



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

March 3, 2026

Executive Session - Administration Building - 5:45 p.m.

Public Session - Administration Building - 7:30 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 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 6, 2026 and posted at the Board of Education office, on the district's website, and communicated to the Livingston Township Clerk.

Members Present: Pamela Chirls, Seth Cohen, Fang Gong, Parul Khemka, Inna Yelisevich and Abe Klein

Also in Attendance: Dr. Daniel Fishbein, Jessica Rapp, Dr. Maura Tuite, 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:

- legal and student matters

Action may be taken upon return to the public session. The full length of the meeting is anticipated to be approximately 105 minutes; and be it

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

Mr. Cohen seconded the motion.

Vote all in favor.

At 7:30 p.m., Mrs. Khemka reconvened the meeting.

## **Superintendent's Report**

### Budget

Dr. Fishbein explained that the State Legislature granted the new governor a two week extension to present the state budget to the public, which pushes her budget address to March 10. We should know our state aid figures by March 12.

Dr. Fishbein continued that since our last budget update, our insurance broker informed us the total increase for our medical, prescription and dental coverages is 33 percent and that we should receive exact rates by mid April. We are eligible for an insurance cap waiver, which we will use to help us to close our budget gap. We will present our tentative 2026-2027 budget on March 17. Once it is approved by the board, it will be submitted to the Essex County Superintendent and County Business Administrator for approval. Changes can still be made to the budget until the board's final approval during our Public Hearing, which is scheduled for April 28. Budget discussions will continue to be held between March 17 and April 28. We will also be holding two public budget forums on April 23, at 9:30 to 11:30 a.m. and from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. in the large conference room at 11 Foxcroft Drive to provide additional opportunities for the community to ask questions. In addition, the community can email questions to [budgetquestions@livingston.org](mailto:budgetquestions@livingston.org).

Dr. Fishbein announced that since we used three snow days but only two were built into the 2025-2026 calendar, Monday, March 30 will be a school day.

Mrs. Khemka announced that the link to the BOE meeting was not loading on FaceBook but it could be found on both the website and in Spotlight.

### **Board Reports**

Mrs. Gong, Mrs. Yelisevich and Mrs. Khemka participated in Read Across America at several elementary schools this week.

### **Student Representative's Report**

Mr. Klein stated that students just came back from February break, thanked the custodial staff for handling the large amount of snow we received at the beginning of last week and announced the Student Government is planning a spring festival. He will share more details about the spring festival at a future meeting.

### **Public Comment**

Neal Ashinsky, expressed concerns about the upcoming school budget that include the possibility that teachers may be RIF'd and our insurance risk pool. Mr. Ashinsky asked how we plan to build up future budgets and prevent this from happening again in 2027-2028.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR APPROVAL**

### **PROGRAM/CURRICULUM**

Mr. Cohen moved the following:

#### **1.1 Field Trip**

**Resolved**, that the Livingston Board of Education approves the field trip as shown on **Attachment A**.

Mrs. Chirls seconded the motion.

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

## **BUSINESS**

Mrs. Chirls moved the following:

### **3.1 Additional Daily Ski Trip**

**Resolved**, that the Livingston Board of Education approves *Shyella Mayk, Christopher Wagner, Jacob Bernstein, Maureen Weakley, Claudia Netti* and *Kristina Duda* and ten parent volunteers (*Barbara Scarpa Pinkham, Christopher Pinkham, Gennia Yosifovich, Chad Dinzes, Susan Lugashi, Inga Cohen, Liati Hai, Jeff Arons, Brian Spector, Boris Kizhner, Vaishali Patil* and *Tejas Jois*) to chaperone approximately 50 members of the HMS Ski & Snowboard Club on an additional daily ski trip to either Camelback Ski Resort in Tannersville, PA, or Blue Mountain Resort in Palmerton, PA, on March 4, 2026. All daily ski trips were previously approved on December 9, 2025.

### **3.2 Overnight Trip**

**Resolved**, that the Livingston Board of Education approves *Daniel Quackenbush, Dan Gonzalez, Teresa Fannell, Sarah Rosenberg, Deborah Girone, Natalie Bray* and *Pietrina Daly* to chaperone approximately 100 students participating in the DECA State Competition in Atlantic City, New Jersey, from March 2 to 5, 2026. This resolution has been updated from the one previously approved on January 20, 2026.

### **3.3 Approval of Educator Advancement Program**

**WHEREAS**, the Livingston Board of Education (Board) is committed to recruiting, developing, and retaining highly qualified and diverse educators to serve its students;

**WHEREAS**, the Board recognizes the importance of providing opportunities for staff and teachers to advance their careers through degree completion programs and professional development;

**WHEREAS**, BloomBoard, Inc. (BBI) has presented a proposal to the Board to implement an Educator Advancement Program that includes job-embedded coursework, coaching, and classroom experience to enable aspiring educators to complete the Alternate Pathway at Drew University leading to a teaching certification;

**WHEREAS**, the Board will utilize grant dollars available in the State of New Jersey and cover portions of any remaining balances for the cost of tuition through the tuition reimbursement provisions within our collective bargaining agreement with the Livingston Education Association (LEA), as applicable;

**WHEREAS**, the Board will identify participants for enrollment in the program through its partnership with Drew University and ensure compliance with programmatic assurances, including residency placements, cooperating teacher requirements, and technical support;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Livingston Board of Education hereby approves this agreement with BloomBoard, Inc. established in March 2026 to implement an Educator Advancement Program as outlined in the proposal dated February 9, 2026;

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Board authorize the Board Secretary to execute such agreement, a copy of which shall be retained on file in the Business Office.

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

**Resolved**, that the Livingston Board of Education approves the addition of a Workshop Meeting on March 10, 2026 at 6:00 p.m. for the Board to continue their NJSBA Certification Training.

### **3.5 Bylaws, Policies and Regulations**

**Resolved**, that the Livingston Board of Education approves the following Bylaws, Policies and Regulations for second reading and adoption:

- Bylaw #0142.1 - Nepotism (M) (with revisions)
- Policy #1220 - Employment of Chief School Administrator (M) (with revisions)
- Policy #1552 - Sexual Harassment - Staff (M) (new to district)
- Regulation #1552 - Sexual Harassment - Staff (M) (new to district)
- Policy #2415.04 - Title I – District-Wide Parent And Family Engagement (M) (with revisions)
- Policy #2415.20 - Every Student Succeeds Act Complaints (M) (with revisions)
- Regulation #2415.20 - Every Student Succeeds Act Complaints (M) (new to district)
- Policy #2415.50 - Title I – School Parent And Family Engagement (M) (new to district)
- Policy #2440 - Summer Session (new to district)

Mr. Cohen seconded the motion.

**ROLL CALL VOTE** - Ayes - Mrs. Chirls, Mr. Cohen, Mrs. Gong, Mrs. Yelisevich, Mrs. Khemka  
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>Ethan Rotman</i>	IT Support Specialist	Resignation	LHS	February 26, 2026
<i>Rachel Montesion</i>	Instructional Aide	Resignation	MPMS	March 5, 2026
<i>Daniel Gonzalez</i>	TOSD	Resignation	LHS	June 30, 2026
<i>Ruth Finkelman</i>	Teacher of Math	Resignation	LHS	June 30, 2026
<i>Stephania Gautieri</i>	TOSD	Resignation	MPE	June 30, 2026
<i>Caroline Godino</i>	TOSD	Resignation	BHE	April 28, 2026, or sooner if a replacement is found.
<i>Josephine Evangelista</i>	Instructional Aide	Resignation	LHS	April 6, 2026

*\*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	Location	Position	LOA w/pay and benefits	LOA w/o pay, but with benefits (if applicable)	Extended LOA w/o pay or benefits	Return Date
Nikola Poposki*	LHS	TOSD	1/28/2026-2/27/2026**	3/2/2026-5/6/2026**	NA	5/7/2026
Kathryn Fierro	HMS	TOSD	5/11/2026-5/29/2026	6/1/2026-6/30/2026 & 8/26/2026-11/18/2026**	NA	11/19/2026
Kathryn Otterbein	LHS	School Psychologist	5/1/2026-6/10/2026	6/11/2026-6/30/2026 & 8/26/2026-11/18/2026**	11/19/2026-6/30/2027	8/30/2027
Jessica Cohen	RHE	Speech Language Specialist	8/26/2026-9/8/2026 & 9/9/2028-9/23/2026**	9/24/2026-12/2/2026**	12/3/2026-1/1/2027	1/4/2027
Danielle Cohen*	HMS	TOSD	1/2/2026-3/31/2026	4/1/2026-6/30/2026**	NA	8/26/2026

\*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
Amber Van de Beek	MPMS	First Secretary	Leave Replacement	G. Covello	12-mo FS	1	\$57,459 plus \$1,200 for degree (prorated)	2/2/2026-2/28/2026
Amber Van de Beek	MPMS	First Secretary	Tenure Track	G. Covello	12-mo FS	1**	\$57,459 plus \$1,200 for degree (prorated)	3/1/2026-6/30/2026
Ashley Addison*	Collins	TOSD	Fourth Year Tenure Track	NA	MA+32	7**	\$76,018 (prorated)	2/16/2026
Lauren Pantos	RHE	Teacher of Art	Leave Replacement	N. Benjamin	MA	1	\$64,568 (prorated)	3/2/2026
Carlos Huapaya	MPMS	Head Custodian	NA	G. Honore	C	2	\$45,202 plus \$2,500 for Head Custodian (prorated)	3/1/2026
Liam Sweeney	CO	PT IT Support Specialist	NA	R. Pagan	NA	NA	\$20/hr	4/1/2026

\*as amended from a previous agenda

\*\*step will remain the same for the 2026-27 SY

#### **4.4 Substitutes**

**Resolved**, the Livingston Board of Education approves the individuals listed on **Attachment B** as certified substitutes. These individuals are currently employed by the District. In the event these individuals are called upon to serve as a substitute, they will be compensated an additional \$50/day (\$10/period) for that assignment.

#### **4.5 Extra Period Assignments**

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

#### **4.6 Curriculum Writing**

**Resolved**, that the Livingston Board of Education approves the individuals on **Attachment D** to participate in mid-year curriculum writing during the 2025-26 school year, at \$54.23/hour. (Acct #11-000-221-104-5063-19)

#### **4.7 Stipends**

**Resolved**, that the Livingston Board of Education approves the individuals on **Attachment E** for athletic stipends at Heritage Middle School for the 2025-2026 school year in accordance with the contract between the LBOE and the LEA.

**Resolved**, that the Livingston Board of Education rescinds the approval of *Christine Tanko* as Musical Director for the Spring Production at Mt. Pleasant Middle School for the 2025-2026 school year.

**Resolved**, that the Livingston Board of Education approves the individuals on **Attachment F** for cocurricular stipends at Mt. Pleasant Middle School for the 2025-2026 school year in accordance with the contract between the LBOE and the LEA.

#### **4.8 Contract Adjustments**

**Resolved**, that the Livingston Board of Education approves the contract adjustments as listed on **Attachment G**.

#### **4.9 Extra Pay**

**Resolved**, that the Livingston Board of Education approves *Carlos Huapaya* to be paid in accordance with Article XIII, Section II.A. of the contract effective January 12, 2026, through February 28, 2026, for temporarily assuming the role of Head Custodian at Mt. Pleasant Middle School.

Mr. Cohen seconded the motion.

**ROLL CALL VOTE** - Ayes - Mrs. Chirls, Mr. Cohen, Mrs. Gong, Mrs. Yelisevich, Mrs. Khemka  
Nays - None

**MISCELLANEOUS**

Mrs. Chirls moved the following:

**5.1 HIB Report**

**Resolved**, that the Livingston Board of Education accepts the findings of HIB cases.

Mr. Cohen seconded the motion.

**ROLL CALL VOTE** - Ayes - Mrs. Chirls, Mr. Cohen, Mrs. Gong, Mrs. Yelisevich, Mrs. Khemka  
Nays - None

**Old Business**

There was no old business.

**New Business**

There was no new business.

**ADJOURNMENT**

At 7:42 p.m., Mr. Cohen made a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Mrs. Chirls seconded the motion.

**ROLL CALL VOTE** - Ayes - Mrs. Chirls, Mr. Cohen, Mrs. Gong, Mrs. Yelisevich, Mrs. Khemka  
Nays - None

**Respectfully submitted,**



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

March 3, 2026