



LIVINGSTON BOARD OF EDUCATION VOTING MEETING MINUTES

February 25, 2025

Executive Session - Administration Building - 6:45 p.m.

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

A **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 6:45 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 15 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 7:00 p.m., Mr. Cohen reconvened the public meeting.

Superintendent's Report

2026-2027 Calendar Discussion

Dr. Fishbein reviewed the proposed 2026-2027 academic calendar, explaining this calendar includes several single day holidays as well as a full February and April break. Students will start school on August 31, 2026 and the school year will end on June 22, 2027. For the first time, the allocation of give back days, if the district does not need to use any inclement weather days and the order that they will be given back, is also included on the calendar. Dr. Fishbein added he previously reviewed the proposed calendar with our associations and PT Council. The calendar will be placed on a March agenda for approval.

Mr. Stern explained that according to the latest "Education Recovery Scorecard," a project conducted by researchers at Harvard and Stanford, to compare learning loss and recovery across thousands of school districts nationwide, Livingston Public Schools is one of 106 districts nationally and one of six in the state to be designated as "fully recovered" from learning loss due to the pandemic. Their research included analyzing test scores from districts across the country to assess how performance has changed from 2019 to 2024. Livingston's scores were higher in 2024 than in 2019. Mr. Stern added this achievement is due to the dedication and hard work of Livingston educators, administrators and parents as well as the effort and resilience of our students.

Board Reports

Mr. Cohen explained that Mrs. Chirls started as a parent advocate, has served as a multi-term board member and has now become a certified board member. On behalf of the board, Mr. Cohen congratulated Mrs. Chirls on this incredible accomplishment, thanked her for putting forth the time and dedication towards becoming certified and that they are blessed to have her leadership and voice in the community.

Mrs. Khemka announced that all of the board members attended the *Student Perspectives* exhibit, featuring the work of Livingston High School's Advanced Placement art students. Mrs. Khemka thanked Mrs. Rubin, the staff and all who support the arts program.

Mrs. Chirls added thanks to the LHS String Ensemble for the beautiful background music.

Mrs. Yelisevich attended a meaningful vigil held on Sunday for the Bibas family in Israel adding it was wonderful to see our community come together.

Mr. Cohen thanked everyone at Collins Elementary School who invited the board members to read to students in celebration of Read Across America.

Student Representative's Report

Miss Bialick reported that many winter sports seasons are coming to a close as we get ready to begin the spring athletic season in March. Recently, the student government association collaborated with the boys varsity basketball team on an event called the LHS "sell out game" in an effort to promote school spirit at LHS. This event was a huge success as student attendance and spirit were very high. It is also important to acknowledge that many of our Lancers demonstrate their love for LHS in more unconventional ways, such as engaging with our robust TV program, drama department, robotics teams, etc. Miss Bialick concluded that we need not rely only on athletics to positively represent our school and build communities with our peers and that the diversity of our interests makes us a more welcoming environment and allows us to all prosper.

Approval of Minutes

Mrs. Chirls moved the following:

1. Voting Meeting Minutes of January 14, 2025
2. Board Retreat/Workshop Meeting Minutes of January 28, 2025
3. Workshop/Voting Meeting Minutes of February 11, 2025

Mrs. Khemka seconded the motion.

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

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR APPROVAL

PROGRAM/CURRICULUM

Mrs. Chirls moved the following:

1.1 Student Teachers

Resolved, that the Livingston Board of Education approves the student teachers as shown on **Attachment A**.

1.2 Field Trips

Resolved, that the Livingston Board of Education approves the field trips as shown on **Attachment B**.

Mrs. Khemka seconded the motion.

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

STUDENT SERVICES

Mrs. Khemka moved the following:

2.1 Out of District Placements

Resolved, that the Livingston Board of Education approves placement for the academic year 2024-2025 for two (2) Livingston students with disabilities and for Extended School Year 2024 (Summer Programs) for one (1) Livingston student with disabilities, as classified and recommended by the Child Study Team, in facilities with tuition costs to be determined within the limits established by the New Jersey Board of Education as shown on **Attachment C**.

2.2 Related Services/Medical Consultants

Resolved, that the Livingston Board of Education approves the following consultants that will be utilized to provide related services for the 2024-2025 school year:

OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY

Jessica Kashanian

\$90.52/hour

\$316.80/evaluation

Mrs. Chirls seconded the motion.

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

BUSINESS

Mrs. Khemka moved the following:

3.1 Payment of Bills

Whereas, the Board Secretary has audited certain vendor claims as required by N.J.S.A. 18A:19-2 and Board Policy 6470 and presented them to the Livingston Board of Education with the recommendation they be paid, now therefore be it

Resolved, that the Livingston Board of Education approves the payment of the following bills in the amounts listed and attach a complete copy of these bills to the minutes of this meeting.

<u>Fund</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Amount</u>
10,11,12	Operating Budget (checks 108937-110986; adv 267-280)	\$19,037,648.53
20	Grants (checks 108937-110986; adv 267-280)	\$337,530.42
60	Cafeteria (checks 60087-60090)	\$334,067.11
	TOTAL	\$19,709,246.06

3.2 Board Secretary Report – January 2025

Whereas, the Livingston Board of Education has received the Report of the Board Secretary for January 31, 2025, consisting of:

- 1) Interim Balance Sheets
- 2) Interim Statements Comparing Budgeted Revenue with Actual to Date and Appropriations with Expenditures and Encumbrances to Date
- 3) Schedule of Revenues - Actual Compared with Estimated
- 4) Statement of Appropriations Compared with Expenditures and encumbrances, and

Whereas, the Livingston Board of Education has received the report of the Treasurer for January 31, 2025, which report is in agreement with the Report of the Board Secretary, and

Whereas, these reports show the following balances on the date indicated:

	Cash Balance	Appropriation Balance	Fund Balance
(10) General Current Exp. Fund	\$16,349,849.56	\$75,189,965.20	\$5,720,541.87
(11) Current Expense			
(12) Capital Outlay			
(20) Special Revenue Fund	\$636,471.36	\$3,182,665.51	(\$120,310.73)

(30) Capital Projects Fund	\$1,718,622.65	\$1,619,600.00	\$3,317,160.50
(40) Debt Service Fund	(\$934,194.63)	\$7,420,363.00	\$174,139.87
Total:	\$17,770,748.94	\$87,412,593.71	\$9,091,531.51

Whereas, pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-16.10(c3), the Board Secretary has certified that as of January 31, 2025, no budgetary line item account has obligations and payments contractual orders which in total exceed the amount appropriated by the district board of education pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:22-8, 18A:22-8.1, now therefore be it

Resolved, the Livingston Board of Education accepts the above referenced reports and certification and directs that they be made part of this resolution by reference, and be it

Further Resolved, the Livingston Board of Education certifies that, after review of the Secretary's monthly financial report (appropriations section) and upon consultation with the appropriate district officials, to the best of its knowledge no major account or fund has been over-expended in violation of N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-16.10(c4) and that sufficient funds are available to meet the district's financial obligations for the remainder of the fiscal year.

3.3 Transfers

Whereas, the Superintendent of Schools recommends certain transfers among accounts in the 2024-2025 budget for January pursuant to Board of Education Policy 6422, now therefore be it

Resolved, that the Livingston Board of Education ratify transfers pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:22-8.1 and N.J.A.C. 6:20-2A.10 as shown on **Attachment D**.

3.4 Conferences and Overnight Trips

Resolved, that the Livingston Board of Education approves the conferences and overnight trips as shown on **Attachment E**.

Resolved, that the Livingston Board of Education approves *Tom Garzon, Hal Mordoff, Jordan Virgil, Michelle Miani, Jaqueline Pascale, Issam Helwani* and *Robert Rolling* to chaperone approximately 55 students participating in the FBLA State Competition in Atlantic City, New Jersey, from March 10 to 12, 2025.

Resolved, that the Livingston Board of Education approves *Guy Rabner* and *Brynn Smith* to chaperone approximately 16 students participating in the History Bowl National Tournament in Arlington, Virginia from April 24 to 27, 2025.

Resolved, that the Livingston Board of Education approves *Guy Rabner* and *Brynn Smith* to chaperone approximately 16 students participating in the Academic Team High School National Championship Tournament (HSNCT) in Atlanta, Georgia, from May 23 to 26, 2025.

3.5 Fox Fence Enterprises - Change Order

Resolved, that the Livingston Board of Education approves the change order with Fox Fence Enterprises in the amount of \$24,240.00. The contract was originally approved on August 13, 2024 to replace the roofs of Heritage Middle School and Burnet Hill School, at a total cost of \$701,000.00. ROD Grant funding, in the amount of \$379,850.00, will be utilized for these projects.

3.6 RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF LIVINGSTON IN THE COUNTY OF ESSEX, NEW JERSEY APPROVING, ON FIRST READING, A REFUNDING SCHOOL BOND ORDINANCE PROVIDING FOR THE REFUNDING OF ALL OR A PORTION OF ITS OUTSTANDING REFUNDING SCHOOL BONDS, DATED SEPTEMBER 24, 2015

Resolved, that the Livingston Board of Education approves the resolution as set forth in ***Attachment F***.

3.7 Settlement Agreement

Resolved, that the Livingston Board of Education approves the Settlement Agreement for Case #01-2025 which is on file at the Board of Education office.

3.8 Acceptance: Nonpublic Auxiliary and Handicapped Aid (Chapter 192/193)

Resolved, that the Livingston Board of Education approves the acceptance of funds from the New Jersey Department of Education for the Nonpublic Auxiliary and Handicapped Services Aid (Chapter 192/193) for the 2024/2025 school year as follows:

Chapter 192 – Compensatory Education	\$59,821.00
Chapter 192 – E.S.L	\$2,472.00
Chapter 193 – Initial Exam & Class	\$115,377.00
Chapter 193 – Annual Exam & Class	\$61,560.00
Chapter 193 – Corrective Speech	\$60,450.00
Chapter 193 – Supplemental Instruction	\$192,458.00

3.9 Donations

Resolved, that the Livingston Board of Education accepts the donation of a playground from the Harrison Elementary School PTA for use at Harrison Elementary School.

3.10 A Resolution Requesting the State to Make Adjustments to School Funding to Address Budget Constraints for the Current Fiscal Year and Beyond

WHEREAS, Livingston Public Schools has worked diligently to provide high-quality education to all students despite ongoing fiscal challenges; and

WHEREAS, Livingston Public Schools is facing significant budget constraints for the current fiscal year, with projections indicating continued budgetary pressures in the years ahead; and

WHEREAS, the current allocation of state funding does not fully address the increasing costs of educational services, including but not limited to instructional staff, resources, facilities maintenance, technology, and transportation; and

WHEREAS, the financial difficulties faced by Livingston Public Schools have resulted in difficult decisions regarding educational programming, class sizes, and professional staffing, which may have an adverse impact on the overall quality of education and student achievement; and

WHEREAS, the school district's ability to fulfill its mission to ensure a high-quality education for all students is directly affected by these budget limitations, and the current fiscal landscape presents substantial challenges in meeting the range of student needs; and

WHEREAS, Livingston Public Schools has explored all available internal options to reduce expenses without compromising student services, and yet, the fiscal challenges remain significant; and

WHEREAS, Livingston Public Schools recognizes the need to advocate for equitable funding solutions and long-term financial stability for its educational system. It also believes that the state must understand and address the realities of rising costs and decreased resources facing local school districts.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Education of Livingston Public Schools that the Board formally appeals to the State of New Jersey, urging the following:

1. The state recognizes and adjusts the current funding formulas to reflect the increasing budgetary pressures and constraints facing Livingston Public Schools and districts across the state.
2. The state works with local districts to develop a more equitable and sustainable long-term funding model that can address both short-term budget needs and long-term educational goals.
3. The state considers providing additional funding support for districts experiencing significant financial challenges due to rising operational costs, inflationary pressures in education-related expenses, and professional staff shortages.
4. The state offers flexibility and additional support to districts that are actively working to optimize resources and adjust to financial constraints without sacrificing the quality of educational services.
5. The state permits all districts to increase its local tax levy from 2% to 4%.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Livingston Public Schools will continue to work closely with state officials, state legislators, and educational organizations to advocate for funding solutions that ensure all students have access to the education they need so we can advance the achievement of all students, regardless of ongoing fiscal challenges.

3.11 Bylaws, Policies and Regulations

Resolved, that the Livingston Board of Education approves the following Bylaws, Policies & Regulations for first reading:

Policy #5512 - Harassment, Intimidation, or Bullying (M) (Revised)

Policy #5516 - Use of Electronic Communication Devices (Revised)

Policy #5530 - Substance Abuse (M) (Revised)

Regulation #5530 - Substance Abuse (M) (Revised)

Policy #5533 - Student Smoking (M) (Revised)

Regulation #5533 - Student Smoking (New to District)

Policy #7441 - Electronic Surveillance In School Buildings and On School Grounds (M) (Revised)

Regulation #7441 - Electronic Surveillance In School Buildings and On School Grounds (M) (Revised)

Policy #9320 - Cooperation with Law Enforcement Agencies (M) (Revised)

Regulation #9320 - Cooperation with Law Enforcement Agencies (M) (Revised)

Resolved, that the Livingston Board of Education approves the following Policies and Regulations for second reading and approval:

Regulation #0155 - Board Committees (with revisions)

Policy #2365 - Acceptable Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) (new to district)

Regulation #2365 - Statement on Artificial Intelligence (AI) (new to district)

Policy #7230 - Gifts, Grants and Donations (with revisions)

Policy #8550 - Unpaid Meal Charges/Outstanding Food Service Charges (with revisions)

Mr. Cohen seconded the motion.

ROLL CALL VOTE - Ayes - Mrs. Chirls (abstain on check #: 110824, 110831, 110832 only),
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>Steven Milano</i>	Teacher of Television Production	Retirement	LHS	June 30, 2025
<i>Susan LaGravenis</i>	Bus Aide	Retirement	Transportation	June 30, 2025
<i>Katarina Alexander</i>	Instructional Aide	Resignation	BHE	February 21, 2025
<i>Carlene Hendricks</i>	Teacher of Spanish	Resignation	LHS	April 17, 2025
<i>Katherine Urena Paulino</i>	Long-Term Substitute School Counselor	Resignation	MPMS	February 12, 2025
<i>Oleksiy Lytvyn</i>	IT Support Specialist	Resignation	HMS/Hillside	April 21, 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
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Stefanie Velardi*	Harrison	Intervention/ Enrichment Specialist	1/27/2025- 3/31/2025 & 4/1/2025- 4/18/2025**	4/21/2025- 6/30/2025**	NA	8/25/2025
Morgan Pittfield*	Hillside	Instructional Aide	NA	2/10/2025- 4/4/2025 & 4/7/2025- 6/30/2025**	NA	TBD
Thomas Mantone	LHS	Teacher of Health & PE	4/21/2025- 5/2/2025**	NA	NA	5/5/2025
Andrew Greenberg	LHS	Teacher of Math	6/16/2025- 6/24/2025**	8/25/2025- 11/07/2025**	NA	11/10/2025
Jamie Fredette	Transportation	Bus Driver - 25 hour	3/19/2025- 4/18/2025	4/22/2025- 6/30/2025	NA	NA
Claudia Netti	HMS	Teacher of Spanish	2/19/2025- 3/11/2025**	3/12/2025- 5/21/2025**	NA	5/22/2025
Amanda King*	Hillside	Intervention/ Enrichment Specialist	3/17/2025- 5/5/2025 & 5/6/2025- 6/10/2025**	6/11/2025- 9/26/2025**	9/29/2025- 12/12/2025	12/15/2025
Molly Gribbon*	Hillside	Elementary School Teacher	2/19/2025- 4/3/2025 (.5)	4/3/2025 (.5) - 6/30/2025**	NA	8/25/2025

*as amended from a previous agenda

**Designates time counted toward NJFLA/FMLA

4.3 Transfers

Resolved, that the Livingston Board of Education approves the transfers as listed on **Attachment G**.

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
Macy Earley	Collins	Elementary School Teacher	First Year Tenure Track	M. Mitchell	MA	2	\$65,568	8/25/2025
Jennifer Edouard	LHS	Teacher of Math	First Year Tenure Track	M. Winter	BA	3	\$58,568	8/25/2025
Avery MacDonell	LHS	Teacher of Physical Science	First Year Tenure Track	C. Russoniello	MA	2	\$65,568	8/25/2025
Heather Estonactoc*	RHE	Elementary School Teacher	First Year Tenure Track	D. Van Dusen	MA	14	\$94,490 (prorated)	4/1/2025
Jenna Puleio	Collins	Elementary School Teacher	Leave Replacement	J. D'Annunzio	BA	1	\$55,390 (prorated)	3/24/2025
Cassandra Perez*	Hillside	Elementary School Teacher	Leave Replacement	M. Gribbon	BA	1	\$55,390 (prorated)	2/19/2025
Jake Furbeck*	CO	PT IT Support Specialist	NA	NA	NA	NA	\$20/hr	2/19/2025

*as amended from a previous agenda

**begins 60-day probationary period

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

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

Joshua Flynn

Resolved, the Livingston Board of Education approves the individuals listed on **Attachment I** as certified substitutes. These individuals are currently employed by the District. In the event these individuals are called upon to serve as a substitute, they will be compensated an additional \$50/day (\$10/period) for that assignment.

4.6 Extra Period Assignments

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

4.7 Stipends

Resolved, that the Livingston Board of Education approves the individuals on **Attachment K** for co curricular stipends at Heritage Middle School for the 2024-2025 school year in accordance with the contract between the LBOE and the LEA.

4.8 Mentor Fees

Resolved, the Livingston Board of Education amends the individuals on **Attachment L** listed as assigned mentors to receive payment in accordance with the schedule listed.

4.9 NJDOE High Intensity Tutoring Grant

Resolved, that the Livingston Board of Education approves the individuals listed on **Attachment M** to be paid for work performed in the High Intensity Tutoring program at the rate of \$64.94 per hour (not to exceed 2 hours per person per day for the duration of the program). The program will run from January 15, 2025 - June 12, 2025. These positions are funded through the NJDOE High Intensity Tutoring Grant. (Acct #20-451-100-100-1033-12)

4.10 Curriculum Writing

Resolved, that the Livingston Board of Education approves the individuals on **Attachment N** to participate in mid-year curriculum writing during the 2024-25 school year, at the approved rate, not to exceed 25 hours each. (Acct #11-000-221-104-5063-19)

4.11 Affirmative Action Team (AAT)

Resolved, that the Livingston Board of Education appoints the individuals listed on **Attachment O** to the District's Affirmative Action Team.

4.12 Comprehensive Equity Plan

Resolved, that the Livingston Board of Education authorizes the Affirmative Action Team (AAT) to develop a Needs Assessment and a Comprehensive Equity Plan, implement the plan over a February 25, 2025

three year period of time, and submit an annual Statement of Assurance of its implementation and progress.

4.13 Job Descriptions

Resolved, that the Livingston Board of Education approves the following job descriptions:

Treasurer of School Monies
Maintenance Worker/Electrical Worker

Mrs. Khemka seconded the motion.

Mrs. Burman congratulated the two retirees and thanked them for their service.

On behalf of the Board, Mr. Cohen congratulated the two retirees, thanked them for their service to the district and wished them well in the next chapter of their lives.

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

MISCELLANEOUS

Mrs. Khemka moved the following:

5.1 HIB Report

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

Mrs. Chirls 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 7:16 p.m., Mrs. Khemka made a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Mrs. Chirls seconded the motion.

Vote all in favor.

Respectfully submitted,


Jessica Rapp
Board Secretary

February 25, 2025