



LIVINGSTON BOARD OF EDUCATION WORKSHOP/VOTING MEETING MINUTES

Monday, June 14, 2021

Executive Session - Virtual Meeting via Zoom - 6:15 p.m.

Public Session - Virtual Meeting Via Zoom and Facebook Live - 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 Zoom and Facebook Live. The meeting was called to order at 6:16 p.m. by the Board President, Samantha Messer, who announced that adequate notice of this meeting has been provided by amendment to notice approved at the Board's reorganization meeting on January 4, 2021 and posted at the Board of Education office and communicated to *The Star Ledger*, *West Essex Tribune*, *TAPinto Livingston* and the Livingston Township Clerk.

Mrs. Konner 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:

- Personnel

Action may be taken upon return to the public session. The full length of the meeting is anticipated to be approximately 45 minutes and be it

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

Mr. Cohen seconded the motion.

ROLL CALL VOTE - Ayes - Mrs. Chirls, Mr. Cohen, Mrs. Khanna, Mrs. Konner, Ms. Messer
Nayes - None

At 7:05 p.m., Ms. Messer reconvened the public meeting.

Members Present: Pamela Chirls, Seth Cohen, Vineeta Khanna, Ronnie Konner, Samantha Messer and Aditya Desai

Also in Attendance: Dr. Matthew Block, Steven Robinson, Lisa Capone-Steiger, Mark Stern, Susan Burman, Dr. David Greer and Joann Goldberg

There were approximately 35 members of the public and staff watching remotely through the webinar and a Facebook Live Stream.

Ms. Messer announced there will be flag raising at the oval on Saturday at 6 p.m. to recognize Juneteenth, a day that acknowledges the end of slavery in the United States.

Retirement Ceremony

Mrs. Burman introduced our remote virtual Retirement Ceremony that honored Marie Cuenca, Sharon Edelberg, Helene Fersko, Gisela Gugger, Cynthia Healy, Christine Maccarella, Richard Rudd and Lynn Schwartz. Those retirees who didn't attend were also honored.

Workshop Items

1. State Seal of Biliteracy Recognition

Dr. David Greer, K-12 Supervisor of World Languages and English as a Second Language, recognized 13 students who achieved the 2021 State Seal of Biliteracy. These students demonstrated a very high proficiency in reading, speaking and writing in a language other than English. Students recognized for Chinese are Angela Chen, Mingda Lei, JiaYing Ning and Tammy Zhuang. The student recognized for French is Kasey Wei. The student recognized for Italian is Gabriel Yecko. The students recognized for Spanish are Elianna Bershada, Jennifer Dukhan, Joyce He, Ellie Nadelmann, Adaugo Ojukwu, Ariana Sowa and Kevin Zak.

2. SEPAC Presentation

Mrs. Steiger presented a report on the work of our parent group, the Special Education Parent Advisory Group (SEPAC) that explained the types of discussions about special education programs and supports that were held at the elementary and secondary school based meetings this year.

3. Board Size Evaluation

Ms. Messer began by explaining that each of the five board members used a common set of questions to interview a variety of stakeholders, that included current and former superintendents and board members of five, seven, nine and even a twelve member board, to understand their working experience.

Mr. Cohen continued by providing a quantitative analysis with the objective of leveraging the board self evaluation to assess whether seven or nine member boards evaluate themselves differently than the LBOE. He analyzed board self evaluation data for governance metrics across multiple seven and nine member boards in comparison to ours and concluded that we are not rating or seeing ourselves any differently than the seven or nine member boards. Also from the data, a seven or nine member board doesn't see itself lessening the work of board members.

All five members took time to go through who they interviewed and summarized the positives and negatives of working as a five member board of the whole or as a seven or nine member board who work within a committee structure. There was overlap in their research. A summary follows.

Some of the positives of working with larger boards who work in standing committees state division of work and ability to focus on a few topics as positives of the structure, they felt a stronger, more trusting relationship with the superintendent/district, committees can explore and solve problems of the district and build community consensus, they could build engagement amongst board members and stakeholders that would lead to better accountability of the superintendent, allow for deeper dive into the working and decision making and it is a way to build engagement and create consensus during the process development.

Some negatives of working with larger boards in standing committees is that it takes place out of the public eye so there is less transparency with filtering of information, only members on the committee get the complete discussion, more voices can cause difficulty in consensus building

and decision making, decisions are based on committee reports, the division of labor doesn't equal less work for the board members, frustration with how long public board meetings would run to answer all questions and share feedback, could burden the superintendent, create factions, upset the balance, politicize decisions, some may focus on individual special interests, limit information sharing with the community and during some elections the larger boards struggle to fill their seats. It was suggested in multiple interviews to be careful of the timing and to avoid going to a larger board if a majority of new members are elected in a particular year.

Some positives of working with a five member board who function as a board of the whole is that it ensures transparency among board members and the public, everyone hears the same information at the same time, allows for equal opportunities to gather input from everyone, there is easier communication in decision making between board members, it is more manageable for a superintendent to communicate individually with a smaller board, it is easier for individual board members to communicate with the superintendent and a five member board helps ensure you have a group of committed individuals.

Negatives of working with a five member board who function as a board of the whole is more time commitment and work for each individual board member and a board of five can easily become a board of three which creates a concentrated power in the hands of a few people.

All of the research showed there is no correlation between board size and student achievement and most who were interviewed did not feel board size was a determinant of a board's ability to effectively govern. The full presentation will be posted on our website.

There was consensus that if the board size does increase, professional development will be necessary for all the members to guide them to operate effectively together.

Ms. Messer concluded that the next step is for the board to vote on whether or not to put a question on the November 2021 ballot to increase board size. They will have that vote at next week's meeting on June 21. If the board chooses to put a question on the November ballot, the voters will be the decision makers on whether or not the board size increases.

Superintendent's Report

1. Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services

Dr. Block explained that in order to be in compliance for the ESSER Grant, we need to put forward a plan on how to reopen schools safely in the fall. As we approach summer planning, we know there will be no remote instruction, we will have full days with lunch beginning the first day of school, we will continue to utilize outside space for instruction, we will have processes/programs for addressing any learning and SEL needs, we will implement the new elementary schedule, some mitigation measures will disappear and LHS will have self-structure time built into students' schedules.

Dr. Block continued that the ESSER Grant application for federal grant money will be used only for one time expenses during the 2021-2022 school year. Since we are required to share the plan publicly with an opportunity for feedback, Dr. Block reviewed all of the information we have provided for the ESSER Grant and will also share it with the community on our website.

Board Reports

On behalf of the board, Ms. Messer thanked Aditya for his time and service as the student representative this past year and congratulated him on his next step to college.

Dr. Block congratulated the 163 students inducted into the National Honor Society this year.

Mrs. Khanna and Mrs. Chirls attended the Science Research Symposium and Art Awards.

Mrs. Khanna thanked the administration for providing her with a tour of the school buildings last week.

Public Input on Agenda Items ~ up to 15 minutes

There was no public input on agenda items.

VOTING ITEMS

PERSONNEL

Mr. Cohen moved the following:

4.1 Resignations

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

Name	Position	Reason	Location	Last Day of Employment
<i>Sharon Edelberg</i>	Media Specialist	Retirement	BHE	June 30, 2021
<i>Karen Zavaglia</i>	Elementary School Teacher	Retirement	Harrison	September 30, 2021
<i>Patricia Mattia</i>	Secretary	Resignation	LHS	October 18, 2021
<i>Yakira Jackson</i>	ABA Discrete Trial TA	Resignation	BHE	June 30, 2021
<i>Alec Wolf</i>	Instructional Aide	Resignation	BHE	June 30, 2021
<i>Frank Magyar</i>	TOSD	Resignation	LHS	NA

**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	Position	Location	LOA w/pay and benefits	LOA w/o pay, but with benefits (if applicable)	Extended LOA w/o pay or benefits	Return Date
<i>Cassandra Szeles*</i>	Teacher of Health & PE	LHS	5/21/2021-6/9/2021	NA	6/10/2021-6/30/2021 & 8/30/2021-11/19/2021	11/22/2021
<i>Bethany Weissman*</i>	Speech Language Specialist	BHE	4/15/2021-5/24/2021 & 5/25/2021-6/3/2021**	6/4/2021-10/15/2021**	10/18/2021-1/2/2022	1/3/2022
<i>Kelly Nann*</i>	Teacher of Health & PE	LHS	5/19/2021-6/30/2021	8/30/2021-11/19/2021**	NA	11/22/2021
<i>Dina Ferraro*</i>	Teacher of English	MPMS	5/24/2021-6/30/2021	8/30/2021-11/19/2021	11/22/2021-2/11/2022	2/14/2022

<i>Deborah Faber</i>	Elementary School Teacher	Harrison	9/27/2021-11/12/2021	11/15/2021-2/11/2022**	2/14/2022-4/29/2022	5/2/2022
<i>Jennifer Kelner</i>	School Counselor	MPE	8/30/2021-9/14/2021	9/15/2021-12/8/2021**	12/9/2021-2/11/2022	2/14/2022
<i>Janice Reis</i>	Teacher of Art	HMS	8/30/2021-3/10/2022	3/11/2022-6/8/2022**	NA	6/9/2022

*as amended from a previous agenda

**Designates time counted toward NJFLA/FMLA/FFCRA

4.3 Transfers

Resolved, that the Livingston Board of Education approves the transfers as 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
<i>Melyssa Lynch</i>	LHS	Teacher of Math	Leave Replacement	G. McCorkell	BA	1-2	\$54,550 (pro-rated)	8/30/2021-2/4/2022
<i>Alexandra Brown</i>	LHS	Teacher of Spanish	First Year Tenure Track	G. Gugger	MA+16	12	\$88,068	8/30/2021
<i>Denise Adesso</i>	BHE	PRIDE	First Year Tenure Track	L. Babij (transfer)	BA+32	5	\$61,255	8/30/2021
<i>Andrew Chen</i>	MPE	Elementary School Teacher	First Tenure Year Track	new section	MA	1-2	\$61,884	8/30/2021
<i>Jacqueline Tobia</i>	District	Behaviorist	NA	K. Llano	OT/PT/ Non-Certified School Nurse Behav.	6	\$68,585, plus \$1,200 for degree	8/30/2021
<i>Sean Cruz</i>	LHS	Teacher of Business Ed	First Year Tenure Track	new position	BA+16	1-2	\$56,550	8/30/2021
<i>Nidhi Benjamin</i>	RHE	Teacher of Art	First Year Tenure Track	new position	MA	5	\$64,235	8/30/2021
<i>Kieran Nugent</i>	LHS	Teacher of English	One Year Leave Replacement	C. Sorrentino	MA	1-2	\$61,884	8/30/2021
<i>Gina Bianco</i>	HMS	Teacher of Art	One Year Leave Replacement	J. Reis	BA	1-2	\$54,550	8/30/2021
<i>Dena Goldberg</i>	Harrison	School Nurse	First Year Tenure Track	J. Milano	BA	12	\$77,300	8/30/2021
<i>Vanessa Barboza</i>	Central Office	Admin Asst - Curriculum	NA	M.Kincaid (transfer)	NA	NA	\$69,000	7/1/2021

*as amended from a previous agenda

4.5 Substitutes

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>Amanda Piscitelli</i>	BHE	PRIDE Teacher	Long Term Sub	T. Freeman	\$273/day	8/30/2021-10/6/2021

4.6 Contract Adjustments

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

4.7 Separation of Service Agreement

Resolved, that the Livingston Board of Education approves the separation of service agreement between the LBOE and Employee #6551.

Mrs. Khanna seconded the motion.

ROLL CALL VOTE - Ayes - Mrs. Chirls, Mr. Cohen, Mrs. Khanna, Mrs. Konner, Ms. Messer
Nayes - None

MISCELLANEOUS

Mrs. Konner moved the following:

5.1 HIB Report

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

Mrs. Khanna seconded the motion

ROLL CALL VOTE - Ayes - Mrs. Chirls, Mr. Cohen, Mrs. Khanna, Mrs. Konner, Ms. Messer
Nayes - None

PREVIEW OF JUNE 21, 2021 VOTING MEETING AGENDA

The board reviewed the upcoming items for next week's meeting.

Student Representative to the Board

Public Hearing on Superintendent's Contract

Approval of the Contract of Employment - Superintendent of Schools

Approval of Minutes

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

2.3 Related Services/Medical Consultants

3. BUSINESS

3.1 Payment of Bills

3.2 Board Secretary Report – April 2021

3.3 Transfers

3.4 Transfer of Current Year Surplus to Capital Reserve

- 3.5 Travel and Conferences Expenses**
- 3.6 2021/22 Anticipated Contracts to be Renewed, Awarded or to Expire During the School Year - PL 2015 - Chapter 47**
- 3.7 Contract for Supervisory Services for L.I.N.K.S.**
- 3.8 West Essex YMCA**
- 3.9 Subscription Bus Pricing**
- 3.10 General Education Out of District Tuition Rates**
- 3.11 Settlement Agreement**
- 3.12 Bylaws, Policies & Regulations**
- 3.13 Resolution to Add Question Regarding Board Size**

Public Comment ~ up to 15 minutes

Soma Chaudhuri, 9 Norwood Drive, asked what is working well with the board of five and what needs improvement? Does this team believe there is a need to augment?

Ms. Messer responded that working as a committee of the whole works well; however, she personally thinks functional expertise of others could serve them well.

Mrs. Chirls responded in her reading, in a board where policy leadership is prioritized, the particular expertise isn't as critical as the ability of the members who are serving on the board to work in collaboration with each other and with all stakeholders in the work of the board. Mrs. Chirls added it also says there needs to be a separation of the policy responsibility of the board and operational responsibility of the district.

Mrs. Chirls added that regardless of the number of board members, training of the board by an independent body to guide them to operate effectively together must be a priority.

Mrs. Khanna and Mrs. Chirls asked if Mr. Robinson could go back through past years and see how many seats were open and how many people ran to fill them.

Mr. Cohen and Mrs. Konner asked if we could evaluate how well we used the committees we put into policy in 2017.

Old Business

1. Future Calendars

There was a conversation about including Juneteenth as a day off on future calendars and the board unanimously agreed to have the administration rework next year's calendar to see how they can accommodate this addition.

Dr. Block and the administrative team will look to have something to the board as soon as possible.

The board also asked that the administration review the revised calendar with the PTAs, HSAs, LEA and Diversity Committee.

New Business

There was no new business.

ADJOURNMENT

At 9:35 p.m., Mr. Cohen made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mrs. Khanna seconded the motion.

ROLL CALL VOTE - Ayes - Mrs. Chirls, Mr. Cohen, Mrs. Khanna, Mrs. Konner, Ms. Messer
Nayes - None

Respectfully submitted,

Steven K. Robinson
Board Secretary