



Eastern Lebanon County School District  
**Committee Minutes**  
**March 2025**



## Eastern Lebanon County School District

180 ELCO Drive, Myerstown, PA 17067

March 3, 2025, DO Boardroom, 5:30 pm

### Policy Committee Minutes

Policy Committee Chair: **Rachel Moyer**,

Policy Committee Members: **Howard Kramer, Ray Ondrusek, Joya Morrissey;**  
**Board President, Jack Kahl**

Mrs. Moyer called the meeting to order at 5:32 pm.

The following policies were discussed and will move forward for the first reading:

- Policy 601 Fiscal Objectives
- Policy 602 Budget Planning
- Policy 603 Budget Preparation
- Policy 604 Budget Adoption
- Policy 605 Tax Levy
- Policy 606 Tax Collection
- Policy 607 Tuition Income
- Policy 608 Bank Accounts
- Policy 609 Investment of District Funds
- Policy 610 Purchases Subject to Bid/Quotation
- Policy 611 Purchases Budgeted
- Policy 612 Purchases Not Budgeted
- Policy 613 Cooperative Purchasing

The committee reviewed a revised draft of a Display of Flags policy. The solicitor will review the revisions and offer any additional changes.

Mrs. Vicente shared that the Naming Rights Policy will be discussed in the General Services Committee meeting this week. She anticipates revisions to this policy will be needed, and it will be brought to the next meeting in April.

Mr. Kahl requested that the committee consider reviewing a policy permitting therapy animals in schools. Mrs. Vicente will request a draft policy from PSBA and bring it back to the committee in April.

Public Comment: None

Next Policy Meeting:

- April 7, 2025

The meeting adjourned at 5:59 pm.

Future Policy Committee Meetings:

Monday, April 7, 2025  
Monday, May 5, 2025  
Monday, June 9, 2025  
Monday, July 7, 2025

Monday, August 4, 2025  
Monday, September 8, 2025  
Monday, October 6, 2025  
Monday, November 3, 2025



# Eastern Lebanon County School District

180 ELCO Drive, Myerstown, PA 17067

District Board Room

March 4, 2025, 5:00 pm

## General Services Committee Minutes

General Services Committee Chair: **JP Santos**

General Services Committee Members: **Howard Kramer, Ray Ondrusek, David Ziegler; Board President, Jack Kahl**

### Call to Order and Welcome

- Mr. Santos called the meeting to order at 5:03 pm.

### Discussion Items

- **GESA Energy Report**
  - Mrs. Vicente shared that in 2018 the District initiated a Guaranteed Energy Savings Act (GESA) project for the High School. This project aimed to enhance the HVAC system and implement energy-saving improvements cost-effectively. A key benefit of a GESA project is its guaranteed savings, which, through cost avoidance, can be utilized to offset project expenses.
  - ELCO has achieved \$204,093, or 116% of the annual guaranteed energy and operational savings.
- **Athletic Entrance Railing Quote**
  - A quote for a curb railing at the high school athletic entrance was presented in the amount of \$23,945 (COSTARS). The committee discussed the need for this railing due to a safety concern. The committee discussed the potential for a less expensive option but indicated they want to get quotes for railings to match existing building aesthetics. Additional quotes will be secured before being presented to the Board for approval.
- **HS Renovation Punch List Progress Update**

- There are a few items that the contractors are waiting to be delivered to finish the punch lists.
- Bench and Bollard Donations
  - Jack Kahl donated benches and bollards to the District. The bollards will be placed outside the main entrances to provide pedestrian protection, security, traffic control, and aesthetic enhancement. These donations will offset the need for previously allocated safety grant funds, allowing for their reallocation within the District.
- Follow Up: Naming of Planetarium (Policy 715 Commercial Advertising, Partnerships, Sponsorships, and Naming Rights)
  - The district's solicitor stated that the policy can be revised if the Board wishes. Because the naming of the planetarium is not an individual, it can be named for a family. The Policy Committee will review the policy as the next step.

Public Comment: None

Next General Services Meeting: April 8, 2025

Adjournment: Mr. Santos adjourned the meeting at 5:37 pm.

Future General Services Committee Meetings:

Tuesday, April 8, 2025  
 Tuesday, May 6, 2025  
 Tuesday, June 10, 2025  
 Tuesday, July 8, 2025

Tuesday, August 5, 2025  
 Tuesday, September 9, 2025  
 Tuesday, October 7, 2025  
 Tuesday, November 4, 2025



## Eastern Lebanon County School District

180 ELCO Drive, Myerstown, PA 17067

March 4, 2025, DO Boardroom, 6:00 pm

### Finance Committee Minutes

Finance Committee Chair: **Ray Ondrusek**

Finance Committee Members: **Howard Kramer, JP Santos, David Ziegler; Board President, Jack Kahl**

#### Call to Order and Welcome

- Mr. Ondrusek called the meeting to order at 5:45 pm.

#### Discussion Items

- 2025-2026 Preliminary Budget Update
  - Budget Progress
    - Mrs. Mathias provided an update on the progress of the 2025-2026 budget since the last Finance Committee meeting. Increased revenues and reduced expenditures have lowered the overall deficit to \$1,434,482.
    - The administration will do additional work to reduce budgets further.
    - Mrs. Mathias also presented other considerations, including replacing contracted custodial/maintenance employees with ELCO employees, securing bank proposals to reduce fees, and reviewing other utilities, gas, oil, and healthcare costs.
    - Mrs. Mathias presented the estimated fund balance use for the remainder of the 2024-2025 fiscal year, resulting in an approximately \$2,411,005 deficit.
    - Mrs. Mathias presented options for the committee's consideration, including tax increases of 4.8% to 3.8% and their impact on the fund balance.
    - Mrs. Vicente shared that the administration is seeking the Board's guidance on the target tax increase to determine how to proceed.
    - The committee acknowledged that the majority of the district's budget is made up of payroll expenses. Mrs. Vicente shared statistics on the drastic decrease in teacher certifications issued to

new teachers. The pool of qualified candidates for open positions is dwindling.

- Mrs. Mathias recommended not going below a 3.8% tax increase.
- Mrs. Vicente reminded the committee that last year's budget presentation (posted on the district's website) provided the Board with a three-year plan of tax increases that approach the index to make up for the predicted budget deficits.
- The committee was hesitant to go above 3.8% and would like it to be lower. By the end of the meeting, the committee recommended 3.8%.

○ Adequacy Funding

- Mrs. Mathias presented how Ready to Learn funds are allocated to districts. ELCO is the only district in Lebanon County that has not seen an increase in this adequacy funding over the past three years.
- The amount of Ready to Learn funds given to districts that qualify for adequacy funding increases each year. However, ELCO's share is not increasing. In total, the Lebanon County districts went from \$2.7 million to over \$22 million in three years, while ELCO received **no increase**.
- The threshold from 2021-2022 used to determine which schools receive funding was calculated so that ELCO missed the threshold by \$185.04. Therefore, ELCO does not receive adequacy funding increases.
- The adequacy funding formula is not fair. The expenditures from 2021-2022 penalized districts that used the ESSER funding in that school year versus those that delayed spending that grant.

○ Charts - Analytics

- Charts and analytics were included in the budget and adequacy funding presentation.

○ Contracted Staff

- Mrs. Mathias spoke about the concerted efforts to move away from using contracted services and employ workers as ELCO employees, which will increase personnel savings.

○ Assessed Values

- A new warehouse is being planned in Jackson Township. Once completed, it will cost \$31 million and generate \$500,000 in tax revenue for the district. The district would also receive approximately \$160,000 in back taxes from Clean and Green property.

Public Comment: None

Next Finance Committee Meeting:

- March 17, 2025, at 5:00 pm

Adjournment

- Mr. Ondrusek adjourned the meeting at 7:27 pm.

Future Finance Committee Meetings:

Tuesday, April 8, 2025

Tuesday, May 6, 2025

Tuesday, June 10, 2025

Tuesday, July 8, 2025

Tuesday, August 5, 2025

Tuesday, September 9, 2025

Tuesday, October 7, 2025

Tuesday, November 4, 2025





## Eastern Lebanon County School District

180 ELCO Drive, Myerstown, PA 17067

February 18, 2025, DO Boardroom, 6:00 pm

### Finance Committee Minutes

Finance Committee Chair: **Ray Ondrusek**

Finance Committee Members: **Howard Kramer, JP Santos, David Ziegler; Board President, Jack Kahl**

#### Call to Order and Welcome

- Mr. Ondrusek called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm.

#### Discussion Items

- Mrs. Mathias provided additional information regarding the 2025-2026 budget, including the following:
  - The 2024-2025 budget has a deficit of \$2.5 million due to revenues being down by approximately \$1.9 million. This deficit will require some use of the fund balance.
  - The 2025-2026 projected state revenue has decreased, and ELCO is projected to receive less than it received this year.
  - ELCO is the only district in Lebanon County not receiving the Adequacy Funding, the "Fair Funding Formula" used to provide additional funds to districts. ELCO also did not qualify to receive any of the Adequacy Funds in 2024-2025.
- Mrs. Mathias reminded the Committee that last year, the Board recognized that the financial outlook would require a multi-year strategy, which is part of what is being discussed in this year's budget presentations.
- Mrs. Vicente shared that the administrators have been working hard to identify items that can be cut from their budgets. The cuts total close to \$550,000. Some of the items cut include:
  - No new positions are being requested. The reading coach that was discussed at the previous meeting has now been cut;
  - Athletic uniforms; replacement of uniforms will be delayed by one year;
  - Conference fees;
  - Eliminate out-of-state travel.

- Eliminating a Capital Reserve Transfer can save an additional \$200,000 and potentially reduce some operating costs, like bank fees.
- The Committee discussed the potential impacts of some of the cuts and specifically discussed the long-term implications of delaying maintenance and building projects.
- Mrs. Mathias presented the projected Act 1 adjusted index, which shows a decline in this number over the next three years.
- Mrs. Mathias presented several scenarios for tax increase percentages between 3.8 and 4.8, including their impact on the Fund Balance.
- Mrs. Mathias recommended not going below a 3.8 tax increase.
- The Committee discussed the amount of money needed to cover District expenses for a month (approximately \$4.8 million).

#### Public Comment:

- A question was asked if other items from other areas could reduce expenses, and a comment was made about the proposed K-5 ELA resources and their cost of \$500,000.
- Dr. Davis shared that the costs of the CKLA resource have already been adjusted in the budget as presented. This will only impact the budget by \$100,000 but will become a line item in the curriculum budget for subsequent years.

#### Next Finance Committee Meeting:

- March 4, 2025

#### Adjournment

- Mr. Ondrusek adjourned the meeting at 5:57 pm.

#### Future Finance Committee Meetings:

Tuesday, April 8, 2025  
 Tuesday, May 6, 2025  
 Tuesday, June 10, 2025  
 Tuesday, July 8, 2025

Tuesday, August 5, 2025  
 Tuesday, September 9, 2025  
 Tuesday, October 7, 2025  
 Tuesday, November 4, 2025



## Eastern Lebanon County School District

180 ELCO Drive, Myerstown, PA 17067

March 6, 2025, DO Boardroom, 5:00 pm

### Curriculum Committee Minutes

Curriculum Committee Chair: **Bonnie Kantner**,

Curriculum Committee Members: **Thomas Ferrari, Jr., Rachel Moyer, Joya Morrissey; Board President, Jack Kahl**

Mrs. Kantner called the meeting to order at 5:05 pm.

[Link to Download Presentation Slides](#)

#### Discussion Items

- Lancaster Lebanon Virtual Solutions Contract Renewal
  - Dr. Davis provided background information for the LLVS program that IU13 provides. The LLVS contract provides the content and learning management system for the ELCO Virtual Academy. The curriculum used in LLVS is very close to what cyber charter schools use to provide instruction.
  - ELCO teachers provide the instruction to reduce costs.
  - Pricing for 2025-2026 has not yet been sent, but we do not expect a significant increase. No changes are recommended for the contract renewal.
  - The committee recommends moving forward with the renewal.
- Exchange Student Opportunity
  - Mrs. Vicente shared that we have received a request from ICES to place an exchange student for the 2025-2026 school year with a family who has hosted exchange students before.
  - According to Policy 239, organizations must notify the district of their request to place an exchange student before July 1 of the preceding year.
  - The committee recommends moving forward with an approval for an exchange student for 2025-2026.
- Comprehensive Plan 2025-2028
  - The district is revising the Comprehensive Plan per PDE guidelines. In February, a steering committee meeting was held to review its components.
  - Dr. Davis reviewed draft information from the plan, including the shared values: We are Family, Safety and Belonging, and Engagement for High Achievement.
  - The results of the school community survey asking what ELCO should be known for are: safe, supportive, and inclusive environment, academic and extracurricular

excellence, community and family partnership, well-rounded student development, and strong leadership and effective communication.

- Dr. Davis shared the following data for the ELCO SD:
  - Math PSSA Achievement: ELCO is below similar schools, Lebanon County schools, IU schools, and the state average;
  - ELA PSSA Achievement: ELCO is below similar schools, Lebanon County schools, IU schools, and the state average
  - Science PSSA Achievement: ELCO is closer to similar schools, Lebanon County schools, IU schools, and the state average
  - All data sets were presented for five years, 40-50% ED, compared to Lebanon County Schools, IU13 schools, and statewide.
  - The committee members were provided with a student data snapshot, which includes achievement and growth data for student subgroups.
  - ELCO growth data is phenomenal across the district, and we see most students making more than one year of growth a school year in ELA, Math, and Science.
  - Student achievement is not increasing; we need to adjust to improve achievement. To do this, we need to align curriculum and instructional practices, which are goals within the Comprehensive Plan.
  - Demographic data was shared, reflecting changes since the last Comprehensive Plan. Hispanic, two+ races, low-economic, ELL, and students with disabilities subgroups have all increased and represent a significantly higher percentage of students enrolled than they did in 2021. White and black student subgroup percentages have decreased.
  - Keystone data was shared; our data was comparable to the other state, county, IU, and similar socioeconomic schools. So, if we are on par at the high school level, why aren't we equally on par in the lower grades?
- Strengths: growth on the PSSAs and Keystones, full-day Kindergarten, an aligned assessment system, culture of continuous improvement, future-ready activities, school safety and security, structured literacy, and Apple Distinguished Schools designation.
- Challenges: student achievement, career experiences, transitions, structured literacy, instructional practices, differentiated instruction, belonging, and communication.
- Goals: Success in the Early Years, Thriving Students, Equitable Opportunities for Achievement, and Readiness for College, Career, and Life – the goals will remain the same, but the focus of each goal will change.
- Required Professional Learning components were shared: structured literacy, trauma-informed care, differentiated instruction, common ground, and professional ethics. Two additional areas were added: instructional practices and aligned systems.
- The committee recommends moving forward with approval of the revised Comprehensive Plan in the March Board meeting.

- New Resource Updates
  - Dr. Davis requested that committee members return resources by March 17, 2025. The committee will make recommendations for approval in the April meeting.
  - Dr. Davis shared committee comments on the strengths and concerns for each of the following resources:
  - CDL—J.J. Keller & Associates—Entry-Level Driver Training—Overall, the committee identified more strengths for the CDL resource; the only concern was that the copyright date seemed old.
  - AP Spanish Language & Culture- Vista - Teras 3rd edition - no comments were offered from the committee members
  - AP Biology - Bedford, Freeman & Worth - Biology for the AP Course - no comments were offered from the committee members.
- Dr. Davis offered comments on structured literacy and its components. Additionally, the history of K-5 Literacy was shared; Houghton Mifflin, the publisher of Journeys, which is currently used, fully retires in 2025. Securing resources will be challenging, and the online component will no longer exist.
- Dr. Davis shared that CKLA, Version 1, was first created by Core Knowledge Foundation. Since then, Amplify has created Versions 2 (2015) and 3 (2025). Amplify and CKLA versions 2 and 3 are not connected to the Core Knowledge Foundation. ELCO is considering adopting version 3.
- CKLA is aligned with the PA Core Standards for ELA in grades K-5. It is also aligned with the science of reading, which includes word recognition and language comprehension, and with the new science standards.
- Dr. Davis shared the components of the Skills and Knowledge Strands in grades K-2. The program clearly outlines the systemic skills; a weakness of Journeys is the lack of clearly denoted skills by grade, which may contribute to lower achievement scores.
- Grades 3-5 have integrated strands, which include novel studies and research units.
- There are two choice units in each grade selected by the committee.
- K-5 Literacy - Amplify - CKLA
  - Strengths identified by the committee include integrated comprehension, knowledge, and grammar; integrated writing across K-5; cursive handwriting in grade 3; a meaningful metaphor poetry unit in grade 4; alignment and building of skills across several years; user-friendly and organized, integrated research topics, rigorous curriculum
  - Concerns identified by the committee were filtered into common themes:
    - Skills: tricky vs sight words, kinesthetic segmenting cue consistency, potential confusion from Pre-k programs using a different way to teach phonics, and sounds difficult for PA Dutch students
    - Content:
      - Religion - (3) regions and cultures: Native Americans; (2) birthplace of Democracy - Ancient Greece; (2); (1) Maya Aztec, and Inca

- Age of Earth - (5) Mayas, Aztecs, and Incas - 4000 - 2000 BCE, (3) Rise and fall: Ancient Rome, (1) Mayas, Aztecs and Incas - Age of Earth
  - History - (2) A House Divided: US Civil War and War of 1812 (K) National Icons: Presidents 7 American symbols - Barak Obama book
  - A list of Social Studies and STEELS Science Standards aligned with the content concerns identified by the committee was shared, demonstrating that the topics of concern are part of the PA Academic Standards for those grade levels.
- Dr. Davis presented the following summary recommendations:
  - Data demonstrates that ELCO students are scoring below State, IU, and County peers in reading achievement. Beyond keeping students safe, teaching them to read is the most important thing we do
  - The current resource, Journeys, ceases to be published this year and does not align with research-based approaches in the Science of Reading.
  - Collaborative Teaching advanced ELCO's teaching of decoding, but it relied on teacher-created materials.
  - Act 55 of 2022 requires that structured literacy be included in our instruction and is a required component in our new Comprehensive Plan that was presented tonight.
- Mrs. Moyer, is there a district in the county that uses Journeys? Yes, Palmyra. How did Palmyra earn high scores?
- Mr Kahl asked the audience, mainly teachers, to raise their hands if they wanted this resource; the majority raised their hands.
- Mrs. Morrissey has received a number of messages about this program, mostly expressing concerns with the religious concerns identified by the committee. She made a statement about her position. She firmly believes we must provide the necessary resources to prepare students for success. The curriculum is not a want; it is a need.
- Mrs. Moyer has heard from people in the community who are concerned about the price. Knowing that Palmyra is using the same program and has higher scores, what are they doing that we need to do?
- Mr. Kahl: Drive up academics. School choice is coming, and we will only attract students through a rigorous curriculum. If you vote against this curriculum, you are voting for the status quo and will keep us down.

#### Public Comment:

Barbara Seifert: Was an invitation sent out to the community to come to this presentation? The district cannot afford this program. She believes this curriculum is a "cooked" Hooked on Phonics program. She stated that her problem with the curriculum is what the publisher stands for, which includes advancing anti-racism, creating space for all to be heard, and lifting up the voices of Blacks, Hispanics, and Asians. Where are the whites? She continued to comment that all funding would go away. 4:25

Elizabeth Miller: Spoke about the importance of literacy, knowing facts from opinion, and how to make decisions. What price tag will we put on a literacy program that is needed? Myerstown has changed, and we need resources aligned with the Science of Reading. We need resources for our teachers to provide effective instruction. She commented that she is appalled that there is a concern about teaching that President Obama was a President. English is now the national language, and we need to teach it. 3:27

Next Curriculum Committee meeting:

- April 10, 2025

Mrs. Kantner adjourned the meeting at 6:29 pm.

Future Curriculum Committee Meetings:

Thursday, April 10, 2025  
Thursday, May 8, 2025  
Thursday, June 12, 2025  
Thursday, July 10, 2025

Thursday, August 7, 2025  
Thursday, September 11, 2025  
Thursday, October 9, 2025  
Thursday, November 6, 2025



## Eastern Lebanon County School District

180 ELCO Drive, Myerstown, PA 17067

March 6, 2025, DO Boardroom, 6:00 pm

### Personnel Committee Minutes

Personnel Committee Chair: **Joya Morrissey**

Personnel Committee Members: **Thomas Ferrari, Jr., Bonnie Kantner, Rachel Moyer;** Board President, Jack Kahl

Ray Ondrusek attended.

Mrs. Morrissey called the meeting to order at 6:45 pm.

#### Discussion Items

The Committee reviewed a draft agenda for the March 17, 2025, meeting, which reflects actions as of the date of the Committee meeting. Additional items will likely be included in the time leading up to the voting Board meeting.

As of March 6, 2025, the following items will appear on the March 17, 2025, Board Agenda:

- New hires:
  - The new hire for administrative assistant for Special Education will start next week.
  - AMES contracted positions are being replaced with new ELCO hires. This will be a cost savings.
  - An Assistant Principal candidate has been selected, and an offer has been made.
  - An employment offer is out for a para position.
- Resignations:
  - Math teachers will cover the classes for an LTS mathematics teacher resignation through the rest of the year, and an MOU will be developed to permit teachers to receive stipends for serving as the teacher of record for the remainder of the year.
  - A first-grade teacher resigned, and the math coach will fill in for the rest of the year. The math coach position will not be backfilled for the remainder



of this year. Because the math coach also oversees the elementary ELCO Virtual Academy, a stipend will appear on the agenda for her to maintain this role in addition to teaching first grade.

- Three athletic coaching resignations were received.

#### Absence Without Pay Requests

- Mrs. Vicente reviewed the district's Absence Without Pay (AWOP) report to date. As a reminder, staff who request five or more consecutive AWOP days will appear on the Board agenda for School Board approval. Additionally, individuals who request more than ten (10) AWOP days, excluding extended sickness or approval FMLA leave, will also appear on the Board agenda for School Board approval. There are now three individuals with more than ten AWOP days requiring Board approval. The committee discussed whether these requests should first come before the committee or be placed directly on the Board's agenda. The consensus was that they should be included in the full Board agenda. Once an employee uses 11 AWOP days, Board approval for the days will be required. No names will be included on the Board agenda. Instead, employee numbers will be used.

The Committee moved into an Executive session to discuss an employment issue per Policy 006.

Public Comment: None

Next Personnel Committee Meeting:

- April 10, 2025

Adjournment: Mrs. Morrissey adjourned the meeting at 7:10 pm.

*\*Please note that the Personnel Committee will move into an Executive Session to discuss confidential Personnel matters.\**

Future Personnel Committee Meetings:

Thursday, April 10, 2025  
Thursday, May 8, 2025  
Thursday, June 12, 2025  
Thursday, July 10, 2025

Thursday, August 7, 2025  
Thursday, September 11, 2025  
Thursday, October 9, 2025  
Thursday, November 6, 2025