

The Board of Education of LaHarpe Community School District #347 held a regular School Board meeting on 16 September 2025 in the Board room. President Dustin Detherage called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm. Roll call was answered by Blythe, Dowell, Deitrich, Burt, Detherage, Gebhardt, and Walker. Superintendent Janet Gladu, Board Secretary Liz McCarter, and Principal Ryan Hopper were also in attendance.

Visitors in attendance were Niki Pence, Josie Thomas, and Jennifer Hobby

A Moment of Silence was observed.

Public Comment: none

Business Items:

The Consent Agenda included the approval of the agenda, Open Meeting Minutes of the 19 August 2025 Regular Board Meeting Minutes of the LaHarpe CSD 347 School, Financial Reports, Individual Fund Balances, Payment of Bills, action to delete the verbatim closed session meeting records that were 18 months and older, FOIA requests, Aubrey Porters maternity leave request, Denise Kost's resignation due to retirement, 2024-2025 Administrator and Teacher Salary Benefit Report, and 2025-2026 Administrative cost worksheet.

A motion was made by Walker with a second by Deitrich to approve the items on the Consent Agenda: Open Meeting Minutes of the 19 August 2025 Regular Board Meeting Minutes of the LaHarpe CSD 347 School. Financial Reports, Individual Fund Balances, Payment of Bills, action to delete the verbatim closed session meeting records that were 18 months and older, FOIA requests, Aubrey Porters maternity leave request, Denise Kost's resignation due to retirement, 2024-2025 Administrator and Teacher Salary Benefit Report, and 2025-2026 Administrative cost worksheet. Roll Call: Deitrich – yes; Burt- yes; Blythe – yes; Detherage – yes; Dowell – yes; Gebhardt – yes; Walker – yes; Motion Carried 7 – yay, 0 – abstain, 0 – nay, Motion Carried: 7-0.

PTO Donation of a Gaga Pit: Josie Thomas presented the board with the intent to donate a Gaga Pit for the playground. She stated they would not be purchasing the floor, it is not necessary and it increases the cost. She also stated they have someone to install the pit, it just needs to be in a grassy area on the playground. It is 20ft and it will hold 25 students at a time.

A motion was made by Gebhardt with a second by Blythe to approve the donation of a Gaga Pit from the La Harpe PTO. Roll Call: Deitrich – yes; Burt- yes; Blythe – yes; Detherage – yes; Dowell – yes; Gebhardt – yes; Walker – yes; Motion Carried 7 – yay, 0 – abstain, 0 – nay, Motion Carried: 7-0.

Fiscal Year 2026 Budget Hearing: Superintendent Gladu stated that the proposed budget has inflated expenditures and deflated all revenues. Cafeteria bonds are not included in the budget. Superintendent Gladu reminded the board that this is the last year of the Teacher Vacancy Grant. At this point, grant money is lower than last year. The budget reflects the increases in salaries and personnel. There are additional employees this school year, compared to the end of the school year, May 2025. Superintendent Gladu shared the following budgetary comparison:

Fund	July 1, 2026 Cash on Hand	June 30, 2026 Cash on Hand	Difference	Difference
10 -Education	\$2,014,771	\$2,098,367	Increase of \$83,596	Increase 4.1%
20 – O & M (Bldg.)	\$431,142	\$486,081	Increase of \$54,939	Increase 12.7%
30 – Bonds	\$95,707	\$104,060	Increase of \$8,353	Increase of 8.7%
40- Transportation	\$196,871	\$291,746	Increase of \$94,875	Increase of 48.1%
50 – IMRF	\$67,268	\$75,907	Increase of \$8,639	Increase of 12.8%
60 – Capital Projects	\$0	0	0	0
70 – Working Cash	\$42,542	\$47,687	Increase of \$5,145	Increase of 12.09%
80 – Tort	\$100,387	\$101,468	Increase of \$1,081	Increase of 1%
90 – Fire Prevention	\$228,936	\$229,130	Increase of \$194	Increase of 0.08%
Total Fund Balance	FY2025 \$3,177,624	FY2026 \$3,434,446	Increase of fund balances by \$256,822	Increase of 8.08%

Approval of Fiscal Year 2026 Budget. A motion was made Gebhardt with a second by Dowell to approve the Fiscal Year 2026 Budget. Roll Call: Deitrich – yes; Burt- yes; Blythe – yes; Detherage – yes; Dowell – yes; Gebhardt – yes; Walker – yes; Motion Carried 7 – yay, 0 – abstain, 0 – nay, Motion Carried: 7-0.

Architecnics: Superintendent Gladu shared that district personnel met with the architect on September 12, 2025. The proposed changes from that meeting included a few minor shifts in the floor plan, with space being added between the ovens and serving line as well as additional exterior lighting. The project will go out for bid by mid-October and construction starting March/April. The total for the architect design fee was \$329,820.26. Burt asked if we had talked with city council about the crosswalk moving. Detherage stated that is something they talk to IDOT about because it is a highway.

Cafeteria Bonds: Superintendent Gladu shared that Tim King will be at our October Board meeting. He is talking to Fortress and Raritan about bond sales. He is estimating that our EAV increases 6% each year. The EAV for the last 20 years has averaged 5.89% with a high of 11.8%. Option 1 has 15-year payback with some refunding/refinancing of current bonds. Option 2 is a 13-year payback. Option 2 includes the district putting \$70,000 of Johnson Ground monies towards the levy payment. Detherage stated that he thinks 15-year seems best looking at it now. Dowell stated that if we choose option 1, next year we could still vote to pay extra towards the bonds. She also stated that she is all about the quicker payoff. Detherage stated that option 2 does not lock us into paying that much. He said that there may be years where the money needs to go to other high cost needs. Blythe stated that option 2 seemed better. Detherage said yes, if the current board votes to stay with the decision of the previous board to pay the \$70,000 from the Johnson Ground money. Gebhardt stated that the Johnson Ground money may go up and crops could take it down. Deitrich said they will just have to choose what they think is best because you can't predict the future. Detherage asked if everyone was ok with the 15 year. Walker asked if we need to look at doing a

demo of the old buildings with these bonds as well. Detherage stated these bonds won't cover that. Blythe stated that she thinks we need to retest the buildings that need demolished. Dowell stated we need to focus on building the new building. Walker voiced concern about the parking problem. He stated there is not enough parking for events and sporting events. He asked about getting gravel where the old Corey House was. Dowell mentioned talking to the park district about using their parking lot because it is not that far to walk when the school has events.

Tax Year	EAV	Growth Rate	Highest Growth Rate	Recommended Rate
2025	\$76,104,281	6.4%	11.8%	5.89% - mean of all years
2024	\$71,526,580	6.23%		
2023	\$67,328,884	9.34%		
2022	\$61,624,081	11.8%		
2021	\$55,106,687	6.5%		
2020	\$51,716,636	4.7%		
2019	\$49,389,880	3.9%		
2018	\$47,771,079	4.3%		
2017	\$45,781,043	9.7%		
2016	\$41,707,726	0		
2015	\$41,707,276	1.99%		
2014	\$40,894,375	5.06%		
2013	\$38,923,579	9.2%		
2012	\$35,631,364	3.56%		
2011	\$34,404,440	5.78%		
2010	\$32,523,806	3.68%		
2009	\$31,369,265	7.25%		
2008	\$29,248,079	9.10%		
2007	\$26,807,886	4.28%		
2006	\$25,707,444	5.59%		
2005	\$24,346,051			

Cafeteria Project District Cash on Hand. Detherage stated in the brochure we handed out at the informational meetings the board stated the district would pay \$300,000. Currently we are right at the \$100,000 with the Architect bill this month, and another \$100,000 for the bathrooms. Gladu stated we will owe the architect another \$115,000 before bidding. Detherage stated we need to move \$100,000. Gladu mentioned once she moves it she can not move it back. Dowell stated we should move it as needed like mentioned at the meeting last month.

Exterior Double Door Window Security Film: Gladu presented two quotes from NGS for the window security film for the exterior doors. Gladu stated this is the same film we have on the interior windows. Superintendent Gladu recommends the Madico film. Dowell asked if they have the same warranty and guarantee.

A motion was made by Walker with a second by Blythe to approve the quote from NGS for Madico Safety Film on the exterior doors. Roll Call: Deitrich – yes; Burt- yes; Blythe – yes; Detherage – yes; Dowell – yes; Gebhardt – yes; Walker – yes; Motion Carried 7 – yay, 0 – abstain, 0 – nay, Motion Carried: 7-0.

Newspaper Usage: The two local newspaper usage and costs were discussed to make sure we are utilizing district funds optimally. Gebhardt asked if we are putting the same information in both papers due to the cost differences. Gladu stated we only do both if it is required. Detherage stated that it is fiscally responsible to check on the lowest price. Burt stated that the paper should depend on who the audience is. Detherage suggested calling before placing an ad in either paper to compare cost. Dowell stated the Journal Pilot has a leg up on the Quill because it is a bigger paper. Detherage stated it is not a problem to call and compare prices.

Reports:

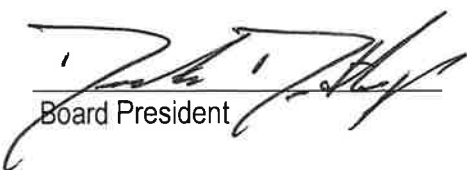
Board Committee: Nothing to report

Board Members: Burt asked if getting board approval for donations was a new thing because we have received other donations without them being approved. Gladu stated that she just went to a training and they talked about donations and board policy. Board Policy states any donation over \$500 must be approved by the board. Burt mentioned he appreciated that American flag being placed in the board room. He asked if there was a reason the board does not say the Pledge of Allegiance at the beginning of the meetings. Detherage stated we never have before but he agreed it could be added to the meetings. Detherage asked if any of the other board members had a problem with it. Walker said he didn't think they needed to. Detherage said it would be added to the agenda to discuss and vote on next meeting.

Principal/Athletic Director: Hopper reported he had a meeting with staff where they discussed a book they are reading called "Just Read It". The book focuses on silent independent reading and the benefits of doing this on a regular basis as a school community. This year the school started something called "Drop Everything and Read". Students and Staff are encouraged when directed over the intercom to drop everything and read a book for ten minutes. When the time is up the class is encouraged to share with each other about what they read. Students responded well to this when they did it last week. Hopper also shared the PTO had a raffle at Back to School Night and a student won a firetruck ride to school. The other students lined up outside and the student absolutely loved it. School pictures were taken on September 12th and went well. Homecoming dress up days are this week led by student council and the staff are doing a float for the homecoming parade at Illini West. Baseball is finishing up. We hosted regionals. The team ended up with a record of 9-10. Girls basketball is starting and they are hoping for another strong season. Tryouts were held for 6th graders who wanted to play up. They moved up one 6th grader from Dallas City and one from La Harpe. We are hosting Regionals and Sectionals this year for both 7th and 8th grade. Detherage stated this shows what a great facility we have. Everything with transportation is going well. Bus Safety was completed the first week of school by Mark Mathew.

Superintendent: Superintendent Gladu stated the August Team Member of the Month was John Draws. She also mentioned the PTO purchased each staff member a t-shirt at the beginning of the year. Pre-K training finished up this week. Gladu stated that board members are eligible for First Net if they are interested. Gebhardt asked if we are still using Navigate360. She stated the Elementary staff are going through a book called "Text Structures and Picture Books". Next month all staff will have a meeting and will discuss the book "The Anxious Generation". Superintendent Gladu stated that the tentative 2025 levy will be on the October Board Agenda and that the Title IX Coordinator and Complaint Managers had completed their required Title IX training.

A motion was made by Detherage with a second by Gebhardt to adjourn the 16 September 2025 board meeting at 6:59 pm (voice vote).


Board President


Board Secretary

10-21-25
Date Approved

