



LIVINGSTON BOARD OF EDUCATION WORKSHOP/VOTING MEETING MINUTES

February 11, 2025

Executive Session - Administration Building - 6:00 p.m.

Public Session - Administration Building - 7:00 p.m.

A **Workshop/Voting Meeting** of the Livingston Board of Education was held on this date in the large conference room in the Administration Building and via a Facebook livestream. The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Seth Cohen, Board President, who announced that adequate notice of this meeting has been provided by amendment to notice approved at the Board's reorganization meeting on January 2, 2025 and posted at the Board of Education office and communicated to *The Star Ledger*, *West Essex Tribune*, *TAPinto Livingston* and the Livingston Township Clerk.

Members Present: Pamela Chirls, Seth Cohen, Fang Gong, Parul Khemka, Inna Yelisevich and Darcy Bialick

Also in Attendance: Dr. Daniel Fishbein, Jessica Rapp, Lisa Capone-Steiger, Mark Stern, Susan Burman and Joann Goldberg

Mrs. Chirls moved the following:

Executive Session

Whereas, the Open Public Meetings Act, N.J.S.A. 10:4-11, permits the Board of Education to meet in closed session to discuss certain matters; now, therefore be it

Resolved, that the Livingston Board of Education adjourns to closed session to discuss:

- legal, student matters and personnel

Action may be taken upon return to the public session. The full length of the meeting is anticipated to be approximately 60 minutes; and be it

Further Resolved, the minutes of this closed session be made public when the need for confidentiality no longer exists.

Mrs. Khemka seconded the motion.

Vote all in favor.

At 7:09 p.m., Mr. Cohen reconvened the public meeting.

Superintendent's Report

Board Certification

Jeanne Cleary, our field representative from the New Jersey School Boards Association, reviewed the requirements of the certification process. Board certification recognizes the full board's commitment to training and effective governance in areas such as group process, decision making, planning, effective meetings and focus on student achievement.

Ms. Cleary continued that a best practice is for a board to complete their self-evaluation annually, which can help lead into board goals with action plans. The board members decided that they would identify one or two areas they want to focus on to begin the certification process and to add the training to a workshop meeting in the near future.

LHS Report on Graduates

Mrs. Sinead Crews and Ms. Nicole Rothman provided this annual presentation which includes their steadfast mission, highlights from last year, a review of comparative data, testing trends and their future goals.

The full presentation is available on our website.

A few items discussed after the presentation were how Naviance is introduced to students in 7th grade for career exploration and to gauge their interests and is then the same program that is used to complete the college application process in 11th grade.

In general it is hard for the counselors to get families to look at schools outside of where most students from Livingston want to apply. Counselors do their best to introduce other schools that fit what a student is looking for but ultimately it is their decision where to apply.

Counselors are aware social media causes stress for students and work with them to deal and manage it throughout the college application process.

Counselors have a process to follow up with students who are accepted into schools about withdrawing their other applications so that it opens up spaces for other students who have applied; however, some students keep them active until they understand what their financial packages will entail.

Miss Bialick commented how the guidance department provides students with access to a wealth of knowledge and has not had any of her questions go unanswered.

Budget Discussion

Dr. Fishbein explained that we are in the process of developing a preliminary budget while awaiting for the NJDOE to notify us about our State aid, which we expect to get by the end of the month. The tentative budget is due to be approved at our March 18 meeting and our Public Hearing must occur no later than May 7.

Dr. Fishbein explained that this budget will be challenging because our costs are going up significantly. We plan to use our banked cap and possible health insurance adjustment to help in balancing the budget. Dr. Fishbein explained we will work to balance the budget to an allowable limit so that we can maintain our programming and continue to provide the students in Livingston with the education they deserve.

Mrs. Chirls asked if now is a good time to appeal to the State to release budget constraints and Dr. Fishbein agreed and will develop a resolution for the board members to approve at our next meeting.

Board Reports

Mrs. Khemka announced that all of the board members attended the Lunar New Year celebration event and thanked everyone who put it together.

Mrs. Gong thanked the school district for all their support with the Lunar New Year celebration.

Student Representative's Report

Miss Bialick explained that she has collaborated with LHS administrators and fellow student government representative, Jacob Heyderman, to discuss potential initiatives they can take to combat food waste in our schools. They are working with the administration to get formal approval to set up a donation system in our lunch spaces so that students can place any unopened lunch items in donation binds to be collected after school by charitable organizations or given to one of the many community service-oriented clubs. This initiative will go into effect shortly as they outline the specifics regarding which organizations will be collecting the food. If the program is a success at the high school, they hope to expand it into the middle and elementary schools.

Public Comment

Michelle Amin, Livingston, stated it would be helpful if the guidance counselors could provide a timeline to 10th grade parents about what happens in 11th grade, suggested sharing the Report on Graduates presentation with all 11th grade parents, suggested adding a Sunday SAT/ACT testing date for those who celebrate Shabbat and cannot attend on a Saturday, would like to be included in the prom conversation and suggested there be a notation on student tardies when they are late due to inclement weather.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR APPROVAL

BUSINESS

Mrs. Chirls moved the following:

3.1 Cooperative Girls Ice Hockey Program

Resolved, that the Livingston Board of Education approves the agreement to participate in the Cooperative Girls Ice Hockey Program between the Chatham, Millburn and Livingston School Districts for the 2025-2026 and 2026-2027 school years.

Mrs. Khemka seconded the motion.

ROLL CALL VOTE - Ayes - Mrs. Chirls, Mrs. Gong, Mrs. Khemka, Mrs. Yelisevich, Mr. Cohen
Nayes - None

PERSONNEL

Mrs. Chirls moved the following:

4.1 Resignations & Retirements

Resolved, that the Livingston Board of Education accepts the resignations of:

| Name | Position | Reason | Location | Last Day of Employment |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|---------------|-----------------|-------------------------------|
| <i>Phyllis Fiore</i> | Kindergarten Teacher | Retirement | MPE | June 30, 2025 |
| <i>Beth Alterman</i> | Kindergarten Teacher | Retirement | MPE | June 30, 2025 |
| <i>Guy Rabner</i> | Teacher of Italian | Retirement | LHS | June 30, 2025 |
| <i>Kathleen Youtz</i> | Teacher of Math | Retirement | MPMS | June 30, 2025 |
| <i>Christopher Russoniello</i> | Teacher of Science | Retirement | LHS | June 30, 2025 |
| <i>Richard Battista</i> | Teacher of Music | Retirement | MPE | June 30, 2025 |
| <i>Jamie Fredette</i> | 25-Hr Bus Driver | Retirement | Transportation | June 30, 2025 |
| <i>Peter Sbarro</i> | Maintenance Person | Resignation | B&G | April 11, 2025 |
| <i>Christina Schumacher</i> | Playground Aide | Resignation | RHE | January 27, 2025 |
| <i>Patricia LeGrand</i> | Playground Aide | Resignation | BHE | January 31, 2025 |

**as amended from a previous agenda*

4.2 Leaves of Absences

Resolved, that the Livingston Board of Education approves the leaves of absences of:

| Name | Location | Position | LOA w/pay and benefits | LOA w/o pay, but with benefits (if applicable) | Extended LOA w/o pay or benefits | Return Date |
|--------------------------|-----------------|---------------------------|---|---|---|---|
| <i>Victoria Kenney</i> | Collins | Elementary School Teacher | 4/21/2025-6/30/2025 & 8/25/2025-9/24/2025** | 9/25/2025-11/14/2025** | 11/17/2025-6/30/2026 | 8/31/2026 (or first day of 2026/2027 school year) |
| <i>Alexandra Pefanis</i> | MPMS | Teacher of Art | 4/21/2025-6/30/2025 & 8/25/2025-10/8/2025** | 10/9/2025-11/14/2025** | 11/17/2025-6/30/2026 | 8/31/2026 (or first day of 2026/2027 school year) |
| <i>Sarah Pasculli</i> | LHS | TOSD | 5/23/2025- | 9/9/2025- | 11/17/2025- | 8/31/2026 (or |

| | | | | | | |
|-------------------------------|-----|------------------------------|--|---|-------------------------|--|
| | | | 6/30/2025 & 8/25/2025- 9/8/2025** | 11/14/2025** | 6/30/2026 | the first day of the 2026-2027 school year) |
| Mary Sass* | HMS | Teacher of Social Studies | 1/2/2025- 4/1/2025 | 4/2/2025- 6/30/2025** | NA | 8/25/2025 |
| Isabella Gardner* | MPE | TOSD | 4/1/2025- 5/5/2025 | 5/6/2025- 5/9/2025 & 5/12/2025- 6/30/2025 & 8/25/2025- 10/8/2025** | NA | 10/9/2025 |
| Jayne Merlo-Chiaramonte* | HMS | TOSD | 12/9/2024- 3/7/2025 | 3/10/2025- 6/6/2025** | 6/7/2025- 6/30/2025 | 8/25/2025 |
| Genevieve Finnegan* | RHE | Elementary School Teacher | 11/18/2024- 1/29/2025 | 1/30/2025- 5/1/2025** | 5/2/2025- 6/30/2025 | 8/25/2025 |
| Ann Marie Mansfield* | RHE | Kindergarten Aide | 1/21/2025- 1/27/2025 (.5) | 1/27/2025 (.5)- 4/4/2025** | NA | 4/7/2025 |
| Samantha Stoddard* | LHS | TOSD | 1/2/2025- 2/28/2025 & 3/3/2025- 3/31/2025** | 4/1/2025- 5/23/2025** | 5/24/2025- 6/30/2026 | 8/31/2026 (or the first day for staff for 2026-2027 school year) |
| Diane Miranda-Evangelista* | HMS | School Nurse | 3/3/2025- 4/18/2025 | 4/21/2025- 8/29/2025** | NA | 9/2/2025 |
| Darren DiGeronimo* | B&G | Maintenance Person | NA | 1/9/2025 (.5)- 3/31/2025 | NA | TBD |

*as amended from a previous agenda

**Designates time counted toward NJFLA/FMLA

4.3 Transfers

Resolved, that the Livingston Board of Education approves the transfer of the individuals listed on **Attachment A**.

4.4 Appointments

Resolved, that the Livingston Board of Education approves the applications indicated below (*) for emergent hiring for the following appointments under the requirements of N.J.S.A. 18A:16-1 et. seq., N.J.S.A. 18A:39.17 et. seq.; N.J.S.A. 18A:6-4.13 et. seq. All appointments are contingent upon reference checks in accordance with P.L. 2018, c.5.

| Name | Location | Title | Tenure Track/LOA or LT Replacement | Replacing | Guide | Step | Salary | Effective Date |
|-----------------------------|----------|--------------------------------|---|-----------------|-------|------|--|--|
| Amelia Rieth | District | Supervisor of Math (PreK-6) | First Year Tenure Track | A Rodriguez | LSA | 1/2 | \$125,054 plus \$2,100 for longevity | 9/1/2025 |
| Heather Estonactoc | RHE | Elementary School Teacher | First Year Tenure Track | D. Van Dusen | MA | 14 | \$94,490 (prorated) | 4/14/2025 or upon release from current contract |
| Marisa Ehrmann | LHS | Teacher of Health & PE | First Year Tenure Track | D. Jones | BA | 1 | \$55,390 (prorated) | Upon issuance of certification |
| Sevgi Tugce Akinci Yalt* | MPMS | Teacher of Math | Leave Replacement | K. Brenneck | 2MA | 1 | \$68,990 (prorated) | 8/28/2024- 1/31/2025 |
| Sevgi Tugce Akinci Yalt | MPMS | Teacher of Math | Leave Replacement | S. Velardi | 2MA | 1 | \$68,990 (prorated) | 2/1/2025 |

| | | | | | | | | |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------|--|-----------------------------|------------|----|----|---------------------------|---|
| <i>Maria Rodriguez Miranda</i> | RHE/ Collins/ MPE | Teacher of Spanish | Leave Replacement | L. Martes | BA | 1 | \$55,390 (prorated) | 1/1/2025 |
| <i>Cassandra Perez</i> | Hillside | Elementary School Teacher | Leave Replacement | M. Gribbon | BA | 1 | \$55,390 (prorated) | 2/24/2025 |
| <i>Heidi Slurzberg</i> | BHE | TOSD | Second Year Tenure track | new | MA | 7 | \$11,575.30 (prorated) | 1/27/2025 |
| <i>Corinne House</i> | CO | Admin Asst, Information Technology | NA | E. Kang | NA | NA | \$68,000** (prorated) | 2/18/2025 |
| <i>Jake Furbeck</i> | CO | PT IT Support Specialist | NA | NA | NA | NA | \$20/hr | upon clearance from the Office of Student Protection |

**as amended from a previous agenda*

***salary will remain the same for the 2025-26 SY*

Resolved, that the Livingston Board of Education approves the appointment of the ABA Discrete Trial TAs and Instructional Aides as listed on ***Attachment B***.

4.5 Substitutes

Resolved, that the Livingston Board of Education approves the appointment of the individuals listed below to serve as substitutes on an as-needed basis for the 2024-2025 school year:

Teachers

*Milly Azcona
Marisa Ehrmann
Kevin Meany
Hamina Chowdhury
Taylor Sargis
David Reich
Kyleigh Colonna
Rebecca Benoit
Tripti Gupta
Marianna Sassone
Ethan Smith
Sean Neary
Milly Azcona*

Custodial

*Etmond Lleshi (\$18.50/hr)
Tonin Voci (\$18.50/hr)*

Resolved, that the Livingston Board of Education approves the appointment of the individual(s) listed below to serve as long-term substitutes as reflected below:

| Name | Location | Title | Leave Replacement or Long Term Sub | Replacing | Salary | Effective Date |
|--------------------------------|-----------------|---------------------------|---|------------------|---------------|---------------------------|
| <i>Katherine Urena Paulino</i> | MPMS | School Counselor | Long Term Sub | L. Balasic | \$317/day | 1/21/2025- 3/7/2025 |
| <i>Bettina Plesnitzer</i> | HMS | Teacher of Health & PE | Long Term Sub | S. Mayk | \$345/day | 1/22/2025 - 3/21/2025 |
| <i>Meghan Dufford*</i> | RHE | Kindergarten Aide | Long Term Sub | A. Mansfield | \$141/day | 1/22/2025- 4/4/2025 |

| | | | | | | |
|-------------------------|-----------------|--------------------|---------------|-----------|-------------|------------------------|
| Maria Rodriguez Miranda | RHE/COL/ MPE | Teacher of Spanish | Long Term Sub | L. Martes | \$277/day** | 8/28/2024 - 12/31/2024 |
|-------------------------|-----------------|--------------------|---------------|-----------|-------------|------------------------|

**amended from previous agenda*

***to be paid the difference between this rate and \$150/day already paid*

4.6 Extra Period Assignments

Resolved, that the Livingston Board of Education approves the extra period assignments as listed on **Attachment C**.

4.7 Contract Adjustments

Resolved, that the Livingston Board of Education approves the contract adjustments as listed on **Attachment D**.

Mrs. Khemka seconded the motion.

Mrs. Burman congratulated all of the retirees.

On behalf of the Board, Mr. Cohen wished all of the retirees good health and happiness in their retirement and thanked them for their dedicated years of service.

Mrs. Burman introduced Amelia Rieth, who was appointed as the Supervisor of Math, PreK-6.

ROLL CALL VOTE - Ayes - Mrs. Chirls, Mrs. Gong, Mrs. Khemka, Mrs. Yelisevich, Mr. Cohen
Nayes - None

MISCELLANEOUS

Mrs. Chirls moved the following:

5.1 HIB Report

Resolved, that the Livingston Board of Education accepts the findings of HIB cases.

Mrs. Khemka seconded the motion.

ROLL CALL VOTE - Ayes - Mrs. Chirls, Mrs. Gong, Mrs. Khemka, Mrs. Yelisevich, Mr. Cohen
Nayes - None

Old Business

There was no old business.

New Business

There was no new business.

ADJOURNMENT

At 8:50 p.m., Mrs. Chirls made a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Mrs. Khemka seconded the motion.

Vote all in favor.

Respectfully submitted,



Jessica Rapp
Board Secretary