

The Board of Education of La Harpe Community School District #347 held a regular School Board meeting on 20 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, Gebhardt, Deitrich and Walker. Superintendent Gladu, Principal Ryan Hopper and Board Secretary Liz McCarter were also in attendance.

Visitors in attendance: Jennifer Hensley, Cathy Hensley, Randy Hensley, Brian Covert, Ashlee Goettsche, Laura Jones, Lorrie Harl, Amy Simmons, Joseph Hincks, Sharon Berlett, Michelle Detherage, Niki Pence, Courtney Painter, Julie Garrison, Jadrien VanFleet, Kassandra Duerr, Erin Neff, Denise Kost, Susan Bray, Madison Mershon, Carrie Finch, Lacey Barrera, Kayla Gebhardt, Leesa Swanson, John Draws, Jacques Reynolds.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

A Moment of Silence was observed.

Public Comment: Detherage notified the public that comments will be recorded to help with board notes.

Public comments were heard from Brian Covert regarding the 7th grade basketball season.

Public comments were heard from Amy Simmons. She presented the board with a letter.

Public comments were heard by Joe Hincks. He presented the board with a letter, which he also read.

Public comments were heard from Jennifer Hensley.

Public comment was next heard from Lacey Barrera.

Public comments were heard by Leesa Swanson.

Public comment was heard from Julie Garrison. Julie presented the board with a letter.

Public comments were heard from Carrie Finch.

Public comment was received in written correspondence from Kayla Gebhardt. Dustin Detherage read her letter.

Business Items:

The Consent Agenda included the approval of the agenda, Open Meeting Minutes of the 17 December 2025 Regular Board Meeting of the LaHarpe CSD 347 School, Open Meeting

Minutes of the 12 January 2026 Athletic Committee Meeting, Open Meeting Minutes of the 22 December 2025 Special Meeting, Open Meeting Minutes of the 13 January 2026 Special Meeting, Financial Reports, Individual Fund Balances, Payment of Bills, action to delete verbatim closed session meeting records that were 18 months and older, FOIA Requests.

To accept Donna Nell's Retirement resignation effective 30 May 2029.
To accept Carrie Finch's Retirement resignation effective 30 May 2030.

Fund — FY 2027

Education — \$2,466,662.80
Building — \$330,350.77
Debt Services — \$109,626.04
Transportation — \$145,195.37
IMRF — \$156,548.94
Capital Projects — \$4,000,000.00
Working Cash — \$47,591.34
TORT Immunity — \$191,894.09
Fire Prevention & Safety — \$224,922.84

Total — \$7,672,792.19

Comparison Year — Total

FY 2026 — \$3,822,923.57
FY 2025 — \$3,776,629.79
FY 2024 — \$3,813,449.86
FY 2023 — \$3,061,185.25
FY 2022 — \$2,423,966.80
FY 2021 — \$1,584,443.65

A motion was made by Dowell with a second by Blythe to approve the items on the Consent Agenda: Open Meeting Minutes of the 17 December, 2025 Regular Board Meeting of the LaHarpe CSD 347 School, Open Meeting Minutes of the 12 January 2026 Athletic Committee Meeting, Open Meeting Minutes of the 22 December 2025 Special Meeting, Open Meeting Minutes of the 13 January 2026 Special Meeting, Financial Reports, Individual Fund Balances, Payment of Bills, action to delete verbatim closed session meeting records that were 18 months and older, FOIA Requests.

To accept Donna Nell's Retirement resignation effective 30 May 2029.
To accept Carrie Finch's Retirement resignation effective 30 May 2030.

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.

8th Grade Graduation/Promotion Date:

Ryan Hopper recommended we hold 8th grade graduation on Friday, May 22, 2026 at 6pm. This is a date that does not conflict with the State Track Meet.

A motion was made by Gebhardt with a second by Burt to set 8th grade graduation for Friday, May 22, 2026 at 6pm.

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.

Appoint new District Auditor:

Superintendent Gladu stated that our current auditor has retired. She stated that she sent out multiple requests to auditors and two have submitted proposals. She said that Galleros Robinson is proposing a 3-year agreement for the following amounts: 2026 - \$25,000; 2027 - \$26,000; 2028 - \$27,000. Wipfli Advisory LLC is proposing a 3-year agreement for the following amounts: 2026 - \$26,000; 2027 - \$27,050; 2028 - \$28,150 – plus travel and admin/tech fee of 6%.

A motion was made by Blythe with a second by Deitrich to hire Galleros Robinson as the district auditors in the amount of \$25,000 for Fiscal Year 2026, \$26,000 for Fiscal Year 2027, and \$27,000 for Fiscal year 2028.

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.

Consider Bids for cafeteria addition and award project:

Superintendent Gladu stated that the board had the same bid sheets that were presented last month and that we had been advised by our attorney to accept the lowest responsible bid. The board discussed pending litigation against one of the bidders.

A motion was made by Detherage with a second by Gebhardt to approve the cafeteria addition project to Maas in the amount of \$3,450,000,000.

Roll Call: Blythe - yes; Burt – yes; Detherage – yes; Dowell – no
Walker – yes; Gebhardt – yes; Deitrich – yes

Motion Carried 6 – yay, 0 – abstain, 1 – nay, 0 – Absent: Motion Carried: 6-1.

Tree Removal by Maintenance Department: Three quotes were obtained for tree removal. Maynard's Tree Service, LT Land and Tree Service and Brock Richardson. Dowell asked that an additional, local company also be contacted for a bid, to which the board agreed. The board decided to table this.

2024-2025 Student Standardized Testing: Ryan Hopper discussed where we scored in comparison to state testing levels.

Reports:

Board Committee: None

Board Members: None

Principal: Ryan Hopper stated Elementary AIMS web testing had concluded and Jr. High AIMS web testing would soon follow. Both would be reviewed after completion. Ashlee Goettsche and Susan Pratt lead a hot chocolate party for honor roll students.

Athletic Director: Ryan Hopper stated that the 7th grade boys had finished their season with a record of 12-10. He heard a lot of positive feedback from parents and players at 8th grade night about the season.

Transportation: Ryan Hopper stated that things are going well and the bus drivers have been very flexible in covering all the extra driving duties.

Superintendent: Superintendent Gladu stated that new OMA law states that meetings on election days are prohibited. The March board meeting date will need to be changed.

A motion was made by Dowell with a second by Gebhardt to adjourn to closed session at 7:03pm to discuss items per 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(1). The appointment, employment, compensation, discipline, performance, or dismissal of specific employees of the district and (15) closed session minutes. 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 Walker to adjourn the January 20, 2026 closed session at 7:57. (voice vote)

A motion was made by Blythe with a second by Deitrich to return to open session at 8:01. (voice vote)

A motion was made by Detherage with a second by Burt to approve the closed session minutes from December 16, 2025, December 22, 2025 and January 13, 2026. 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 Detherage with a second by Gebhardt to extend Ryan Hopper's contract through June 30, 2031 with a salary increase of 8% for the 2026/2027 school year.

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.

Additional Public Comment:

Some staff members returned to the meeting after closed session.

Public comments were heard from Laura Jones. With responses from Detherage, Blythe, Deitrich, J. Gebhardt and Detherage again.

Public comments were heard from Ashley Cox. With response from J. Gebhardt, Detherage, Laura Jones and Detherage again.

Public comments were heard from Joe Hincks. With response from Julie Garrison and Dowell.

Public comment was heard from Deitrich.

A motion was made by Blythe with a second by Deitrich to adjourn the January 20, 2026, board meeting at 8:42pm. (Voice Vote)


Board President


Board Secretary

March 24, 2026
Date Approved

