



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

January 28, 2025

Executive Session - Administration Building - 6:30 p.m.

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

A **Board Retreat/Workshop 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 6:30 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 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 and student matters

Action may be taken upon return to the public session. The full length of the meeting is anticipated to be approximately 30 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.

## **Workshop Items - Board Retreat**

### Public Comment

Dr. Fishbein discussed the Board's public comment policy, highlighting the conflict between the portion that the public comment section of the meeting is not an opportunity for cross dialogue between Board members and the public and the portion that upon conclusion of a participant's remarks, a member of the Administration may respond to the inquiry at the end of this section of the meeting.

There was a discussion and the Board is supportive of Dr. Fishbein working to align these two items. There was further discussion about whether having an FAQ posted on the website as a means to follow up and respond to questions/concerns or having Dr. Fishbein address them at the following meeting is the best course of action. Either way, everyone wants to ensure the public understands how their questions/concerns will be handled after they speak of them at a meeting.

### District Chain of Command

Dr. Fishbein explained that we have a district chain of command document posted on our website that provides a road map to getting questions answered and voicing concerns. The document was created to help people get to the correct person to answer their question.

The Board suggested making the document more prominently available on the website and possibly providing links to the supervisors of each of the school departments.

### Program and Facility Needs

Dr. Fishbein explained that last year, the district worked with a consultant about our future facility needs. Dr. Fishbein continued that our enrollment is growing and there are still multiple construction projects being built in town that are expected to yield more students so we need to start planning as strategically as possible for the future. He asked the Board to provide him with what they would like to see as part of a referendum.

Mr. Cohen expressed maintaining current class sizes and possibly even shrinking them.

Mr. Cohen suggested our spaces should integrate the needs of our special education students so we can continue to keep students in their home schools and not send them out of district.

Mr. Cohen added ensuring our buildings are as safe and secure as possible.

Mrs. Khemka suggested looking at the programs we currently offer at the high school to see what we offer, what we could do better and what will encourage students to pursue their passions while they are in school.

Mrs. Khemka added we should go through the equity audit to see how our facilities meet some of those needs.

Mrs. Chirls suggested when thinking about what our space needs are, think about how we design the programs in a way that offers our staff and students flexibility and the ability for cross collaboration. Mrs. Chirls added we need to look at how best can departments work together to serve students as programs evolve in the future.

Mrs. Chirls also suggested thinking about what the physical needs are outside and around our buildings for athletic, art and technology programs.

Mrs. Chirls asked if there are items we can collaborate on with the Township or local organizations.

Mrs. Chirls mentioned that in the past we discussed building a performing arts center and other communal spaces for high school students and would like to take those needs into account when thinking about space.

Mrs. Chirls asked if we would have space to allow for Universal PreK, if that becomes mandated.

Mrs. Gong suggested we complete a new demographic study.

Dr. Fishbein agreed we should go out for a new demographic study since our last one was completed almost four years ago.

### **Public Comment**

David Lipsic, stated he feels security is lacking and would like to see security in the schools improved. Mr. Lipsic mentioned he believes there was money put into last year's budget to perform a security audit and asked for the status.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR APPROVAL**

#### **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

### **ADJOURNMENT**

At 7:42 p.m., Mrs. Khemka made a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Mrs. Chirls seconded the motion.

Vote all in favor.

**Respectfully submitted,**

  
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**Jessica Rapp**  
**Board Secretary**