

I am submitting my resignation from my position as Clerk of the Board and Custodian of Records with the Lakeland Joint School District, effective 2/03/26.

This decision comes after careful thought and extensive conversations over the past few months. This resignation letter has been sitting in my drafts since September and after multiple attempts to endure I have finally reached a point that I can no longer continue employment as the Board Clerk and Custodian of records. The current board environment has become increasingly difficult to navigate, and continuing in this role would come at the expense of my wellbeing. Patterns of unprofessional conduct, a lack of respectful dialogue, and the way sensitive matters are handled have created conditions that make it impossible to carry out my responsibilities effectively.

One recurring issue is the way agenda items are presented. Items are often placed on the agenda with no context or supporting information, including matters in executive session. This leaves staff unprepared, creates confusion, and fosters anxiety about the board's intentions. Transparency and clarity are essential for effective governance, and without them, staff are left feeling uncertain and mistrustful.

Another concern is the tone of board meetings. Staff are frequently subjected to harsh and accusatory comments that go beyond constructive criticism. While disagreement is natural in governance, the manner in which these exchanges occur undermines collaboration and erodes confidence in leadership. This pattern of communication sends a message of hostility rather than partnership, which damages morale across the district.

Communication outside of meetings has also contributed to the problem. In person interactions, emails and replies from certain board members are often curt, dismissive, or condescending. Instead of fostering dialogue, this approach discourages staff from asking questions or offering input. Over time, this erodes trust and creates a culture where staff feel undervalued and unsupported.

I want to emphasize that my decision is not a reflection of the district office staff, who have consistently demonstrated professionalism, intelligence, and genuine dedication to the success of our schools. Their commitment to collaboration and student-centered service stands in contrast to the challenges within the board environment. Unless these issues are addressed, the cycle of turnover will continue. Board clerks will keep leaving, teachers and staff will feel unsupported, and the district will struggle to retain the talent it needs to thrive.

I remain grateful for the opportunity to serve the district and for the support of those who are committed to its mission. I truly hope you take the time to think about what I have said and make drastic changes to your behavior moving forward because the current state this district is in is not serving the students to the best of our abilities.

Sierra Schrader