

**Lower Merion Education Association  
Executive Council Meeting  
October 11, 2021**

**AGENDA**

CALL TO ORDER: President A. Avellino called the meeting to order at 4:21.

Approval of minutes from September: A. Thomas. 2nd V. Fedeli

**OFFICER REPORTS:**

President: Aimee Avellino

- Unfortunately, today's meeting begins on a sad note. We are mourning the sudden passing of Anthony Cappelli, a custodian at BC. He and his family have strong connections to LMEA and the LMSD community. His wife, Joanne, works at Welsh Valley and is an LMEA rep. His sister, Beverly Raschiatore works at Merion and his sister-in-law works at Gladwyne. His children attended LMSD schools, too. Our thoughts and prayers are with the family at this time. It is a great loss for the LMSD community and we acknowledge this loss with a moment of silence.
- Sometime this week the district will send a survey to staff to gather information prior to the opening of the new middle school. There will be two parts-part one about work environment & climate, and a second part about your current position and views on possible changes, etc. There will be significant changes next year ahead of the opening of the new middle school and we strongly encourage you to participate in the survey. Please encourage your staff members to participate, too. It shouldn't take long. This is your opportunity to provide input and feedback as the district moves forward.
- There have been a few emails since the start of the year where the district is looking for volunteers. You are under no obligation to volunteer for committees or meetings outside of the day. You can politely decline and you can remind others that they can decline as well.
- The LMSD website has a new section on the staff portal. There's a new tab for HR that gives HR team contact info and responsibilities so you know who to reach out to. This is a really great resource, so please spread the word. Other info will be added (for example maternity leave info, etc.) and we will let you know when there are updates. Reach out to A. Avellino with questions.
- V. Millard is joining our meeting. She is our PSEA Uniserv rep. She will be helping us navigate conversations around prep time, as this is on CNC's radar for the next round of negotiations. She will attend the next officers' meeting and CNC meeting to help us discuss pros and cons of placing language about prep time in our next contract.
- Absences & lack of substitutes continue to be an issue. LMSD is trying to get subs, but it is a systemic issue, not just contained to LMSD. Staff are entitled to and should use leave time as needed. Last minute things come up, but sometimes we know in advance. We are asking you to please encourage staff, when possible, to try to enter absences in advance so administrators can plan. It is understood that this isn't always possible, but when it is, please try to enter it online in advance.
- The Apple Core will be shared in the Executive Council meeting email. In this issue are details about the Maternity Leave workshop in November. Email A. Avellino to attend or to meet separately. The issue also contains an Outreach update, information about Weingarten cards & PSEA calendars that will be coming to locations soon. Please be sure to leave out the cards and calendars for staff with the flyer that will be sent from K. Salladino. There may not necessarily be enough calendars for everyone, but email KS or AA for more. Hold on to extras or return to AA. The Apple Core also contains a reminder for members to sign up for the LMEA Blast

Vice President, Support: Victor Fedeli

- No report.

Vice President, Professional: Kelly Cenicola

- No report.

First Vice President: Andy Thomas

- No report, but just a reminder to please check in with new special ed staff. Let A.Thomas know of any issues.

Secretary, Support: Lisa McDevitt

- No report.

Secretary, Professional: Karen Salladino

- No report, but just a reminder that we are still looking to fill several rep positions. A vacancy list will be included in the Executive Council follow up email.

Treasurer: Darlene Mandarino

- Financial statement sent with meeting reminder so that Executive Council members can look over before the meeting. Approval of the September Financial statement D.Mandarino, 2nd D. Williams. A. Avellino reminded everyone that the audit will be ready next month.

#### **COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

Outreach: Andria Johnson

- "Lemon Run" Oct. 30th. Details in the Apple Core.

Constitution:

- No report

Elections: Kelly Cenicola

- Anyone interested in attending the House of Delegates, please email K. Cenicola. At the General Membership meeting at 4:15 on 10/13 the only item on the agenda is voting for the House of Delegates. The LMEA office will be open for voting, or members can attend via the [Zoom link](#).

CNC

- No report.

Financial Advisory Committee: Aimee Avellino

- No report.

Health and Safety: Aimee Avellino, Larry Giaquinto

- After the last meeting there were questions about CO2 monitors. L. Giaquinto and A. Avellino are gathering more information and that info will be shared at the next meeting. H&S meetings continue to occur every month. If there is a concern, please start at the building level with the Head Custodian and then follow up with A. Avellino.

Legislation:

- No report.

Minority Affairs Committee: Dee Archer

- No report.

PACE: Andy Thomas

- No report. Forms for auto-contributions should be coming in soon...nothing to do if already signed-up, but encourage those that aren't to do so.

PR&R: Victor Fedeli, Andy Thomas

- Only 1 active in arbitration that was scheduled for 9/14, but then needed to be rescheduled. A settlement offer was made, but that offer was not accepted. November 1st is the potential date for an arbitration meeting.

Social: Lisa McDevitt, Aimee Avellino

- No report.

Special Services: Aimee Avellino

- No report.

Sunshine: Debbie Williams

- Sadly the LMEA has lost 3 members since the year began. Thank you for continuing to keep D. Williams informed.

Membership: David Grumbine

- Updated report will be shared via the Executive Council follow-up email.

#### **REPORTS OF THE AD HOC COMMITTEES:**

CARE: Jackie Gaines

- No report

Education Foundation: Andria Johnson

- No report.

#### **BUILDING AND DEPARTMENT REPORTS:**

Administration: No report.

Belmont Hills ES: No report.

Cynwyd ES: Folks questioning conferences being held both via zoom and in-person. There are health concerns as well as concerns with tech issues. Is that the format across all levels? Another question surrounds conferences at the elementary level and can we consolidate days for conferences. Could there be afternoon and evening conference slots all in one day instead of over 4 separate days? A. Avellino those concerns were brought to LMSD H&S, just like the Open House concerns and LMEA is strongly advocating for consistency for all levels. Talks are ongoing and plans are still being made.

Gladwyne ES: No report.

Merion ES: No report.

Penn Valley ES: Thank you to A. Thomas and A. Avellino for answering emails. Concerned about the LMEA contract not posted on LMEA website. A. Avellino stated that all information a member might need is available online. LMSD gave LMEA a copy of the changes made after the last round of

negotiations. Revisions were shared, so just waiting for the final draft to be shared so that it can be posted. Another concern is in regards to prep time. When we missed specials, members were told that their "guaranteed prep time was 8:25-9:05." A. Avellino stated that 8:25-9:00 is not "guaranteed prep time." That time is part of the contractual work day and administrators can assign tasks as needed. If there are concerns, please speak with the administrator to strategize coverage. Another concern is about time to prepare before having to Zoom for quarantined students. A. Avellino shared that she was given a day to prepare and share materials with a quarantined student. Reps should talk to admin to strategize. An additional concern was raised about equity among specialists, special ed teachers, gifted teachers, etc. during quarantine Zooms. A. Avellino stated that special education and gifted supports should continue as dictated by the child's IEP. Specials and other support resources are being worked on. There is a priority on academics and IEP support.

Penn Wynne ES: No report.

Bala Cynwyd MS: No report.

Welsh Valley MS: No report.

Harrington HS: Concern shared about a feeling of lessening respect on part of admin for teachers and staff. Members are requesting more militancy from the union against admin piling on extra responsibilities. A. Avellino requested specific contract violations be provided. Info was shared about past practices around missed prep time and comp time, but now evaluation meetings are during prep without comp. While not the letter of the law, it goes against past practice. V. Millard reminded members that prep time isn't in contract and it is quite difficult to prove past practice grievances unless the past practice is well-documented across the board for several years. A. Avellino shared that at the elementary level, evaluation meetings are quite often during prep time. V. Millard shared that "militant actions" need nearly 100% buy-in and in the recent past it was difficult to get large buy-in and turn out from members. A. Avellino encourages members to pass along areas of grievances where the contract is being routinely violated. A. Thomas acknowledged the concerns and suggested that the next contract will have more focus on these kinds of things, if there are specific examples to work with. A. Avellino encourages anyone who is having difficulty to speak to their admin. Another concern was about LMEA members wanting to leave LMEA. V. Millard asked that if you hear about people wanting to drop, please reach out to officers to discuss the many benefits of membership.

Lower Merion HS: Concern raised about timing for changes to insurance coverage being added to the HR site so that members are aware of timelines. A. Avellino can work with Eric Demkin to take care of that. Use this [link](#) to access the district's information about Health Insurance and Benefits. In the meantime, the following information from HR may be helpful:

If you experience a qualifying life event (QLE) after your initial enrollment period or outside of the annual open enrollment period, you have 31-calendar days from the event date to notify the Benefits Specialist to make any changes to your enrollment. A QLE includes the following: Divorce/Marriage, Birth/Adoption of a Child, Loss or gain of other healthcare insurance.

Another concern raised about whether two forms or one need to be completed for coursework and salary advancement. A. Avellino will follow up with E. Demkin for clarity. Use this [link](#) to access the district's information about salary advancement and tuition reimbursement. If members have concerns, they should reach out to E. Demkin with questions. A concern was raised about the discrepancy between time staff are required to respond to emails from families vs the time taken for the district to respond to staff. A concern was shared about the district charging people with sick time during mandatory quarantines may be leading people to not want to get tested. A. Avellino reminded members that if they are sick they should not be at work. It is irresponsible to come to work sick. The

district has a Covid hotline if there are questions about protocols. The district and LMEA have collaborated on a Health & Safety plan and it is every member's responsibility to follow it. If the plan is not followed, members can be disciplined. A concern was shared about cooperating teachers receiving an email from Alexis McGloin saying that any stipend received must be turned over to the district and set up in an activity fund to be used. A. Avellino was not aware of such a requirement and will look into the matter. A question was asked about the pathway to grieving something. A. Avellino shared that the PR & R committee is responsible for handling grievances. Reach out to A. Thomas or V. Fedeli with questions or concerns. A question was asked about what to say to members who have concerns about the benefits of being a member and if it is worth it. V. Millard will share information that K. Salladino will add to the Executive Council follow-up email. A. Avellino reminded members to use the district's survey as an opportunity to share concerns, thoughts and feelings about the work environment. The LMEA is strongly encouraging everyone to take advantage of this opportunity to share concerns. K. Cenicola added that within the survey there is an opportunity to share very specific concerns and to ask HR to contact you to discuss the concerns in follow-up conversations.

Building & Grounds: No report.

Transportation: No report.

At Large Reps: No report.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS: None.

NEW BUSINESS: None.

ADJOURNMENT: D. Mandarino 2nd R. Brooks