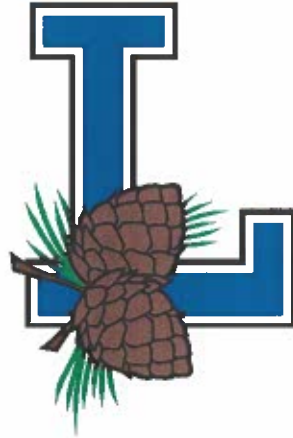


Lakewood Public Schools



Lakewood Board of Education Special Meeting Agenda

September 9, 2026

Public Session - 4:30 PM

High School Commons

855 Somerset Avenue

Lakewood, NJ 08701

BOARD MEMBERSHIP

Mr. Moshe Bender- President

Mr. Heriberto Rodriguez- Vice President

Mr. Aaron Chase

Mr. Meir Grunhut

Mr. Joel Kleinman

Mr. Samuel Melnik

Mr. Abraham Reich

Mr. Shlomie Stern

Mrs. Harriet Westbrook-Goldberg

SUPPORT PERSONNEL

Dr. Laura A. Winters, Superintendent

Mr. Kevin Campbell, Business Administrator/Board Secretary

Mr. Joshua Forsman, Esq., In-House Attorney/General Counsel

Mrs. Kristie Sussino, Assistant Business Administrator/Assistant Board Secretary

Ms. Louise Davis, State Monitor

Mr. James Trischitta, Director of Technology, NonPublic Technology & NonPublic Security Grant

Mr. Bryan Powell, Network and Systems Supervisor

Mr. Eric Holmberg, Translator

Mrs. Omaida Segui, Executive Administrative Professional

Mrs. Evelyn Schoenfeld, Executive Administrative Professional

AGENDA

I. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE - President, Lakewood Board of Education

II. STATEMENT BY THE BOARD SECRETARY

Pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 231, of the Laws of 1976 (THE OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS ACT), Mr. Campbell notified the public that notice of the date, time, location and agenda of this meeting, to the extent known, was provided at least forty-eight (48) hours prior to the commencement of this meeting in the following manner:

1. By posting such notice on the public announcement board of the Lakewood Board of Education Offices, and the Lakewood Township Municipal Building.
2. By e-mailing such notice to the office of the New Jersey Star Ledger, The Lakewood Scoop and The Lakewood Shopper.
3. By filing such notice with the Board Secretary.
4. By mailing such notice to all individuals who requested and paid for a copy of the same.

III. ROLL CALL:

Moshe Bender-President	<u> P </u>	
Heriberto Rodriguez- Vice President	<u> P </u>	(Arrived at 4:58pm)
Aaron Chase	<u> P </u>	(Zoom)
Meir Grunhut	<u> P </u>	(Zoom)
Joel Kleinman	<u> P </u>	
Samuel Melnik	<u> P </u>	
Abraham Reich	<u> P </u>	(Zoom/then In-Person as of 5:22pm)
Shlomie Stern	<u> P </u>	
Harriet Westbrook-Goldberg	<u> P </u>	(Arrived at 4:44pm)

IV. COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE REPORT

Mr. Kleinmann provided the Transportation Committee Report.

V. PUBLIC COMMENT - Agenda Items Only (Limited to 4 minutes as per Board Policy #0167)

Pursuant to Board Policy 0164, Roberts' Rules of Order shall govern the Board of Education in its deliberations and in the conduct of its meetings. As such, all comments from the public and from other members of the Board should be directed to the Board President, who is responsible for presiding over the meeting. Public comments can be made during the public session.

The President shall direct all inquiries or comments to the appropriate Administrator or Board member for response, as appropriate. The law requires a period of public comment at our meetings, not a question or answer session or debate. The board president, at his discretion, may or may not feel it is appropriate to answer questions raised during the public comment period. The board and administration do take all public comments seriously and consider them when conducting business.

The President may interrupt, warn, or terminate a participant's statement when the statement is too lengthy, abusive or obscene. In addition, Security Personnel may direct any individual to leave the meeting when that person does not observe reasonable decorum, whether the person is at the microphone or at any other place in the meeting room. New Jersey law makes it a crime for any person to intentionally disrupt a public meeting. Law enforcement will be contacted if a person disrupts the meeting and fails to desist after being directed to do so.

Finally, we ask that you silence all electronic devices.

VI. REPORT OF THE SCHOOL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATOR

A. OPERATIONS:

1. Transportation:

- a. **BE IT RESOLVED** that the Lakewood Board of Education hereby authorizes payment to the Lakewood Student Transportation Authority (LSTA) to fund hazardous-route transportation for eligible nonpublic-school students, consistent with the District's continued funding of hazardous-route transportation for public-school students; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that payment shall be based on the District Report of Transported Resident Students (DRTRS) for up to **12,642 students**, at an amount not to exceed **\$1,177 per student**, for a total amount not to exceed **\$14,879,634**, subject to verification of student eligibility, supporting documentation, and the availability of funds.

***State Monitor, Louise Davis- Under Advisement**

-As of September 23, 2026- State Monitor, Louise Davis sent a written response to the above matter and stated that 'according to her statutory authority, the Lakewood Board of Education's above-referenced action item, taken at a special meeting called for this sole purpose, is denied.'

Motion to Approve the Business Administrator Agenda: _____ **4:48pm**

First: Mr. Stern Second: Mr. Melnik

Voting:

Moshe Bender-President	<u>Abstain</u>
Heriberto Rodriguez- Vice President	<u>Absent</u> (Arrived 4:58pm)
Aaron Chase	<u>Y</u>
Meir Grunhut	<u>Y</u>
Joel Kleinman	<u>Abstain</u>
Samuel Melnik	<u>Y</u>
Abraham Reich	<u>Y</u> (Zoom/then arrived at 5:22pm)
Shlomie Stern	<u>Y</u>
Harriet Westbrook-Goldberg	<u>Y</u>

***State Monitor, Louise Davis- Placed this item under advisement**

VII. PUBLIC COMMENT - (Limited to 4 minutes as per Board Policy #0167)

1. Commissioner Meir Lichtenstein
2. Assemblyman Avi Schnall
3. Reuvain Borchardt
4. Aaron Hirsch

*All members of the board spoke in regards to the hazardous bussing matters throughout the public comment portion of the board meeting.

*State Monitor, Louise Davis addressed the board as well throughout the public comment portion of the board meeting.

VIII. GOOD & WELFARE

IX. ADJOURNMENT

Motion to Adjourn the meeting: 6:00pm

First: Mr. Kleinmann Second: Mr. Melnik

Voting:

Moshe Bender-President	<u>Y</u>
Heriberto Rodriguez- Vice President	<u>Y</u>
Aaron Chase	<u>Y</u>
Meir Grunhut	<u>Y</u>
Joel Kleinman	<u>Y</u>
Samuel Melnik	<u>Y</u>

Abraham Reich	<u>Y</u>
Shlomie Stern	<u>Y</u>
Harriet Westbrook-Goldberg	<u>Y</u>

Meeting was adjourned at 6:00pm

I, Kevin Campbell, Business Administrator/Board Secretary, of the Lakewood Board of Education, hereby certify this to be a true copy of the Certified agenda for the In-Person Special Public Meeting held on September 9, 2026.



Kevin Campbell, Business Administrator/Board Secretary

September 23, 2026



MIKIE SHERRILL
Governor

DR. DALE G. CALDWELL
Lt. Governor

State of New Jersey
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
PO Box 500
TRENTON, NJ 08625-0500

DR. LILY LAUX
Commissioner

September 23, 2026

Sent via email: lwinters@lakewoodpiners.org
Dr. Laura A. Winters
Superintendent of Schools
Lakewood Board of Education
200 Ramsey Avenue
Lakewood, NJ 08701

RE: Fiscal Monitor Decision September 9, 2026 Special Meeting
Board Resolution Agenda Item SBA -A. OPERATIONS: 1. Transportation
Placed Under Advisement by Fiscal Monitor

Dear Dr. Winters:

Please accept this letter as notification that according to my statutory authority, the Lakewood Board of Education's above-referenced action item, taken at a special meeting called for this sole purpose, is denied.

On August 26, 2026, the Board approved the elimination of courtesy busing due to lack of funding for non-mandated public and non-public school students. This decision, as well as the current state of the Board's budget for the 26-27 school year forms the basis for this denial.

The Board sought approval to provide "payment to the LSTA to continue funding hazardous route buses for eligible nonpublic school students, consistent with the District's continued funding of public school students, based on DRTRS up to 12,642 students, at the aid in lieu rate of \$1,177, totaling \$14,879,634. Subject to verification of eligibility, supporting documentation and **availability of funds.**" Upon review of the roll call, it is of note, that while all present expressed support and a sense of urgency, the Board President who called for this Special Meeting and the Transportation Committee Chairperson, both abstained from passing

the Resolution.¹ No explanation was provided by either Trustee for the abstention. Moreover, multiple Trustees erroneously asserted that the Board has the same obligations to all students in Lakewood, not merely the public school students.

There is no available funding in the FY 26-27 Budget, and as you know, the Board has made a request for an Advance in State Aid exceeding \$132 million for this school year. At present, the budget is in deficit. Board trustees discussed the very real fact that to fund this resolution, the Board would have to request an additional advance on state aid of nearly \$15 million, as the funding of transportation services to non-mandated children was not included in the budget or in the request for an advance on state aid.

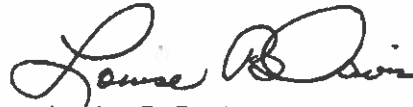
The services sought to be funded by this resolution are not legally mandated to be provided by the Board. Under New Jersey law, a school district must provide transportation to students who live far enough from their schools to qualify as "remote" students, whether they attend public or nonpublic schools. Transportation for students who live closer to school -- often called "courtesy busing" -- is an optional service school districts may provide.

The law does not require the district to provide the same courtesy busing to nonpublic school students, even if it chooses to provide courtesy busing for public school students, including on routes the district considers hazardous. The Commissioner of Education and the State Board of Education have confirmed this in prior decisions, including in at least one case involving the Lakewood Board of Education. See, e.g., *Rosalie Bacon, et al. v. N.J. Dept. of Educ.*, Agency Dkt. No. 4-03, 2006 N.J. AGEN LEXIS 108 (Jan. 4, 2006) (State Board of Education decision explaining "it is well settled that the Lakewood Board has no legal obligation to provide courtesy busing to non-public school students even if it chooses to provide such transportation to its public school students"). Even if courtesy busing was provided to these students, under P.L. 2023, c. 326, the parents of the nonpublic students that elect to receive transportation services must pay all of its costs.

Accordingly, the District has no legal obligation to fund courtesy transportation for nonpublic school students. In light of the District's severe fiscal crisis, the FY 26-27 budget deficit, and the pending request for an Advance in State Aid exceeding \$132 million, I am exercising my statutory authority to deny this resolution. This decision is made in the best interests of the District's fiscal health and in accordance with my statutory obligations to ensure the responsible use of public funds.

¹ With no explanation, both the Monitor and the public are left without any explanation as to the reason for the abstention, including whether there exists a conflict of interest, in which case neither should have participated in the committee meeting on this topic or the discussion at the board meeting.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Louise B. Davis". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Louise" being larger and more prominent than the last name "Davis".

Louise B. Davis
Fiscal State Monitor

Cc:

Kevin Campbell, SBA/BS

Members Lakewood Board of Education

Susan Naples, Executive Superintendent, Ocean County

Jason Bedell, Executive SBA, Ocean County

Dr. Lily Laux, New Jersey Commissioner of Education

Joseph Howe, New Jersey Deputy Commissioner of Education

Stephanie Kuntz, New Jersey Director of State Monitors

Joshua Forsman, Esq. Lakewood General Counsel