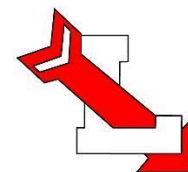


*A Summary of the Regular Meeting of the Lowell Board of Education*

# Board Briefs



Regular Meeting of February 10, 2025

## **STUDENT COUNCIL REPORT**

Conner Casarez stated that the Winter Fest Dance took place as well as the Unified Basketball game. The Student Leadership class is putting on Be Nice week that will include several activities. Students and staff are getting ready for exams.

## **APPROVED ITEMS**

January minutes, payment of bills, Schools of Choice Resolution, overnight student trip, K-5 English Language Arts Curriculum and security camera purchase.

## **REPORTS**

Murray Lake Elementary "What I Need (WIN)" Program.

## **HUMAN RESOURCE UPDATE**

Dustin Cichocki stated that the district has chosen Applitrack as its applicant tracking system. Job postings for the 2025-2026 school year will take place prior to spring break. The Technology Trainers started this week in each building. Technology Trainers are current staff members in each building that receive a stipend for their work. The trainers will work with the Technology Department and the Director of Curriculum to determine what their daily tasks will be. Cichocki stated the district is running smoothly and he thanked all staff for their work.

## **BUDGET UPDATE**

Sonia Hodge stated Governor Whitmer presented a favorable budget proposal last week. At this time it looks like the foundation allowance would be increased from \$9,608 per pupil to \$10,000 per pupil. This increase would be \$1.36 million for Lowell Area Schools. There is also a 4% increase in At Risk funding. There are also similar increases in mental health and security grants. Part of the proposal also includes the elimination of the extra retirement funding. The retirement changes will have a lot of moving parts that will have to be mapped out so that the Board has a clear picture.

## **CURRICULUM UPDATE**

Dan VanderMeulen thanked the Murray Lake staff for their presentation. This program is a good example of the Professional Learning Teams working together. The high school flex schedule is also a good example of Professional Learning Teams. K-5 teachers will be working on Open Court during Friday's professional development time, middle school teachers will be working on behavior strategies and high school teachers will be working on curriculum maps and common assessments. The first meeting with the Technology Trainers took place to talk about their role in the district.

### **SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT**

Superintendent Fowler stated that the district received a rebate check from the architect for \$75,000 for energy efficiency at the middle school. Fowler also received a thank you letter from Gilda's club for a \$50,000 Pink Arrow check. There are a lot of activities taking place throughout the district including athletics and musical/play events. Fowler stated that we do have a library process in place and if things change at the Federal or State levels we will change our process. An internal document related to transgender students that was questioned outlines the importance of good communication between school and families. It is a tool that is used to have those conversations that address bathroom and extracurricular activities. President Trump's orders as well as Congress and Governor Whitmer's orders will have an impact on schools and we will be reviewing policies in the spring. Changes take time. What we will do is continue providing educational opportunities for our students. This is what we are good at and will continue to do every day. We will continue to talk about political changes but continue to keep doing what we have been doing. The February Work Session will take place at the High School library.

### **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

One audience member made a public comment. No action taken.

### **BOARD COMMENTS**

- Pat Nugent stated that he had an administrator that talked about the four R's - Reading, Writing, Arithmetic and Relationships. It is important that each teacher knows that they are not successful without relationships. It's hard to manage a school as an administrator without good relationships. The Board has a goal in their Strategic Plan that students build and demonstrate real relationships with staff.
- Jennifer Dougherty stated that the Board's job is to make sure students are educated and ready for life after high school. The Board deals with whatever regulations come their way. Even though things are up in the air, no one claims to be a constitutional scholar and more importantly the Board does not try to be. Just because the Board does not show up for every fight that comes before them, they are doing their jobs and care about getting kids educated to be successful.
- Laurie Kuna stated she was a classroom teacher for 29 years at Lowell High School. The curriculum that was adopted tonight is for 6 years, the administration in Washington will be in office for 4 years, so there will be 2 years beyond that. The overall goal of the Board is to educate kids, regardless of their needs. It is the Board's job, by law, to educate students. She thanked the community for their support and thanked the Murray Lake staff for their presentation. She stated Lowell has an outstanding staff.