

The Board of Education of LaHarpe Community School District #347 held a special School Board meeting on 13 January 2026 in the Board room. President Dustin Detherage called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm. Roll call was answered by Blythe, Dowell, Burt, Detherage, Deitrich, Gebhardt, and Walker.

Visitor in attendance: Laura Jones, Jadrien VanFleet, Julie Garrison, Susan Bray, and Ashley Cox

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

A Moment of Silence was observed.

Public Comment:

Laura Jones spoke of having potential financial concerns for the district if the rumors in the public she is hearing are correct. She is hearing rumors that the board wants to get rid of the Superintendent. She was worried how financially detrimental that would be for the district at this time with the project going on and if an interim superintendent needed to be hired that could cost the district between \$1200 and \$1500 a day. She stated that the morale at the school before all of this has been so good.

Jadrien Van Fleet spoke as well. She said she is worried about the culture at the school. She said Janet is the glue that holds us together. She knows Janet has her back. She will be disappointed if Janet leaves.

Julie Garrison stated that the climate and the culture in the school is going down. She said this shouldn't be an issue. She said having Kayla as her student teacher would be a conflict of interest because her husband is the vice president of the school board. The union says it is a conflict of interest. Kayla throws Josh's name around and it creates an uneasy environment. She doesn't want to work in that environment. She stated that Janet is taking the blunt of all of this for supporting her decision. She said Janet has accomplished so much, she has gotten grants to cover school supplies.

Susan Bray said that Janet has done such wonderful things and this situation has been totally blown out of proportion. She has gotten the school certified teachers. Homeschool kids are coming back to school because of the positive changes. She said she feels like there needs to be a policy against board members spouses working here.

Ashley Cox stated she has been teaching here at LaHarpe for 14 years. She said she got word today that she is retaliating against Kayla over the situation from last year. She said she chose not to take a student teacher because she holds herself to the same standard as Sherry Beals and Melissa Johnson and she does not feel like she is that caliber of a teacher. She stated there is a lot of tension, she is really bummed about all of it. She said she doesn't always agree with Janet but she knows Janet and Ryan have her back.

Business Items:

Approval of the agenda.

A motion was made by Gebhardt with a second by Walker to approve the agenda.

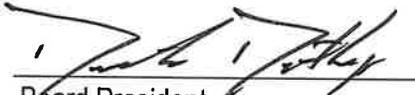
Roll Call: Blythe- yes; Burt – yes; Detherage – yes; Dowell – yes; Walker – yes; Gebhardt – yes; Deitrich– yes; Motion Carried 7 – yay, 0 – abstain, 0 – nay, 0 – Absent: Motion Carried: 7-0.

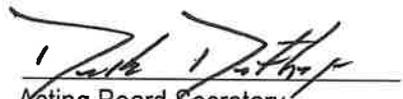
A motion was made by Blythe with a second by Dowell to adjourn to closed session to discuss items per 5ILCS 120/2/(c)(1). The appointment, employment, compensation, discipline, performance, or dismissal of specific employees of the District; and (15) closed session minutes at 6:17pm. Roll Call: Blythe- yes; Burt – yes; Detherage – yes; Dowell – yes; Walker – yes; Gebhardt – yes; Deitrich– yes; Motion Carried 7 – yay, 0 – abstain, 0 – nay, 0 – Absent: Motion Carried: 7-0.

Closed session was called to order at 6:17pm. Roll Call: Blythe- yes; Burt – yes; Detherage – yes; Dowell – yes; Walker – yes; Gebhardt – yes; Deitrich– yes; Motion Carried 7 – yay, 0 – abstain, 0 – nay, 0 – Absent: Motion Carried: 7-0.

A motion was made by Dowell with a second by Blythe to adjourn closed session at 8:01pm. Roll Call: Blythe- yes; Burt – yes; Detherage – yes; Dowell – yes; Walker – yes; Gebhardt – yes; Deitrich– yes; Motion Carried 7 – yay, 0 – abstain, 0 – nay, 0 – Absent: Motion Carried: 7-0.

A motion was made by Gebhardt with a second by Dowell to adjourn the 13 January 2026 special board meeting at 8:01pm. (voice vote)


Board President


Acting Board Secretary

1-20-26
Date Approved