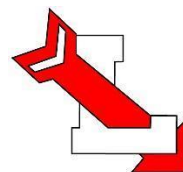


Board Briefs



Regular Meeting of January 12, 2026

STUDENT COUNCIL REPORT

Gianna Gates-Duprey reported that students are adjusting back to class after the break. Seniors are starting to commit to their dream schools. Local scholarship applications were released last week. Underclassmen are starting to schedule their classes for next school year. Winter sports have started and students are putting in a lot of hard work. Unified sports are practicing for their upcoming basketball games. Practice for the upcoming school musical "Chicago: Teen Edition" has started. The high school food drive has started. Students are competing with other districts to collect as much food as possible. All the food will be donated to the Flat River Outreach Ministries (FROM). A blood drive will take place on January 21 that is open to the community.

ACTION ITEMS:

- Election of Officers
- Minutes for December 8, 2025 Regular Meeting
- Payment of Bills
- Board Committee Memberships
- Appointment of Assistant to the Board Secretary
- Authorization of the Superintendent, Chief Financial Officer, or Treasurer of the Board of Education to sign disbursement checks
- Approval of Huntington National Bank, Mercantile Bank of West Michigan, Fifth Third Bank, UMB Bank N.A., and Michigan CLASS as official depositories
- Board members agreed to disclose any conflict of interest prior to discussion and vote at a Board meeting.
- Delegated the Superintendent, or his designee, the responsibility of posting notices of all meetings
- Approved a yearly compensation of \$300 and reimbursement for expenses related to elected duties.
- Retained the law firms of Thrun Law Firm, P.C. and Clark Hill as the primary legal consultants for the school district
- Approved the firm of Hungerford CPAs & Advisors as the school auditor
- Approved the employment of Dana Champion-Wigfield as the Director of Student Services.
- Approved the 2026 schedule of meetings
- Approved the technical corrections of policies 1422, 1623, 1662, 2260, 2260.01, 2300, 2301, 3122, 3123, 3362, 4122, 4123, 4362, 5517 and 5517.02
- Approved the General Fund budget amendment
- Accepted a gift to the district

SCHOOL BOARD RECOGNITION

Superintendent Fowler read the following statement:

Good evening, and thank you all for joining me in recognizing the Lowell Area Schools' Board of Education. Each January, we celebrate School Board Appreciation Month. It gives us a chance to pause, reflect, and express gratitude to our members of the board who are here out of a desire to serve our community and focus on supporting student achievement. Celebrating School Board Appreciation Month is one small way to express appreciation for all that our board members do. School systems are complex and face a variety of opportunities and challenges each day. Our School board members represent different views, priorities, and even different areas of our community, but they do so with a focus on student achievement that meets the following needs:

Our Board:

- Creates a vision for what parents and citizens want their school district to become and how to make student achievement the top priority.
- Sets standards for what students must learn and be able to do.
- Assesses whether schools achieve their goals and whether students are learning.
- Accounts for the outcomes of decisions and by tracking progress and reporting results.
- Aligns the use of the district's human and financial resources.
- Creates a safe and orderly climate where students can learn and teachers can teach.
- Collaborate to solve common problems and to support common successes.
- Focuses on continuous improvement by questioning, examining, revising, refining and revisiting issues related to student achievement.
- Helps to tell the story of Lowell Area Schools and the students who get an education here.

In the coming months we will have meaningful discussions on facilities needs, curriculum resources, safety and security measures, staffing, and how we continue to tell our story as a district. Your dedication does not go unnoticed. You sacrifice time with your own families in order to serve all our families. Thank you for how you are able to weather criticism with grace and celebrate success with humility. Our schools are stronger because of your leadership

HUMAN RESOURCES UPDATE

Dustin Cichocki stated that Dana Champion-Wigfield has been hired as the Director of Student Services. A retirement seminar will take place on January 19 at 4:30pm. Formal bus driver negotiations will take place at the end of the month. The Business Office is working through mid-year resignations and retirements (middle school art teacher, bus drivers, custodial, etc). Staffing discussions are taking place for the 2026-2027 school year.

BUDGET UPDATE

No report.

CURRICULUM UPDATE

Steve Gough stated there is a lot going on in curriculum across the district. The high school was notified by GreatSchools that they were again recognized as a college success school. This program recognizes public schools that excel in college preparation, college enrollment, and college performance based on high school graduation rate, SAT scores, percentage of graduates going on to higher education, and percentage of graduates that do not need remediation when they arrive at higher education. The high school was also notified by College Board that it had been recognized again as an AP honor roll school and advanced from the bronze level to the silver level. These honors speak to the work of our high school staff and also speaks to the impact of the flex time tier 2 intervention system that not only supports students who need academic assistance, but also supports students in advanced placement programs as well. It is important to recognize that these kinds of recognitions do not just reflect the work of the high school staff but also the work of the middle school and elementary teachers that prepare students to enter the high school. Gough congratulated the teaching staff and thanked them for their excellent work and achieving those recognitions. The vertical K12 reading team met on Thursday to continue their work to ensure alignment and reading across all of the grade levels. The team finished their K12 reading articulated vision for teaching and learning and developed a communication plan to ensure that educators (K12) are aware of that work and what the expectation is

regarding reading instruction across the district. The belonging team will hold their second meeting on January 27 and the math team will hold their second meeting on January 28. All of those teams will meet again in the spring to review their work and progress. Administration is already preparing for the upcoming school year by working on calendars, handbooks and updating documents across the district. Students have begun selecting classes. An updated Curriculum Guide will be brought to the Board for discussion and approval in the next month. The high school will request to formalize and approve the craft arts pilot that was approved last year. Gough is also aware of some special education program updates that will be coming in the Curriculum Guide to ensure that all of our students are getting good guidance in the areas of college and readiness during their high school experience. Gough clarified a public comment from the December meeting where a parent seemed to imply that Lowell Area Schools is trying to hide the readers' advisory list related to our library. This is not the case. The list was posted to the library page of our website in November, a month prior to the public comment and parents were notified about how to locate it through the building newsletters that we are now sending out monthly with information about our library program. Gough stated that there has been an update to our Destiny system that now allows for a parent portal. Parents will now be able to access their students' library accounts through the parent portal. Parents would be able to see what their students have checked out, what they have previously checked out and will also be able to set their own limits in that parent portal based on author, topic, book title, and whatever limit they would like to set. The parent portal will become available this month. Parents will be notified how to access the portal and how to find support through building newsletters. The district is going to continue to maintain the readers advisory list at this time as a service to our parents so they are aware of the books that we recommend for the oldest students in each building.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Four audience members made public comments. No action taken.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Superintendent Fowler wished everyone a happy new year. He responded to a public comment regarding monitoring classroom libraries. The District does not have a systematic approach to cataloging those books. In the absence of that, the District encourages communication between teachers and families. He also responded to another public comment related to sexual content in a book. Fowler stated that this was an unfair question to post to the Board (asking for a yes or no answer) because Board members had not read the book. It is the hope that families are having conversations about what's appropriate and what's not. There is a process in place to monitor content in our libraries. Staff and students jumped right back into learning after a two-week break. There were high levels of engagement and enthusiasm in all classrooms across the district. Fowler displayed a trophy to the Board and attendees awarded to Alto Elementary being recognized by the Michigan Green Building Collaborative as a green schools champion. The District sought advice from consultants from E3M Solutions about fluctuating temperatures in the building during the winter months. The company did a month-long study of the buildings management system, software, and mechanical units. The study helped adjust heating and cooling schedules, optimizing equipment that we have in place and making a few minor upgrades that save money and improve the comfort level in our classrooms. We are using what we learned at Alto Elementary to improve efficiency in our heating and cooling systems across the district. Fowler thanked Greg Pratt, Cody Buchanan and everyone involved with continuing the tradition of realizing savings through energy efficiency. Construction has started at Cherry Creek Elementary. Students left on Friday and the walls in the old computer lab were knocked down on Saturday. Over spring break the YMCA room will be renovated into the new music room. The current music room will become temporary classrooms. Third and fifth graders will move into the furniture pilot classrooms. Over the weekend, Mr. Fowler members of the Board received a request for information related to accessibility as it relates to Board of Education meetings and the meeting schedule. It has been a long-standing tradition that meetings are held on the second and fourth Monday with a couple of exceptions. This has allowed other community organizations to plan around these meetings to avoid conflict. Lowell Area Schools does live stream meetings on YouTube and those meetings are accessible on YouTube or the district website with a closed captioning option. All of our meeting postings also have a statement to contact the Superintendent's office if a community member does need accommodations to be able to participate in the meeting. Dana Champion-Wigfield has been hired as the new Director of Students Services. Dana will be replacing Liz McCall who took a job outside of Michigan. Fowler congratulated Theresa Wooley, Middle School Art Teacher, on her retirement. Fowler addressed a public comment about the lack of library communication. Fowler stated that he has always been impressed with Mrs. Beachler's staff and parent

Regular Board of Education Meeting

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communication. Fowler congratulated Debra Osborne, Cindy Smith and Noreen Moser for receiving the 2025 Service Award for Adult Volunteers from the Michigan Association of School Librarians. He thanked them for creating a culture of literacy in our schools and in our communities.

BOARD COMMENTS

- Jared Blough thanked Sonia Hodge for her budget presentation.
- Laurie Kuna wished everyone a happy new year and congratulated the Beachlers on becoming grandparents.
- Jessica Curtis wished everyone a happy new year and thanked Sonia Hodge for her budget presentation.
- Brian Krajewski stated that he is glad to see that the Destiny software has finally been updated.