



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

Tuesday, June 28, 2022

Public Session - Hybrid Meeting at Administration Building – 7:00 p.m.

A **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 and Samantha Messer

Also in Attendance: Dr. Matthew Block, Michael Davison and Joann Goldberg

There were approximately two members of the public and staff in person and approximately 36 members of the public and staff watching remotely through the webinar and a Facebook Live Stream.

### **Superintendent's Report**

#### 1. Start Strong Assessment Letter

The board discussed getting a letter to our legislators advocating that they waive the requirement to add this assessment for students to take in the fall on what they learned the year prior. Ms. Messer stated if we send the letter and have parents also advocate in writing for the waiver, it is possible we can get this changed.

The board asked if there were drafts of letters being circulated by any other superintendents or professional organizations in the State. Dr. Block responded that other superintendents have discussed advocating but wasn't aware of any circulating letters.

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

There was no public input on agenda items.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR APPROVAL**

#### **STUDENT SERVICES**

Ms. Messer asked for a motion to split the resolutions and Mrs. Chirls and Mrs. Khanna agreed.

Mrs. Chirls moved the following:

## **2.1 Great Schools Partnership, Inc.**

**Resolved**, that the Livingston Board of Education approves the contract with Great Schools Partnership, Inc. to provide coaching and technical assistance in support of the learning and planning efforts around educational equity, anti-racism, diversity and inclusion initiated by the district for the 2022-2023 school year.

Ms. Arnette seconded the motion.

Ms. Messer requested a more clearly defined scope of work before voting on this expenditure.

Dr. Block responded that Great Schools provided a draft scope of work that he shared with the board this afternoon and that the purpose of the vote is to let them know that we plan on working with them again next year.

Mrs. Chirls expressed concern about the lack of specificity in the contract and how items included in the original proposal were not included in the contract for services. Mrs. Chirls asked what exactly is the work they will be doing and how the training is going to work, especially this summer.

Dr. Block responded he can go back to Great Schools to refine some of the scope of work but needs their approval to show them that we plan on working with them again next year.

Mrs. Chirls then suggested our attorney create the contract, that we vote tonight on a proposal with the expenses for them to do work on summer curriculum writing and training and then vote on a more finalized contract at the next board meeting.

Dr. Block reiterated his suggestion to have the board approve the agreement to show we plan to work with Great Schools again next year and then he can work to get a second document from them with a refined and more detailed scope of work, which is what they did last year.

There was additional discussion about how to proceed with handling the summer projects outside of approving the contract as it stands. Mrs. Chirls suggested sending them a letter outlining and approving the payment for the two summer projects and then approving a contract that has been reviewed by our attorney at the next meeting.

Ms. Messer reiterated that she is not comfortable voting on a \$78,000 expenditure without a more specific scope of work that is output oriented to provide them with expected results. Ms. Messer continued last year's scope of work is more input driven.

Mrs. Khanna explained her hesitancy to vote on this expense is due to the fact that the board asked Great Schools to provide them with a presentation outlining their efforts and explaining how they feel they have affected change at LHS, but that was never done. Ms. Arnette agreed.

Dr. Block reviewed all of the information he has sent to the board in response to their questions about this contract prior to the meeting. Dr. Block continued he is not in favor of having an outside consultant make a presentation to the board and that it is the administration who reports back to the board on how we feel they have helped us. The board continued discussing their need for a more detailed scope of work, modifying the fee in the contract language, consulting an attorney about the contract and how best to modify the language in the resolution so a vote could be cast tonight.

Dr. Block continued by asking for a commitment from the board that we will work with the Great Schools Partnership to develop a scope of work that is amenable to everyone and that we will move forward with them as a resource. Dr. Block asked the board to provide him with what

they feel is missing from the scope of work he sent to them so he can share it with the Great Schools Partnership.

Mrs. Chirls suggested any board members who have questions or comments should forward them to Dr. Block and Mr. Cohen so they can be incorporated into the agreement.

Ms. Arnette requested a breakdown of what the \$80,000 is covering in an effort to remain transparent.

Dr. Block read a revised resolution and everyone agreed with the language.

Mrs. Chirls moved the revised resolution as follows:

**2.1 Great Schools Partnership, Inc.**

**Resolved**, that the Livingston Board of Education commits to working with Great Schools Partnership, Inc. during the 2022-2023 school year to provide coaching and technical assistance in support of the learning and planning efforts around educational equity, anti-racism, diversity and inclusion initiated by the district pending subsequent board approval of the scope of work.

Ms. Arnette seconded the revised resolution.

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

Ms. Messer moved the following:

**2.2 Contract for Supervisory Services for L.I.N.K.S.**

**Be It Resolved**, Drs. Eric Herschman and Susan Herschman have the experience and expertise to provide professional development for mental health services. Drs. Eric Herschman and Susan Herschman have provided a proposed Agreement, dated September 1, 2022 regarding the nature of their services to the satisfaction of the Board.

**Be It Further Resolved**, that Drs. Eric Herschman and Susan Herschman be approved by the Board of Education for the period September 1, 2022 through June 30, 2023 at the professional fees provided in the proposed Agreement.

**Be It Further Resolved**, that this appointment is made without advertising for bids because the services rendered are professional services as defined by the statute and not subject to competitive bidding.

Mrs. Khanna seconded the motion.

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

**BUSINESS**

Ms. Arnette moved the following:

**3.1 Genesis Educational Services, Inc.**

**Whereas** the Livingston Public Schools utilizes Genesis, a proprietary software package for school operations; and

**Whereas** the Livingston Board of Education is desirous to upgrade the software to expand its utilization for district operations; and therefore

**Be It Resolved** that the Livingston Board of Education authorizes the School Business Administrator to upgrade the Genesis software for district operations in the amount of \$125,000; and

**Be It Further Resolved**, that this agreement for software services and training is being awarded without competitive bidding in that said agreement is for goods or services for the support or maintenance of proprietary computer hardware and software and is exempt pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:18A-5(a) (19); and

**Be It Further Resolved**, that the monies for this software package be drawn from the contingency account, current balance \$238,265. The amount to be transferred is \$125,000 and the remaining balance will be \$113,365.

Mrs. Khanna seconded the motion.

Mrs. Chirls expressed concern about this expense and asked if there is money available since it came through after the budget was approved.

Mr. Davison explained this expense is being taken from the cost of the tech coaches that were pulled from the budget. Mr. Davison continued Genesis does not issue contracts and that this is a purchase of a software license. The \$125,000 is for the implementation and data conversion of the payroll and budgetary/accounting software.

Mrs. Chirls suggested changing the word agreement in the resolution to software services and training.

Ms. Messer explained she didn't realize this money was coming out of the money the board voted to bank and that they never had a discussion about how to spend those remaining funds, either in a committee meeting or at the board table. Ms. Messer questioned how else this money could be spent and if it is the highest priority.

Mr. Cohen responded it was explained in board notes and that the board also listed the purchasing of this new software as a board budget goal.

Dr. Block responded that one of the board budget goals was to modernize this system and it became a priority for them when the people in the seats in the department changed. Dr. Block added that the new people hired are well versed in Genesis so they want to take advantage of the timing.

Mrs. Chirls asked if the administrative team has seen the operation of Genesis in other districts and Mr. Davison responded that although they did not, he has spoken to another district who utilizes it, has hired new staff who are users of the software and we had Genesis come in and provide a presentation to all the staff here who will be users. Mr. Davison added we currently use Genesis for the student database and for human resources so it makes sense to add the payroll, budget and accounting features so that we are all working under one comprehensive system.

When asked about timing, Mr. Davison added the process to bring all of the systems together will take about a year so if they choose not to approve this tonight, we will need to wait another year to begin.

The board expressed when we budget this kind of money for any item, they would like to know it was vetted properly.

The resolution was revised to include "for software services and training" after the word "agreement" in the fourth paragraph.

Mrs. Khanna seconded the motion.

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

Ms. Arnette moved the following:

### **3.2 CJPRIDE Shared Services Agreement**

**Resolved**, that the Livingston Board of Education approves the agreement with Central Jersey Program for Recruitment of Diverse Educators ("CJPRIDE") for the 2022-2023 school year.

Mrs. Khanna seconded the motion.

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

### **Public Comment ~ up to 15 minutes**

There was no public comment.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

At 8:05 p.m. Mr. Cohen asked for a motion to go into Executive Session to review the superintendent's evaluation, no action will be taken and that the board would not be returning to public session.

Mrs. Chirls moved the following:

### **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

**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 June 28, 2022 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 - Ms. Arnette, Mrs. Chirls, Mr. Cohen, Mrs. Khanna, Ms. Messer  
Nayes - None

**Respectfully submitted,**



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**Michael Davison**  
**Board Secretary**

June 28, 2022