

# Press Release



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## **Lenape Regional Superintendent Carol L. Birnbohm, Ed.D., Announces Retirement**

*Birnbohm, a Cherokee High School graduate, returned to her alma mater to build a 33-year career in education, 13 as district leader*

**Shamong, N.J.** – Lenape Regional High School District (LRHSD) Superintendent Carol L. Birnbohm, Ed.D., will retire effective Sept. 1, 2025. The LRHSD Board of Education formally approved Birnbohm’s retirement at its regular meeting Wednesday, May 14.

Birnbohm has served as superintendent since 2012 and assistant superintendent since 2007. Her history with the district extends far beyond these leadership roles. An alumna of Cherokee High School, one of the district’s four high schools, Birnbohm returned to Cherokee in 1992 to launch her professional career.

At Cherokee, she taught mathematics, coached varsity lacrosse and swimming and served as assistant field hockey coach. She was named New Jersey Lacrosse Coach of the Year in 1998. Birnbohm transitioned into administration in 2001, becoming assistant principal at Cherokee and supervisor of mathematics and guidance. In 2004, she was promoted to district leadership as director of programs and planning, a role she held until being appointed assistant superintendent.

Birnbohm has appreciated opportunities to teach, coach and lead in a district that has played such a significant role in her own life. In a letter to staff announcing her retirement, Birnbohm said her involvement in LRHSD “has been a constant source of pride as I have watched generations of students and staff grow, learn and achieve remarkable things.” Among those students are her own three children – Kaitlyn, Jenna and Dylan - who are graduates of Seneca High School.



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## **Pushed for fair funding statewide**

Over more than a decade, Birnbohm has prioritized initiatives that support LRHSD's foundation for continued excellence. She has relentlessly advocated for fair funding for LRHSD following the state's modifications to the School Funding Reform Act eight years ago. Facing a seven-year reduction in LRHSD's state aid, Birnbohm vowed at the time not to sit back and "brace" for impact, but instead to help develop a state-funding plan that was fair to all students in New Jersey public schools.

Birnbohm has yet to let up on that promise, initially helping form Support Our Students (SOS), a broader coalition of districts negatively impacted. She has become one of the strongest and most consistent voices on behalf of SOS and, specifically, LRHSD. She has forged relationships with legislators and aimed to educate them on school funding issues and possible solutions, leading to changes in policy and small wins for LRHSD in the funding fight. She also has remained open and honest with LRHSD staff, students and taxpayers, who have, in turn, provided the district with unprecedented levels of support despite the cuts and sacrifices required to adjust to yearly funding reductions.

Birnbohm's oversight of this issue has provided a framework for continued advocacy, and her accessible and empowering leadership style has prepared LRHSD colleagues and fellow school leaders to carry such efforts forward.

"Carol is a superintendent's superintendent—an esteemed leader whose wisdom and expertise have been sought by highly accomplished peers," emphasized LRHSD Board President Charles D. Roseboro. "Through her strategic vision, exceptional daily management of the district, and remarkable ability to build a strong leadership team, Carol has made a lasting impact on the LRHSD. The benefits of her contributions will be felt for years, if not decades, to come."

## **Led initiatives for student success and school safety**

Birnbohm's leadership of LRHSD through the creation of the 2019 Strategic Plan followed by a successful bond referendum in 2021 has resulted in program and facilities improvements that students are currently enjoying. Examples include the addition of air conditioning districtwide and specialized classrooms for new, in-depth career pathways. Students across all four district high schools now have the option to pursue four-year programs in Automotive at Seneca High School, Carpentry at Cherokee High School and Welding/Metalwork Fabrication at Lenape High School.

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The career-focused programming is an extension of LRHSD's "Two Graduations" model, also introduced during Birnbohm's tenure. The campaign encourages students to think beyond their high school education to develop a vision – and a plan – for their futures. LRHSD students' second graduation may be from college, a technical school or another post-secondary training program.

Birnbohm also focused on improving LRHSD facilities by making them increasingly secure. In 2018, she collaborated with Burlington County's commissioners to obtain a substantial safety and security grant. This funding enabled LRHSD to enhance school entrance vestibules for visitor containment, upgrade entry systems and install bullet-resistant glass, all without affecting the school budget. Since then, she has remained committed to ongoing improvements, prioritizing the safety and well-being of LRHSD students and staff across all high schools.

Birnbohm has understood that caring for students' well-being extends to supporting their mental health. She oversaw a new partnership with Care Solace to provide 24-hour support. Under her leadership, the district also developed a Wellness Room in each school – the first in the county – to provide students with safe spaces to visit during the day and have access to a wellness counselor. Furthermore, the Board designated LRHSD as a "Stigma-Free Zone" to emphasize the district-wide commitment to mental health awareness and encourage students and staff to take advantage of supports in place.

With each new initiative introduced, Birnbohm first conducted research and then sought feedback to ensure an efficient and effective rollout. Her thoughtful and strategic approach was evident throughout LRHSD's navigation of the pandemic as well as the rollout of the LRHSD Mobile App and the district's current four-day rotating schedule. Birnbohm cites the conversion of the old 13-period schedule to the current four-day rotating schedule as one of her favorite accomplishments, largely because of the teamwork it took to make it happen. The transition lasted two years from start to finish and involved multiple committees of both students and staff to explore scheduling models and work through the logistics of making a switch.

Birnbohm credits her former Cherokee teachers with inspiring her to become an educator and shares how they taught her valuable skills she currently utilizes as a school leader. She has never lost sight of the role of LRHSD's teachers and administrators in students' learning, growth and lifelong successes. That has motivated her to develop an annual theme to help all 1,000-plus district employees focus on a short-term goal that ultimately

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helps the district and its students. She has aimed to personally connect with staff members to learn about their goals and what they have accomplished, and to offer appreciation for their efforts.

## **Recognized at regional, state and national levels**

Birnbohm has prioritized relationships with fellow administrators as well, both within LRHSD and throughout the state. She has held leadership roles in both the Burlington County Association of School Administrators and the New Jersey Association of School Administrators (NJASA).

In 2024, county commissioners named Birnbohm as Outstanding Woman of the Year for Burlington County. She earned several other distinguished honors as well, including the 2019 NJ Superintendent of the Year for Region III from NJASA; 2019 Burlington County Superintendent of the Year and 2017-2018 National Superintendent to Watch from the National School Public Relations Association.

"It has been truly inspiring to work alongside Dr. Birnbohm—a talented and dedicated leader who consistently and fearlessly advocated for the students and staff of the LRHSD," said LRHSD Assistant Superintendent Matt Webb. "Among her many achievements, one of her most significant contributions was her remarkable ability to recognize the strengths of her team and empower them to grow, take on new challenges and achieve their full potential."

Birnbohm earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in mathematics education from the College of New Jersey and a Master of Arts degree in education administration from Rowan University. Birnbohm earned her doctorate in education from Wilmington University in 2010. She received the Audrey K. Doberstein Award for Leadership for outstanding leadership and dedication to the philosophy and mission of Wilmington University.

LRHSD has commenced a search for the next superintendent and is currently collecting applications. Interested candidates may submit an application with resume and cover letter by May 31, 2025 to, <https://www.applitrack.com/lrhSD/onlineapp/>.

## **One more graduation speech**

Birnbohm will return to her alma mater, Cherokee High School, on June 17 at 6 p.m. for a farewell of sorts when she delivers her final graduation speech as LRHSD superintendent.

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**About LRHSD** - The Lenape Regional High School District's four high schools – Lenape, Shawnee, Cherokee and Seneca – as well as the Sequoia Alternative and Transition to Adult Programs, educate approximately 6,600 students from eight communities in Burlington County, NJ. The communities served include Evesham, Medford, Medford Lakes, Mount Laurel, Shamong, Southampton, Tabernacle, and Woodland. The Lenape Regional District is among the highest-achieving districts in the state, with an average graduation rate of 96.2% and an average combined SAT score of 1121. A leader in progressive education, the LRHSD's mission is to develop physically and emotionally healthy students who excel in an ever-changing world.

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