



# Lower Merion School District

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## **LMSD Board of School Directors Meeting Highlights**

### ***Vol 1. No. 4 - Highlights from the June 13, 2016 Regular 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 Winners**

State Representative Tim Briggs presented winners of this year’s “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 and LMHS Ultimate Frisbee. Individual first-place state winners included members of the Harriton, LMHS, WVMS and BCMS TSA and Science Olympiad programs and LMHS swimmer Anna Kalandadze (PIAA 500 yard freestyle champion).

##### **Featured School: Bala Cynwyd Middle School**

BCMS Principal Jason Potten shared highlights from the 2015-16 school year with a specific focus on key themes at BCMS this year, including “problem-solving approaches to learning,” “care for self and others,” “a commitment to learning,” and “being a part of a community.”

##### **Policy/AR 213: Grading for Student Progress**

Assistant Superintendent Dr. Scott Eveslage provided a brief overview of proposed changes to the secondary grading scale as referenced in recent public presentations and [a letter sent to LMSD families](#). The changes would more closely align the District’s grading scale with other high-achieving high schools and College Board standards. Dr. Eveslage also responded to key themes and questions that emerged from community comments following the District’s invitation for public feedback. The Board authorized the District to move forward with proposed changes to the grading scale.

#### **SUPERINTENDENT’S UPDATE - RECENT HIGHLIGHTS**

Superintendent Robert Copeland shared the following recent highlights and achievements from LMSD schools:

##### **Lower Merion Township Scholarship Fund Awards 2016 Grants**

The Lower Merion Township Scholarship Fund held its 51st annual New Recipient Reception at the Merion Tribute House last month. This year, the Scholarship Fund awarded 104 grants - 46 new and 58 renewals - totaling \$95,000 to college-bound LMSD grads who demonstrate financial need. The scholarship fund was established in 1964 and has awarded more than \$3 million in grants over the past 51 years. The Scholarship Fund relies completely upon the donations and generosity of the LMSD community.

##### **BCMS Librarian Honored by Senator Daylin Leach**

Bala Cynwyd Middle School’s Kelly McDermott was recently selected as *Public School Librarian of the Year* by State Senator Daylin Leach among dozens of nominees from the Townships of East Norriton, Plymouth, Upper Merion, Lower Merion, Radnor and Haverford, and the Boroughs of Norristown, Bridgeport, Conshohocken, West Conshohocken and Narberth. The Librarians of the Year event, sponsored by Senator Leach’s office, honors two outstanding librarians from the 17th Senatorial District. McDermott was selected for her overall outstanding service, including special programs,

knowledge of her field and commitment to the public.

#### **4<sup>th</sup> Annual TEDxLMSD a Success**

Students, staff and community members recently gathered in Harriton High School's Black Box Theater for the fourth annual TEDxLMSD – an independently-organized "TED talk" planned by students, for students with enthusiastic support and mentorship from District staff. This year's student team brought together five dynamic speakers to address this year's theme – *Think!* – focusing on how people are thinking about and solving pressing issues in today's society. Speakers included LMSD alumni, parents and community members. More than 100 students from both high schools attended the event.

#### **HUMAN RESOURCES**

A number of longtime LMSD staff members announced their retirement this month. Best wishes to Joyce Acton (Gifted Education/LMHS), Delores Brown (Transportation/HHS), Joanne Carbone (Instructional Aide/LMHS), Elizabeth Clark (Speech & Language/Student Services), Robert Farr (Instructional Aide/Merion), Lynne Freeland (English/LMHS), Mark Hansler (Social Studies/LMHS), Deborah Martin (Family & Consumer Science/HHS, LMHS), Sally Pettit (Special Education/BCMS), Sally Reynolds (Office Manager/Admin).

The Board also approved the terms of an Act 93 meet-and-discuss agreement with the Lower Merion Organization of School Administrators for the period January 1, 2015 – June 30, 2018.

#### **EDUCATIONAL SERVICES ACTIONS**

Among the items approved the renewal of MyLearningPlan through the Montgomery County Intermediate Unit (MCIU) to record Act 48 hours for the 2016-17 school year.

#### **STUDENT SERVICES ACTIONS**

Among the items approved by the Board included a renewal agreement with Leader Services to provide IEP Writer/Child Count Licenses as well as independent consultant contracts for speech and language pathology and occupational therapy services for the 2016-17 school year.

#### **BUSINESS OFFICE AND FINANCE**

##### **Approval of 2016-17 Budget**

The Board of School Directors approved the 2016-17 Final Budget, which sets the tax rate at 27.3963 mills. The budget calls for a 4.4% 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, accounting for nearly 88% of expenditures. 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 among any district in Southeastern PA. The District can maintain current, comprehensive academic programs K-12, all co-curricular activities and instructional and support staffing levels with the funding approved in the 2016-17 Final Budget. To view the 2016-17 Final Budget resolution, [click here](#).

##### **Additional Actions**

The Board approved a List of Bills reviewed through the Facilities & Purchasing Committee as well as the May 2016 LMSD Financial Report...The Board accepted donations of a steel, pedestal table from the Merion Home & School Association (HSA); two trees from the Merion Elementary Fifth Grade Committee and a bench from Lower Merion High School HSA...The Board approved a list of financial institutions and investment trusts as depositories for School District Fund for the fiscal year 2016-17 in accordance with Board policy...The Board appointed Kenneth A. Roos, of Wisler Pearlstine, LLP, as Solicitor for the school district...The Board established meal prices for the 2016-17 school year.

#### **FACILITIES & OPERATIONS**

Bids awarded to refinish gym floors in all schools; install sidewalk at Penn Wynne ES; asbestos abatement for classroom renovations at the District Administrative Offices; asphalt repairs and improvements at Cynwyd ES and Welsh Valley MS; replace boilers and install emergency lighting at Bala Cynwyd MS...Agreement approved for participation in a three-year Microsoft Agreement with Lancaster-Lebanon Intermediate Unit 13, to stay current on Microsoft software...Agreement approved for renewal of BusBoss transportation routing software and support...Agreement renewal approved with

SchoolMessenger for District-wide and building-level notification services (automated email and voice-messaging, etc.)...Quotes approved with Starlite Productions for audio-visual equipment to be installed in Lower Merion High School science classrooms...License Agreement with Presentation BVM Church approved for use of parking space from July 1, 2016 to June 20, 2017 to augment parking for Penn Wynne ES. Agreement approved with SunDance Associates to perform demographic studies and provide updated enrollment projections...Proposal approved for professional services from Montgomery County Planning Commission to provide an updated study of enrollment projections...Change orders approved for additions and alterations at Penn Valley and modular classrooms at Penn Wynne ES.

### **POLICY**

The following policies were reviewed for a second reading: [Policy 621 \(Federal Fiscal Compliance\)](#); [Policy 622 \(Travel Reimbursement- Federal Programs\)](#); [Policy 812 \(Food Service\)](#); and [Policy 827 \(Conflict of Interest\)](#). Policies 621, 622, 812 and 827 are part of new Federal Compliance obligations; these new requirements are consistent with current District practices.

### **UPCOMING MEETING DATES**

Upcoming Meeting Dates: July 14 Facilities/Purchasing Committee @ 8:30 AM and the July 18 Regular Business Board @ 8:00 PM

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