

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF LA HARPE SCHOOL DISTRICT #347 IN THE PD ROOM ON September 23, 2026.

The meeting was called to order by President Detherage at 6:00pm in the PD Room. The following board members answered roll call. Blythe, Burt, Deitrich, Detherage and Dowell. Also present were Interim Superintendent Grimm, Principal Hopper, and Board Secretary McCarter. Visitors in attendance were Laura Jones and John Quigle.

President Detherage led those in attendance in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

The Board observed a moment of silence.

Interim Superintendent Grimm encouraged the Board to spend a few minutes at each meeting highlighting the good things that are happening in the district.

GOOD NEWS ITEMS:

- Superintendent Grimm mentioned we received a letter from the State Board of Education stating that our Special Ed Department is in full compliance with no deficiencies and he praised Susan Pratt for her hard work.
- The baseball team was praised for the great season they had.

APPROVE AGENDA:

Motion by Dowell with a second by Burt to approve the agenda as presented.

Roll Call Blythe – yes; Burt- yes; Dowell – yes; Deitrich – yes; Gebhardt – absent; Detherage – yes; Walker – absent. Motion Carried 5-0.

COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC:

Public comment was heard by Laura Jones speaking for Amy Simmons regarding Science Olympiad and the project the board is working on for that organization.

PUBLIC HEARING REGARDING FY 27 DISTRICT BUDGET:

Detherage called the public meeting to order at 6:05pm.

Roll Call Blythe – yes; Burt- yes; Dowell – yes; Deitrich – yes; Gebhardt – absent; Detherage – yes; Walker – absent. Motion Carried 5-0.

There was no public comment regarding the proposed budget. The board thanked Laura Jones for her hard work.

A motion was made by Blythe with a second by Deitrich to adjourn the Public Hearing at 6:06pm.

Roll Call Blythe – yes; Burt- yes; Dowell – yes; Deitrich – yes; Gebhardt – absent; Detherage – yes; Walker – absent. Motion Carried 5-0.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Motion by Detherage with a second by Blythe to approve the following board meeting minutes.

D. Regular Meeting, August 24, 2026

E. Closed Session, August 24, 2026

Roll Call Blythe – yes; Burt- yes; Dowell – yes; Deitrich – yes; Gebhardt – absent;
Detherage – yes; Walker – absent. Motion Carried 5-0.

FINANCIAL ACTIVITY:

A motion was made by Dowell with a second by Detherage to approve the payment of the September Bills as presented, as well as the approval of the September Fund Balance Report, and the Approval of the August District Financial Report.

Roll Call Blythe – yes; Burt- yes; Dowell – yes; Deitrich – yes; Gebhardt – absent;
Detherage – yes; Walker – absent. Motion Carried 5-0.

CONSENT AGENDA:

- A. Approval to Apply for FY 27 Maintenance Grant.
- B. Approval of Change Orders for the Lobby Bathroom Project.
- C. Approval of Walk in Freezer and Grain Bin on FFA Property as Surplus District Property
- D. Approval of Waiver of admission fees for LH and DC 5th-8th grade students to home events.
- E. Approval of Waiver of PM Kindergarten Milk Fees.
- F. Approval of FY27 Employee Handbook

A motion was made by Blythe with a second by Burt to approve the Consent Agenda as presented.

Roll Call Blythe – yes; Burt- yes; Dowell – yes; Deitrich – yes; Gebhardt – absent;
Detherage – yes; Walker – absent. Motion Carried 5-0.

ACTION ITEMS:

APPROVAL OF THE FY 27 DISTRICT BUDGET:

A motion was made by Detherage with a second by Blythe to approve the FY 27 Budget as presented.

Roll Call Blythe – yes; Burt- yes; Dowell – yes; Deitrich – yes; Gebhardt – absent;
Detherage – yes; Walker – absent. Motion Carried 5-0.

APPROVAL OF THE DONATION TO IW BOOSTER CLUB BATHROOM PROJECT: There was no board action taken.

APPROVAL OF BOARD POLICY 7:70 STUDENTS – ATTENDANCE AND TRUANCY:

The current policy was reviewed against ISBE guidelines and there were no changes made.

A motion was made by Dowell with a second by Deitrich to approve the two year review of Board Policy 7:70 – Students Attendance and Truancy showing no changes to the policy as required.

Roll Call Blythe – yes; Burt- yes; Dowell – yes; Deitrich – yes; Gebhardt – absent;
Detherage – yes; Walker – absent. Motion Carried 5-0.

APPROVAL OF PROPOSAL FROM ARCHITECHNICS FOR HVAC STUDY:

It was stated that through building meetings and conversations with Michael it is apparent there are multiple systems in place for different parts of our HVAC system and that multiple parts of our system are outdated and/or don't work properly. We are not currently meeting all the standards that are in place for these systems. In several cases the systems do not speak to each other. Our system can only be controlled by a computer in our boiler room. There are no remote capabilities in place so that Michael can monitor or change our control setting from anywhere but in the building. This is a proposal for our current architect to do a comprehensive study to see what is needed to get to where we need to be with all of this. They will report the results to the board and then upon approval would prepare the bid documents in order to be out for bid in January or February of 2027. Mr. Grimm also suggested if this is approved that Architechnics do this study as part of the Health Life Safety system and pay for this study using HLS funds.

A motion was made by Burt with a second by Dowell to approve the proposal from Architechnics to conduct a comprehensive review of the District's HVAC system in the amount of \$20,000 as presented.

Roll Call Blythe – yes; Burt- yes; Dowell – yes; Deitrich – yes; Gebhardt – absent; Detherage – yes; Walker – absent. Motion Carried 5-0.

APPROVAL OF A \$50 WALMART GIFT CARD FOR STAFF:

Discussion was had regarding the gift of the ham and turkey that are given each year to staff for the Holiday's. Dowell suggested giving a gift card instead of the ham and turkey. It was also discussed that these would be handed out the day of the Veteran's Day program.

A motion was made by Deitrich with a second by Dowell to approve the staff gift of a \$50 Walmart gift card to each staff member.

Roll Call Blythe – yes; Burt- yes; Dowell – yes; Deitrich – yes; Gebhardt – absent; Detherage – yes; Walker – absent. Motion Carried 5-0.

REPORTS:

Board Committee – It will be taken to the sports co-op to talk about school sponsored softball. Ryan will check on Title IX to make sure this is even something we can do. Dowell stated that when we discussed this earlier we said if we offer this it will be school sponsored not parent sponsored.

Dowell stated that the fire chief came to her with concerns over them not being able to get to the sprinklers in the boiler room due to the construction.

Deitrich stated that parents had brought concerns to her because students in the Elementary hallway are leaving lunches on the benches. Mr. Hopper stated he hadn't heard this concern but he would look into it.

Superintendent- Mr. Grimm updated the Board on the plans to move the hood in the cafeteria. He stated the kitchen will need to be closed for 6 weeks in order to get the hood taken apart and moved. There have been discussions with the Park District about renting the clubhouse. The food will be prepared there and transferred in warmers to the East of the cafeteria to serve from

there. Mr. Grimm discussed the QFB Energy contract which is our current contract for energy. The contract is up in October. Mr. Grimm is requesting the board to allow him to enter into a verbal agreement for a 12mth period. He will bring the One-year contract in October to meeting. He is also looking into opportunities for solar. He stated that Title Grants were approved and Title money can be spent now. He also updated the board on the meeting that he had with QNS. Mr. Grimm updated the board on FOIA requests.

An update was given regarding the boiler project. The state inspector and ROE will be in the building October 6, 2026. Concerns have been voiced to the building manager regarding the tiles in the bathrooms. The issues with the soap dispensers were also discussed. It was suggested that the tile layer be supervised better when they start working in the new addition so things don't have to be redone. Mr. Grimm stated that he would bring that up in the next building meeting. Burt brought up issues with the hand dryers.

Principal- There was discussion about the new Student Newsletter Mrs. Porter is doing with the 6th grade class. There was discussion about Lunch Bunch led by Mrs. Goettsche and Mrs. Pratt. Mr. Hopper talked about a lesson he attended in music class. He discussed peer tutoring, and Spirit Week.

Mr. Hopper stated that Baseball is over. They finished with a 13-4 record. Girls basketball has started. The 7th grade team had 6 girls so they had tryouts for the 6th graders. Two girls showed up to try out and both made the team. The 8th grade teach has seven players.

Transportation Mr. Hopper stated is going well. There are some typical bus inspections and maintenance in the last two weeks but all 6 busses are in the garage and ready to use.

DISCUSSION ITEMS:

- A. UPDATE ON PROJECTS: An update was given on the building addition and projects as well as the boiler replacement.
- B. FOIA REQUESTS: Mr. Grimm updated the board on current FOIA requests.
- C. PEANUT PRODUCTS AND FOOD ALLERGY MANAGEMENT POLICY: A policy was presented and discussed to approve at the October meeting. The school does not currently have a policy like this in place.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS: There were none presented at the meeting.

CLOSED SESSION:

A motion was made by Blythe with a second by Dowell to adjourn to closed session at 7:23pm to discuss items pursuant to 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(1)(10) The appointment, employment, compensation, discipline, performance, or dismissal of specific employees, specific individuals who serve as independent contractors in an educational setting, or specific volunteers of the District, including hearing testimony on a complaint lodged against an employee, a specific individual who serves as an independent contractor in an educational setting, or a volunteer of the District to determine its validity & 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(21) Discussion of minutes of meetings lawfully closed under this Act, whether for purposes of approval by the body of the minutes or semi-annual review of the minutes as mandated by Section 2.06.

Roll Call Blythe – yes; Burt- yes; Dowell – yes; Deitrich – yes; Gebhardt – absent; Detherage – yes; Walker – absent. Motion Carried 5-0.

Also in attendance were: Ralph Grimm – Interim Superintendent, Liz McCarter – Board Recording Secretary, and Ryan Hopper – Principal.

Discussion was had regarding personnel matters.

A motion was made by Dowell with a second by Blythe to adjourn the closed session at 7:43pm. Majority of Ayes by voice vote. Motion carried.

A motion was made by Detherage with a second by Deitrich to return to open session at 7:44pm. Majority of Ayes by voice vote. Motion carried.

Meeting was called to order at 7:44pm by President Detherage.

Roll Call Blythe – yes; Burt- yes; Dowell – yes; Deitrich – yes; Gebhardt – absent; Detherage – yes; Walker – absent. Motion Carried 5-0.

ACTION AFTER CLOSED SESSION:

- A. Retirements/Leaves – None
- B. Transfers – None
- C. Resignation –None
- D. Extracurricular Employment – None
- E. Employment
 - a. Part Time Crossing Guard – Mr. Grimm recommended the board approve the employment of Kris McCarter as a part-time crossing guard for one hour per day on student attendance days at an hourly rate of \$17.46 beginning Monday, September 28, 2026 as presented.

A motion was made by Blythe with a second by Detherage to hire Kris McCarter as a part-time crossing guard for one hour per day on student attendance days at an hourly rate of \$17.46 beginning Monday, September 28, 2026 as presented.

Roll Call Blythe – yes; Burt- yes; Dowell – yes; Deitrich – yes; Gebhardt – absent; Detherage – yes; Walker – absent. Motion Carried 5-0.

FUTURE MEETING DATES AND TIME:

- A. The board was reminded the next regular Board Meeting will be held on Tuesday, October 20, 2026 at 6:00pm in the PD Room.

ADJOURNMENT:

A motion was made by Deitrich with a second by Detherage to adjourn the September 23, 2026 board meeting at 7:49pm. Majority of Ayes by Voice Vote. Motion carried.

THESE MINUTES ARE APPROVED AS WRITTEN THIS 20th DAY OF OCTOBER, 2026.


Dustin Detherage, Board President


Liz McCarter, Board Secretary

