



## **LIVINGSTON BOARD OF EDUCATION WORKSHOP MEETING MINUTES**

Monday, October 8, 2018

A **Workshop Meeting** of the Livingston Board of Education was held on this date in the large conference room at the Administration Building. The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by the Board President, Pamela Chirls, who announced that adequate notice of this meeting had been provided by amendment to notice approved at the Board's reorganization meeting on January 2, 2018 and posted at the Board of Education office and communicated to *The Star Ledger*, *West Essex Tribune*, *The Alternative Press* and the Livingston Township Clerk.

Members Present: Pamela Chirls, Ronnie Konner, Samantha Messer, George Shen and Philippe Jallow

Members Absent: Charles "Buddy" August

Also in Attendance: James O'Neill, Steven Robinson, Lisa Capone-Steiger, Susan Burman, Joann Goldberg, and approximately 20 members of the public and staff

### **Superintendent's Report**

#### Public Hearing for District and School HIB Self-Assessment Report

##### a. Presentation

Mr. O'Neill explained this is a report that the district is required to make on an annual basis. The schools, through the principals and school safety team, perform a self-assessment that shows how we comply with the requirements of the Anti-bullying Rights Act. The self-assessment is broken down to include HIB programs and initiatives, training, staff instruction, investigating and reporting procedures and compliance with HIB laws. This year the scores ranged from 74 to 78, with a composite score of 75.67 out of a possible 78 points. Mr. O'Neill continued we anticipate that continuing the existing programs and practices will reinforce this positive trend in behavior.

##### b. Discussion

Mrs. Chirls asked if the curriculum for character education is consistent amongst all of the elementary schools. Mrs. Steiger replied that yes, the curriculum through school counseling and health are consistent across all buildings. Mrs. Steiger added each building adds their own personality but there is continuity in terms of the language of anti-bullying and the goal of having kinder more inclusive schools.

Mrs. Chirls asked if any of the assessment includes parent programming and Mrs. Steiger replied the anti-bullying specialists hold training for parents annually through the PTAs/HSAs.

c. Questions and Comments from Public

There were no questions or comments from the public.

Student Safety Data System Report (2017-2018 School Year)

Mr. O'Neill explained this report was previously called the Violence and Vandalism report and was given to the board on a semi-annual basis. This is the first time the data has been compiled in this new format. Going forward it will be easier to compare the data. Mr. O'Neill noted he did not see any spike in activity and considering the size of the high school student population, the number of offenses were relatively small.

PARCC Testing Scores

Mrs. Natalie Topylko, Director of Curriculum and Instruction - STEM/Testing, brought us up to date on PARCC testing and scores by highlighting the results from the spring of 2018. Mrs. Topylko explained levels 4 and 5 are considered passing and that participation levels are close to 100 percent.

Mrs. Topylko continued that performance is steady for grades 3 and 4 with a little bump up in grade 5 for ELA and in Math, scores were slightly down in grade 4 so they will take a look at what the needs are for those students. Mrs. Topylko added they were pleased with the numbers for grades 6 to 8 in ELA and are keeping an eye on grade 8 Math. In ELA, grades 9 to 11 also showed growth; however, in Math, not a huge population are taking the test.

Mrs. Topylko reviewed how they analyze the data and what their next steps will be going forward. The full presentation is available on our website.

Ms. Messer asked if they could have a breakout of the students in 4<sup>th</sup> grade who didn't pass the Math portion and if they are a level 1, 2 or 3.

Ms. Messer also requested a break out of 8<sup>th</sup> grade scores versus 9<sup>th</sup> grade scores for Algebra 1.

Mrs. Konner asked how the results received back help identify weaknesses or strengths and Mrs. Topylko replied they don't provide the type of detailed analysis we had hoped which makes it a tedious process. Mrs. Topylko replied they provide four clusters of standards to compare and they can see where a student falls within the standard.

Mrs. Konner asked if there is a way to compare our scores with other high performing districts and Mrs. Topylko replied there is no report that does this so we pull information from other websites and speak to our peers in other districts since they are looking for this same information.

Mrs. Konner asked if there are questions or specific suggestions they can bring forth about PARCC when they attend the New Jersey School Boards Workshop at the end of the month since they will have opportunities to meet with the Commissioner of Education and the State Board of Education during the conference.

Mrs. Steiger stated ask them to provide usable information and not to change the rules when students are in high school.

Mrs. Chirls asked Mrs. Topylko to provide the disaggregated data from the various math tests so they can see the differences across the grade levels.

Ms. Messer asked on the grade 3-5 Math slide, why there is a ten percent decline from grade 3 to 4 and if this is consistent across all schools. Mrs. Topylko will investigate further.

Dr. Shen asked if there is a way to improve the content we offer in ELA to make it more interesting for students and asked how we can help students who make careless mistakes in Math.

#### MPMS 1:1 Initiative Update

Mrs. Erin Borino, Director of Technology, reviewed the steps the district has taken to bring the 1:1 initiative into the district. To date, we have 1:1 devices for students and staff at the high school and at Heritage Middle School. During the budget process, monies were put aside to add the initiative at Mount Pleasant Middle School. Over the summer, two meetings were held to review the "must haves" for a device and what type of case protection would be needed for our sixth graders. At a meeting last week, they discussed how to roll out the distribution of the devices which included how to inform parents and train staff. At next week's Board of Education meeting, a resolution is on the agenda to approve the devices. Once approved, they will be ordered and the plan is to distribute the devices in December so students have them at the beginning of the second marking period.

Mrs. Chirls asked for a description of the device and its capabilities and Mrs. Borino explained it is an HP Chromebook that operates on the Chrome operating system, includes a dual camera and is a touch screen. The device does not come with a digital pen; however, there will be classroom sets of styluses available for students to use. The insurance fee will be approximately \$30.

#### Miscellaneous

Mr. O'Neill announced we have a month left during this election season and he has disseminated our school policy, which is intended to control what happens on school grounds, at school events and in school buildings, to the incumbents running for the school election. Mr. O'Neill added there isn't much more we can do to police at the local level.

#### **Board Reports**

Mrs. Konner attended the LACD meeting where they discussed the Halloween party scheduled for October 20 and some other events, the Performing Arts Committee meeting where they reviewed plans to purchase property to build a theater, a number of back to school nights and the Essex Regional Education Services Committee meeting.

Mrs. Konner shared with everyone her experience at a PEP rally assembly held at Harrison Elementary School where Mrs. Healy taught students how to develop a social filter through different skits.

Mrs. Konner added the Big L Hall of Fame is coming up this week and our own Buddy August is being inducted.

Dr. Shen was unable to attend but spoke about the September 29<sup>th</sup> diversity celebration held at the YMCA.

#### **Preview of October 15, 2018 Voting Agenda**

The board reviewed the items that will be voted on at the October 15 meeting.

- 1. PROGRAM/CURRICULUM**
  - 1.1 Textbooks/DVDs**
  - 1.2 Student Teachers**
- 2. STUDENT SERVICES**
  - 2.1 Out of District Placements**
  - 2.2 Related Services/Medical Consultants**
- 3. BUSINESS**
  - 3.1 Payment of Bills**
  - 3.2 Board Secretary Report – August 2018**
  - 3.3 Transfers**
  - 3.4 Purchase of Student Computers – MPMS 1:1**
  - 3.5 Field Trips**
  - 3.6 Conferences and Overnight Trips**
  - 3.7 Parental Contract for Transportation**
  - 3.8 Student Safety Data System Report**
  - 3.9 Policies and Regulations**
- 4. PERSONNEL**
  - 4.1 Resignations**
  - 4.2 Leaves of Absences**
  - 4.3 Appointments**
  - 4.4 Substitutes**
  - 4.5 Extra Work Pay**
  - 4.6 Stipends**
  - 4.7 Lateral Moves**
  - 4.8 Extra Period Assignments**
  - 4.9 Contract Adjustments**
  - 4.10 Summer Work**
  - 4.11 Longevity**
  - 4.12 Mentor Fees**
  - 4.13 2018-2019 Re-Appointments**
- 5. MISCELLANEOUS**
  - 5.1 HIB Report**
  - 5.2 Suspension Report**

Mr. Robinson explained there will be a conference with the Livingston Education Association at the beginning of the meeting and they have two topics to discuss with the Board.

Mrs. Chirls reviewed the changes made on Policy 2430 – Co-Curricular Activities after the last meeting and after a short discussion, it was decided that only the last sentence about the Board not subsidizing any overnight travel will be removed.

Mrs. Burman will make the same adjustment on Policy 2431 – Athletic Competition.

Mrs. Chirls asked if we could further define what “appropriate” means under Policy 2464 – Gifted and Talented Pupils.

With respect to Policy 5339 – Screening for Dyslexia, Mrs. Chirls asked under the first paragraph, what if there are signs that show before that first semester of second grade when the screening shall be administered. Mrs. Steiger replied if there are any signs before the screening, students would be assessed for intervention.

Mrs. Chirls asked if that should be included in the policy and Mrs. Steiger replied no, the implementation for intervention is different than the screening for dyslexia, which is statutory.

With respect to Policy 5561 – Use of Physical Restraint and Seclusion Techniques for Students with Disabilities, Mrs. Chirls asked if training is updated annually and there are changes in practice, does the training happen sooner than the annual event. Mrs. Steiger replied we use a research based model that typically doesn't change over time. If it does, the trainers go out and get updated training and then people will be trained annually.

Mrs. Konner asked if there is a break down by school for our field trips and Mr. Robinson explained there is but we keep that information separately than what is posted with the agenda.

### **Public Comment ~ up to 15 minutes**

Cindy Goldstein, 24 Mayhew Drive, saw four boys riding their bicycles to school without helmets and asked if there is some type of presentation we can provide to students to address this safety concern.

Mrs. Goldstein also asked parents in the community to please pay attention to what they are doing driving their cars dropping off and picking up their children.

Brian Bradley, 46 Ashwood Drive, confirmed the device fee for MPMS computers would be \$30 per year.

Sundee Amin, 6 Washington Court, asked if the PARCC test is easier for the lower grades which is why we see better scores, are we not giving students the foundation to get better scores the next year and what can the district do to collect more information to ensure we are providing students with the right platforms in science and math.

Sherry Miller, 18 Sycamore Terrace, with regard to 1:1 at the high school, asked the administration to look into when students lose or break chargers, there is a limited supply to purchase replacements, she has heard there is a black market for pens and that some incoming 9<sup>th</sup> grade received broken devices.

Mrs. Miller also mentioned drop off at the high school was difficult today due to the number of cars there because of the training held in the building this morning.

Mr. Robinson explained we are in the last year of 1:1 at the high school and a committee will begin to discuss the purchase of a new device. Mr. Robinson added we will look into the rumor of a black market for the pens.

Mr. O'Neill explained principals put information in their newsletters to parents about the rules to abide by during pick up and drop off and he knows periodically have sent reminders to students about wearing a helmet when riding a bike. Mr. O'Neill added we can remind students. Mr. O'Neill continued we have had the Township assist us in monitoring traffic safety concerns during pick up and drop off.

Mr. O'Neill agreed there is a frustration with the PARCC scores and one problem is that so few states use the test. Mr. O'Neill added he is not saying no to tests, but would like to see a test that is more tried and true, one that provides comparative data with other districts as well as some diagnostic data so we could see what our kids are missing and address those concerns in our curriculum.

Ms. Messer suggested looking at the evidence statements which show which standards are more problematic and could provide insight into patterns that need to be addressed through training or the curriculum.

## **Old Business**

There was no old business.

## **New Business**

There was no new business.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

At 8:40 p.m., Mrs. Chirls asked for a motion to go into Executive Session to discuss the superintendent search. No action will be taken.

Mrs. Konner moved the following:

## **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

1. Legal Matters
2. Negotiations
3. Personnel

**Whereas**, N.J.S.A. 10:4-1 et seq., also known as the "Sunshine Law," authorizes a public body to meet in executive or private session under certain limited circumstances, and

**Whereas**, said law requires the Board to adopt a resolution at a public hearing before it can meet in such an executive or private session, now, therefore, be it

**Resolved**, by the Livingston Board of Education that:

- (A) It does hereby determine that it is necessary to meet in executive session on October 8, 2018 to discuss the matters stipulated, in conformance with the subsections of said act which are indicated.
1. Matter rendered confidential by federal law, state statute or rule of court.
  2. Matter in which the release of information would impair a right to receive federal funds.
  3. Matter, the disclosure of which would constitute an unwarranted invasion of individual privacy unless the individual concerned shall request in writing that the same be disclosed publicly.
  4. Collective bargaining matter.
  5. Matter involving the purchase, lease or acquisition of real property with public funds, the setting of banking rates, etc. where it would adversely affect the public interest if discussion were disclosed.
  6. Tactics and techniques utilized in protecting public property where disclosure could impair protection.
  7. Investigation of violations or possible violations of law.
  8. Pending or anticipated litigation or contract negotiation other than collective bargaining agreement.
  9. Personnel matters unless the individual employees or appointees affected requested that such matter be discussed at a public meeting.
  10. Deliberations occurring after a public hearing that may result in the imposition of a specific civil penalty.
- (B) The matters discussed will be made public when confidentiality is no longer required and formal action pursuant to said discussion shall take place only at a meeting to which the public has been invited.
- (C) No action will be taken.

Dr. Shen seconded the motion.

Vote all in favor.

**Respectfully submitted,**

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**Steven K. Robinson**  
**Board Secretary**

October 8, 2018

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