Lackawanna Trail School District
School Board Meeting Minutes
October 13, 2026

The Lackawanna Trail School District met in person and via Zoom for a scheduled meeting on Tuesday, October 13, 2026 at 7:41 pm, public notice thereof having been given in accordance with applicable law.

An Executive Session was held prior to the meeting from 6:37 pm to 7:37 pm. The following items were discussed: Personnel, Stipends for Staff. All board members were present for the executive session.

President Eric Johnson called the meeting to order and directed the secretary to call the roll. Board Members present: Heather Clark, Brendan Dwyer, Susan Fazio, Susanne Green, Kristy Huggler, Eric Johnson, Jaclyn Litwin, Joseph Strauch and Tracy Wescott.

Administrators present: Emily Hickox, Shannon Kuchak, Cody Opalka, Matthew Rakauskas, Christopher Stahl and Amie Talarico.

There was an opportunity for public participation provided. No members of the public commented.

Approval of Minutes
Mr. Strauch made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Wescott, that the minutes from the September 14, 2026 School Board Meeting and October 5, 2026 Work Session be approved as submitted. The motion passed by a unanimous vote of 9-0.

Bill Listing
Mr. Dwyer made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Clark, that all bills found to be true and accurate be approved. The motion passed by a vote of 8-1. Mr. Strauch voted no.

Treasurer's Report
Mr. Dwyer made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Litwin, that the board approve the August and September Treasurer's Report as submitted. The motion passed by a unanimous vote of 9-0.

Information Technology Support Agreement
Mr. Dwyer made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Wescott, that the board approve the agreement with ISS Solutions, Inc/Paradigm Technology Consulting for information technology support in the amount of $6000. The motion passed by a vote of 7-2. Mrs. Green and Mr. Strauch voted no.

Stipend
Mr. Dwyer made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Wescott, that the board approve a stipend of $1500 for extra duties performed as Transportation Assistant for Heather Stage. The motion passed by a unanimous vote of 9-0.

Bus Driver

Mr. Dwyer made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Wescott, that the board approve Stacie Fish as a substitute bus driver with Smarkusky Bus Company effective October 2, 2026. All clearances and driving credentials are on file. The motion passed by a unanimous vote of 9-0.

Temporary Paraprofessional

Mrs. Clark made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Litwin, that the board approve Marie Woody as a temporary part-time paraprofessional at a rate of $16 per hour as per the LTESPA collective bargaining agreement, beginning October 19, 2026 through approximately December 31, 2026. All clearances are on file. The motion passed by a unanimous vote of 9-0.

Extracurricular Basketball Volunteer

Mr. Dwyer made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Litwin, that the board approve Lorenzo Domiano as a volunteer with the Boys' Basketball team for the 2026-2027 school year. All clearances are on file. The motion passed by a unanimous vote of 9-0.

Reports of New Business were provided by the Superintendent, Elementary and Secondary Principals, Secondary Assistant Principal, Director of Special Education and Business Manager as well as several reports by board members. Administrator reports are included in the attached addendum.

Mr. Johnson announced that there would be an executive session prior to the next meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 8:41 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Tracy Wescott, Secretary Board of Education

NEW BUSINESS REPORTS ADDENDUM:

Superintendent's Board Report - Matthew Rakauskas

The Staff Development Day on Friday was among the most productive in recent years. Thank you to the administration for developing and leading this schedule. It included a Culturally Responsive Environment Training aligned with our Comprehensive Plan, an Artificial Intelligence Dilemma Workshop geared toward educators, self guided work on curriculum mapping through Atlas, and various grade level faculty and committee meetings.

Thank you to the Board of Directors for all of the recent hires. We are moving closer to being fully staffed due to our aggressive employee appointment process as of late. For a full list of outstanding employment opportunities please visit our website under the dropdown menu *"Employment and Clearances."* Most notably we are advertising for a Part-Time Bookkeeper and Maintenance II (Custodian).

Elementary Principal report - Shannon Kuchak

1. I'd like to congratulate our **September LTEC Students of the Month:** Henry Merkel (K), Angelo Margotta (1st), Theo Flanigan (2nd), Hunter Lane (3rd), Eloise Flanigan (4th), Addison Lunger (5th), and Natalia Demming (6th). These students have gone above and beyond in demonstrating what it means to be a Lion by consistently exceeding our PBIS ROAR expectations. We are so proud of all of you!
2. **LTEC Fun Run Fundraiser:** We held the 3rd annual Fun Run on September 25th. This year, the Trail community raised an incredible $26,621 for LTEC, which is a RECORD HIGH! A huge thank-you to our students, staff, families, and community for making this happen. These funds will be shared between ROAR and PTO to create awesome opportunities for our students and support our teachers.
3. Our ROAR program recently initiated **The Golden Dust Pan Award.** This is a weekly classroom ROAR reward that recognizes classrooms demonstrating pride in their learning environment by keeping their spaces clean, organized, and welcoming. This initiative reinforces our ROAR expectations while encouraging students to take ownership of their shared spaces and celebrate positive habits. Congratulations to all classrooms who have earned this prestigious award this month!
4. On Wednesday, October 7th, we had our annual **Fire Safety Program.** Volunteer firefighters came to our school, set up fire trucks and the smoke house to educate our students on fire prevention and safety. Our students had a great time while learning important safety skills. I'd like to thank Mrs. Shaw and Mrs.Joanne Wright, for organizing this fun and informative day. And a HUGE THANK YOU to all of the volunteer firefighters who came out to spend the day with us and teach our Lions about fire safety. We are very fortunate to have such an awesome community supporting our school.
5. The **LTEC Family Book Club** is up and running again this year. This club encourages a love of reading and brings families together through shared stories and discussions. A special thank-you to Mrs. Krivak for creating this wonderful program and sharing her passion for reading, and to Mrs. Haus for all of her hard work and support! We are so

grateful for all you do to make this opportunity possible for our families. **Upcoming Meeting:** November 5th after dismissal from 3:30pm - 4:30pm.

6. **LTEC Make Up Picture Day:** October 21
7. On October 22, LTEC will celebrate our **Quarter 1 ROAR Fall Festival**, recognizing students' positive behavior and success in meeting our ROAR expectations. On this day, students will also enjoy a **Bully-Free BMX Assembly** that promotes kindness, positivity, and the impact one person can make in creating a safe, supportive school environment. This event reinforces our ongoing commitment to building a positive school culture where all students feel valued and respected.
8. LTEC will recognize **Red Ribbon Week** during the week of October 26th to promote healthy choices, personal safety, and a drug-free lifestyle. Through schoolwide activities and messaging, students will be encouraged to make positive decisions that support their health and well-being.
9. LTEC will celebrate **Halloween** on Friday, October 30th, with a parade beginning at 9:45am on the playground, weather permitting. Classroom parties will follow immediately after the parade, and early dismissal will begin at 11:15am
10. LTEC will hold **Parent-Teacher Conferences** on Thursday, November 12, from 5:00–8:00 p.m., and Friday, November 13, during the scheduled Act 80 day. These conferences provide an opportunity for families and teachers to connect, discuss student progress, and work together to support student success.

Jr/Sr High School Principal Report - Cody Opalka

September - Students of the Month

- I'd like to take this opportunity to congratulate our September Students of the Month. Congratulations to Molly Schultheis, Troy Skotleski, Elizabeth Harvey, Delaney Dwyer, Levi Johnson, and Seamus Dwyer. We thank each and every student of the month for their positivity that they put forth each day and their assistance in making our school a great place. Thank you, Lions!

Make-up Pictures

- On Thursday, October 22, Lackawanna Trail High School will have our photographers back at the high school for make-up pictures. Any students who did not get their pictures taken, need to get their pictures taken on October 22. As always, don't forget to smile.

United Leaders in Action Haunted Hallways

- The United Leaders in Action and the Elementary PTO have teamed together with other Lackawanna Trail clubs to put together a Trunk-or-Treat and Haunted Hallways Event. This event will take place on Saturday, October 24. The Trunk-or-Treat will take place from 4:00pm to 6:00pm and the Haunted Hallways will take place from 6:00pm - 9:00pm. We hope to see the community there.

Josten's Sophomore Ring/ Senior Meetings

- On Monday, November 2, Jostens will be at the high school to present the Sphormore class with all the information they might need regarding Josten's class rings. Additionally, the senior class will meet with Josten's to discuss the various packages seniors might be able to purchase to celebrate graduation.

Fall Instrumental/ Chorus Concert

- Please join Mr. Dikeman and the Lackawanna Trail Concert Band as they perform on Thursday, November 5, in the PS Bank Auditorium at 7:00pm. Mrs. Fumanti and the Chorus will have their Fall Choral Concert on Tuesday, November 10, in the PS Bank Auditorium at 7:00pm. We hope to see everyone there.

Parent-Teacher Conferences

- As we approach the end of the quarter on October 30, we look forward to share with parents/ guardians the opportunity to touch base with teachers at our upcoming parent-teacher conferences which are taking place on November 12 from 5:00pm - 8:00pm. Much like other years, we will have both the in-person and virtual options for families. Please check the high school website as we approach the date.

Jr/Sr High School Assistant Principal Report - Christopher Stahl

Transition to Lackawanna Trail

My first several days at Lackawanna Trail have been both productive and welcoming. I have been working closely with Mr. Opalka to become familiar with building procedures, daily operations, and the students and staff. I have made it a priority to maintain a visible presence throughout the school day, particularly during arrival, dismissal, class transitions, and lunch periods. I appreciate the warm welcome I have received from the entire school community.

Student Discipline and Attendance

My initial focus has been on reviewing student discipline procedures, identifying patterns in referrals, and working with teachers to address classroom concerns. I am also working to ensure that disciplinary consequences are appropriate and consistent, while providing students with the support they need to improve their behavior. This includes working closely with our emotional support and special education teachers. Regarding attendance and truancy, I am completing the necessary requirements to serve as the district's truancy officer and becoming familiar with the procedures and existing cases. I expect to assume responsibility for truancy matters at both the junior/senior high school and elementary school once the required authorization is complete.

Athletics and Student Activities

The fall athletic season continues, and I had the opportunity to attend last Friday's Homecoming football game. Congratulations to our football team, coaching staff, band, bandfront, and cheerleaders for an outstanding performance. I also attended my first field hockey game on Thursday afternoon. The girls played a hard-fought game and represented themselves, their school, and the community well. It has been a pleasure getting back out to watch fall athletics and support our student-athletes. Additionally, I have several chess matches scheduled with various student "challengers" throughout the building!

Upcoming Events – SAT

The SAT School Day administration is scheduled for the morning of October 21, 2026. Interested students should speak with their guidance counselor for additional information.

Director of Special Education Report - Amie Talarico

- The Special Education Plan is due this spring. We will meet in December to begin that work. The plan is due for submission on May 1, 2027.
- Our Board Certified Behavior Analyst through Step by Step started today. Wendy Bellington began working with our Autistic Support and Emotional Support Classrooms.
- We are meeting regarding group services for students with Autism and other mental health supports on Friday. CCBH is sending people on site to discuss our needs assessment.

Business Manager Report - Emily Hickox

This is a very busy few weeks in the Business Office. We are working on multiple grant applications, grant quarterly reports and grant final expenditure reports. We are also preparing for the 2025-2026 financial audit. We are excited to start the interview process later this week for the vacant Bookkeeper position.