APPROVED

Lawrence Family Development Charter School

Minutes

LFDCS Board of Trustees Meeting-Zoom Only

Date and Time
Wednesday April 8, 2026 at 5:30 PM

Location
Zoom Only

Trustees Present
D. DeFillippo (remote), E. Nolberto (remote), G. Lopez (remote), J. Cedeno (remote), J. Henriquez (remote), J. Tejada (remote), L. McRae (remote), L. Perez (remote), R. Almanzar (remote)

Trustees Absent
C. Needham

Trustees who arrived after the meeting opened
J. Henriquez, R. Almanzar

Trustees who left before the meeting adjourned
J. Henriquez, R. Almanzar

Guests Present
A. Croes (remote), D. Thakkar (remote), H. Castleman (remote), L. Lawler (remote), M. Ventre (remote), N. Arpin (remote), Nicole Dean-Ward (remote), S. Stukuls (remote), Y. Rodriguez (remote), tmara@lfdcs.org (remote)

I. Opening Items

A.

Record Attendance

B. Call the Meeting to Order

G. Lopez called a meeting of the board of trustees of Lawrence Family Development Charter School to order on Wednesday Apr 8, 2026 at 5:37 PM.

C. Pledge of Allegiance

D. Approve minutes from the March 11, 2026 BOT Meeting

D. DeFillippo made a motion to approve the minutes from Board of Trustees Meeting on 03-11-26.
L. Perez seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

Roll Call

G. Lopez	Aye
R. Almanzar	Aye
J. Cedeno	Aye
L. Perez	Aye
J. Tejada	Aye
C. Needham	Absent
D. DeFillippo	Aye
J. Henriquez	Absent
E. Nolberto	Abstain
L. McRae	Abstain

II. Superintendent's Report

A. Update

Superintendent Darshan T. shared that the primary focus has been on the lease and the school’s financial documents. As a result, he does not have any additional updates to report at this time.

III. Assistant Superintendent's Report

A. Updates from the Assistant Superintendent

Assistant Superintendent Sally S. presented a first draft of a standing operating procedure for Board of Trustees attendance, developed in response to prior discussions. The document outlines relevant Massachusetts laws, meeting purpose, key definitions, expectations for attendance, procedures for reporting absences, and potential consequences for excessive absences. She asked trustees to review the draft, provide feedback, particularly on highlighted sections, and share any questions ahead of a more in-depth discussion and finalization at the next meeting.

IV. Finance Department

A. Finances Update

Finance Director Mark V. shared an update on the school's finances and budget planning. He noted several key milestones, including the lease being signed, title insurance secured, and progress on preparing the FY27 budget. The school has implemented QuickBooks and completed financial reconciliations through February, with some remaining work on fixed assets. So far this year, about $1 million has been spent, including a large portion on facilities. The team is reviewing these costs to better understand spending and improve efficiency, and they are also considering switching payroll providers.

In terms of finances, the school has brought in $14.6 million in revenue so far. However, spending in some areas is higher than expected. Salaries and benefits are at 77% of expenses, which is above normal, and facilities costs are also much higher than typical. These will be the main focus areas when planning next year's budget. In addition, the school recently learned that DESE tuition funding will be reduced by about $450,000 this year, and federal grant funding has dropped by $2 million over the past two years, adding financial pressure.

Mark V. also explained that if the school had been able to purchase the campus instead of leasing it, it could have saved a significant amount of money. Because of the current financial situation, the school is looking at ways to reduce costs, such as cutting non-essential expenses, reviewing software usage, and making changes to benefits and services. Some administrative roles may be reduced, but instructional positions will not be affected. The budget process will continue with a focus on human capital in May, followed by a full budget proposal in June.

Linette P. asked whether any key roles would be eliminated as part of the budget adjustments. Mark V. confirmed that some positions may be reduced, but these would be primarily administrative roles. He emphasized that no instructional roles will be affected.

V. Principal's Report

A. Parent Coffee

Principal Hali C. shared that she presented the "breakfast in the classroom" initiative at the most recent parent coffee. She explained that the school will pilot this program in the spring to address low breakfast participation and improve the morning routine. Currently, students either eat in the cafeteria or carry food to their classrooms, which can be rushed and messy. The new approach will allow students to go to their classrooms and eat breakfast there while starting their morning meeting or advisory. The goal is to increase the number of students eating breakfast, which research shows can improve attendance,

focus, health, and academic performance, while also creating a calmer and more positive start to the day.

The pilot will begin in May with selected grade levels and run through the end of the school year so the school can make adjustments before launching it schoolwide in the fall. The schedule for families will not change. Students will still arrive between 7:30 and 8:00, but instead of stopping in the cafeteria, they will have breakfast ready in their classrooms starting at 7:45. The school has received a grant to support the program, and planning has included staff feedback, surveys, focus groups, and a visit to another local school already using this model.

During the discussion, Linette P. asked about cleanliness and potential pest issues. Hali C. explained that the current system actually creates more mess because students carry food through the hallways, leading to spills. By keeping food in classrooms and improving waste management with supplies funded by the grant, the school expects conditions to improve. Additional feedback from families and staff was positive, highlighting benefits such as smoother transitions, more instructional time, and stronger social connections as students share breakfast together. The school also plans to offer both hot and cold meal options and allow students some choice to reduce food waste and better meet their preferences.

Trustees Jennifer C. and Elizabeth N. shared their agreement with the breakfast in the classroom initiative.

B. School Site Council Meeting 03/25/2026

Hali C. also shared an update from the final School Site Council meeting of the year, which took place on March 25th. She noted that it was the best-attended meeting so far, with over 30 participants joining in person and online. The meeting included a brief presentation on the breakfast in the classroom initiative, but the main focus was to provide an open forum for families and staff to share what is working well and what could be improved, in support of overall school improvement.

During the discussion, several strengths were highlighted. Families and staff appreciated the school’s efforts to review and update curriculum across all subject areas, as well as the addition of curriculum specialists to better support teachers. There was also positive feedback on extracurricular activities, including expanded after-school programs and events, as well as strong participation in parent-teacher conferences. Improvements in communication, such as updates to the school’s website and materials, were also recognized.

Areas for growth were identified as well. Feedback included concerns about the timing and implementation of new curriculum, challenges with certain subject materials, and a

desire for more engaging and consistent homework. Families also suggested improving communication around student performance, ensuring earlier notification when students are struggling. Additional suggestions included expanding extracurricular options, improving how information is shared with families, and setting clearer expectations for student participation in activities.

Hali noted that this feedback has already been shared with the instructional leadership team and will be used to guide future improvements.

VI. Parent Student Handbook Revisions

A. No Nit Policy

J. Henriquez arrived at 6:11 PM.
Hali C. presented a proposed update to the school's head lice policy. She explained that the current "no-nit" policy, where students must stay home until all lice and eggs (nits) are removed, is now outdated and no longer aligned with guidance from the American Academy of Pediatrics and the National Association of School Nurses. Many school districts have already moved away from this approach.

Under the proposed change, if a student is found to have live lice, they will be sent home and must begin treatment before returning. However, if a student only has nits, they will be allowed to remain in school, unless they are too uncomfortable. Once treatment has started, the student can return, and the school nurse will check their hair to ensure there are no live lice. Hali C. also noted that due to privacy rules, the school cannot notify entire classrooms about individual cases.

Dave D. expressed support for the updated policy, noting that it aligns with current health guidance and reflects a more practical approach.
D. DeFillippo made a motion to adopt the No Nit Policy.
E. Nolberto seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

Roll Call

D. DeFillippo	Aye
C. Needham	Absent
L. Perez	Aye
R. Almanzar	Aye
J. Henriquez	Absent
G. Lopez	Aye
J. Tejada	Aye
E. Nolberto	Aye
L. McRae	Aye
J. Cedeno	Aye

B.

Pickup policy if called for student health

R. Almanzar left at 6:24 PM.

Hali C. presented a proposed update to the student illness pickup policy, noting that the current handbook does not clearly define expectations for how quickly students should be picked up when they become sick at school. She explained that in some cases, students are left waiting for extended periods after the nurse contacts a parent.

The proposed update would require that students be picked up within two hours of parent notification. If a parent cannot be reached or is unable to pick up the student, the school would contact the student's designated emergency contacts. The draft also included that if no caregiver is able to pick up the student within two hours, the school may file a 51A for neglect as a final step.

Trustees expressed concerns about the strictness of the timeline and the use of a 51A, noting that many families face barriers such as work schedules, transportation challenges, or limited support systems. Several members emphasized that not being able to pick up a child within two hours does not necessarily indicate neglect.

While there was agreement that sick students should not remain at school for long periods, trustees suggested adding more supportive steps before any formal reporting. These included requiring at least two emergency contacts per student, strengthening efforts to reach caregivers, and creating family support meetings or action plans for families who have repeated pickup challenges.

Hali C. agreed to revise the policy to include clearer escalation steps and return it for further review. Trustees also requested data on how often these situations occur to better understand the need for the policy update.
This item is tabled until the next meeting.

C. Hate Crimes Updates

Hali C. presented a proposed update to the school's bullying policy related to hate crime and bias-motivated behavior guidance. She explained that the recommendation is based on a Massachusetts Department of Education resource guide on hate crimes, and noted that all Massachusetts schools already have reporting procedures in place for bullying, harassment, and discrimination.

She stated that instead of creating a separate hate crime policy, the guidance recommends incorporating this language into the existing bullying policy. The proposed updates would clarify that the school's policy already covers harassment and discrimination, and would add explicit language addressing bias-motivated behavior. This

includes defining it as a form of harassment or discrimination and providing examples of what it may look like.

Hali C. also proposed adding new definitions to the handbook, including definitions for hate crimes and discrimination. Discrimination was defined as excluding individuals from participation, denying benefits, or treating members of protected groups unfairly under state or federal law.

In addition, she recommended updating the policy language throughout the bullying section to consistently include references to discrimination and bias-motivated incidents alongside bullying, retaliation, and harassment, to ensure these behaviors are clearly covered.

She also clarified that while the school does not determine whether an incident is legally a hate crime, any incident that may meet that threshold must be reported to law enforcement, since hate crimes are criminal matters handled by authorities rather than school investigators.

Hali C. explained that these updates are intended to strengthen and clarify the existing bullying policy by aligning it with state guidance and making expectations clearer for staff, students, and families. Trustees noted that the added definitions and examples would improve understanding and help reduce ambiguity in interpreting these terms.
D. DeFillippo made a motion to accept the changes to the bullying and harrassment policy to include hate crime and bias-motivated behavior guidance.
L. Perez seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

Roll Call

J. Cedeno	Aye
J. Tejada	Aye
G. Lopez	Aye
R. Almanzar	Absent
D. DeFillippo	Aye
C. Needham	Absent
L. McRae	Aye
E. Nolberto	Aye
L. Perez	Aye
J. Henriquez	Abstain

D. Promotion/Retention Policy

Hali C. presented proposed updates to the school's promotion guidelines, found on page 42 of the student handbook, which outline how students are promoted to the next grade level.
She explained that one of the updates removes outdated MCAS performance categories such as "advanced," "proficient," "needs improvement," and "warning," since those terms

are no longer used in current MCAS reporting or on the school's report cards. Instead, student performance is now reflected using a numerical grading scale from 0 to 100, which aligns with letter grades.

Hali C. clarified that the updated policy would more clearly outline the multiple measures used when considering grade promotion or retention decisions. These include classroom grades as well as internal and external assessments such as MAP, DIBELS, and MCAS. She noted that the previous policy did not clearly specify the criteria used in these decisions.

Another update corrects the attendance requirement. The existing language referenced five absences, but Hali C. clarified that the correct standard is 18 absences, which aligns with the definition of chronic absenteeism and the expectation of 90% attendance.

She also proposed adding clearer language stating that the school reserves the right to retain students based not only on attendance but also on academic performance. She explained that while retention is rare, it does occur in cases where students are significantly below grade level or failing multiple subjects, and this expectation was not clearly stated in the current handbook.

Trustees asked for clarification on how retention decisions are supported and communicated. Hali C. explained that most students who struggle academically are supported through interventions and may attend summer school, and that retention is typically considered only on a case-by-case basis after multiple supports have been provided.

Several members emphasized the importance of outlining the supports in place before retention is considered. Staff explained that the school uses an RTI (Response to Intervention) process, where students are regularly reviewed in teams, interventions are adjusted as needed, and progress is monitored over time. It was also noted that parents are notified during this process, and that a link or reference to the RTI process could be added to the handbook for clarity.

Trustees also raised broader concerns about communication between school and families, particularly around grades and academic progress being shared in real time rather than only at report card or parent conference periods. There were suggestions that clearer expectations for both teacher communication and parent notification should be included alongside the promotion policy.

Hali C. agreed to revise the language to better reflect both academic supports and communication practices, and to bring an updated version of the policy back for further review.
This policy will be tabled to the next meeting.
J. Henriquez left at 6:55 PM.

E. Homework Policy

Hali C. presented proposed updates to the homework policy, noting that the current system is becoming difficult to manage, especially in upper school grades where teachers may have up to 80 students. She explained that the existing policy allows students to receive partial credit for late homework, but it has become challenging for teachers to consistently track and grade late submissions throughout the term.

She shared that the proposed update would remove acceptance of late homework after the due date, in order to establish a clearer structure for deadlines and support consistency in grading. The intent, she explained, is also to help students develop stronger time management skills and better align expectations with high school practices.

Trustees raised mixed concerns about the change. Several members emphasized the importance of communication and support systems, noting that students and families may not always be fully aware of missing or late assignments until grades are already impacted. Others expressed concern that students should not be penalized due to breakdowns in communication or tracking systems.

Nicole A. explained that tools such as Schoology are used to post assignments, due dates, and reminders, and that students are expected to track their work through these systems. However, trustees and parents noted that communication across multiple platforms can still result in missed information and confusion.

There was general agreement that a clear cutoff for late work is needed to avoid end-of-term grading overload and to establish consistent expectations. Suggestions included setting a final deadline for accepting late work, such as one week before the end of the quarter, and ensuring that both students and parents receive advance notice of missing assignments.

Some members also suggested strengthening parent notification and acknowledgment of assignments, while others emphasized that exceptions may still need to be considered for unique circumstances, such as illness or emergencies.

Hali C. agreed to revise the policy to include a clearer timeline for late work submission and notification expectations, and the committee moved toward a vote with the proposed adjustments.
D. DeFillippo made a motion to accept the homework policy with the update that the missing work will be given until the week before the grades close/end of quarter to be accepted.
J. Tejada seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

Roll Call

D. DeFillippo	Aye
L. McRae	Aye
R. Almanzar	Absent
E. Nolberto	Aye
J. Tejada	Aye
L. Perez	Aye
J. Cedeno	Aye
J. Henriquez	Absent
G. Lopez	Aye
C. Needham	Absent

F. Timeout Policy

R. Almanzar arrived at 7:18 PM.
Hali C. presented proposed updates to the school's reflection room policy to align with recent Massachusetts Department of Education regulations, which were updated in February and will go into effect in August 2026. She explained that the current policy was last revised in 2016 and now needs to be updated to reflect the new state requirements.

She noted that one key clarification in the updated guidance is that the reflection room must be an unlocked space, and students must always be able to leave. Staff are also not permitted to physically block a student from exiting the room.

The updated language also emphasizes that staff supervising students should focus on co-regulation strategies, such as monitoring a student's physical cues and emotional state to determine when they have calmed. Students should not be required to complete specific tasks, such as counting or other activities, to prove they are ready to leave the space.

Hali C. also clarified facility requirements, noting that any space used as a reflection room must meet appropriate safety and building standards, including proper size, lighting, ventilation, temperature control, and overall safety compliance. She stated that the school is already in compliance with these requirements but is adding the language to ensure alignment with the updated regulations.

She introduced new language regarding behavior support planning. The update requires that when students demonstrate ongoing or escalating behavioral concerns that impact learning or safety, the school must develop a Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP). For students with disabilities, the IEP team must also address behavior needs within the student's individualized plan. A Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA) should be used to help identify the cause of behaviors and guide interventions focused on skill-building and prevention rather than exclusionary discipline.

She also noted that staff responsible for implementing behavior plans must receive appropriate training and supervision. Hali C. explained that these updates ensure the school's policy is consistent with state regulations and reflects a more supportive, skill-based approach to student behavior.
D. DeFillippo made a motion to accept the timeout policy.
E. Nolberto seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

Roll Call

J. Tejada	Aye
L. Perez	Aye
E. Nolberto	Aye
G. Lopez	Aye
R. Almanzar	Abstain
J. Cedeno	Aye
L. McRae	Aye
C. Needham	Absent
J. Henriquez	Absent
D. DeFillippo	Aye

G. Visitor Policy

Hali C. presented updates to the visitor policy to make expectations clearer and improve safety for everyone in the school.

She explained that all visitors must sign in at the front desk and wear a visitor badge at all times while inside the building. The badge must stay visible so staff always know who is in the school. If someone is in the building without a badge, staff may stop them, ask them to sign in, and if needed, escort them out.

She also clarified that visitor badges are not required during large school events such as open houses, graduations, concerts, and other school-sponsored events where many families are present.

The policy continues to require that visitors do not have unsupervised access to students. It also states that anyone who spends more than 10 hours per year in the school must complete a CORI background check, as required by law. This includes volunteers, contractors, and other regular visitors.

Hali C. recommended that visitors schedule appointments when meeting with teachers or administrators so staff can plan ahead and avoid interruptions during class time. Parents should still be allowed to come to the school without an appointment if there is an urgent concern, such as a safety issue, a serious problem involving their child, or a situation that needs immediate attention.

Hali C. explained that the school can limit future visits if a visitor behaves in a disruptive way. Written notice would be sent within one school day if this happens. She described disruptive behavior as yelling at staff at the front desk, using profanity or insulting language toward staff, refusing to leave the building when asked, demanding immediate access to staff who are not available, or acting in a physically intimidating way such as slamming objects or invading personal space. It also includes threatening language or actions toward staff or the school.

Some members of the board raised concerns that people may come into the school emotional or upset, and that speaking loudly or strongly does not always mean someone is being disrespectful or unsafe. They emphasized that the policy should not mistake emotional reactions or cultural differences in communication for misconduct, but should still address behavior that is clearly unsafe or threatening.

Hali C. shared that there have been real situations where visitors refused to leave, used aggressive language, or made staff feel unsafe at the front desk. They explained that the policy is needed to support staff and keep the building safe.

It was also noted that when a parent arrives without an appointment but has an urgent concern, front office staff should first listen to the concern and decide whether it needs immediate attention or can be scheduled for later the same day or another time.
Hali C. agreed to update the policy to include clearer examples, make appointments recommended instead of required, and add clearer steps for handling urgent walk-in situations.
This item is tabled until the next board meeting.

H. Updated Digital Policies

Hali C. presented updates to the digital policies. These updates are designed to make the handbook clearer and easier to navigate for families and staff. Currently, information about technology is spread across several different sections, including the library and media center policy, the acceptable use policy, parts of the discipline policy, and multiple forms. This can make it difficult to quickly find specific expectations or guidance.

The updated structure organizes all technology-related content into clearer, more defined sections.

One major change is the creation of a new section called Digital Learning, Instructional Technology, and Artificial Intelligence. This section explains the school’s overall philosophy rather than rules. It outlines how technology is used for teaching and learning, the school’s beliefs about digital instruction, how AI fits into education, and expectations for age-appropriate use and teacher practice. It does not include discipline, enforcement, or consequences, which are addressed in other sections.

The Acceptable Use Policy has also been refined. This section is focused strictly on appropriate use of technology. It includes expectations for device and account access, password security, and responsible use of school networks. It also outlines prohibited behaviors such as cyberbullying, hacking, accessing inappropriate content, or bypassing security systems. Privacy expectations are included as well, such as not recording or sharing photos or videos without permission. AI use is also addressed here, with the expectation that students may not use AI to complete independent assignments unless a teacher gives permission. This section focuses on rules for technology use, not instructional practices or philosophy.

The Academic Integrity Policy focuses on honesty and originality in student work. It defines expectations for academic honesty, including plagiarism and submitting work that is truly the student's own. It also provides clearer guidance on AI use, including appropriate uses such as brainstorming or skill practice when approved by a teacher, and prohibited uses such as submitting AI-generated work as final student work or using AI to replace independent thinking. This section does not include disciplinary procedures, which are covered elsewhere in the handbook.

A new section, Digital Citizenship and Family Partnership, has also been added. This section provides guidance for families on supporting responsible technology use at home and school. It includes suggestions such as encouraging respectful online behavior, having conversations about technology use, monitoring screen use when appropriate, and helping students understand expectations around digital tools and AI. It is intended as a resource for families rather than a set of requirements.

The Student Code of Conduct remains the section that outlines discipline. It explains behavioral expectations, how violations are addressed, and the steps of progressive discipline.

Several forms were also updated for clarity and consistency. The digital account consent form covers permission for students to access school platforms such as PowerSchool, Schoology, Google Classroom, and Clever, with a focus on privacy and account creation. The Chromebook agreement outlines expectations for care and use of school-issued devices, including insurance and repair costs, and is only required if families choose to allow students to bring devices home.

The library and media center policy remains in place but has been simplified to remove outdated references to devices. It now focuses solely on library materials and resources.

D. DeFillippo made a motion to accept the updated policies of digital use.
J. Tejada seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

Roll Call

J. Henriquez Absent

Roll Call

L. McRae	Aye
E. Nolberto	Aye
D. DeFillippo	Aye
J. Cedeno	Aye
C. Needham	Absent
J. Tejada	Aye
L. Perez	Aye
G. Lopez	Aye

I. Wellness Policy

Sally S. presented the wellness policy update. The policy is required to be reviewed and revised every three years. For this revision, the committee worked with wellness coaches provided by the Department of Education to evaluate the existing policy using an assessment tool. This process ensured that all required state and federal requirements were included and identified any gaps or areas needing updates, as well as incorporating recommended best practices.

Based on this review, a revised wellness policy was developed. The updated version is more comprehensive and aligns with both compliance requirements and best practice guidance.
A separate document was also created to outline all changes from the original policy. This comparison shows whether updates were required by regulation, reflect best practices, or were added because they were previously missing, and it also indicates where language was expanded or revised for clarity.

The updated policy has already been submitted to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) and has been approved as fully compliant. It is now being presented for final approval and a vote.
D. DeFillippo made a motion to accept the DESE approved Wellness Policy changes.
E. Nolberto seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

Roll Call

G. Lopez	Aye
J. Tejada	Aye
L. Perez	Aye
L. McRae	Aye
J. Cedeno	Aye
J. Henriquez	Absent
R. Almanzar	Aye
D. DeFillippo	Aye
E. Nolberto	Aye
C. Needham	Absent

J.

Cafeteria Policy

Hali C. presented the updated cafeteria policy, which is being renamed the school meals policy. The policy continues to outline student meal procedures and aligns with the district's wellness policy.

The main updates include the implementation of free breakfast and lunch for all students, as well as the introduction of breakfast in the classroom, which will be offered daily.

Aside from these changes, the expectations for the cafeteria remain the same as in the previous version of the policy. The key revisions focus on expanding meal access and adding the breakfast in the classroom program.
D. DeFillippo made a motion to accept the School Meals policy as written.
L. Perez seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

Roll Call

D. DeFillippo	Aye
L. McRae	Aye
E. Nolberto	Aye
G. Lopez	Aye
R. Almanzar	Aye
J. Tejada	Aye
L. Perez	Aye
J. Cedeno	Aye
J. Henriquez	Absent
C. Needham	Absent

VII. Employee Manual Revisions

A. Tuition Reimbursement

Mark V. presented updates to the tuition reimbursement policy.

The main change clarifies that employees must be employed for one full year before becoming eligible for tuition reimbursement. Staff who begin in August and complete a full school year may qualify for summer coursework reimbursement, but only if they remain employed, receive a renewal letter, and are still employed as of October 1st. This requirement is intended to ensure employees complete a full year of service and do not receive reimbursement before leaving the district.

The policy maintains the 75% reimbursement benefit, with no changes to the amount, and includes an annual cap of $7,500 per employee. Employees must earn at least a B- or C in eligible graduate courses. All coursework must be pre-approved before enrollment, and reimbursement is only issued after course completion and verification of eligibility.

Lynette M. asked about the risk of employees taking summer courses, receiving reimbursement eligibility, and then leaving shortly after October 1st. Mark V. responded that this risk is considered manageable and that the timing requirement is intended to ensure a reasonable period of continued employment after reimbursement eligibility. He noted that most employees would already have been working for several weeks by that point.

Lynette M. asked follow-up questions about how often similar situations have occurred and whether employees had previously received reimbursement and then left the district. Mark V. explained that there had been a small number of cases involving employees leaving after receiving reimbursement or submitting requests improperly without prior approval. He also reiterated that the policy now requires strict pre-approval before enrollment, completion of the course, and verification of all criteria before payment is issued.

Lynette M. also asked about the annual reimbursement limit, which was confirmed as $7,500 per employee, along with clarification on how the benefit is typically used across staff groups.

D. DeFillippo made a motion to accept the tuition reimbursement policy as written.
L. Perez seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

Roll Call

J. Henriquez	Absent
R. Almanzar	Aye
L. Perez	Aye
E. Nolberto	Aye
G. Lopez	Aye
C. Needham	Absent
J. Tejada	Aye
D. DeFillippo	Aye
L. McRae	Aye
J. Cedeno	Aye

VIII. Department Highlight

A. Mentoring at LFDCS

Tracey M. presented an overview of the school's teacher mentoring and induction program. She explained that the program is designed to support new and incoming educators as they transition into their roles, with the goal of strengthening and retaining a high-quality, diverse teaching workforce. The program is guided by updated DESE

requirements and focuses on providing structured support to ensure teachers have the tools they need to be successful in the classroom.

She described the year one mentoring model, which includes a three-day summer orientation, training for mentors, and ongoing support throughout the school year. New teachers are paired with mentors when possible and meet regularly for coaching, reflection, and goal setting. The program also includes reciprocal classroom observations, monthly mentor meetings, targeted professional development, and a required log of at least 50 mentoring hours. The program is structured around DESE teaching standards, including curriculum planning, instructional practice, family engagement, and professional responsibilities. Tracy also emphasized that new teachers are supported by a broader network that includes coaches, administrators, and specialists.

In year two, support continues through a structured professional learning course called *Studying Skillful Teacher*, along with individualized mentoring, additional classroom observations, and continued mentoring hours. She shared positive feedback from participants, who reported growth in areas such as instructional strategies, planning, student engagement, assessment practices, and cultural responsiveness. Looking ahead, she noted that the program continues to evolve, with ongoing efforts to refine mentoring structures and incorporate more flexible coaching models, including video reflection and differentiated support.

IX. Closing Items

A. Adjourn Meeting

E. Nolberto made a motion to adjourn.
D. DeFillippo seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

Roll Call

C. Needham	Absent
D. DeFillippo	Aye
E. Nolberto	Aye
R. Almanzar	Aye
J. Tejada	Aye
J. Henriquez	Absent
J. Cedeno	Aye
G. Lopez	Aye
L. Perez	Aye
L. McRae	Aye

There being no further business to be transacted, and upon motion duly made, seconded and approved, the meeting was adjourned at 8:37 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Y. Rodriguez

Documents used during the meeting

- SOP for BOT attendance.pdf
- BIC_ Parent Coffee 3.20.26.pptx
- School Site Council Notes 3.25.26.pdf
- SSC Minutes 03_25_2026.pdf
- Lice Policy.docx
- Student Illness Pick Up Policy.docx
- Hate Crime Policy.docx
- Promotion Guidelines.docx
- Homework Policy.docx
- Reflection Room Policy.docx
- School Visitor Policy.docx
- Proposed DL related edits for Parent-Student Handbook 2027.docx
- LFDCS_Draft Revision_ Wellness Policy 03.2026.docx
- Wellness Policy 11.13.23.pdf
- Cafeteria Policy p82.docx
- Draft_Tuition Reimbursement Handbook Update_02.10.26.docx
- Final Copy_ Mentoring at LFDCS- Board Presentation-April 2026.pptx