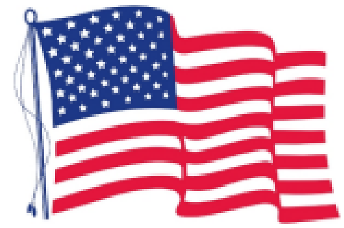
Lehighton Area School District
Administration Building - Board Room
1000 Union Street, Lehighton, PA 18235
**July 13, 2026 at 7:00 PM - Workshop Meeting**



# 1. Opening Exercises

**1.1. Call to Order**
Board Vice President, H. Neff called the Board Meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

**1.2. Opening Exercises**
Opening Exercises included the Pledge of Allegiance and a moment of silence.

**1.3. Roll Call**
**PR/AB**

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| **AB** | **Ms. Joy Beers** | **PR** | **Mr. Jeremy Glaush** | **AB** | **Mr. Alex Matika** |
| **AB** | **Mr. David Bradley** | **PR** | **Ms. Denise Hartley** | **PR** | **Ms. Heather Neff** |
| **PR** | **Mrs. Lory Frey** | **PR** | **Mr. William Howland** | **PR** | **Mr. Timothy Tkach** |

*Also Present:*
Mr. Jason Moser, Superintendent
Ms. Rebecca Karpowicz, Board Secretary

Gretchen Laviolette

**1.4. Public Comment**
Welcome to the Workshop Meeting of the Lehighton Area School District Board of Directors. This meeting serves as a Committee of the Whole and includes reports and discussions related to Academic Affairs, Policy, Finance, Athletics, Buildings & Grounds, Personnel, Technology, and Safety & Wellness.

Public comment will be provided at the conclusion of each committee's portion of the agenda. Comments should be limited to matters related to the committee currently under discussion.

There was no public comment at this time.

# 2. Academic Affairs Committee

**2.1. ATSI Non-Title I School Plan 2026-2027**
Recommendation to approve the Lehighton Area High School 2026-2027 Additional Targeted Support and Improvement (ATSI) School Improvement Plan, as presented.

Attached is a copy of the plan, a parent/community summary and the signature page; the plan will be posted on the website and the summary will be sent out to the high school community.

The plan has been reviewed and signed by the educational consultant from Carbon Lehigh Intermediate Unit #21 and, upon Board approval, will be posted publicly on the district website and submitted to the Pennsylvania Department of Education in accordance with state requirements.

J. Moser presented the ATSI summary, highlighting that the district had made steady progress by narrowing its targeted areas down to a single subgroup of concern: the special education population. He explained that the academic growth and achievement gaps were a systemic K–12 issue rather than an isolated high school problem, tracing the root cause to historical practices where supplemental learning support courses were taught below grade level starting as early as second grade. J. Moser shared that administration had reviewed data for every student in grades K–8 and shifted its strategy to ensure students remain exposed to continuous, standard grade-level instruction with appropriate scaffolding and support services. In response to a query from H. Neff regarding lower-grade subgroups, J. Moser clarified that while these student groups existed throughout the elementary and middle schools, the cumulative academic gap became most visible by the time students reached the high school level.

**2.2. CLIU Title III Consortium**
Recommendation to participate in the CLIU #21 Title III Consortium for the 2026/2027 school year.

G. Laviolette explained that the district partnered with the Intermediate Unit (IU) consortium for its Title III allocation to support the district's small English Language Learner (ELL) student population. She noted that the consortium model allowed the district to secure better pricing on recommended devices or applications and provided access to professional development. J. Moser added that participation in the IU consortium was a requirement, as the district would otherwise lose access to this federal funding.

**2.3. ECYEH Letter of Agreement**
Recommendation to approve the Local Education Agency Letter of Agreement with Pennsylvania's Education for Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness (ECYEH) Program Roles and Responsibilities for the 2026-2027 School year.

J. Moser called upon G. Laviolette, who indicated she had no additional comments on the matter. J. Moser then clarified that the LEA is required to establish this agreement annually with ECYEH. He explained that the contract served as a standard rollover agreement to reaffirm existing protocols and mandate necessary support structures for any district students experiencing homelessness.

**2.4. Pathstone MOU**
Recommendation to approve the Pathstone MOU and Letter of Understanding.

G. Laviolette clarified that the agreement was a standard annual requirement under the district's federal programs and grants, ensuring necessary collaboration with the Head Start organization.

**2.5. SHINE Program**
Recommendation to approve the Sponsor to Sponsor Agreement with the SHINE afterschool program and the meal contract to provide food service at $4.95 per student for the 2026-2027 School Year.

J. Moser noted that this was a standard annual agreement and highlighted that, unlike the previous year when state funding delays stalled the program's start, the state budget had already passed for July. D. Hartley affirmed this as a positive development. J. Moser reiterated that SHINE was an excellent program for district students and clarified that while the district initially paid the food service cost, these expenses were ultimately offset by meal reimbursements, making it largely a transactional paper process as D. Hartley noted. H. Neff asked if the Board had any questions, and there were none.

**2.6. Carbon, Monroe Pike Drug & Alcohol Preventative Services**
Recommendation to approve the contract with Carbon-Monroe-Pike Drug and Alcohol Commission, Inc., for Drug and Alcohol Primary Prevention and SAP/Intervention Services for the 2026-2027 school year, in the total amount of $34,200.00.

J. Moser explained that the agreement was an annual renewal for essential community-based services, noting that the agency provided student cessation programs, assisted with grant alignment, and sent representatives to Student Assistance Program (SAP) meetings when requested. He emphasized their consistent availability for non-routine requests. In response to an inquiry from D. Hartley regarding the contract cost, J. Moser indicated there was a minor, non-drastic increase from the prior year, which D. Hartley noted still appeared very reasonable. R. Bowman questioned the referral process for students facing substance abuse challenges and whether Carbon-Monroe-Pike handled subsequent placement referrals given most students are covered under parental insurance. J. Moser clarified that the district initiates the referral to the agency, whose representatives then assess the student and manage the treatment referral process directly.

**2.7. MusicFirst**
Recommendation to approve MusicFirst online curricular resource for the Elementary Center in the amount of $795.00. Cost to come out of 2026-2027 technology budget.

G. Laviolette explained that the resource was selected to replace a previous elementary music program that had been discontinued, much to the chagrin of Music Department Chair M. Kulpa. She noted that M. Kulpa and M. D'Alessandro had conducted extensive research during the second half of the school year before selecting Music First. G. Laviolette highlighted that the new program was substantially less expensive than the previous resource and stated that the instructors were very happy with the selection.

**2.8. Word Origins**
Recommendation to approve the purchase of Word Origins printed morpheme tiles for the elementary center, grade 4 in the amount of $4,300.00.

G. Laviolette explained that the curriculum was designed to bridge the gap between the UFLI (University of Florida Literacy Initiative) program used in grades K–3 and the recently purchased Morpheme Magic program for fifth grade, allowing students to sustain their foundational literacy skills into the intermediate grades. J. Moser elaborated on the educational value of morphology, defining it as the study of word construction. He emphasized that the most effective way to teach vocabulary is through word parts, such as Greek and Latin roots, rather than memorizing isolated words. He noted that word study serves as exceptional preparation for long-term verbal reasoning skills and SAT preparation, concluding that equipping students with these structural skills allows them to successfully decode unfamiliar words in new contexts.

**2.9. Achieve for The Practice of Statistics for the AP® Course**
Recommendation to approve the purchase of Achieve for The Practice of Statistics for the AP Course from BFW Publishers in the amount of $4,558.58. Purchase to come out of the curriculum budget.

Achieve for The Practice of Statistics for the AP Course (Six-Use Online; Add-On).

G. Laviolette explained that the purchase represented an updated edition of a resource the district had utilized for several years, which was necessary to align with changes made to the AP Statistics curriculum. Speaking from her own experience teaching the subject, G. Laviolette noted that the textbook was highly successful, adding that Mrs. Scarpati had used the resource for the first time during the past school year with great success among her AP students. J. Moser noted for the record that all of the recommended curricular purchases were fully within the presented budget and required no additional funding.

**2.10. Student/Parent Handbooks**
Recommendation to approve the following student/parent handbooks for the 2026-2027 school year:
**Lehighton Area High School**
**Lehighton Area Middle School**
**Lehighton Area Elementary Center**
**Lehighton Area Pre-K Counts**
**Lehighton Area Virtual Academy (LAVA)**
Handbooks are in the process of being finalized.

J. Moser acknowledged that R. Bowman had raised some concerns regarding the handbooks. J. Moser stated that the administration would conduct a thorough review to ensure all materials aligned with district policy and would have legal counsel review any items that were questionable in terms of state statute.

**2.11. Additional Handbooks/Resources**
Recommendation to approve the following additional handbooks/resource guides for the 2026-2027 school year:
**McKinney Vento Resource Guide**
**Home Education Handbook**
**LASD Coaches Handbook**

H. Neff noted that an athletic handbook would also be added to the agenda at a later date, likely by the legislative meeting in July. J. Moser provided additional context on the materials, explaining that the McKinney-Vento resources supported students experiencing homelessness or foster placement. He noted that the home education handbook served as a guide for parents choosing that schooling option while outlining the specific requirements the district must maintain to support them. Lastly, he clarified that the coaches handbook established professional expectations for athletic staff.

**2.12. Public Comment**
Public comment is now open for Academic Affairs.

None at this time.

# 3. Policy Committee

**3.1. First Reading of Policies**
None at this time

**3.2. Second Reading and Final Approval of Policies**
Recommendation to approve the following policies for Second Reading and Final Approval:
**249 - Bullying Cyberbullying -** Review of this policy is required every three years according to 24 P.S. 13-1303.1-A.

J. Moser stated that the administration was still reviewing some of the previously discussed revisions. He noted that while these updates might not be fully reflected in the current draft on the agenda, the policy would be completely updated by the upcoming legislative meeting.

**3.3. Public Comment**
Public comment is now open for Policy.

None at this time.

# 4. Finance Committee

**4.1. Donations**
Recommendation to accept the following donations:
1. Miscellaneous snack items to be used for BRAVE camp from People's EC Church.

J. Moser clarified that the church had independently reached out to the district to ask how they could support the camp. He noted that while the district did not actively solicit the donation, the church's desire to connect with and support the school community was greatly appreciated.

**4.2. Settlement Agreement**
Recommendation to approve the Settlement Agreement and corresponding attorney fees for a student.

J. Moser stated there would be nothing to speak publicly about here and if there were any questions, they could discuss it in executive session.

**4.3. Director Request for Legal Representation Fees**
J. Moser explained that the item stemmed from an email request submitted by B. Bradley seeking district reimbursement for legal fees that might be accrued in a Carbon County Court matter. J. Moser noted he was uncertain of the legal validity of the request and stated it would require formal Board authorization to even be considered for payment. W. Howland observed that B. Bradley was not present to speak on his request but noted that he would have the opportunity to present his thoughts prior to a future vote.

R. Bowman stated that while he had not obtained a copy of the petition, his understanding was that the school district was not named in it, though he noted that if the alleged conduct related to B. Bradley's role as a school board director, the district might face a future claim for fees. R. Bowman expressed his opinion that the petition would not go very far and mentioned that he had a pending motion to intervene in the case. J. Moser stated that liability questions could not be answered by anyone physically present in the room and would require consultation with the district solicitor, followed by formal Board discussion and action. J. Glaush suggested the request would ultimately be rejected, noting that several board members had previously signed a petition for removal. R. Bowman clarified that no board members were signers of the specific legal petition before the court, prompting J. Glaush to specify he meant the broader petition for removal.

**4.4. Public Comment**
Public comment is now open for Finance.

None at the time.

## 5. Athletics Committee

**5.1. Candidates for Athletic Coaching/Manager Positions**
Recommendation to approve the following requests for Athletic Coaching/Manager Candidates, as per contracted rates, pending any necessary paperwork:
**Cody Scherer** - Volunteer Football Coach
**Greg Swatt** - Assistant Boys Soccer Coach

H. Neff remarked that it was wonderful to see alumni athletes returning to give back to the district. J. Moser agreed, noting that seeing the names of individuals he used to play sports with made him feel nostalgic.

**5.2. Public Comment**
Public comment is now open for Athletics.

None at the time.

## 6. Buildings & Grounds Committee

**6.1. Secondary Evacuation Site**
Recommendation to approve the 2026-2027 Secondary Evacuation Location Memorandum of Understanding and Protection of Personally Identifiable Information and MOU Appendix B Code of Conduct: Parents/Guardians, Visitors, Volunteers and Consultants.

J. Moser explained that the district is required to establish this Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on a regular basis. He noted that the agreement represents a routine summertime task to ensure the district's emergency protocols remain properly aligned and finalized.

**6.2. Disposal of Surplus Property**
Recommendation to approve the disposal of the attached unneeded surplus, unusable, and/or obsolete property from the District that is consuming valuable storage space according to policy 706.1.

J. Moser noted that the item on the list was a Dell computer from the middle school that was no longer used, lacked available parts, and could not be repaired. G. Laviolette added that the device was likely from many years prior.

J. Glaush questioned whether the district was stripping memory and RAM from such computers before disposal, noting that RAM was currently expensive and could potentially be resold or repurposed. G. Laviolette confirmed that the practice occurred but indicated the district did not currently possess a substantial surplus of old RAM. In response to an inquiry from R. Bowman regarding the district's standard hardware, G. Laviolette clarified that while the district used Dell Chromebooks, standard Windows devices were generally limited to administrators and secretaries. R. Bowman and J. Glaush discussed potential financial recovery options for obsolete hardware, with J. Glaush suggesting gray market resale or consulting the Intermediate Unit (IU) for interested buyers, and R. Bowman suggesting that the district investigate vendor buyback or offset credit programs based on purchasing thresholds.

### 6.3. Use of School Property

Recommendation to approve the Use of School Property for the following requests:
1. **Lehighton Cheerleading (Amanda Hunsicker)** - August 8 & August 9, 2026 - 11:30 AM-4:30 PM - High School Gym - UCA Cheer Camp.
2. **LASC (Ashley Moser & Alicia Hughart)** - August-October 2026 (Saturdays & every other Sunday) - 12:30-5:30 PM - Middle School Soccer Fields & Outside Fields - U13 & U16 Games.

J. Moser noted that the second request fell under specific board purview and required formal approval, as it involved an outside organization seeking to utilize school property on a Sunday.

### 6.4. Public Comment

Public comment is now open for Buildings & Grounds.

None at the time.

## 7. Personnel Committee

### 7.1. Candidates for Employment

Recommendation to approve the following candidates for employment in accordance with the respective contracts:
**Daniel Derr** - Part-time cleaner for the District at a rate of $12.96 per hour, effective July 28, 2026, pending any necessary paperwork.

Mentors at a contracted rate of $37.00 per hour for up to 16 hours:
**Donna Zacharias** as a mentor to *Jamie Scott*
**Suzanne Cordes** as a mentor to *Janine Matika*

**2026-2027 Advisors:**
**Melissa Blocker** - Assistant Scholastic Scrimmage at the High School at a stipend of $1,700.00.
**Stephanie Kulpa** - 5th Grade Chorus at a split stipend of $1,000.00.

**Operation Council Members for the Middle School at a contracted rate of $1,800.00 each:**
**Theresa Kokinda**, **Sarah Dunchack**, and **AnnaLeigh Conway**.

J. Moser provided clarification regarding the inclusion of mentors for two veteran teachers, explaining that per the collective bargaining agreement, a one-year mentor is provided to support teachers who undergo a voluntary position transfer. He noted that the remaining listings included existing advisor vacancies and operational council members, which were also established under the new collective bargaining agreement through a redistribution of funding and roles.

In response to an inquiry from R. Bowman requesting elaboration on the operational council positions, J. Moser explained that these are stipend positions with a job description approved the prior month, consisting of three representatives per school building. He noted that these council members advise administration from a faculty perspective on building logistics, scheduling, and event planning to ensure clear faculty input in building decisions. G. Laviolette added that additional recommendations would likely be presented by the next legislative meeting, sharing that the elementary building had received nine applicants for its five available positions and was scheduling interviews. She further noted that high school applications had increased from one to three, and she anticipated those positions would be filled and added to the upcoming agenda.

**7.2. Candidates for the Substitute List**
Recommendation to approve the following list of requested candidates for the 2026-2027 Substitute List, pending any necessary paperwork:
**Jane Maurer** - Substitute Teacher
**Deanna Blasiak** - Substitute Nurse

J. Moser noted that the list included district retirees who had already submitted their names to assist with future substitute needs. He stated that this commitment reflected positively on their experience and expressed appreciation for their ongoing willingness to serve the district.

**7.3. Professional Development**
Recommendation to approve the following Professional Development opportunities:
**Employee #s 153, 1036, 1666, 1172, 1932 and 1936** to attend the LETRS Course 2. Cost not to exceed $2,700 and will come out of the professional development budget.

J. Moser noted that the training was accounted for in the budget and described it as the second volume of an intensive professional development program centered on the science of reading and early literacy. He indicated that the group would be attending the training at the Bucks County Intermediate Unit (IU), where they had previously completed Volume One, and explained that this second course would fully certify the participating teachers in this top-of-the-line instructional program.

**7.4. Pre-Approval of Employee Continuing Education Courses**
Recommendation to approve the following requests for pre-approval of courses/Programs of Study for employee continuing education:
1. **Employee #655** - July 13, 2026-November 13, 2027/American College of Education - M.Ed., Instructional Design and Educational Tech. (up to $577.00 per credit/up to 15 credits per year).
2. **Employee #1968** - August 24, 2026-May 5, 2028/Kutztown University - Elementary Ed PreK-4 Initial Certification, M. Ed. (up to $100.00 per credit/up to 18 credits per year).
3. **Employee #1309** - August 18 - September 30, 2026 - Game On! Enhancing Math Learning with Interactive and Engaging Practice (Coursework for MA +30 - up to $577.00 per credit/up to 15 credits per year).
4. **Employee #1309** - July 1- August 31, 2026 - AI in Formative Assessment and Feedback Loops (Coursework only - up to $577.00 per credit/up to 15 credits per year).
5. **Employee #577** - September 1, 2026 - September 1, 2027 - Let the Students Talk: The Power of Conversation in the Classroom (3 Credits/Non-Degree - up to $577.00 per credit/up to 15 credits per year).
6. **Employee #577** - September 1, 2026 - September 1, 2027 - Civics Education Today (3 Credits/Non-Degree - up to $577.00 per credit/up to 15 credits per year).
7. **Employee #1072** - September 1 - October 19,2026 - Instructional Coaching Educational Development & Strategies - up to $577.00 per credit/up to 15 credits per year).

J. Moser observed that many of the submitted courses were directly tied to students and classroom instruction, a sentiment that R. Bowman echoed, stating it was great to see.

**7.5. Uncompensated Leave**
Recommendation to approve uncompensated leave for employee #1239 from November 11, 2026 through the remainder of the 2026-2027 school year.

J. Moser noted that there was no additional comment on the matter.

**7.6. Resignations**
Recommendation to accept the resignation of the following employees, with regret:
**Kianna Cederberg -** English Language Arts Teacher at the Middle School effective June 19, 2026.
**Jessica Holloman** - Learning Support Teacher at the Middle School effective August 1, 2026.
**Karissa Nenscel** - Learning Support Teacher at the Elementary Center effective August 17, 2026.

J. Moser noted that the departures included three excellent educators who would be missed, explaining that at least two of them were taking opportunities closer to where they live. In response to an inquiry from R. Bowman regarding whether the vacancies had been posted, J. Moser confirmed that the positions had already been posted and interviewed for. He added that a slate of candidates to fill these and other openings would be presented at a special board meeting on Thursday night, as the resignations had been anticipated prior to this official board approval.

**7.7. Public Comment**
Public comment is now open for Personnel.

None at the time.

## 8. Technology Committee

H. Neff introduced the Technology Committee update, but G. Laviolette and J. Moser confirmed there was nothing to report at this time, noting that June was a heavy month for technology contracts and upcoming expenses would not appear until August.

**8.1. Public Comment**
Public comment is now open for Technology.

None at the time.

## 9. Safety & Wellness Committee

**9.1. Public Comment**
Public comment is now open for Safety & Wellness.

None at the time.

## 10. Miscellaneous

**10.1. George's Transportation Agreement**
Recommendation to approve the agreement with George's Transportation  for student transportation for the 2026-2027 and 2027-2028 School years, as well as the  Field (Activity) and Athletic trip rates.

J. Moser summarized negotiations for a new two-year contract with George’s Transportation, highlighting the following key components:

- **Base Increases:** A 3% base cost increase in year one and a 3% base cost increase in year two, aligning with budgeted projections.
- **Driver Retention Incentive:** A one-time, $30,000 payment will be made to George's in year one to increase driver pay and support recruitment for part-time positions. This payment is excluded from the base when calculating the year two increase.
- **Athletic Trips:** A minor increase of $2 to $5 per trip was added, depending on length, to directly boost driver compensation.
- **Fuel Charge Provision:** In response to an inquiry from W. Howland regarding volatile fuel costs, J. Moser confirmed the contract contains a standard fuel service charge tied to a baseline of roughly $3.81 per gallon, which protects both parties from major market fluctuations.

R. Bowman inquired whether the contract covered transportation for pre-K students. J. Moser clarified that while the contract encompasses any run the district requests, introducing pre-K bussing involves significant logistical hurdles.

The ensuing board discussion focused on multiple challenges regarding pre-K transportation:

- **Safety and Liability:** H. Neff and T. Tkach raised concerns regarding the safety, liability, and physical constraints of installing proper car seats on school buses or district vans. T. Tkach noted that local districts typically omit pre-K transportation for this reason.

- **Cost and Logistics:** J. Moser and G. Laviolette pointed out that servicing mid-day, half-day pre-K schedules for a small group of students could require up to six different bus routes, dramatically increasing costs.
- **Capacity Constraints:** D. Hartley noted that the contractor already faces tight seating and routing constraints managing the current student population, and adding pre-K runs could negatively affect existing operations.

G. Laviolette confirmed that the lack of transportation has not acted as a deterrent for pre-K enrollment, as parents are notified upfront. Following this feedback, D. Hartley concluded that pre-K transportation does not require further board review due to safety concerns and a lack of demonstrated need.

## 11. Communications

### 11.1. Public Comment

This is the closing of the Workshop Meeting and an additional opportunity for public comment is offered.

None at the time.

### 11.2. Adjournment

MOTION by J. Glaush, SECONDED by w. Howland, to adjourn the Meeting.

YES - 6 NO - 0 ABSENT - 3 ABSTENTIONS - 0

The July 13, 2026 Workshop Meeting was adjourned at 7:47 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Rebecca Karpowicz, Board Secretary
By Janine Partenio, Recording Secretary