



## **LIVINGSTON BOARD OF EDUCATION WORKSHOP/PUBLIC HEARING MEETING MINUTES**

Monday, August 10, 2020

Public Session - Virtual Meeting Via Zoom and Facebook Live – 7:00 p.m.

A **Workshop/Public Hearing Meeting** of the Livingston Board of Education was held on this date via Zoom and Facebook Live. The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by the Board President, Ronnie Konner, who announced that adequate notice of this meeting has been provided by amendment to notice approved at the Board's reorganization meeting on January 7, 2020 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: Charles "Buddy" August, Pamela Chirls, Seth Cohen, Ronnie Konner, Samantha Messer and Aditya Desai

Also in Attendance: Dr. Matthew Block, Steven Robinson, Lisa Capone-Steiger, Susan Burman, Joann Goldberg, Sara Bright, Michelle Cebula, Lorena Dolan, Carlos Gramata, Cindy Healy, Shawn Kelly, Bronawyn O'Leary, Blair Rosenthal, Dr. Emily Sortino, Mark Stern, Natalie Topylko and Justin Toomey

There were approximately 488 members of the public and staff watching remotely via a Facebook Live stream.

Mr. Aditya Desai led the Pledge of Allegiance.

### **Workshop Item**

#### 1. Reopening Plan

Dr. Block explained that as of today, our charge is to submit to the Department of Education a plan for reopening schools for in-person education in the fall. The checklist we received states we need to implement a schedule that includes in-person instruction in some capacity for at least 180 days, to ensure that each student is provided with at least four hours of instructional contact time per school day or one continuous session for two and one-half hours for kindergarten students, to incorporate a policy regarding full time remote learning services and to prepare for a potential shift back to entirely remote learning models.

Dr. Block presented a staged approach to allow students to ease in and get comfortable with the new safety procedures that will be in place.

Dr. Block praised our teachers and the work they do every day adding that long term, we need to keep our educators teaching our students. Dr. Block added this is a new paradigm for teachers who will be asked to teach in multiple modes simultaneously.

Mr. Robinson reviewed the items we have purchased so far to prepare for schools to reopen and explained how the cost affected our budget. Mr. Robinson added during the budget process, the board proactively put money aside to handle these additional expenses. Mr. Robinson shared a picture of a classroom at Heritage Middle School with 11 desks to show how we plan to social distance students.

Dr. Block reviewed our continued tasks which are to refine the remote learning plan, prepare for in-person instruction, create a plan that is likely to be sustainable but can be flexible over time and to provide excellent educational experiences five days a week.

Dr. Block reviewed the various resources we have utilized to create our reopening plan. In addition, Dr. Block meets with and speaks to surrounding district superintendents on a regular basis.

Based on the advice we have received, there are a number of guiding principles we will follow in our planning. These include universal masking, eye protection for all staff, enhancement of air filtering and ventilation, regular hand washing and sanitizing, increased cleaning protocols, six feet of social distancing, more frequent in-person classes for younger students, more remote classes for older students, separate cohorts on different days, use of larger spaces for instruction, use of daily screening tools to separate community members with symptoms, single direction hallway movement and staggered use of restrooms.

Dr. Block explained the definitions of synchronous and asynchronous learning. Synchronous is when teachers and students learn together at the same time. Asynchronous is when students learn independently with teacher support.

Dr. Block continued throughout the month of July, we looked at various plans. The hybrid plan, with a staged approach and an option for all virtual is the plan he is presenting tonight; however, it may change between now and the beginning of school. Dr. Block added we need to be able to pivot in any direction based on new information as it is received. Dr. Block continued we like the staged approach, it is a hybrid plan that mixes in-person and virtual instruction, allows us to start small and grow and to open with what is manageable in an effort to create something that will be sustainable. This is not a plan just for September but is a plan for the 2020-2021 school year.

Mrs. Steiger explained how the elementary program will group students into A or B cohorts who will attend in-person school two days in a row. The remaining day will rotate between the two cohorts. School days will operate on a partial day schedule to begin the school year. Students will attend school, in-person, two to three times per week and at least 50% of students will be remote each day. There will be a structured schedule of synchronous and asynchronous learning.

Dr. Block explained that secondary instruction will begin with most students being remote each day. The mornings will be more synchronous and less asynchronous. The afternoon will be asynchronous with teacher support. Teachers will be provided with common planning time. Face-to-face office hours will be offered to all students daily. Students will have opportunities to connect with all of their teachers each week. We want to make sure each step in the process is functioning well before we move to the next step.

Dr. Block continued we know the secondary schedule is very different from the elementary schedule and this is due to the knowledge we have that adults, and secondary students fall into this category, transmit the virus differently than younger children. Doctors suggest more in-person time for elementary and more remote time for secondary.

Mrs. Steiger explained that teaching students in-person and online simultaneously will be a new paradigm for teachers and we will need to provide opportunities for professional development,

teacher collaboration and implementation of new and creative ideas. Mrs. Steiger explained we have added four days of professional development to the start of the school year and also released a Professional Development Repository to all staff last week where they will find hundreds of courses, slides, resources and exemplars for teaching and learning as tools for expanding their practices.

Mrs. Steiger added the district understands that personal circumstances may necessitate a family to decide not to do in-person instruction and they will be afforded a choice to keep their child home in a remote learning setting. Mrs. Steiger continued on August 14, all Livingston families will receive a survey from the district to make the choice whether their child(ren) will attend in-person sessions in the hybrid model or will begin the school year remotely. Staff will also be provided with a survey of their intention to return on September 1.

Dr. Block requested parents take the survey as quickly as possible.

Mrs. Chirls stated although the NJDOE doesn't require approval, she asked if it is Dr. Block's intention that they approve the plan and Dr. Block responded it is his preference to have the board approve the plan. Dr. Block added the plan is always going to be a living document and after the approval, he will work with the board to decide how best to proceed if they choose to go down a different path.

Mrs. Konner asked for questions about Operations.

Mrs. Chirls asked if the filters we ordered are in yet and if they have been tested. If they haven't come in, what is the plan and how long do they need to be tested prior to school opening.

Mr. Robinson responded the elementary and middle school filters are in and the high school filters are due over the next week or two. Mr. Robinson added we have a commissioning agent who will perform all testing and adjust and balance the units to make sure everything is functioning properly.

Mrs. Chirls asked how classrooms will be cleaned when there is a five minute break between blocks of classes at the high school and Mr. Robinson responded staff will be provided with cleaning wipes to wipe down the desks in between classes.

Mrs. Chirls asked how we will track when a student forgets to transmit the medical check form prior to coming into the building each morning?

Mrs. Steiger responded reports will be generated and provided to the administrators and nurses so if they see a form is not complete, the student will be brought to an isolation area and a parent will be contacted to complete the form.

Mrs. Chirls asked what happens if a student at a bus stop gets a temperature check and has a temperature but no parent is present and Mrs. Steiger responded we would have to wait with the bus and student while a parent is called and if there is no other option, the student would have to be brought to school while we get a hold of a parent.

Mr. Cohen asked if the commissioning agent is testing the ventilations systems one time or if it will be a continuous effort and Mr. Robinson responded right now it is one time to ensure the system is working properly.

Mr. Cohen asked if there is a plan to let the community know the results and Mr. Robinson said yes.

Mr. Cohen remarked that part of the plan talks about opening windows to increase ventilation and we have several classrooms throughout the district that don't have windows. How do we plan on using these spaces? Mr. Robinson responded there is ventilation in all classrooms regardless of whether or not they have windows but we are monitoring and will look to provide air purifiers as well as work with principals to move students to a different location.

Mrs. Chirls stated the ASHRAE checklist says there has to be ongoing maintenance of the ventilation system and Mr. Robinson responded he will discuss with the commissioning agent to make sure the system is being maintained in the proper manner.

Mr. Cohen asked if we utilize multiple entrance and exit doors for students, do we anticipate increased security costs and Dr. Block responded he is working with Chief Marshuetz to limit outdoor spaces and use of extra doors and that once school begins, our regular security measures will be in place.

Mrs. Chirls asked how we will handle the mixing of cohorts in bathrooms and Dr. Block responded there will be a regular cleaning of all bathroom facilities in compliance with CDC guidelines and we will be monitoring bathroom use to make sure there are no gatherings of students.

Ms. Messer asked how many people we can accommodate in the tents and should we order more and Dr. Block responded we do plan on rotating classes outside but that widespread classes outside all day could be a security issue.

Ms. Messer asked if we have looked at utilizing other spaces and Mr. Robinson responded that renting space will be a slow and expensive venture. We would need to locate a space, then go through the Zoning Board, Planning Board and Department of Education to get approvals. We would also need to have the space retrofitted to create an educational space that meets all compliance requirements such as ADA. After that, we would have to go out to bid for construction. Mr. Robinson added this process could take upwards of 8 months and cost millions of dollars.

Mrs. Chirls asked how the Monmouth Court space will be utilized and Mrs. Steiger responded it will be utilized as it is typically with students on a hybrid model or remote students Zooming into classes.

Mrs. Konner asked if there are variations that occur with the HVAC systems when we switch to heat as opposed to air conditioning and Mr. Robinson responded he will find out, although the filter will be the same.

Mrs. Konner asked if we have screens on all the windows and Mr. Robinson responded we have no screens at the high school.

Mrs. Konner asked how large of a space the isolation area will be to house students who forget to complete the forms until we can get in touch with parents and Mrs. Steiger responded most schools have elected to use the gymnasium as an isolation space.

Mrs. Konner asked if there are any plans to perform a readiness drill to see what concerns might come up and how long it will take students and staff to get into the buildings. Dr. Block responded we can probably do a drill before school starts but the true test will be once kids are in, which is another reason to start small.

Mrs. Steiger added we have already had experience with this with the ESY program that we ran over the summer. We had approximately 45 to 50 students in person so had a lot of practice with the process of having students and staff enter and exit the buildings during this COVID experience.

Mrs. Konner expressed concern with students getting inside if it is raining or if we have a hurricane and Dr. Block responded if the weather is that bad, we can schedule a remote learning day.

Mrs. Chirls asked how we will adhere to distance requirements during drills and Dr. Block responded we will do drills as they have been done in the past but will do them in a socially distanced way. It will be new and students will have to practice.

Mrs. Steiger added we had a lot of practice in ESY doing drills and that the Livingston Police Department offered a lot of guidance and support.

Mrs. Chirls asked if students in ESY had snacks and Mrs. Rosenthal responded that yes, students were instructed to bring water bottles and a snack. Students washed their hands and then ate at desks socially distanced apart and afterwards, the students washed their hands again and teachers cleaned the desks.

Mrs. Konner asked for questions about Instruction.

Ms. Messer asked for Dr. Block to share the thinking behind the secondary one week on/one week off as opposed to going with a semester model.

Dr. Block explained the faculty and leaders at the high school looked at and chose this model.

Mr. Stern added they had concerns with courses in the languages and math finishing in January and then students not having those subjects again until the next fall. They were also concerned that if they started the school year with semesters and felt it wasn't working out, they would be stuck that way for the rest of the year.

Mrs. Chirls asked how the entire AP program will be delivered in this model by the time AP tests happen in early May.

Mr. Stern responded it will be similar to how it is done on a regular basis but with virtual, we will need to get creative in our delivery of instruction in all subject matters.

Ms. Messer asked with students having one set of classes one week and a different set of classes the next, how we ensure that kids are actually doing the work on a daily basis and getting the support they need so that a week doesn't go by before we find out a kid didn't understand or is really struggling.

Dr. Block responded there will be an opportunity for students to have a daily connection with teachers.

Mr. Cohen stated when you read the plan, it comes across as secondary students will receive half of the education that they would receive in a normal school year.

Dr. Block responded this is not the schedule for the year, it is the schedule for September and the idea is to build over time. Dr. Block wants to give teachers a chance to acclimate to the new paradigm and new model. Whenever you do things remotely, and even when in school, there are times when you are synchronous and the teacher is delivering direct instruction and times when students are working independently or collaboratively with other students. The number of synchronous hours in class doesn't necessarily dictate the number of hours you receive in education. There are other resources that the teacher will provide for students to work on asynchronously in the afternoon. It is a different way of looking at instruction but it is a full program.

Mr. Cohen responded that it sounds like a good amount of professional development may be in need before the school year to help facilitate this and asked if we have enough built into the academic calendar.

Dr. Block responded that he believes the addition of the four days prior to school opening will allow teachers time to collaborate and refine their practice prior to the opening of school. Mrs. Steiger added we are modeling synchronous and asynchronous learning through a PD repository that is full of resources to assist teachers in their own self-directed learning prior to the four days in September. Staff will also have supplemental time to work together during common planning, in department and faculty meetings and during professional development meetings throughout the year.

Mr. Cohen asked if students with an IEP will receive the services they are entitled to and how will this be delivered. Mr. Cohen also asked how BSI will work.

Mrs. Steiger responded students will receive all of their services whether it be synchronous or asynchronous at all the schools. Students who receive in class support will receive assistance from two teachers in the synchronous part and then have access to that special educator during other scheduled time. Students will still see their case manager whether they are physically in the building or remote.

Mrs. Steiger explained BSI is not special education but those teachers will do a push in model so they will be in classrooms with the students they are assigned. Students will be cohorted in such a way that it will be efficient. Students will be pulled out based on their IEP requirements.

Mr. August asked how our plan compares with other school's plans and Dr. Block responded each community has come up with a different plan and it is hard to find two that are exactly alike.

Mrs. Chirls asked what our plans are for physical education and music and if there has been any consideration to doing certain specials in a remote environment in the afternoon and delivering core curriculum during the time students are physically in school.

Mrs. Steiger responded we have discussed all these things at length and don't have enough time to offer specials in the afternoon. The music and physical education supervisors are working to come up with plans that are logical for kids. For music, we are looking into bell covers for horn style instruments and for physical education, students will come already dressed and not use locker rooms.

Mrs. Konner confirmed when we are required to switch to a fully remote day, the schedule will change to be able to provide students with a full academic schedule and if that is the case, why are we only providing four hours of in-person instruction in the hybrid and remote models?

Dr. Block responded some of the reasons are the need for students to have lunch, to provide a break from wearing a mask, to limit the number of transitions in the hallways and limit the number of students staff members will interact with during a day.

Mrs. Konner stated those reasons don't exist if the kids are at home.

Mrs. Konner asked for students who choose the remote option, are they still on the same four hour timeline as the hybrid students and Dr. Block responded they are so that if we need to pivot, all students can do so together.

Mrs. Konner asked if there was any consideration to have secondary students go fully remote and Dr. Block responded that we know from feedback last year, remote was very positive for secondary students because they have more ability to work independently.

Mrs. Konner expressed concern that teachers receive enough professional development to teach remotely so that students have a better education experience than in the spring and Mrs. Steiger responded that is why we created the PD repository, so that teachers have a central place to receive support and resources both from administrators, their colleagues and through exemplars.

Mrs. Chirls asked what happens if we don't have enough teachers to start the school year because they choose to go on a leave?

Mrs. Steiger responded that the administrative team has a plan in case they need to replace teachers and will be working to ensure new teachers get the professional development they need to transition to teaching remotely when they arrive for New Teacher Orientation.

Mrs. Chirls asked if the cohorts by alphabet are likely to change if they are not balanced based upon the needs of each grade or school. Mrs. Steiger responded that yes, once parents have selected their option for their children, if the alphabets need to be adjusted, we will do so.

Mrs. Chirls asked how the mixing of cohorts will happen and what the cleaning protocols and hallway travel will be for 5th graders who switch classes and Mrs. Steiger responded the teachers will be moving, not the students.

Mrs. Chirls asked if school plans are being shared with parents before the survey is released and Dr. Block responded principals are working on their detailed, logistical building plans that don't have anything to do with whether or not a parent decides to send their child back to school.

Mr. Desai asked if we will be labeling some hallways to limit contact between students and to keep them moving in one direction and Dr. Block responded that we have already ordered labels and signs to institute that procedure.

Mr. Desai asked if there is a way to use the later half of a school day for extracurricular activities in person and Dr. Block responded we are looking at how we can bring students back for social interaction in clubs and groups as well as ideas to expand our virtual offerings.

Mr. Desai asked if there is a way to provide one common platform for students to connect and Mr. Stern responded they are meeting with the Student Government Association and student class officers to figure out ways to work together to maintain school spirit.

Mrs. Konner asked for questions on Health and Wellness.

Mr. Cohen asked if Dr. Kelly and Lou Anello, who have reviewed and approved this plan, are comfortable with the mixing of cohorts at the secondary level despite the fact that it assumes the highest risk threshold as written in the CDC guidelines.

Mrs. Steiger responded Dr. Kelly has reviewed the entire reopening plan and while the risk is high while you are mixing cohorts, we have minimized the number of students within the cohorts to such a level that he has expressed support for this model while understanding we don't have permission from the Governor to go to a fully remote program right now.

Mrs. Chirls asked if Dr. Kelly suggested any changes to what we proposed and Mrs. Steiger responded he was part of the design work in the committee.

Mrs. Konner asked if Dr. Block received clarification that every grade level had to provide some type of in-person learning and Dr. Block responded although we know some districts submitted a fully remote reopening plan, we don't know if those plans will be approved. If those plans do get approved, it may change the landscape. Dr. Block continued that his indication from the

county is that in-person instruction should be made at every level which is why we are submitting a plan that is cautious and allows us to start slowly.

Mrs. Chirls asked if we would be open to having Dr. Kelly, Lou Anello or a panel of doctors attend one of our board meetings to address questions.

Mrs. Steiger said Dr. Kelly has offered to do a FAQ video if we gather questions in advance.

Mrs. Konner asked how we will make reasonable accommodations for staff with underlying medical conditions.

Dr. Block responded the quality of education we are able to provide is largely due to the talented educators who work with our children and we have been working on how to maintain having all of our teachers, including the ones who have medical issues, engage with our kids through the 20-21 school year.

Mrs. Konner asked if Dr. Block can make a commitment to ensure we make accommodations to staff after we receive the survey results and Dr. Block responded we are looking at every opportunity and every scenario to be able to provide reasonable accommodations.

Mrs. Konner asked how we will deal with minimizing student anxiety in both models and Mrs. Steiger responded we have three subcommittees through the Health and Wellness Committee and one of them is working through all counseling supports for students while another one is working on all of the lessons for students. Mrs. Steiger continued there are rich resources already in place for everyone to utilize to ensure that we are addressing all of the residual trauma kids may bring to the classroom or be dealing with when learning remotely while living through a pandemic.

### **Public Comment**

Kenneth Fischer, 29 East Hobart Gap Road, asked what type of testing protocols will be in place on days for in-person learning? What happens when a teacher or student is exposed to someone in class who has COVID? Do they need to quarantine and for how long? Will there be contact tracing? How can this be effectively done with students who are in classrooms, hallways and school buses? Will parents be notified? How much is the positivity/infection rate for Livingston and Essex County taken into account in our planning? Have we looked into the robocall issue he mentioned at a prior meeting?

Michelle Amin, 6 Washington Court, asked for families that choose to either keep their child remote or choose the hybrid in-person program, at what point in time is there an opportunity for a parent to change their mind? How does that work with whatever percentages we are allowing for a population to be in person?

Victoria Khavulya, 40 Lee Road, asked if the district has considered the fact that students are not social distancing when they are not in school or when they are learning remotely? What do we suggest to a parent who has no ability to stay at home and has child care needs, specifically for younger children?

Cara Katz, 20 North Hillside Avenue, asked how we will handle mental health issues for students who have been kept out of school and expressed disappointment that a guidance counselor wasn't part of tonight's panel.

Ephraim Abam, 11 Sycamore Terrace, asked if any thought has been given that during the first couple of weeks of school, teachers and students will be worried about getting COVID so less

attention will be paid to academics? Have we given any thought about doing some type of testing of students prior to the opening of school?

Allison Handler, 14 Hearthstone Terrace, asked what the plan is for incoming freshman high school orientation. How will students get their new devices and return old devices?

Dr. Amy Schecter, 22 Stoneham Drive, asked if there will be a policy for mask exemptions, if doors will be open in classrooms, if students will eat snacks outside in tents or if there will even be snacks and if it is worthwhile to pursue renting space so that we can socially distance students. Mrs. Schecter expressed the high potential for exposure by bringing secondary students back for half a day outweighs the benefit of being in school.

Mindy Fox, 38 Chestnut Street, asked to clarify what we mean by synchronous learning in terms of whether there is a live stream of the teacher to the students at home or whether there is some kind of two way so that the teacher can see the students that are at home via Zoom. Can the students raise their hand? What's the level of engagement, interactivity? Is it a one way live stream or a two way type of program?

Lauren Bloom, 517 Regal Boulevard, asked why Friday was chosen as the elementary alternate day and not Wednesday. Mrs. Bloom expressed she is looking forward to whatever in-person learning her child can receive.

Cindy Goldstein, 24 Mayhew Drive, expressed concern about the integrity of education. Mrs. Goldstein had 260 parents sign a letter over the last week stating there is no substitute for qualified and engaged educators. Mrs. Goldstein stated at the July 28 meeting, it was disclosed that a large number of staff will choose FMLA and they are concerned the quality of education will not be at the level they expect. Mrs. Goldstein requested the board and administration take liberties to retain our staff.

Mrs. Goldstein asked if we could indicate how many leave requests we have already processed? How many leave requests were already filed? What is our projected number of staff who may choose not to come back to the buildings should we require everyone to be in person.

Spencer Korn, 7 Cherry Hill Road, asked why is it not possible to offer a full day of synchronous learning at the secondary level? What are the specific parameters that were used to choose this model? If the Governor gives the okay to go to remote learning for all students, does the administration plan to go all remote knowing that 70 percent of parents want to be in-person in a true hybrid? Why can't we have core classes more than just every other week?

Adam Henslovitz, 45 North Mitchell Avenue, stated if we go back online, it would be a full day of remote instruction as opposed to every other week allowing for all courses to be taught. If the plan is approved, will we consider going to something similar to allow for the every week, every subject schedule? Would we consider asking parents again whether this hybrid plan is preferable to a remote option where students would receive a full day of instruction?

Katey Quillen, 15 Fernwood Road, asked if there is a willingness for the Board of Education to resume meetings in-person prior to the start of the school year as a show of confidence to the community? Is there a willingness for the Board of Education and administration to participate in a classroom simulation to test how the plan will work out while role playing as teachers and students wearing masks and face shields in both an in-person physical classroom and virtual

setting? What is the district's willingness to ask the community what they are willing to sacrifice to go back to an in-person model?

Nora Vickerman, 82 Ridge Drive, asked if the kids who don't have IEPs but are pulled out for math groups, reading groups, etc., still have that chance whether in school or remotely?

Dr. Karen Borger, 84 North Mitchell Avenue, as a parent who was one of the 70% opting for in-person learning, stated she is disappointed with the half day option. As a physician, Dr. Borger asked if there was any consideration to reversing the plan to open school more robustly in the fall and then dial it back in the winter months as flu season kicks in, numbers start to rise and people need to stay indoors.

Alyse Heilpern, 4 Highland Drive, asked if the district consulted with a distance learning expert, when assessments will be given at the secondary level and how schools will ensure that students and faculty who travel to COVID hotspots do not come to school without quarantining for the 14 days.

Marrea Major, 24 Swan Road, asked if a student in a classroom is found to have a fever and that child goes into quarantine, what happens to the class and teacher? What happens when a student who rides a bus is found to have a fever during the day? Do multiple classrooms have to go into quarantine? Would it be for 14 days?

Laura Lemos, 154 North Livingston Avenue, asked who she should speak with about an individualized plan for her elementary children.

Jane Marie Matise, 45 McCall Avenue, asked when we will hear specifics of the plans so we can make a decision, if the YMCA will be available and what time children will be picked up.

John Dax, 47 Wynnewood Road, asked how students will maintain the normal pace of learning? How will students catch up from what they missed from the second half of last year? What will be put in place to ensure that our kids won't finish behind where they need to be? Why can't students have classes for a full day at the same pace of learning they used to have?

Deena Goldstein, 8 Princeton Road, asked what types of support programs and guidance will be in place to support the incoming freshman class.

Sharon Apples, 73 Rockledge Drive, asked if the Board of Education considered particular guidelines or expectations relating to testing and grading given the extensive differentiation in learning mediums and different levels of support that students are going to receive depending on each family's personal circumstances. With testing, what are we truly measuring during these times? When it's appropriate, will the identity of the teachers who have chosen to take FMLA or retire be disclosed in advance of school starting for parents to gauge the impact that such changes may have on their children's education? Is there a deadline for these teachers to formally notify the district? Is the Union supportive of the current proposed plan or is there some expectation of challenges or worst case scenario, striking? Will there be particular guidelines imposed on the teachers and students applicable to remote learning to ensure the utmost engagement and ability? Lastly, Mrs. Apples asked if the board can streamline communication to parents.

Seth Marx, 17 Hampton Terrace, asked if money were not an object, are there any other solutions that we would explore to create a safe return to school?

Dr. James Pritsiolas, 4 Walton Lane, is a physician and agrees with Dr. Borger that we should start school robustly before the flu season starts. Dr. Pritsiolas stated he thought the concept of a hybrid model was to start off half a week in school and half at home rather than one day in school and the rest of the week at home which doesn't seem to be what people wanted as expressed in the survey.

Shelli Faber, 34 Vanderbilt Drive, asked for more information on the afternoon, independent learning period that follows dismissal and before teacher office hours begin. Mrs. Faber asked what the plan will be for administering assessments at the high school and how we plan to proctor testing when students are at home online.

Dr. Stacy Bernstein, 3 Canterbury Road, echoed the remarks of the last two physicians that the infection rate is low so we should start school robustly now and then slow down once the rate goes up and we enter flu season. Dr. Bernstein asked if we have put any type of sound system in place so that staff and students can hear one another while wearing masks.

Venecia Hou-Puri, 33 South Mitchell Avenue, asked why we aren't moving forward with fully dedicated remote teachers and wants to know how we will guarantee her family's health and safety.

Dr. Leo Pritsiolas, 26 Coventry Road, is a local physician and agrees with the other doctors that we should start out with a robust plan while the infection rate is low and then scale back. Dr. Pritsiolas stated 70% of parents want more in-person instruction than ½ a day once a week and that students will fall short with this model.

Stefanie Cohen, 20 Stonewall Drive, expressed she gets a vibe that some members of the board, no matter what people say, do not want in-person learning. Mrs. Cohen added remote learning started strong last year but ended up weak and aren't members of the board supposed to operate in what is in the best interest of all the stakeholders? Mrs. Cohen asked how remote learning/teaching will be evaluated?

Abby Silverman, 12 Pebble Beach Drive, asked if a child has symptoms of anything this winter, will physicians be working in conjunction with the school nurses to ensure there is some uniformity about when kids can go back to school? Will they be using the rapid test? Will they be using the testing strategies for exposures or will they be doing the 14 day quarantine? If a child is told they must self isolate at home, will they be able to pivot to remote or will they just be out of school for that time?

Anthony Rosamilia, President of LEA, reiterated that the LEA has publicly called for a virtual start to the school year due to the pandemic. Mr. Rosamilia added the LEA would welcome a statement from the board to the Governor expressing their grave concerns regarding reopening of schools for in-person instruction during a pandemic when there are so many uncertainties and risks.

Michele Cohen, 15 Woodland Terrace, asked when the details of the in-person and all virtual plans will be made available. Will the day look the same for those who choose the virtual model or hybrid model and what would the percentages be of synchronous and asynchronous learning? Will we have virtual clubs available?

Laura Lemos, 154 North Livingston Avenue, stated she does not want her kindergartener sitting in front of a Chromebook for seven hours a day so who does she speak with to come up with a plan that works for her family?

Sasha Paillet Koff, 13 Rumson Road, would like to understand by a grade by grade level what the curriculum differences will be this year versus years prior. What will the remediation be coming back to school for learning that was missed in the spring? What is the extent to which the WiFi systems have been beefed up or tested so all of the classroom teachers can Zoom simultaneously? Mrs. Koff would like clarification around opting in and the prioritization as it relates to spacing. Mrs. Koff asked for more specifics on exactly how cleaning will be handled between classes and who will be doing the cleaning.

Ian Shainbrown, 2 Mountain Ridge Drive, expressed virtual clubs and staring at a screen for many hours a day is not good for a child's mental health. Mr. Shainbrown suggested looking back and reassessing starting off the school year with more in-person instruction just like the physicians who have spoken before him have mentioned.

Dr. Eric Handler, 14 Hearthstone Terrace, stated children should be the number one priority and the best way for them to get their education is in person. Staring at screens for hours on end is not good for a student's mental health. Infection rates are currently low and with the masks and hand washing, it should result in less flu coming this season. Dr. Handler agrees with the other physicians that the best course will be to start robustly and scale back later on.

Michele Cohen, 15 Woodland Terrace, asked if there are certain elective classes that will be unavailable to students and will schedule changes have to be made for elective courses and if so, when will they be notified?

Cindy Goldstein, 24 Mayhew Drive, from the survey, what is the 70/30 breakdown between K-5 and 6-12? Mrs. Goldstein stated before the pandemic, she asked the board to consider revamping the Code of Conduct where they can address integrity with assessments. Mrs. Goldstein asked that we provide communication to parents not to send their children to school if they are sick in order to limit exposure to other children and staff.

Dr. Block thanked the principals and directors for joining the meeting and let them sign off of the Zoom call.

Mr. Robinson stated we will provide a FAQ online with all of the answers to the public's questions posed tonight before the Wednesday meeting.

Mrs. Konner asked for questions on Technology.

Mr. Cohen asked if we anticipate the new MacBooks will be delivered in enough time for staff to be trained on them so they can enact whichever learning plan we have in September. Mr. Cohen asked if we anticipate any other technology purchases to help support synchronous learning for kids both in the classroom and at home.

Mr. Robinson responded the MacBook purchases were made and Apple has indicated that we would have them by the end of August.

Mrs. Steiger responded that the Technology Committee is doing an assessment right now of all the classrooms in each building to see if we need any additional hardware to allow synchronous

instruction to happen. Mrs. Steiger added we are equipped with ample amplification for teachers.

Mrs. Chirls asked if the plan for those who want to be fully remote will be released before the parent survey on Thursday.

Dr. Block responded from the questions received tonight, it is apparent parents need more answers about what it will be like fully remote before they make a decision so in our FAQs we will try to get deeper into what that looks like.

Mrs. Chirls confirmed we provide help for those families who need access at home.

Mrs. Konner confirmed all students who come to school will need to bring their devices with them. Dr. Block will look into whether or not cases were purchased for the younger students.

Mrs. Konner asked for questions on Governance.

The board discussed that there are a few ancillary policies the board will need to adopt prior to the opening of school.

### **Public Comment**

Cara Katz, 28 North Hillside Avenue, stated she thinks the board needs to listen to the 70% of the community who want a true hybrid model and expressed disappointment that there was no guidance counselor on this call.

Michele Cohen, 15 Woodland Terrace, asked how we intend to handle synchronous learning for those who are remote on a given day that class will be held outside.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

At 10:50 p.m., Mrs. Konner asked for a motion to adjourn to Executive Session adding no action will be taken and that the board will not be coming back into public session.

### **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Mr. Cohen moved the following:

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 August 10, 2020 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.

Ms. Messer seconded the motion

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

**Respectfully submitted,**



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

August 10, 2020

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