Inspiring Excellence
LAKE STEVENS
School District

Lake Stevens School District | 12309 22nd St. NE | Lake Stevens, WA 98258-9500
425-335-1500 (office) | 425-335-1549 (fax)

BOARD OF DIRECTORS' REGULAR SESSION MINUTES
April 29, 2026

Board Members: David Iseminger, President
Mari Taylor
Paul Lund
Ryan Dickson
Mary Templeton, Superintendent/Board Secretary

Student Advisory Council Officers: Aashi Bendalam, president

The Lake Stevens School District Board of Directors met in a Regular Session at the Educational Service Center. A Zoom option was available for this meeting that President Iseminger called to order at 6:30 p.m. followed by the pledge of allegiance.

ROLL CALL

Present: President David Iseminger, Director Mari Taylor, Director Paul Lund, Director Ryan Dickson, Superintendent Dr. Mary Templeton and SACo member Aashi Bendalam. Director Brian Kesler was absent.

AGENDA/MINUTES

Director Lund made a motion to approve the April 29, 2026 Agenda. The motion was seconded by Director Taylor and unanimously approved. Director Lund made a motion to approve the April 15, 2026 Regular Meeting Minutes. The motion was seconded by Director Dickson and unanimously approved.

RECOGNITION OF STUDENTS, STAFF, AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS

There was no recognition of students, staff, and community members at this time.

REPORTS OF SCHOOL BUILDINGS AND PROGRAMS

There were no reports of school buildings and programs at this time.

COMMUNITY COMMENTS

President Iseminger opened the floor for community comments. Hearing no comments, President Iseminger closed this portion of the meeting.

DECISION ITEMS

Consent Agenda:

Director Taylor made a motion to approve the "Consent Agenda" items: Approval of the May 1, 2026 vouchers and invoices have been examined, audited, and allowed by the Board of Directors; that the sum of said payroll and/or vouchers and invoices amounting to $2,143.77 covered by ACH numbers 9000019262 through 9000019292 and manual warrants listed below, drawn on the General Fund. Approval of the May 1, 2026 vouchers and invoices have been examined, audited, and allowed by the Board of Directors; that the sum of said payroll and/or vouchers and invoices amounting to $1,960,069.39 is covered by warrants numbers 320706 to 320844 and manual warrants listed below, drawn on the General, Capital Projects & ASB Fund(s). Personnel Report: Classified Employment: Brieanne Blaschka Production Kitchen Manager, Shannon Gabriel Temp ARC Custodian, Shannon Lord 1:1 Specialized Program Para, Neil Mellem Swing ARC Custodian, Jacqueline Resto Temp PBS Para, Angela Simonet Swing ARC Custodian; Resignations: Jazmyn Allen 8/14/2026, Laura Balazic 6/16/2026, Brenda Freeman 8/15/2026, Damon Matz 4/30/2026; Retirements: Che Mai Gray 6/16/2026, Kimberly Majors 8/15/2026, Jacquelyn Muir 6/16/2026. Approval of the Co-Curricular Report. Approval of a donation from Lake Stevens Education Foundation to Lake Stevens School Distrcit Food and Nutrition Services in the amount of $1,000. These funds will be used for student school meal debt relief. The motion was seconded by Director Dickson and unanimously approved.

Director Lund made a motion for approval of a correction of a numbering error of Resolution No 3-26 to read Resolution No 6-26 – Acceptance of the Educational Specifications for SILC. The motion was seconded by Director Dickson. The motion was unanimously approved by roll call vote.

Director Taylor made a motion for approval of Amended February 25, 2026 Regular Session Minutes. The motion was seconded by Director Dickson. The motion was unanimously approved.

Director Lund made a motion for approval of the final acceptance of public works projects. The motion was seconded by Director Dickson. The motion was unanimously approved.

Director Taylor made a motion for approval of Resolution No 10-26 – Approval of final GMP amendment three to the GC/CM contract for the New Elementary School Eight Project. The motion was seconded by Director Lund. Director Lund said a thank you for all the great work with this project. The motion was unanimously approved by roll call vote.

Director Lund made a motion for approval of Resolution No 11-26 – Intent to Construct New Elementary School Eight Project. The motion was seconded by Director Dickson. Director Lund commented that this is really exciting work. President Iseminger noted that lots of work goes into this project. The motion was unanimously approved by roll call vote.

Director Taylor made a motion for approval of Resolution No 12-26 - Approval of the final GMP amendment three to the GC/CM contract for the Safety and Program Improvements Project. The motion was seconded by Director Lund. The motion was unanimously approved by roll call vote.

Director Lund made a motion for approval of authorization to sign an electrical easement with Snohomish PUD for New Elementary Eight. The motion was seconded by Director Dickson. The motion was unanimously approved.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

There were no Discussion Items at this time.

INFORMATION

Principal Malissa Weatherbie provided an update on the implementation of Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), highlighting work at Mount Pilchuck Elementary and noting similar efforts across all elementary schools. Over the past year, staff have

developed a stronger understanding of the PLC framework, particularly the four guiding questions focused on student learning, assessment, intervention, and extension. This year's work has centered on building a strong foundation, with grade-level teams identifying essential standards, developing common formative assessments, and refining strategies to support students who have not yet mastered key concepts. She noted a significant shift toward greater instructional consistency across classrooms within grade levels, supporting increased educational equity for all students.

Principal Weatherbie also emphasized the growth in staff collaboration, with teachers engaging in more reflective, data-driven conversations during PLC time to improve instructional practices and student outcomes. She shared that PLC efforts have expanded beyond grade-level teams to include collaboration with resource and multilingual staff, creating more inclusive supports for students. Looking ahead, next steps include vertical teaming across grade levels to better align expectations, refine standards and assessments, and strengthen intervention systems so schools can respond more effectively to student needs.

President Iseminger asked what factors contributed to the increased alignment in instruction, including whether it was due to more collaboration time, clearer expectations, or the PLC structure. Principal Weatherbie responded that the structured PLC framework has been the key driver, providing a clear process for identifying essential standards, analyzing data, and engaging in more focused instructional conversations.

President Iseminger also commented that the model appears to empower educators to lead the work. Principal Weatherbie agreed, noting that teacher ownership and dedicated PLC time have been critical, and that research shows it typically takes two to three years to see significant improvements in student outcomes.

Superintendent Templeton emphasized her belief in the expertise of educators and the importance of a clear framework that allows for autonomy and creativity. She noted that PLCs help break down silos and shift responsibility to collective ownership of all students, highlighting the role of vulnerability, collaboration, and shared accountability in improving outcomes.

SACo President Asahi asked about vertical collaboration across schools, particularly transitions to middle school. Principal Weatherbie shared that the district is exploring ways to strengthen alignment, including collaboration with the Early Learning Center and a 4th–7th grade math initiative, while acknowledging ongoing challenges.

Director Lund reflected on this shift as moving from "my students" to "our students," supporting stronger collaboration across the system. He also recognized student voice and contributions, acknowledging SACo leadership and emphasizing the importance of student engagement in district conversations and continuous improvement efforts.

Dr. Gina Anderson, Schools Chief of Innovation, Compliance and School Support Operations, introduced the update by highlighting progress on Elementary #8 and the Glenwood project, emphasizing the collaborative design process and use of district design principles. She also announced a Skyline open house scheduled for June 3 for the school community.

Dr. Gina Anderson provided an update on Elementary #8, noting significant construction progress over a short period of time and highlighting the excitement this has generated among nearby Stevens Creek Elementary students. She shared that the district is coordinating with construction partners to engage students through an assembly, offering both context for the project and connections to potential career pathways.

Dr. Anderson also shared updates on the Glenwood project, describing a collaborative design process that included multiple staff groups, district leaders, and design partners reviewing and providing feedback on draft plans. She emphasized that input from staff who work in schools daily is helping refine designs while also building shared understanding and readiness for the transition. Additionally, she provided an overview of safety and security design principles, including the use of "concentric circles" of safety, which incorporate secured perimeters, controlled entry points, and internal lockdown capabilities to enhance school safety while maintaining a functional learning environment.

Dr. Anderson shared that a draft of the educational specifications (edspecs) was included in the board packet. She explained that the edspecs serve to document the district's values, priorities, and decision-making framework, as well as outline detailed facility requirements such as space, capacity, and infrastructure. These specifications not only guide design partners but also serve as a tool for accountability to ensure expectations are met.

Dr. Anderson noted that the draft is being provided for board review and feedback, rather than approval at this time, to allow for deeper understanding and reflection. Board members were encouraged to share input ahead of a future meeting when the document will be brought forward for approval. She also emphasized that the edspecs are necessary to qualify for state matching funds through SCAP, which will help support the district's bond-funded projects. President Iseminger clarified with Dr. Anderson that the board review and the consent is required in order to get the SCAP money.

Director Dickson asked whether the draft educational specifications could be shared publicly, including on social media.

Dr. Anderson referred the question to Robb Stanton, who responded that the document is public but currently in draft form. He noted the intent is for board review and feedback prior to broader sharing of a finalized version.

President Iseminger expressed appreciation for the review process, emphasizing the importance of taking time to thoroughly review the document in order to effectively represent the community.

Director Lund commented on the value of reviewing drafts and asked how changes and updates will be communicated, including whether version control or clear indicators of revisions will be provided.

Dr. Anderson responded that monthly updates are posted on the district website for reference.

Superintendent Templeton added that the process is designed to ensure accountability and transparency, noting that any changes to timelines or commitments will be clearly communicated along with next steps.

Dr. Anderson shared that updates will be identified during presentations, citing a recent timeline change to the transportation satellite project as an example.

Superintendent Templeton further noted that edited versions showing changes can be provided for transparency, while final versions posted publicly will remain clean and streamlined.

Assistant Superintendent of Business and Operations Teresa Main reviewed the district's budget development timeline, noting that budget presentations will continue through August and include additional General Fund reviews, smaller district funds, the public hearing process, and final budget adoption. She explained that the district will submit its budget to OSPI and ESD prior to adoption. Ms. Main also reviewed levy and bond information, including projected tax rates, plans for additional bond sales to support construction projects, and the potential refinancing of 2016 bonds to reduce interest costs. She noted that the district maintained its AA3 Moody's rating due to strong financial stability.

Ms. Main discussed the projected reduction and eventual elimination of Levy Equalization Assistance (LEA) funding beginning in 2028, resulting in an estimated $3 million annual revenue loss. She stated that district leadership plans to continue advocating for restoration of the funding. Ms. Main also reviewed the district's current financial outlook, explaining that conservative budgeting, careful expenditure monitoring, and continued pursuit of grant funding are contributing to a projected ending fund balance of approximately 14%.

Superintendent Templeton emphasized the importance of maintaining adequate reserves to manage delayed state apportionment payments, unexpected expenses, and other financial uncertainties. She noted that while the district's fund balance is considered strong, Moody's indicated higher reserve levels would typically be needed for a ratings upgrade. She added that the district prioritizes investing resources directly into student programs and services.

Ms. Main reviewed additional financial pressures impacting the district, including inflation, rising insurance costs, increased contracted service expenses, and temporary sales tax impacts on previously exempt services. She noted that enrollment growth has stabilized at approximately 1–1.5% annually since the pandemic, while kindergarten enrollment has begun leveling off. Ms. Main also stated that approximately 83% of district expenditures support salaries and benefits.

President Iseminger asked whether the funding formula discussed was regional or statewide. Ms. Main clarified that the formula is statewide and explained that the Implicit Price Deflator (IPD) is calculated using state economic forecasting formulas. Superintendent Templeton noted that the district only receives IPD increases on state-funded staffing units and not on locally funded positions.

Ms. Main reviewed the state's prototypical funding model, explaining that while the model establishes staffing allocations, it does not fully fund actual staffing levels or compensation costs. She shared that 16% of certificated staff, 52% of classified staff, and 16% of administrative staff are funded locally through levy dollars. Superintendent Templeton added that the model no longer reflects current educational service demands and emphasized the importance of offering competitive compensation to recruit and retain high-quality educators.

Ms. Main explained that local levy dollars are used to cover gaps between state funding allocations and actual employee compensation costs, including approximately $8.6 million annually for certificated salaries. She also reviewed preliminary projections for the 2026–27 budget, including approximately $200 million in anticipated revenue and nearly $217 million in expenditures, along with costs associated with inflation, staffing, declining LEA funding, and the planned opening of four new schools.

Ms. Main reviewed district revenue and expenditure categories, noting that approximately 80% of district revenue comes from the state and that most expenditures directly support student instruction and services. She also discussed increasing staffing needs within operational and support departments due to continued district growth. Superintendent Templeton commented that additional operational staffing is necessary to maintain the district's "foundation for excellence."

Director Dickson thanked staff for the presentation and congratulated the district on successfully passing its audit. He asked whether lower-than-anticipated expenditures reflected contingency planning or deferred projects. Ms. Main responded that expenditure differences primarily reflected contingency planning for emergencies, staffing adjustments, enrollment changes, and other unforeseen costs. Superintendent Templeton added that contingencies also account for substitute staffing, major repairs, HVAC failures, and other facility-related emergencies.

Director Dickson asked whether any major projects had been deferred into future years. Ms. Main responded that no major projects had been deferred, although the district plans to phase the approximately $8 million Cavalero roof replacement project over multiple years. Superintendent Templeton noted that major facility emergencies are often funded through the General Fund. Director Dickson also asked about the district's long-term financial outlook and future growth planning. Ms. Main responded that the district is required to prepare a four-year financial forecast, which will be presented at a future meeting, and stated that she remains confident in the district's financial outlook due to conservative budgeting practices and ongoing oversight. Superintendent Templeton added that the district's budget is regularly reviewed by multiple oversight agencies, including OSPI, ESD 189, external auditors, and Moody's.

President Iseminger commented that he remains confident in the district's financial management and stewardship of taxpayer resources. Director Dickson noted concerns regarding future economic conditions and long-term enrollment trends. President Iseminger responded that the district regularly reviews long-term growth projections and future facility needs to ensure continued fiscal sustainability.

SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATE

Superintendent Templeton highlighted the importance of the arts, particularly drama, in supporting student development. Drawing on her background in theater, she noted that participation in productions builds skills such as collaboration, communication, creativity, problem-solving, and executive functioning. She shared that she has attended nearly all district drama productions over the past two years and described them as meaningful opportunities for both students and the community. She emphasized her expectation that performances remain positive, uplifting, and appropriate for audiences of all ages, and referenced a recent high school performance where she observed content that may not have been suitable for younger audience members, reinforcing the importance of continued attention to age-appropriate programming.

Superintendent Templeton recognized several recent productions, including Alice in Wonderland, James and the Giant Peach, Chitty Chitty Bang Bang, Mary Poppins, and Tuck Everlasting, and commended the quality of student performances. She also highlighted upcoming elementary concerts and future drama productions, including a Cavalero production inspired by Camelot. She reaffirmed the district's commitment to supporting and growing the arts as a way to foster creativity, inclusion, and student engagement.

SACo COMMENTS

Aashi Bendalam, SACo President, thanked staff for the presentations and expressed appreciation for the information shared, noting that she learned a great deal. She also extended thanks to those in attendance, stating how valuable the updates were.

BOARD COMMENTS

Director Lund thanked staff for the presentations and expressed appreciation for the volunteers recognized earlier in the meeting, noting the strong support they provide across the district, particularly in arts programs such as band where students often find connection, belonging, and opportunities to build teamwork and skills. He emphasized the importance of recognizing the many volunteers serving in schools and encouraged continued appreciation for their contributions, including those not formally honored. Director Lund also expressed appreciation for the district's regular budget updates and transparency, commending Teresa Main and staff for clear communication and consistent reporting that supports Board understanding and builds trust.

Director Taylor thanked staff for the evening's presentations and shared appreciation for the volunteer celebration, noting how enjoyable it was to connect with community members. She also commented on the PLC update, highlighting the value of accessing teacher expertise and building strong relationships that support collaboration and data sharing across the district. Director Taylor thanked Teresa Main for the budget updates, noting her appreciation for the ongoing financial reporting and district transparency. She concluded by expressing overall appreciation for staff's work and updates across both instructional and operational areas.

Director Dickson thanked the district's Volunteers of the Year and noted appreciation for the progress on Elementary School 8, including visible construction updates and aerial photos showing continued development. He also commented positively on district construction projects overall. He shared appreciation for the PLC update, noting it was valuable to see work from the field and that his own children have demonstrated understanding of teachers' professional learning efforts. Director Dickson also thanked Teresa Main for the budget presentation and noted appreciation for the clean audit report and continued strong financial reporting.

President Iseminger congratulated the Volunteers of the Year and recognized their important role in supporting the school community. He expressed appreciation for the regular reports provided to the Board, noting they are informative and support ongoing questions and understanding of district operations. He emphasized the importance of Board engagement and oversight in ensuring responsible fiscal stewardship and strong long-term planning, including budget oversight, bond readiness, and maintaining public trust. He also reflected on the district's broader commitment to excellence across academics, staff support, and programs, noting the importance of high expectations and community support in maintaining strong outcomes for students. He offered a final nod to the district's arts programs, recognizing them as an exceptional part of the student experience and a reflection of the community's commitment to learning, engagement, and opportunity.

ADJOURNMENT

With no other objections from other directors, President Iseminger adjourned the Regular Session at 8:43 p.m.

President

Secretary