



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

Tuesday, October 11, 2022

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 7:00 p.m. by the Board President, Seth Cohen, 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, 2022 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:** Jenissa Arnette, Pamela Chirls, Seth Cohen, Vineeta Khanna, Samantha Messer and Jeffrey Xu (arrived at 7:03 p.m.)

**Also in Attendance:** Dr. Matthew Block, Michael Davison, Lisa Capone-Steiger, Mark Stern, Susan Burman and Joann Goldberg

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

### **Superintendent's Report**

#### 1. NJSLA (as per Policy 2610)

Mrs. Topylko, Director of Secondary Education, presented the results of the assessment students took in the spring, adding the NJSLA is the first full standardized test taken since the start of the pandemic.

Mrs. Topylko explained the work of the school and district data teams and how they analyze the data, set goals and create action steps to address the goals. Mrs. Topylko then reviewed the performance and participation levels as well as the percentage of students who met or exceeded expectations in ELA, mathematics and science. According to the data, Livingston students scored higher than the average statewide statistics in all categories and at all grade levels. Mrs. Topylko explained that the dip in the percentage of students who received passing scores reflects the hard work that teachers and students have been doing in incredibly difficult circumstances.

Ms. Messer commented positively on the scores adding it would be unrealistic to think that we weren't going to decline at all during the pandemic.

Ms. Arnette asked if we are seeing the same trends in NJSLA and the LinkIt data and Mrs. Topylko responded that students are taking LinkIt later in the year so she will get back to her with a response once we have a better data set.

With regard to the grade 3 reading scores, Mrs. Chirls asked if there are things we are doing differently and if the test tells us anything in general about progress and Mrs. Topylko responded

they didn't see trends among the schools but are working to triangulate the data and will get back to her.

Mrs. Chirls asked about speculation as to why grade 8 math scores were so low and if we are doing anything in the program to address them. Mrs. Topylko responded we have not yet disaggregated the data by level; however, more kids are going into Algebra in eighth grade. They have discussed the possibility of providing a lab class or time beyond the school day to provide extra help for struggling students.

Mrs. Chirls asked if we know what the effects of the Math in Focus program are on these students and Mrs. Topylko responded they are working on that data.

Mrs. Chirls asked about communication home and Mrs. Topylko responded that they are releasing the information to parents tomorrow by uploading it into the parent portal on Genesis.

Mrs. Khanna asked if parents get to see how their child performed on a test and Mrs. Topylko responded in grade 6, there are gradebooks online for parents to view and at the elementary level, teachers are working on sending tests home for parents to see their work.

Mrs. Khanna asked for an explanation of Dynamic Learning Maps that were in the presentation. Mrs. Topylko responded that for a small population of students who have significant learning challenges, the NJSLA is so challenging that they would not obtain a score that would lend any insight into their thought process. The State created a dynamic learning map of student abilities so a teacher can see what they understand and what they do not.

Mr. Cohen asked if the State provided any guidance for interpretation of this information, if what we have now should be our new baseline and if the State is the only comparative data.

Mr. Stern responded it is certainly a baseline with which we are doing our work this year.

Mrs. Topylko continued that district factor groups are not highlighted anymore so we have to wait until other school districts make their presentations to their boards to get that comparative data.

Mr. Cohen asked after the ESSER funds are no longer available, if it is the expectation that these types of programs will need to continue and need to be encompassed into the budget and Mrs. Topylko responded that we have two more years but some will prove to be so useful that we might want to reallocate resources to continue them.

Mr. Stern added some of these initiatives might replace others but we will need to determine what is a replacement versus what is an addition.

Mrs. Steiger added we would have to reallocate funds for the summer intervention program.

Mr. Cohen requested sample sizes be added to the slides for future presentations.

The full presentation is available on our website.

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

Mrs. Steiger explained that each year the district is required to complete a HIB self-assessment for the prior school year, present it to the board of education and share it with the Department of Education. The nine anti-bullying specialists in the district spend the year gathering information to complete the self-assessment. The self-assessment is made up of eight core elements that include training, curriculum and instruction, programming and reporting procedures. This year our composite score was 77.56 out of a possible 78 points. Mrs. Steiger

added each of our scores went up a little bit from last year and that this assessment enables the anti-bullying specialists to reflect on their work and provides them with opportunities for improvement.

### 3. Turf Field Update

Mr. Davison explained the original bid for the turf field occurred in September and all four bids came in over budget so the board rejected them at our last meeting. Mr. Davison then consulted with the architect on ways to phase the project into two parts. The architect recommended removing the lights, as they were one of the more costly items, rebid the turf field and then include the lights as part of the 2023-2024 budget. This phasing would extend the project timeline into the early fall of 2023. We subsequently rebid the project on October 7 removing the lighting and lighting controls from the base bid. We received three bids with the low bidder coming in within our \$3.6 million budget. As previously stated, the Board would only be committed to the project once a bid has been formally awarded. Mr. Davison added if the Board would like to move this project forward, we can prepare a resolution for a subsequent meeting.

Mr. Cohen stated he supports moving ahead with the field but that it is in the best interest of the district to pause and fold the project into a larger overarching plan of our facilities.

Mrs. Chirls and Mrs. Khanna both agreed it would be fiscally responsible to hold off on this project. Mrs. Chirls asked if there is anything we could do to repair the area so that it is usable.

Ms. Messer asked what happens to the money and Mr. Davison responded it will be returned at the end of the year to the capital reserve account.

### 4. Niche Rankings

Dr. Block announced Niche came out with rankings and Livingston was listed as the Number 7 public school in NJ, Number 2 as the best place to teach and Number 6 for the best teachers.

## **Board Reports**

Mrs. Chirls attended the Livingston Huaxia Chinese School's 20th anniversary celebration at Mount Pleasant Middle School.

Mrs. Chirls attended the teen mental health first aid training and thanked Mrs. Steiger for putting this training in place for our staff and tenth grade students.

## **Student Representative's Report**

Mr. Xu explained that LHS celebrated a week of respect with a combination of activities at all different grade levels. Mr. Xu added he will begin working with the high school administration on his student budget goal.

## **Public Input on Agenda Items ~ up to 15 minutes**

Starr Preston, 184 East Mount Pleasant Avenue, commended the administration and staff at MPE for their commitment to equity. Ms. Preston asked if there has been an equity audit performed or if one is being considered because having a third independent party would let us know if we are spending time and resources in the right or wrong areas.

Dr. Block responded we are looking at all aspects of our equity work including evaluating and reflecting on the work we are doing and making sure it has a strong purpose. Dr. Block added that Great Schools Partnership is a consultant that can help us with reflection through surveys and data analysis.

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR APPROVAL

### BUSINESS

Mrs. Chirls moved the following:

#### **3.1 Change to LBOE Annual Public Meeting Calendar**

**Resolved**, that the Livingston Board of Education moves the November 8, 2022 Workshop Meeting to November 1, 2022.

Mrs. Khanna seconded the motion.

**ROLL CALL VOTE** - Ayes - Ms. Arnette, Mrs. Chirls, Mr. Cohen, Mrs. Khanna, Ms. Messer  
Nays - None

### PERSONNEL

Ms. Messer 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
Ana Da Silva	School Psychologist	Resignation	BHE	December 2, 2022

#### **4.2 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
Kristy Knapp	BHE	School Social Worker	First Year Tenure Track	NA	MA	14	\$92,869 (prorated)	12/12/2022 or earlier if released by current district
Kristin Mahoney	Hillside	Reading Interventionist	Leave Replacement	P. Bauer	MA	1	\$62,455 (prorated)	10/17/2022
Banupriya Ramesh	MPE	Playground Aide	NA	NA	NA	NA	\$18/hr	9/28/2022

#### **4.3 Stipends**

**Resolved**, that the Livingston Board of Education approves the appointment of the individuals on **Attachment A** as Building Equity Coaches and Student Equity Advisors for the 2022-2023 school year. The stipend amount is \$2,579 per equity coach/equity advisor as approved on the June 21, 2022 and September 20, 2022 Board of Education agendas.

Mrs. Khanna seconded the motion.

Mrs. Chirls stated she hopes any staff members that want to be involved in the initiatives at the building level will be included and Dr. Block responded that anyone can join the equity team and are encouraged to get involved.

**ROLL CALL VOTE** - Ayes - Ms. Arnette, Mrs. Chirls, Mr. Cohen, Mrs. Khanna, Ms. Messer  
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.

Ms. Messer seconded the motion.

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

### **PREVIEW OF OCTOBER 18, 2022 VOTING AGENDA**

The board reviewed the upcoming items on the October 18 agenda.

#### **Conference with Livingston Education Association**

##### **Superintendent's Report**

1. Strategic Plan
2. Architect Capacity Analysis

For the architect's presentation next week, Ms. Messer and Mrs. Chirls asked for an explanation and clarity on the numbers and what they mean, room usage at all buildings and recommendations with reduced class size guidelines, not our current ones.

Ms. Messer also asked to see who we soft bordered and where they might have gone if we had more space.

Mrs. Chirls asked what our goals and/or needs might be with our Pre-K program going forward.

#### **Approval of Minutes**

1. Voting Meeting Minutes of September 20, 2022
2. Public Portion of Executive Session Meeting Minutes of October 3, 2022

#### **PROGRAM/CURRICULUM**

- 1.1 Books and DVDs**
- 1.2 Student Teachers**
- 1.3 Field Trips**
- 1.4 District Nursing Services Plan**

#### **STUDENT SERVICES**

- 2.1 Out of District Placements**
- 2.2 Related Services/Medical Consultants**

**BUSINESS**

- 3.1 Payment of Bills**
- 3.2 Preliminary Board Secretary Report – August 2022**
- 3.3 Transfers**
- 3.4 Conferences and Overnight Trips**
- 3.5 Policies & Regulations**

Ms. Messer asked if we can look at not charging families for field trips.

Mr. Cohen announced there is a Policy Committee meeting tomorrow and they will bring forward the policy to include an Equity Committee, as well as a number of other policies, at our next meeting.

**Public Comment ~ up to 15 minutes**

Bernard Searle, 14 Washington Court, stated he is happy the field is being put on hold and noticed there is a disconnect between the Township and the Board with the number of additional housing units being added to town and how that will affect the school district. Dr. Searle suggested we should stop looking at adding on to schools and rather look at a long range goal of adding an additional school somewhere.

Mr. Cohen responded that tomorrow we are having a 2:2 Meeting with the Township to discuss some of the items he has mentioned, that the Board is thinking similarly about the points he has raised tonight and hopes to schedule a 5:5 date for the discussion to continue in public.

**Old Business**

There was no old business.

**New Business**

There was no new business.

**ADJOURNMENT**

At 8:31 Ms. Messer made a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Mrs. Chirls seconded the motion.

Vote all in favor.

**Respectfully submitted,**



**Michael Davison  
Board Secretary**

October 11, 2022