



Lower Merion School District

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LMSD Board of School Directors Business Meeting Highlights

Vol. 2, No. 7 – Highlights from the January 23, 2017 Business Meeting

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

PRESENTATIONS

Elementary STEM programs in LMSD

Elementary students and staff presented an overview of STEM programs in LMSD elementary schools. Highlights included: a review of STEM integration across the curriculum; increasing emphasis on engineering and design; expanded use of makerspaces, after-school STEM clubs and activities; community STEM events; and expanded learning opportunities for coding, computation and 3D printing.

To view a slideshow of the presentation, [click here](#).

Preliminary Budget Presentation

Superintendent Robert Copeland provided an overview of the 2017-18 LMSD Preliminary Budget. The Preliminary Budget is subject to change and serves as a starting point each year in a comprehensive public process that concludes with Final Budget adoption in June. It establishes a millage (tax) rate that cannot be increased in the final budget.

Mr. Copeland described the unique challenges the District faces with regard to enrollment growth. The greatest cost to any school district is directly related to the number of children served. No other school district in the Commonwealth has been impacted more by enrollment growth over the past eight years than Lower Merion. LMSD is the fastest-growing school district in Pennsylvania by total number of students. Mr. Copeland also provided uncertainties with this year's process related to current and future tax revenues, the state budget and pending budget litigation.

This year's Preliminary Budget calls for a 3.85% 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. In the spring, the Board is required to approve a Proposed Final Budget, a more refined budget document that forms the foundation for adoption of a Final Budget in June. The District is making every effort to ensure the most fiscally-responsible final budget. Superintendent Copeland is leading a comprehensive administrative review of all areas of the budget to identify opportunities for cost-savings and greater efficiencies.

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. The need for additional revenue has been exacerbated by minimal increases in funding from state and federal sources and unfunded/underfunded mandates.

Mr. Copeland announced the budgeting calendar and opportunities for public engagement, including an expanded series of public budget presentations that will focus on specific departments and programs. The schedule of presentations and additional budget resources are available in [the budget section of the District website](#). This information will be updated throughout the budget process. The District encourages community members to review this information to better understand the budget and current funding challenges facing public education in Lower Merion and across the Commonwealth.

Questions about the LMSD budget may be directed to budget@lmsd.org. To review the Preliminary Budget presentation, [click here](#).

SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATE

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

8th Annual Afternoon of Service

Hundreds of Lower Merion School District students, parents, faculty, staff, and community members gathered at Harriton High School last Friday for the District's 8th Annual "Afternoon of Service" celebrating the life and works of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. This event honors the legacy of Dr. King and his belief in the importance of serving others.

Under the leadership of Welsh Valley Middle School teacher Jamie Nemeč, school and community groups organized an array of service-related initiatives and educational activities for students of all ages ranging from hands-on arts & crafts activities for veterans and local senior care centers to projects benefiting the Ronald McDonald House, the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, the Peter Powerhouse Foundation and local schools-in-need. The event also served as the culmination of a month-long District-wide collection effort benefiting Cradles to Crayons. Thanks to all who helped make this important day possible. For more coverage, [click here](#).

Board Appreciation Month

January is School Director Recognition Month. Mr. Copeland shared the following remarks in recognition of the LMSD Board:

January is School Director Recognition Month in Pennsylvania, a time to spotlight the contributions of these valuable citizen-volunteers.

In Lower Merion, our school directors are passionate about making our schools the very best they can be, and their commitment to quality public education and this community is unsurpassed. They devote countless hours each month to school business; they take the time to understand the issues, opportunities and challenges that we face as a District and truly are experts in their role. They provide the necessary leadership to ensure that the children of Lower Merion and Narberth receive the finest public education possible.

On behalf of the entire Lower Merion School District community, I would like to recognize each of our school directors and thank them for regularly going above and beyond. Yours is a difficult and often thankless job; it's important you know that we are deeply grateful for all that you do.

HUMAN RESOURCES

The Board approved personnel actions across the District, including staff and coaching hires for the current school year. The Board approved the appointment of Mark Klein as Interim Human Resources Manager from January 1, 2017 through June 30, 2017.

Several longtime staff members announced their retirement this month. Best wishes to Robert Brant (Operations), Jason Christmas (Transportation), Joe Dennis (Custodian/Lower Merion), Lawrence Dudley (Custodian/BCMS) and Nancy Sargent (Grade 5/Penn Valley).

The District mourns the passing of Ernest "Ernie" Iovannone, an aide at Penn Valley Elementary School. Ernie passed away over winter break after a courageous battle with cancer. Ernie was a fun-loving, kind soul and diligent professional who excelled in his duties as a recess/cafeteria aide.

The District mourns the passing of several retired staff members, including former groundskeeper Joseph Augustine, who retired in 2015 and former LMHS English teacher Dorothy Rudisill, who retired in 1976.

EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

Among the items approved by the Board included several overnight field trips and a renewal agreement with Atomic Learning for professional learning resources.

STUDENT SERVICES

Among the items approved by the Board included an agreement with the Montgomery County Office of Children and Youth to develop a transportation plan for children in foster care.

BUSINESS OFFICE AND FINANCE

The Board approved a List of Bills reviewed through the Facilities & Purchasing Committee as well as the December 2016 LMSD Financial Report.

FACILITIES & OPERATIONS

Bid approved for replacement of a utility and crane truck with Manderbach Ford, US Municipal and E.M. Kutz...Quote approved with Presidio for software, licenses and professional services for the Cisco Identity Services Engine...Quote approved with ePlus for hardware for the Cisco Identity Services Engine...Quote approved with ePlus for annual software maintenance and support for VMWare server virtualization software...Change orders approved for asphalt repairs and improvements at WVMS and CYES, and DAO classroom renovations.

POLICY

The following policy was reviewed for a second reading: [Policy 906 Addressing Complaints and Concerns of the Public](#).

The following policies were reviewed for a first reading: 1. [Policy/AR 105.1 Curriculum Review by Parents/Guardians and Students](#); 2. [Policy/AR 555 Private Coaching or Training of Students by District Athletic Coaches](#); and 3. [Policy/AR 904 Public Attendance at School Events](#).

UPCOMING MEETING DATES

Upcoming Meeting Dates: February 1 Curriculum Committee @ 8:30 AM; February 3 Policy Committee @8:30 AM; February 6 Education Committee & Supplementary Regular Meeting @ 8 PM; February 9 Facilities/Purchasing Committee @ 8:30 AM; February 13 Regular Business Board @ 8:00 PM; February 15 Communications Committee @ 7 PM; February 23 Legislative Committee @ 8:30 AM.

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.