



Lower Merion School District
301 East Montgomery Avenue ♦ Ardmore, PA 19003-3399
www.lmsd.org

LMSD Board of School Directors January 26-27, 2026, Business Meeting Highlights

*For a complete agenda, visit the [BoardDocs section](#) of the District website.
Closed-captioned [meeting videos](#) are available on the District website within five days.*

(Note: this meeting was originally scheduled for January 26, 2026,
but was reconvened on January 27, 2026, due to snow)

Dr. Sautner opened the meeting by noting that the meeting had been called to order last night but was re-convened tonight on zoom due to the weather. She went on to explain that Regular Business Board Meetings, such as this one, are where the Board votes on official business, hears committee reports and public comment according to a published agenda. There are two public comment periods on the agenda, one for agenda topics and one for other topics.

She then explained the Board's new engagement strategy, which has a goal of increasing transparency and respectful dialogue. The two public comment periods at Board and Committee meetings are part of this process. She reminded families that their school contacts are their strongest relationships and that the Board serves all taxpayers in the District. She also noted that small groups of Board Directors will be holding additional community meetings to discuss issues such as the budget, outside of the official/scheduled meetings.

SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATE/PRESENTATIONS

Dr. Ranelli shared the following updates:

- The ISC is hosting a Parent Ed [program about smartphones and child development](#) on February 4, 2026.
- The ISC is hosting a Roundtable conversation with Amy Buckman, Dir. Of School and Community Relations, on February 17, 2026.
- Applications for the ISC "You Matter Award" will open soon.
- Several hundred students and their families volunteered for the annual [Martin Luther King Afternoon of Service](#) at Harriton High School.
- The [Welsh Valley's VEX Robotics team](#) started off their competition season by winning the Judges' Award at Great Valley Middle School's VEX Robotics Tournament.
- Four LMHS musicians were selected for the [District 11 Band and Orchestra](#) and a Harriton student [won First Prize](#) in the String 4 category of the state OPUS Music Competition.
- Students from BRMS created a [video for Holocaust Remembrance Day](#).

- LMSD's Student Services Department and the Committee for Special Education (CSE) will host a parent/guardian [presentation about Policy 236](#) Behavioral Supports on February 4, 2026.

Dr. Ranelli also explained the factors he considers when deciding whether schools will open on weather-impacted days. He consults with municipal officials to assess the safety of walkers and students waiting at bus stops, whether buses will be able to navigate roadways safely, and if staff can safely commute from their homes (many of which are outside LMSD) to school buildings.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

(All committee meeting videos are available for one month [on the District website](#))

- BJ Uzzell, Harriton High School Student Representative, reported that the Midyear Experience has ended and second semester is underway. Seniors are beginning work on senior projects and other students are selecting classes for next year. Fundraising is underway for Dr. Harriton, which will take place on February 20, 2026. He also reported on the MLK Afternoon of Service and shared that the AP Art classes from LMHS and HHS will be visiting the Philadelphia Art Museum.
- Shaila Anolik, LMHS Student Representative who shares the role with her twin sister, reported that it's a busy time of year. Two students from LM competed at the [US Figure Skating championships](#) and that winter sports are underway, including the wrestling teams [highest-ever finish at the Central League championships](#). She also reported on the MLK Afternoon of Service, midyear experience and course selection. Amazing Ace will be held Friday, January 30, 2026. The next day will be the [Hope Classic basketball games](#) supporting Angelman's Syndrome research.
 - Dr. Sautner thanked the students and noted that student representatives will be added to the Policy and Curriculum committees.
- Ms. Kalish reported on the January 12, 2026, Curriculum Committee meeting, where there were presentations on PSSA and Keystone test data and the new state-required Personal Finance course.
- Ms. Shurak reported on the January 12, 2026, Policy Committee meeting, where there were discussions of policies listed on tonight's agenda, as well as discussions about the Civility Policy, the PIAA rule change that allows private school students to try out for public school sports that their schools don't offer, graduation requirement updates with the personal finance course, and whether to revise policies regarding fundraising.
- Ms. Rubin thanked the Facilities team for their work during and after the storm and then reported on the January 22, 2026, Facilities and Purchasing Committee meeting, which included review of the following items: the list of bills, the contracts and the purchasing report items listed on tonight's agenda.
- Dr. Ridky reported on the January 16, 2026, Finance Committee meeting, where there was a review of the auditor's report, which showed good progress in reducing the debt burden,

though it continues to be a major expense. He noted that the District's cash reserves are dwindling and are below what is considered optimal to maintain a good rating.

ADDITIONAL AGENDA ITEMS

Ms. Thomas proposed adding an agenda item to vote on merging the high school football teams. After discussion about the Superintendent's prior recommendation against merging the teams, the Board's request to the Superintendent to gather additional information about the impact of a merger on student safety and other potential policy impacts, and public comment, the motion to add the agenda item did not pass.

AUDIENCE RECOGNITION FOR AGENDA ITEMS

During audience recognition, District residents commented on the following agenda topics:

- Format of the Policy Committee meeting

Prior to voting on the Consent Agenda, Dr. Sautner noted the passings of William Zimmerman, former teacher and wrestling coach at Harriton High School, and John F. Trainor, former head custodian at Harriton High School.

Ms. Kalish noted that one of the HR items is the upcoming retirement of Board Secretary Ms. Denise LaPera and expressed gratitude to her for all she has done in service of students, staff, the Board and community.

The Board voted to approve the items below via a Consent Agenda:

HUMAN RESOURCES

The Board approved:

- Personnel actions across the District, including staff hires, re-hires and reclassifications for the 2025-2026 school year.

STUDENT SERVICES

The Board approved:

- Student Services Agreements for students receiving non-District educational services.

EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

The Board approved the following field trip requests:

- LMHS Indoor Track and Field State Competition
- Harriton High School Debate and Speech State Competition
- Harriton High School FBLA State Competition
- Bala Cynwyd Middle School and Welsh Valley Middle School Science Olympiad State Competitions

BUSINESS OFFICE

The Board approved:

- List of Bills
- December 2025 LMSD Financial Reports
- Surety bonds for the Lower Merion Township and Borough of Narberth tax collectors for the period January 1, 2026, through December 31, 2029.
- Resolution confirming the District will not raise taxes for the 2026–27 fiscal year by more than the Act 1 Index of 3.5%.
- Accepting the following donations:
 - \$500 to PWES from the Pa. Gamma chapter of Alpha Delta Kappa for bilingual and multicultural library resources
 - \$250 to Mrs. Kaufmann's 2nd grade class at BHES from Christopher Smith
 - \$500 grant to the Harriton Music Parents' Association from the Dr. David J. Eschelman Charitable Fund

FACILITIES AND OPERATIONS

The Board approved:

- Contracts for:
 - Combi Ovens at PVES and PWES
 - Science tables at WVMS
 - Student desks at WVMS
 - Cafeteria tables and chairs at HHS
 - Classroom and dining hall chairs at BRMS
- Facilities usage agreement with Villanova University for LMHS and HHS graduations
- MCIU quote for VMWare VSPHERE
- List of contracted drivers and aides

OLD BUSINESS

The Board approved:

- Policy and Board Procedure 002 School Board Organization
- Policy 004 Formulation and Adoption of Policies
- Board Procedure 007 Board Meetings

NEW BUSINESS

The Board approved:

- Appointment of Abby Rubin as representative to the MCIU

AUDIENCE RECOGNITION FOR NON-AGENDA ITEMS

During this audience recognition, District residents commented on the following agenda topics:

- Football merger

- Start time change and impact on learning
- Bell-to-bell cell phone ban
- Lights for Arnold Field

SUNSHINE ACT

Mr. Roos, Solicitor from Wisler Pearlstine, noted the Board met in Executive session on January 26, 2026.

UPCOMING MEETING DATES

Board Meetings will be held in the DAO Board Room (and livestreamed) at 7:00 p.m.

- Feb. 17 – Regular Business Board Meeting

Committee Meetings will be held in the DAO Board Room (and livestreamed) unless noted otherwise:

- Feb. 9 – Curriculum Committee 6:00 p.m., followed by Policy Committee 7:30 p.m.
- Feb. 12 – Facilities/Purchasing Committee 9:00 a.m. (via Zoom Only)
- Feb. 27 – Finance Committee

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 meeting minutes. Citizens are encouraged to attend meetings. For information, visit LMSD.org.