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

Board Briefs

Regular Meeting of November 9, 2026

STUDENT COUNCIL
Allison Raison reported that Lowell Area Schools hosted the fall RCA meeting. Students from RCA schools get together to share ideas and collaborate on a community service project. The group had a guest speaker, Sarah Spitler, founder of Empowering All Survivors, which brings awareness to community mental health needs. This year's community project will be “Blanket Hug” which will be a blanket drive at each RCA school. All blankets collected will go to Empowering All Survivors and given to clients who are discharged from Pine Rest. Jostens presented cap and gown information to seniors this week. There is a new red gown design that will unite the senior class by wearing all the same color and design. The fall play "Ghost Light" was very successful. Exam week is coming up. The high school will host a blood drive on November 19. Substitute Appreciation Week is next week. The Student Council is working on creating a small gift of appreciation for substitute teachers.

ACTION ITEMS
October 12, 2026 Regular Meeting minutes, October 26, 2026 Work Session minutes, October 26, 2026 Closed Session minutes, payment of bills for October, 2026, Summer Tax Resolution,

REPORT - AUDIT
Taylor Boonenberg from Hungerford provided the Board of Education the 2025-2026 Audit Report. The full audit report is located on the Transparency Page of the district website.

REPORT - INCLUSION PRACTICES
Dana Champion-Wigfield, Director of Student Support Services and Erin Walters, Principal of Bushnell Elementary, provided the Board of Education an overview of inclusive education at Lowell Area Schools.

FIRST READING OF REVISED/NEW BYLAWS/POLICIES (attachment)
The Board conducted a first reading of multiple policies. Revisions to Board policies occur on a regular basis to reflect changes in state and federal laws. These revised policies will be brought to the Board at the next meeting for approval. Superintendent Fowler stated that Policy 8510 (Wellness) will be pulled from approval next month. The Wellness Committee needs more time to meet and discuss any changes to bring to the Board for approval.

PUBLIC COMMENTS ON AGENDA ITEMS
One public comment. No action taken.

PUBLIC COMMENTS (GENERAL)
One public comment. No action taken.

HUMAN RESOURCES UPDATE
Dustin Cichocki stated that healthcare insurance open enrollment is open now for all staff. The district will be holding two informational sessions - one on retirement and one on the 457 plan for staff. Crisis Prevention (CPI) training has taken place over the last couple of weeks.

BUDGET UPDATE
Sonia Hodge stated she met with the Wellness Committee to review the Wellness Policy, which needs to be completed every 3 years. The committee consisted of teachers, parents, staff members and the food service director. The next meeting will take place on December 1. Recommendations from the committee will be brought to the Board of Education at the December Regular meeting. The Business Office has completed all the Skyward trainings.

CURRICULUM UPDATE
Steve Gough stated that the "no student streaming day" took place on October 29. There was a reduction of 20-35% of screen time throughout the district, depending on the building. Staff have also been given a survey about the day and so far the feedback is positive. The District Technology Team will meet on November 18. The team will be reviewing all the results including the staff survey. The district is engaging in a digital tools and screen time analysis using various platforms (for comparing results) - iBoss, Clever and Light Speed. This analysis will provide information broken down by date, building, grade level and classroom. The October 30 staff professional development day will focus on math.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT
Superintendent Fowler thanked staff and community members in honor of Veterans Day on November 11. Their service is not only an important safeguard for the freedoms received today, but important role models in the school system and for the next generation. He congratulated all the students who participated in the fall play as well as all our athletes. He stated that the cross country team competed at the Michigan International Speedway this weekend. He gave special recognition to cross county team members - Emma Putnam and Marshal Huhn. He thanked the Business Office and Taylor Boonenberg from Hungerford for the audit report and Dana Champion-Wigfield and Erin Walters for their inclusion report. He responded to a public comment regarding doing an anonymous survey of students and parents of athletics. He stated that there is a survey done, but it is not anonymous. The administration will continue to talk about this subject. He congratulated Pat Nugent, Jennifer Dougherty and Jared Blough for a successful re-election to the Board of Education. He also congratulated Senator Albert and Representative-elects Strong and Afendoulis on their wins.

BOARD COMMENTS
- Jared Blough thanked Dana Champion-Wigfield and Erin Walters for their inclusion report.
- Laurie Kuna thanked all the veterans.
- Jennifer Dougherty thanked Sonia Hodge and the Business Office for providing reliable and accurate budget information. She also reminded all that if there are books that parents do not want their child to access they should contact the Media Center and they will flag the account so those books are reviewed before they are checked out.
- Jessica Curtis recognized the student section leaders. She has heard from several people and other schools how they are doing an amazing job. This is a huge sense of belonging for all students - whether they play a sport or not.
- Pat Nugent thanked the Business Office for the unqualified opinion on the budget audit. Not all schools across the state are getting unqualified reports, which makes it difficult and uncomfortable for Boards of Education. He replied to a public comment by stating that is offensive to him for someone to say that the Board of Education promotes or glorifies suicide. It grossly misconstrues the books that are found in our libraries and the ways that the Board carefully and faithfully uses State grant money in the district. He thanked the 6,000 people who voted for him to be re-elected to the Board of Education. It shows Lowell voters support the work that he does as well as Mr. Blough and Mrs. Dougherty by re-electing them.
- Brian Krajewski reflected on the suicide of his best friend when he was in school. He has spent his entire life making sure to support kids and give them the support they need so they never experience what he did. So, when a member of the public says that he glorifies suicide it makes him want to tell everyone that there is someone out there that can help and to know there is a tomorrow. Mr. Krajewski will support any funding that will put more support in counseling and more support for kids.