



Lower Merion School District

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LMSD Board of School Directors Business Meeting Highlights

Vol. 2, No. 12 – Highlights from the June 12, 2017 Business Meeting

For a complete agenda, visit the BoardDocs section of the District Website. [Click here](#) to view.

PRESENTATIONS

“There Ought To Be a Law” Essay Contest Presentation

State Representative Tim Briggs honored award-winners in the annual “There Ought to be a Law” essay contest. Students from local elementary schools were honored for their efforts to imagine and write about a law that would make their school, community or state a better place.

State Championship Recognition

The Board held its annual recognition of state champion athletic and academic performances. This year’s championship teams included Harriton Science Olympiad, LMHS Boys Tennis, LMHS Girls Ultimate Frisbee, Harriton Girls Tennis and LMHS Girls Crew. Individual first-place state winners included members of the Harriton, LMHS, WVMS and BCMS TSA and Science Olympiad programs as well as LMHS swimmer Anna Kalandadze.

Students Advocating for Gender Equality (SAGE)

Student leaders and faculty advisors from SAGE – a club of Harriton and LMHS students – presented on this year’s accomplishments, including the 4th Annual LMSD Girls Empowerment Conference. The mission of SAGE is to promote awareness, discussion, and advocacy among peer groups in the Lower Merion and Harriton school community about social justice issues that intersect with gender, such as: gender equality, LGBTQ+ rights, race, ethnicity, class, disability, sexism, sexual violence prevention and support. The four pillars that are the foundation of the mission are: Girls Empowerment/Leadership, LGBTQ rights, Masculinity and Male Ally-ship, and Race/Ethnicity. To view a video recap of the conference, [click here](#).

Final Budget Presentation

Superintendent Robert Copeland presented the 2017-18 Final Budget, which represents the final step in an extensive, year-long public budgeting process and reflects input received through a variety of public forums. The 2017-18 budget reflects the District’s commitment to fiscal responsibility and preserving the quality of the LMSD experience. The 2.48% tax increase is among the lowest increases in the past 30 years. It is necessary to maintain existing programs and cover new costs related to enrollment growth, personnel (salaries and benefits) and state and Federal mandates, including rising retirement and special education costs. This year, the District anticipates savings in its insurance plan, utilities costs and operations purchasing and expects increased revenues related to improved interests rates and additional Medicaid/Access funds. (Some increased revenues will, however, be offset by anticipated reduction in state transportation subsidies.) The District will continue to review all areas of the budget to identify opportunities for cost-savings and greater efficiencies.

This year, the District’s Finance Committee hosted a series of detailed, in-depth presentations on key areas of the budget, including curriculum and instruction, facilities, transportation, staffing and special education. The District also engaged the public through presentations at regular Board meetings, public budget workshops, committee meetings and via community comments. Additional budget resources included online information and videos in the budget section of the District website.

One of the ongoing challenges the District faces with regard to budgeting is unprecedented enrollment growth. No

other school district in the Commonwealth has been impacted more by enrollment growth over the past eight years than Lower Merion. LMSD continues to face additional uncertainties in the budgeting process related to current and future tax revenues, the state budget and pending budget litigation. Fixed costs, including salaries, benefits and debt service, continue to be key drivers of the budget, with the instructional program accounting for two-thirds of the entire budget. [Click here](#) for a slideshow of the Final Budget presentation.

SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATE

Superintendent Copeland congratulated and extended best wishes to the Harriton and Lower Merion high school graduating classes of 2017. Images from Harriton's commencement ceremony can be [viewed here](#). Images from Lower Merion's commencement ceremony can be [viewed here](#).

HUMAN RESOURCES

The Board approved personnel actions across the District, including staff and coaching hires for the current school year and summer programs. The Board approved the contract of Megan Shafer, Esq. as Senior Director of Policy, Personnel and School programs for a five-year term to commence on July 1, 2017.

Several longtime staff members announced their retirement this month. Best wishes to Amy Barnett (Special Education Teacher/Gladwyne), Deborah Frazier (School Psychologist/Student Services), Janet Lawson (Grade 5 Teacher/Merion), Madeleine Meehan (Cafeteria & Recess Aide/Merion), Mia Morrow (Food Service Associate/Penn Valley), Pennsylv Ward (Bus Driver/Transportation)

The District mourns the loss of two longtime former employees: Music Teacher Dr. Herman Giersch (Lower Merion High School/Bala Cynwyd Middle School) was employed in LMSD from September 1938 until his retirement in June 1982; Clerical/Library Aide Gladys Kates (Bala Cynwyd Middle School) was on staff in the District from October 1966 until her retirement in June 1992.

EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

The Board approved contracts with the Center for Responsive Schools for training and Naviance (Hobsons) for the Guidance Department for the 2017-18 school year. The board approved the purchase of textbooks and resources for Algebra 3H, Precalculus H and Precalculus.

STUDENT SERVICES

Among the items approved by the Board included independent consultant contracts with Chris Costello, Physical Therapist; Sharon Ezersky, Occupational Therapist; Karen Penzarella, Occupational Therapist; Ellen Madof, Psychologist; Timothy Woods, Physician; and Abington Speech, for Speech and Language services.

The Board approved the Special Education Service Cost Plan Agreement for the 2017-18 School Year with Montgomery County Intermediate Unit (MCIU). The District annually contracts with MCIU to provide services for students whose needs cannot be met in either the regular or special education program provided in the District. This group includes those requiring hearing support, vision support, multi-handicapped, autistic support, life skills and/or learning/emotional support.

BUSINESS OFFICE AND FINANCE

Approval of 2017-18 Budget

The Board of School Directors approved the 2016-17 Final Budget, which sets the tax rate at 28.0740 mills. The budget calls for a 2.48% tax increase to maintain existing programs and cover new costs related to enrollment growth, personnel (salaries and benefits) and mandates, including rising retirement and special education costs. Fixed costs, including salaries, benefits and debt service, continue to be the key drivers in the budget. The need for additional revenue has been exacerbated by minimal increases in funding from state and federal sources, unfunded/underfunded mandates and the highest level of enrollment growth by total number of students among any district in PA over the past eight years. The District can maintain current, comprehensive academic programs K-12, co-curricular activities and instructional and support staffing levels with the funding approved in the 2017-18 Final Budget.

To view the 2017- 18 Final Budget resolution, [click here](#).

To view the 2017-18 Final Budget, [click here](#).

To view the 2017-18 Real Estate Tax Resolution, [click here](#).

Additional Actions

- The Board approved a List of Bills reviewed through the Facilities & Purchasing Committee as well as the May 2017 LMSD Financial Report.
- The Board accepted with gratitude a donation from Gladwyne Elementary Home and School Association of \$50,000 to \$55,000 to purchase 40 laptop computers estimated at \$42,700 and 25 Chromebooks and charging carts estimated at \$8,200 to Gladwyne Elementary School.
- The Board approved the continuation of the firm of Rainer & Company to audit the accounts of the School District for the 2016-17, 2017-18, and 2018-19 fiscal years.
- The Board appointed Kenneth A. Roos, of Wisler Pearlstine, LLP, as Solicitor for the School District for the 2017-18 school year.
- The Board approve transfers in the 2016-17 Budget as [listed here](#). The Board authorized the Business Manager to make additional transfers in the 2016-17 Budget as may be recommended by the School District Auditors. Such transfers must be approved publicly by the School Board prior to being finalized.
- The Board approved transfers from the General Fund to the Capital Reserve Fund established pursuant to 53 P.S. Section 1432 in the current projected amount of \$3,750,000 and authorized the Business Manager to transfer excess General Fund monies to the Capital Reserve Fund if such funds are available, or to adjust the transfer amount during the audit at the end of the fiscal year in consultation with the auditors. Such transfers must be approved publicly by the School Board prior to being finalized.
- The Board approved items [listed here](#) as committed fund balance and authorized the administration to reflect these commitments in any applicable submissions to the Pennsylvania Department of Education.
- The Board adopted the 2017-18 Homestead and Farmstead Exclusion Resolution. [Click here](#) to view.
- The Board resolved that the administration continue to segregate, in PSDLAF Account No. xxxxx-113, the monies received on account of the exceptions approved by the Pennsylvania Department of Education for the 2016-17 tax year pending the resolution of the appeal of the Montgomery County Court of Common Pleas Order of August 29, 2016 and any proceedings on remand or otherwise in relation to the August 29, 2016 Order and to supplement this amount with the monies in the 2017-2018 tax millage attributable to these exceptions from the 2016-2017 tax increase. The monies in this account may not be released by the administration without further action taken by the Board at a public meeting.
- The Board approved financial institutions and investment trusts as depositories for School District funds for the fiscal year 2017-18 with the investment limitations in accordance with the Board policy entitled "Investments."
- The Board approved maintaining 2016-17 Nutritional Service prices for the 2017-18 school year.
- The Board agreed to contribute 50% of the cost of the tax collection portions including software, installation, and maintenance.
- The Board approved a two-year renewal of Long Term Disability Policy with National Insurance Services.

FACILITIES & OPERATIONS

- Contracts awarded for heating oil, gasoline, bio diesel and other blends of bio-fuel; white copy paper, abrading and re-coating of gym floors, equipment for bus radio communications system and sealcoat asphalt (partial) at HHS and LMHS
- Student transportation contracts approved with Atlas Transportation, Klein Transportation, Wilson Metz, Perkiomen Motorcoach, Philadelphia Transportation, Sague, Superior Bus Services, Inc, and Werner Coach for the 2017-18 school year
- Three-year service agreement approved with IM Pools Management Inc. for swimming pool services
- License agreement approved with Main Line School Night for the 2017-18 school year
- Facilities lease agreement approved with Hines Rowing Center for the Lower Merion High School Crew Team
- Addendum approved with Musco Sports Lighting LLC for the extension of mobile lighting rental through June 22, 2019
- Parking license agreement approved with Presentation BVM Church for the 2017-18 school year

- Renewal of three-year service contracts approved with Johnson Controls, Inc for LMHS and HHS
- Three-year enterprise agreement approved with Adobe, Inc/Lancaster-Lebanon IU13 for Adobe software suite
- Second amendment approved with F. Tavani & Associates for professional services
- Amendment to the agreement for professional services approved with Gilbert Architects, Inc. for additional civil engineering, permitting and landscape architecture design
- Proposal approved with Barry Isett and Associates Proposal for monthly, quarterly, semi-annual and annual inspections at HHS
- Quote approved from Presidio Networked Solutions for professional services for installation of wireless network after the start of the 2017/18 fiscal year.

POLICY

The following policies were reviewed for a second reading: [Policy 701 Equipment Disposal](#) and [Policy 254 Student Wellness](#).

The following Policies/AR were reviewed for a first reading: [Policy 216 Administration of Student Records](#) and [Policy/AR 915 - School Related Organizations of Parents and Professional Personnel](#).

NEW BUSINESS

The Board approved meeting dates for September-December 2017.

UPCOMING MEETING DATES

Monday, July 17 Regular Business Board @ 8:00 PM; Thursday, July 13 @ 8:30 AM - Facilities/Purchasing.

LMSD BUSINESS MEETING HIGHLIGHTS is distributed to the community and staff of Lower Merion School District to highlight actions taken at Board Meetings. It is not intended to take the place of the minutes of the meeting. Citizens are encouraged to attend meetings; for information, visit www.lmsd.org.