



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

April 8, 2025

Executive Session - Administration Building - 5:30 p.m.

Public Session - Administration Building - 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 a Facebook livestream. The meeting was called to order at 5:45 p.m. by Parul Khemka, Board Vice 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, Fang Gong, Parul Khemka, Inna Yelisevich and Darcy Bialick

Members Absent: Seth Cohen

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:

- student and legal matters

Action may be taken upon return to the public session. The full length of the meeting is anticipated to be approximately 90 minutes; and be it

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

Mrs. Gong seconded the motion.

Vote all in favor.

At 7:13 p.m., Mrs. Khemka reconvened the public meeting.

## **Superintendent's Report**

Dr. Fishbein reported that every year the New Jersey Department of Education prepares School Performance Reports for each school and district. These reports, which contain a large variety of information about each school and the district, can be found on the NJDOE website as well as our own website.

Dr. Fishbein responded to public comment from previous meetings:

Substitutes being given access to WiFi - Dr. Fishbein explained that we provide Chromebooks for our substitutes, when necessary, and permitting sub-personal devices on our network is considered a security issue.

Conducting a Security Audit - Dr. Fishbein explained that the district conducted a Security Audit in June of 2016 and most of the items in the reports were addressed. We are currently reviewing the findings again and will address any other items we feel will enhance our security. Additionally, one of this year's district goals is improving security and we have been working on improvements throughout the school year.

Students marked tardy due to bad weather - Dr. Fishbein explained that bad weather is predictable, and unless one of our buses is late, we have to be accurate with reporting tardies to the State of New Jersey and cannot deviate from our current practice.

Alternative dates for testing - Dr. Fishbein explained that we host two ACTs and two SATs on Saturdays during the school year and due to staff proctor constraints, we moved the PSAT to a school day for this past year. Students who cannot test on Saturdays can work with their school counselor to apply with the College Board/ACT to test on Sundays.

Prom on Friday nights - Dr. Fishbein explained that the Prom has been scheduled on Fridays for the past several years to suit staffing needs and that it is difficult to have the Prom on a Thursday night and think all teachers and staff to be in school the next day. It also helps with attendance since most of the class would take off the day after the Prom to extend their long weekend/post Prom events.

### Budget Discussion

Dr. Fishbein announced we will be holding a public forum to answer budget questions on Wednesday, April 23 from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m. in the large conference room in the Administration Building and the Public Hearing and Vote on the Budget is scheduled for Tuesday, April 29 at 7:00 p.m.

Dr. Fishbein addressed additional questions he has received about the implementation of the student activity fee by explaining that the proposed 2025-2026 budget introduces the fee built in as a revenue. This is a user fee that helps supplement our extra-curricular programs in order to keep programs during challenging budgetary times. The proposed fee structure is \$200 for LHS and \$100 for HMS students who participate in athletics, clubs or activities in which the district expends funds. The fee is only charged once per school year, regardless of the number of activities in which a student participates. The district will be responsible for all necessary equipment. The student activity fee is separate from any voluntary fundraising done by parent groups. While the district budget covers the basic essential equipment for each activity, parent fundraising groups provide supplemental resources that can be used for equipment that goes beyond basic essential need, as well as for group celebrations, extra supplies and any other materials that enhance the activity for our students.

## **Board Reports**

Mrs. Gong attended the March Madness Academic Tournament and was happy to see more than 20 alumni return to support the coach and the team.

## **Student Representative's Report**

Miss Bialick explained that over the last few weeks, the final decisions from colleges were released, which means that our seniors have now decisively heard back from every school and are left to choose which of their options will be their best fit. Many seniors will be visiting schools and attending admitted students days over spring break to help make their final decisions. The patterns of admission this year among top universities have left many students feeling confused as inconsistent test optional policies among institutions made admissions feel a little more convoluted and random in this admissions cycle. Additionally, the class of 2025 is the largest population of students applying to college in a single admissions cycle. This is partially due to a baby boom that occurred in 2007, but also corresponds with the general trend that has occurred over the last several years of more and more students choosing to apply to college. Naturally, this made the 2025 college admissions cycle more difficult for the Lancers. However, despite these challenges, LHS students continued to preserve and succeed with many students getting into their first choice schools. This success is the direct result of the immense support students receive from our tremendously dedicated guidance counselors, teachers, and administrators. The access they have to enriching extracurriculars, a variety of high level academic classes, and personalized support from the college counseling teams at LHS provides students with a distinct advantage if they choose to pursue and utilize these resources. On behalf of the class of 2025, Miss Bialick thanked all those in the Livingston school system who have helped shape them as students, allowing them to achieve the milestone of committing to college. As this chapter of their lives closes, they can look forward to life in college knowing that they have been thoroughly prepared to find success in all future endeavors

## **Public Comment**

Michelle Amin, thanked the Superintendent for following up on past questions. Mrs. Amin stated she is looking for consideration for a student's tardiness or absence, questioned shorter labs on delayed opening days and asked if the Prom cannot be on a school night, could it be on a Saturday night?

## **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR APPROVAL**

### **BUSINESS**

Mrs. Chirls moved the following:

#### **3.1 Unused Snow Days**

**Resolved**, that the Livingston Board of Education approves using the unused snow days from the 2024-2025 school year as days off for students and staff on Monday, April 21, 2025 and Tuesday, May 27, 2025.

#### **3.2 Change to Annual Public Meeting Calendar**

**Resolved**, that the Livingston Board of Education approves the following changes to the Annual Public Meeting Calendar that was previously approved on January 2, 2025:

- Cancellation of the May 27, 2025 Voting Meeting
- Addition of the June 3, 2025 Voting Meeting
- Cancellation of the June 10, 2025 Workshop/Voting Meeting

### **3.3 Award of Contract - United Business Systems - Copiers**

**Resolved**, that the Livingston Board of Education obtained pricing for the replacement of copiers throughout the District. These copiers can be networked for use as printers, scanners and fax machines; and

**Whereas**, United Business Systems provided us with a proposal under state contract Contract 25-COMG-103708 for Canon copiers in the amount of \$14,268.00 per month (which includes service, toner and staples) for 60 months for 82 machines and a cost for copies of .0033 for black and white and .0048 for color; and

**Now Therefore Be It Resolved**, that the Livingston Board of Education enter into a contract with United Business Systems for a 60 month period.

### **3.4 Architectural Services – Proposal for Pre and Post-Referendum Services**

**Whereas**, the Livingston Board of Education ("Board") has determined that it needs to retain the services of an architectural firm to provide professional architectural services ("Services") pertaining to pre and post-referendum services for the Livingston Public School District; and

**Whereas**, DiCara Rubino Architects ("DiCara Rubino") has provided the Board with their proposal dated February 10, 2025 ("Proposal"); and

**Whereas**, the Board has determined that DiCara Rubino possesses the required expertise to perform the Services; and

**Whereas**, in accordance with N.J.S.A. 18A:18A-5, the Board may contract for the Services by resolution at a public meeting without public bidding, as such Services constitute Professional Services in accordance with the terms of the statute.

**Be It Resolved**, that the Board hereby enters into an agreement with DiCara Rubino as outlined in the proposal for a pre-referendum fee of one hundred and thirty five thousand dollars (\$135,000.00).

Mrs. Gong seconded the motion.

**ROLL CALL VOTE:** Ayes - Mrs. Chirls, Mrs. Gong, Mrs. Khemka, Mrs. Yelisevich  
Nayes - None

### **PERSONNEL**

Mrs. Chirls moved the following:

#### **4.1 Resignations & Retirements**

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

<b>Name</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Reason</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Last Day of Employment</b>
<i>Christopher Bickel</i>	Supervisor of Social Studies (PreK-6)	Retirement	District	June 30, 2025
<i>Elizabeth DeStefano</i>	Administrative Secretary - 10 month	Resignation	LHS	May 5, 2025

<i>Christina Mangiarelli</i>	Teacher of Psychology	Resignation	LHS	June 30, 2025
<i>Christina Bravo</i>	TOSD	Resignation	LHS	June 30, 2025
<i>Erica Tucker</i>	Instructional Aide	Resignation	Harrison	April 7, 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:

<b>Name</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>LOA w/pay and benefits</b>	<b>LOA w/o pay, but with benefits (if applicable)</b>	<b>Extended LOA w/o pay or benefits</b>	<b>Return Date</b>
<i>Carmella Allen</i>	RHE	Instructional Aide	2/5/2025-5/14/2025	5/15/2025-6/30/2025**	NA	TBD
<i>Katharine Carlin</i>	MPE	Elementary School Teacher	8/25/2025-9/24/2025	9/25/2025-10/17/2025**	10/20/2025-6/30/2026	8/26/2026
<i>Pietrina Daly</i>	LHS	School Nurse	4/3/2025-4/25/2025	4/28/2025-5/19/2025**	NA	5/20/2025
<i>Caroline Clark</i>	RHE	TOSD	NA	8/25/2025-11/14/2025**	11/17/2025-11/30/2025	12/1/2025
<i>Jessica D'Annunzio*</i>	Collins	Elementary School Teacher	3/17/2025-5/7/2025	5/8/2025-9/30/2025**	10/1/2025-6/30/2026	8/26/2026
<i>Danielle Wojdyga*</i>	LHS	Teacher of English	1/21/2025-3/24/2025 & 3/25/2025-4/21/2025**	4/22/2025-6/30/2025**	8/25/2025-1/1/2026	1/2/2026
<i>Amanda King*</i>	Hillside	Intervention/Enrichment Specialist	3/17/2025-5/9/2025 & 5/12/2025-6/6/2025**	6/9/2025-6/30/2025 & 8/25/2025-9/12/2025**	9/15/2025-12/12/2025	12/15/2025
<i>Daniel King*</i>	LHS	Teacher of Music	3/28/20205-4/4/2025; 4/8/2025; 4/11/2025; 4/23/2025-5/1/2025**	NA	NA	5/2/2025
<i>Diana Terrana*</i>	BHE	PRIDE TA	NA	NA	1/10/2025-4/8/2025	4/9/2025
<i>Sarah Pasculli*</i>	LHS	TOSD	5/9/2025-6/30/2025 & 8/25/2025-9/8/2025**	9/9/2025-11/14/2025**	11/17/2025-6/30/2026	8/26/2026

*\*amended from previous agenda*

#### **4.3 Transfers**

**Resolved**, that the Livingston Board of Education approves the transfer(s) as listed on **Attachment A**.

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#### 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
Marken Hyka	CO	Maintenance Person	NA	P. Sbarro	M	8	\$58,767, plus \$625	4/16/2025
Anna Solovyeva	LHS	Teacher of Biology & Chemistry	First Year Tenure Track	B. Bremmer	M	16	\$102,700	8/25/2025
Alexandria Brown	Hillside	Elementary School Teacher	First Year Tenure Track***	C. Levine	BA	5/6	\$60,568	8/25/2025
Amy Pagán	CO	Benefits Coordinator/ Payroll Assistant	NA	E. Villar	NA	NA	\$65,000 (prorated)	5/12/2025
Rafael Pagan	CO	IT Support Specialist (hourly)	NA	NA	NA	NA	\$20/hr	4/22/2025

*\*as amended from a previous agenda*

*\*\*salary will remain the same for the 2025-26 SY*

*\*\*\*leave replacement from 8/25/2025-9/30/2025, tenure track commencing 10/1/2025*

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

#### 4.5 Substitutes

**Resolved**, that the Livingston Board of Education approve 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
Bettina Plesnitzer*	HMS	Teacher of Health & PE	Long Term Sub	S. Mayk	\$345/day	1/22/2025 - 4/2/2025
Bettina Plesnitzer*	LHS	Teacher of Health & PE	Long Term Sub	T. Mantone	\$345/day	4/22/25 - 5/2/2025
Carol Silberfein	BHE	Elementary School Teacher	Long Term Sub	C. Ferraro	\$320/day**	4/8/2025- 5/23/2025

*\*amended from previous agenda*

*\*\*to be paid the difference between their current daily rate and the rate quoted above*

#### 4.6 Extra Period Assignments

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

Mrs. Gong seconded the motion.

Mrs. Burman and the Board congratulated Mr. Bickel on his retirement.

Mrs. Burman introduced Anna Solovyeva, who was appointed tonight as a Teacher of Biology & Chemistry and was sitting in the audience.

**ROLL CALL VOTE:** Ayes - Mrs. Chirls, Mrs. Gong, Mrs. Khemka, Mrs. Yelisevich  
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.

#### **5.2 Bus Evacuation Drills**

**Resolved,** that the Livingston Board of Education approves the amended resolution for the 2024/2025 bus evacuation drills. All schools completed at least one bus evacuation drill by 11/27/2024.

Mrs. Gong seconded the motion.

**ROLL CALL VOTE:** Ayes - Mrs. Chirls, Mrs. Gong, Mrs. Khemka, Mrs. Yelisevich  
Nayes - None

### **Old Business**

There was no old business.

### **New Business**

There was no new business.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

At 7:33 p.m., Mrs. Chirls made a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Mrs. Gong seconded the motion.

**Respectfully submitted,**



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

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