



LIVINGSTON BOARD OF EDUCATION VOTING/WORKSHOP MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, September 9, 2020

Executive Session - Virtual Meeting Via Zoom - 6:30 p.m.

Public Session - Virtual Meeting Via Zoom and Facebook Live – 8:00 p.m.

A **Voting/Workshop Meeting** of the Livingston Board of Education was held on this date via Zoom and Facebook Live. The meeting was called to order at 6:30 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.

Mr. August 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, Negotiations and a Student Matter

Action may be taken upon return to 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.

Ms. Messer seconded the motion.

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

At 8:01 p.m., Mrs. Konner reconvened the public session.

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, James Perrette and Joann Goldberg

There were approximately 400 members of the public and staff watching remotely through the webinar and via a Facebook Live stream.

Mr. Aditya Desai led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mrs. Konner read a statement about opening school this year in a Covid environment. Mrs. Konner asked that we all focus on how we can work together to improve our current situation and asked as people share their comments, to try and focus on solutions and offer constructive suggestions.

Superintendent's Report

1. Enrollment Update

Mr. Robinson provided the board with an enrollment update explaining as we enter the 2020-2021 school year, overall enrollment is flat. Mr. Robinson continued we are keeping the same number of elementary sections which means class sizes will be smaller.

2. Budget Update

Mr. Robinson reviewed the items that are above projected revenues and expenses for the current school year.

Some shortfalls in revenue include the \$541,611 reduction in State aid that was already approved by the board, rental facility income, subscription bussing and food services.

For expenses, we have spent above projections in technology for Zoom licenses and additional WiFi, PPE related supplies, rental of tents at all schools for the year, HVAC testing and unemployment expenses. We are providing free and reduced lunch to those students who qualify.

We anticipate saving on overtime, travel, printing costs and school supplies.

Mr. Robinson continued we had put money aside in a Crisis Management account to offset these expenses and still have money in our Emergency Reserve.

Mrs. Chirls asked about additional expenses to test our HVAC systems and Mr. Robinson explained he promised if the original samples came back below the proper levels, he would perform additional testing.

Mr. Cohen asked if there is going to be a need for continued retesting and has that been budgeted and Mr. Perrette responded he thinks its a good idea to have a commissioning or tag agent do an air balance once a year to make sure we are staying within the proper tolerances.

Dr. Block announced if families think they qualify for free and/or reduced lunch, they should contact the Business Office.

Dr. Block announced there were some technical issues with the Help Desk but it is now back up and running so please contact them if your device is not working or if you need assistance with internet access in your home.

Dr. Block announced we will be bringing back PreK-2 and special education self-contained students K-12 in a hybrid model on Monday, September 21.

Dr. Block announced he is working on the logistics of holding a coffee with the superintendent for some time this month.

Dr. Block announced the tents have been used for orientations and will be used for student activities while the weather is good.

Mr. August suggested we get flaps for the sides of the tents.

Board Reports

Mrs. Chirls read a statement that she has paid close attention to what everyone has been saying and wants to continue those discussions, even when we disagree. Mrs. Chirls is suggesting that we establish one Elementary Task Force and one Secondary Task Force, including all stakeholders, to actively work on the challenging issues brought on by COVID-19; we move forward with a resolution that makes a clear statement about the challenging issues brought on by COVID-19 and put a Social Media Policy in place during the 2020-2021 school year.

Mrs. Chirls added, "I want students, staff, and families in our buildings, but the school environment must be certified safe, pending discussion of the HVAC report, delivered this afternoon" and "some of you have asked for in-person Board of Education meetings, and of course, we all miss that. Unfortunately, I'm considered high-risk due to surgery and treatment for thyroid cancer. In the interest of my health, my doctor has advised that I must stay away from any such indoor gatherings. I'm sharing this personal information so everyone understands why I cannot attend an in-person meeting."

Dr. Block explained as part of *The Road Back*, we formed a pandemic response team for each building but agreed making some more permanent committees to respond to challenges could be very useful. He will take a look and try to put together a model that will work going forward.

Mrs. Konner was supportive of having a smaller group to work on specific concerns and to talk through some of these challenges.

Mr. Cohen recommended the tasks be specific and that both be attended by Dr. Block so he has a direct understanding of what is being talked about. Mr. Cohen added it is also critical to have a communication plan as to how those discussions will be disseminated to the board and any key stakeholders.

Mr. Desai asked what the tangible benchmarks are that we need to meet to bring grades 3 to 12 back to hybrid learning.

Dr. Block explained that for PreK-2 and special education self-contained, we needed to be sure we had the staffing and the HVAC report in hand to feel confident in our ability to open. We have significant staffing challenges at the secondary levels so when we know we are able to provide proper supervision at those levels, we will be able to bring those students back.

Public Input on Agenda Items ~ up to 15 minutes

Andrew Miller, 18 Sycamore Terrace, asked what the board has in reserves to handle our shortfall in expenses and what happened with the research to expand the size of the board.

Mr. Robinson responded we would look at the existing budget first, then go to our emergency reserve and then our fund balance to handle any shortfall.

Mrs. Chirls explained they did the initial research and have some information for the board to discuss when they are ready. Ms. Messer explained they will get back to it but that the board's priority right now has been dealing with COVID-19 and its impact on the school district.

Meredith Roy, 14 Birch Tree Lane, commended everyone on the board and Dr. Block for all of their hard work.

Helene Korn, 7 Cherry Hill Road, stated the problem is a lack of transparency and that the perception out here is that the board doesn't want our kids back in school. Mrs. Korn continued we have had many months to prepare for this and is concerned about the kids that are suffering from anxiety and depression. Mrs. Korn suggested that those who want to be in the classroom come in to teach while teachers with health issues stream into the classrooms and have classes supervised by unpaid certified aides. Mrs. Korn stated there are a number of people in the community who can become emergency certified and are willing to help out. Mrs. Korn asked why there is a big discrepancy between the primary and secondary school schedules. Why is there no plan for her high school children to meet their teachers? What is the date for second secondary kids back to school? How many community members do you need to certify to accomplish her plan? How are you replacing science labs for high school students?

Dr. Block responded we had board meetings almost every week this summer that included a number of presentations and discussions about the plans and obstacles we were encountering in planning for reopening. Unfortunately, the staffing issue developed over the summer and became more prevalent after the governor made his announcement that schools could go all remote and a number of surrounding districts where our staff live started to close for all remote instruction. Staffing our secondary schools is more challenging due to the specific certification in content areas. We are unable to use volunteers, people need to be paid employees of the school district. Dr. Block added we are anxious to bring all students back as soon as we can and he is looking at all options.

Mrs. Burman added if anyone in the community is interested in becoming a substitute, to check our website under "Employment" for information.

Mr. Cohen suggested looking at the elementary and secondary reopenings separately and not sequentially as they appear to have different challenges.

Pam Kalish, 69 Cornell Drive, how much money was for board legal counsel and if there is a shortfall, what is that attributed to?

Mr. Robinson responded that we budgeted \$200,000 for legal fees for the 2020-2021 school year. Mr. Robinson added when we did the budget, we put money aside in case we needed additional funds for COVID related expenses.

Peg Williams, 30 Crossbrook Road, asked if the K-2 hybrid return is successful, what is the plan to increase from half days to full days? What is the metric for 3-5 to return? How do people get involved in the additional task force that was brought up tonight?

Dr. Block responded once we figure out what the task force looks like, we can let the community know more. A staffing task force will be a challenge due to confidentiality.

Brian Bradley, 46 Ashwood Drive, asked if he missed that we announced a start date for PreK-2 and Dr. Block responded he will announce it officially tomorrow but is looking at September 21 as the date for PreK-2 and special education self-contained for K-12 students.

Kelly Reizun, 51 Mounthaven Drive, asked if we would consider moving students to another building if one was found to be a problem and Dr. Block responded we are confident our facilities are ready.

Elizabeth Weiss, 8 Village Drive, asked what the monitoring and oversight plan is for ensuring that seating for students is six feet apart and after returning to in person learning, will there be a notification plan to inform parents about social distancing and mask wearing.

Dr. Block responded that our classrooms have been set up to be socially distanced with desks set at 6 feet apart and part of the State's requirement is that everyone must wear a mask all day in school. Dr. Block added if we change any of those policies, we will be sure to notify parents.

Lauren Perl, 19 Rumson Road, asked if there will be any in person orientation and activities for students to meet their teachers and Dr. Block responded principals have been encouraged to plan these so parents should begin to get notified about these types of social activities.

Beagy Fils-Aime, 6 Garden Terrace, asked how we will add anti racism to our curriculum in the near future and suggested we hire an outside firm to train the administration and teachers first.

Dr. Block responded this is one of our district goals and we have already taken steps to work with outside firms to help us improve our practice.

Mrs. Steiger added the administrative team were trained by an outside group three summers ago and have been working in a smaller group internally. Curriculum documents are written all the time to support the growth of students and to allow teachers to engage in those conversations.

Donna Bieberman, 78 North Hillside Avenue, asked when we anticipate bringing back full days of hybrid learning similar to what New York City schools are doing.

Dr. Block explained all schools in New Jersey are doing the half day hybrid approach because of the State's all day mask wearing and cohorting requirements. Dr. Block added our hybrid plan is a staged approach that we will continually monitor and when it is deemed appropriate to do so, we will add additional days.

Mr. Cohen suggested checking with the Department of Education to see if there has been any change to the all day mask mandate for students while indoors especially now that people can participate in indoor dining without wearing a mask.

Ms. Messer asked how we are handling science labs and Mrs. Steiger explained there have been modifications and lab simulations.

Mr. Desai added there has been a seamless shift to those virtual labs and simulations and that staff have gone about this creatively.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR APPROVAL

PERSONNEL

Mr. August 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>Jannette Mercer-Braddock</i>	Database Administrator	Retirement	CO	November 30, 2020
<i>Samantha Goldberg</i>	Instructional Aide	Resignation	MPE	August 23, 2020

<i>Sarah Moore</i>	Instructional Aide	Resignation	LHS	NA
<i>Meghan McAuley</i>	Instructional Aide	Resignation	Harrison	August 18, 2020
<i>Gabriella DiGiorgio</i>	Teacher of Social Studies	Resignation	LHS	NA
<i>Marni Askinazy</i>	Instructional Aide	Resignation	BHE	August 31, 2020
<i>Linda Mavromatis</i>	Instructional Aide	Retirement	BHE	August 31, 2020
<i>John Waddon</i>	Instructional Aide	Resignation	MPMS	September 1, 2020

**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>Lindsay Gursky</i>	Elementary School Teacher	Hillside	9/1/2020-1/7/2021	1/8/2021-4/16/2021 & 4/19/2021-6/30/2021**	NA	8/30/2021
<i>Jennifer Wise*</i>	Teacher of Music	RHE/Harrison/Collins	9/8/2020-10/15/2020	10/16/2020-1/15/2021**	1/18/2021-2/2/2021	2/3/2021
<i>Amanda Fischer</i>	TOSD	LHS	1/4/2021-3/12/2021	3/15/2021-6/11/2021**	6/14/2021-6/30/2021	8/30/2021
<i>Jennifer Merlo</i>	TOSD	Collins	NA	9/1/2020-9/30/2020**	NA	10/1/2020
<i>Emily Schulke*</i>	Elementary School Teacher	Harrison	9/1/2020-10/30/2020	11/2/2020-11/15/2020**	NA	11/16/2020
<i>Jessica Cohen</i>	Speech Language Specialist	Collins	9/14/2020-11/18/2020	11/19/2020-12/16/2020 & 12/17/2020-3/19/2021**	NA	3/22/2021
<i>Christine Islinger*</i>	HMS	Intervention/Enrichment Specialist	9/8/2020-10/19/2020	10/20/2020-1/19/2021**	1/20/2021-6/30/2021	9/1/2021
<i>Erin Carabello</i>	MPMS	Intervention/Enrichment Specialist	1/4/2021-2/26/2021	3/1/2021-5/31/2021**	NA	6/1/2021
<i>Wendy Straussman</i>	BHE	Instructional Aide	NA	NA	9/1/2020-6/30/2021	8/31/2021
<i>Gwendolyn Lee</i>	Transportation	Bus Driver	NA	NA	9/1/2020 - 11/30/2020	12/1/2020

**as amended from a previous agenda*

***Designates time counted toward NJFLA/FMLA*

4.3 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
Marc Ciricillo	HMS	Teacher of Science	Leave Replacement	B. Farrand	MA	3	\$61,216*	9/1/2020-10/31/2020
Marc Ciricillo	HMS	Teacher of Science	First Year Tenure Track	B. Farrand	MA	3	\$61,216*	11/1/2020-6/30/2021
Maura Scully	Harrison	Elementary School Teacher	Leave Replacement	K. Mullen	MA	1	\$59,803*	9/1/2020
Samantha Spencer	BHE	Elementary School Teacher	Leave Replacement	E. Burger	BA	1	\$52,673*	9/1/2020
Jessica Soldiviero***	Collins	Elementary School Teacher	First Year Tenure Track	C. Torres	BA+16	4	\$56,628*	9/1/2020
Brooke Reynolds	RHE	Elementary School Teacher	Leave Replacement	R. Isakower	MA	1	\$59,803*	9/1/2020
Samantha Castro	Hillside	Elementary School Teacher	Leave Replacement	L. Gursky	BA+32	1	\$56,972*	9/1/2020
Helene McNanna	LHS	Teacher of Social Studies	Second Year Tenure Track	G. DiGiorgio	D	3	\$70,130*	9/1/2020
Denise Adesso	BHE	PRIDE Teacher	Leave Replacement	L. Svetvilas	BA+32	1	\$56,972*	9/1/2020
Donna Anello	Collins	Elementary School Teacher	Leave Replacement	C. Greenwald	MA+32	1	\$65,522*	9/1/2020
Amanda Piscitelli	BHE	PRIDE Teacher	Leave Replacement	L. Babij	BA	1	\$52,673*	9/1/2020
Ashley Pagnozzi	HMS	TOSD	Leave Replacement	J. Fredericks	MA	1	\$59,803*	9/1/2020
Sharon Treiber	BHE	Lead Playground Aide	NA	F. Leechow	LPA	1	\$18,635*	9/1/2020
Deborah Ottaiano	RHE	Lead Playground Aide	NA	C. Currao	LPA	1	\$18,635*	9/1/2020

*all salaries after 7/1/2020 may be adjusted in accordance with contract negotiations

**will remain at the same step in 2020-2021 in accordance with Article X, Section II.C. of the LEA contract

***as amended from a previous agenda

Resolved, that the Livingston Board of Education approves the appointment of the ABA Discrete Trial TA's and Instructional Aides as listed on **Attachment A**.

4.4 Substitutes

Resolved, that the Livingston Board of Education approves the appointment of the individuals listed on **Attachment B** as substitute teachers, nurses, secretaries, technicians, bus drivers, and security on an as-needed basis for the 2020-2021 school year.

Resolved, that the Livingston Board of Education approves the appointment of the individuals listed below to serve as substitutes on an as-needed basis for the 2020-2021 school year:

Teachers

*Eric Gabriel Alelov
Rebecca Campbell
Jodi Mensch (retired)*

4.5 Transfers

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

4.6 Contract Changes

Resolved, that the Livingston Board of Education approves the contract changes listed on **Attachment D**.

4.7 Summer Work

Resolved, that the Livingston Board of Education approves the team leaders on **Attachment E** to work six hours over the summer of 2020. Individuals will be compensated at the hourly rate approved for curriculum writing.

4.8 Extra Period Assignments

Resolved, that the Livingston Board of Education approves the individuals listed on **Attachment F** for extra period assignments during the 2020-2021 school year.

4.9 2020-2021 Renewals

Resolved, that the Livingston Board of Education approves the individuals on **Attachment G** for reappointment as Playground, Cafeteria and Media Aides for the 2020-2021 school year at the rates listed.

Mr. Cohen seconded the motion.

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

PREVIEW OF SEPTEMBER 21, 2020 VOTING AGENDA

The board reviewed the items that will be on the September 21 agenda.

Approval of Minutes

1. Voting Meeting Minutes of July 28, 2020
2. Workshop/Public Hearing Meeting Minutes of August 10, 2020
3. Voting Meeting Minutes of August 12, 2020

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

3. BUSINESS

- 3.1 Payment of Bills**
- 3.2 Board Secretary Report – July 2020**
- 3.3 Transfers**
- 3.4 Settlement Agreement**
- 3.5 Travel and Conferences Expenses**

Public Comment ~ up to 15 minutes

There was no public comment.

Old Business

There was no old business.

New Business

There was no new business.

ADJOURNMENT

Mrs. Konner announced the next meeting will be on September 21 and the board will be discussing district goals.

At 9:50 p.m., Mr. August made a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Mr. Cohen seconded the motion.

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

Respectfully submitted,



Steven K. Robinson
Board Secretary

September 9, 2020