



## LIVINGSTON BOARD OF EDUCATION VOTING MEETING MINUTES

March 24, 2026

Executive Session - Administration Building - 7:00 p.m.

Public Session - Administration Building - 7:15 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. The meeting was called to order at 7:00 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:

- personnel and student matters

Action may be taken upon return to the public session. The full length of the meeting is anticipated to be approximately 15 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 7:15 p.m., Mrs. Khemka reconvened the public meeting.

## **Superintendent's Report**

### Budget Presentation

Dr. Fishbein explained the 2026-2027 tentative budget includes maintaining all programs that are currently in place for the upcoming school year, continued support for technology and curriculum and a 3.25% salary increase, as per agreements with our associations. It also includes a decrease in debt service due to refinancing bonds.

Dr. Fishbein added that we will use our health care waiver, increase our technology fee from \$30 to \$35 and use the refunding of school bonds to reduce our debt service to help balance the budget.

Dr. Tuite reviewed the Department of Student Services programming and support structure.

Mr. Stern reviewed the Department of Curriculum and Instruction K-6 Initiatives, new and revised high school courses and professional development.

Dr. Fishbein reviewed what is covered under Technology and Facilities in the budget.

Dr. Fishbein reviewed the 40 staffing positions that are being reduced in this budget. Twelve of the positions are being reduced through attrition.

Dr. Fishbein continued with a per pupil cost comparison slide to show how efficient Livingston is in delivering a quality education to students while spending below the state average and comparable districts.

Mrs. Khemka explained how the board has previously and continues to advocate to our elected officials through board resolutions and through our professional organizations about our budget challenges and medical insurance rates. Mrs. Khemka encouraged community members to reach out to our congressional representatives about these issues.

Mrs. Rapp explained the tax levy history, where the money comes from, where it goes, and reviewed the non-mandated programs that the district continues to provide. Mrs. Rapp explained that a balanced, tentative 2026-2027 budget will include \$5,611,079 of a health care waiver adjustment, operating tax levy of 6.37% and a decrease in debt service tax levy of 21.61% which equates to a tax increase on the average Livingston home of \$478 a year. Our public hearing and vote on the budget is scheduled for April 28, 2026.

In the interim, the public will have an opportunity to comment and/or ask questions about the budget during our April 7 and April 28 meetings or by attending one of two Public Budget Forums that will be held on April 23 from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m. or 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. All meetings will be held at 11 Foxcroft Drive. The Public Budget Forums are being held in person only. They will not be recorded or livestreamed. Comments and/or questions can also be emailed to [budgetquestions@livingston.org](mailto:budgetquestions@livingston.org).

Dr. Fishbein added other districts are in the same position of cutting staff or going out to the community with second questions to help balance their budgets.

Dr. Fishbein also confirmed they will provide updates to the board about the health insurance premium, enrollment, registrations at the high school and what scheduling will look like as soon as we have that information.

## **Board Reports**

There were no board reports.

## **Student Representative's Report**

Mr. Klein explained that seniors are excited to hear about final college decisions and will make their commitments by May 1. Students are also excited for the upcoming spring break.

## **Approval of Minutes**

Mrs. Chirls moved the following:

Executive Session Minutes of December 9, 2025; January 6, 2026; January 20, 2026; January 22, 2026; February 3, 2026; February 10, 2026; March 3, 2026 and March 17, 2026

Mr. Cohen seconded the motion.

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

## **Public Comment**

Neal Ashinsky, suggested an estimated budget with everything we wanted to include be shared with the public along with an explanation about the gap and how an extra question to the voters would work. Mr. Ashinsky asked what the status is on moving the budget vote from November to April.

Libby Barak, asked how LHS enrollments and health benefit costs are connected and how we calculate which courses will be offered or not. Mrs. Barak asked for transparency on what is being cut from the budget.

Dr. Fishbein responded that there is no connection between high school enrollment and our health insurance premium, only that it is coincidental that we will have the figures around the same time. Dr. Fishbein added that tonight's presentation includes a slide explaining the staffing cuts, adding that 12 of those positions were cut through attrition, while for the rest, we followed the NJ Code regarding non-tenured staff.

Mrs. Khemka added that not all of the 40 positions cut are teaching positions and that a number of them are non-facing student positions. The complete presentation will be posted on our website.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR APPROVAL**

### **BUSINESS**

Mrs. Chirls moved the following:

#### **3.1 Adoption of the Tentative Budget for School Year 2026-2027**

**Resolved**, that tentative budget be approved for the 2026-2027 school year using the 2026-2027 State Aid figures and the School Business Administrator/Board Secretary be authorized to submit the following tentative budget to the Executive County Superintendent for approval in accordance with N.J.S.A.18A:7F-5 and 18A:7F-6:

	<u>General Fund</u>	<u>Special Revenues</u>	<u>Debt Service</u>	<u>Total</u>
2026-2027 Total Appropriations	\$152,545,310	\$2,289,709	\$5,970,850	\$160,805,869
Less: Anticipated Revenues	\$15,907,232	\$2,289,709	\$1,486,950	\$19,683,891
Taxes to be Raised	\$136,638,078	\$0	\$4,483,900	\$141,121,978

And, to advertise said budget in the West Essex Tribune in accordance with the form suggested by the State Department of Education and according to law; and

**Be It Further Resolved**, that a public hearing will be held at the Administration Building, 11 Foxcroft Drive, Livingston, New Jersey, on April 28, 2026 at 7:00 p.m. in a hybrid format for the purpose of conducting a public hearing on the budget for the 2026-2027 school year.

Mr. Cohen seconded the motion.

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

Mrs. Chirls moved 3.2 to 3.4:

**3.2 Adjustment for Health Care Costs**

**Resolved**, that the Livingston Board of Education includes in the tentative budget the adjustment for increased costs of health benefits in the amount of \$5,611,079. The additional funds will be used to pay for the additional increases in health benefit premiums.

**3.3 Capital Reserve Withdrawal**

**Resolved**, that the Livingston Board of Education includes in the tentative 2026-2027 budget a capital reserve withdrawal in the amount of \$1,537,673 for:

LHS Vape Detectors	\$ 54,235
LHS Repair Pavers @ maint entrance	\$ 20,000
LHS Fire Alarm Panel replacement	\$ 71,571
LHS New Window Curtains in Auditorium	\$ 50,000
LHS New Window shades	\$ 30,000
LHS New Walk-in (2nd freezer)	\$ 20,000
LHS Ticket Booth Replacement	\$ 12,000
LHS Press Box Update	\$ 40,000

LHS Commercial 8' fan in the Weight Room	\$ 18,000
LHS New LED lights in gym (48)	\$ 10,000
LHS New Burglar Panel PE Building	\$ 14,000
MC Renovations	\$ 40,000
HMS Fire Alarm Panel replacement	\$ 35,710
HMS New walk-in box	\$ 20,000
HMS New Boilers (2)	\$ 150,000
MPM Fire Alarm Panel replacement	\$ 68,244
MPM Bollards (Main entrance)	\$ 50,000
MPM Curtains for the Stage (2 back)	\$ 16,000
MPM Locker Replacement /Repair/Paint	\$ 64,960
MPM Paint hallways and door trim	\$ 20,000
MPM New Toilet Partitions	\$ 25,000
MPE replace basketball hoop in the gym	\$ 15,000
MPE Fire Alarm Panel replacement	\$ 51,956
MPE Locker Painting	\$ 10,330
MPE Remove Skylights	\$ 18,000
MPE Replace Carpet in Music Room	\$ 15,000
MPE Sidewalk repair	\$ 10,000
BHE Fire Alarm Panel replacement	\$ 19,200
BHE Card swipe pre-k	\$ 8,000
BHE Reno Nurse room	\$ 50,000
BHE Sink in "breakout room" Pre K	\$ 10,000
BHE New Boilers (2)	\$ 100,000
Collins New Driveway Gate	\$ 20,000
Collins Fire Alarm Panel replacement	\$ 47,172
Collins Soffit Painting	\$ 30,000
Harrison Rock Wall	\$ 27,006

Harrison Sign	\$ 8,000
Harrison Fascia Painting	\$ 15,000
Hillside New Stage curtain	\$ 6,000
Hillside Another Speed Bump	\$ 3,000
Hillside Pave by bank shot	\$ 55,600
RHE Fire Alarm Panel replacement	\$ 64,692
RHE Ramp & Step repair	\$ 25,000
RHE Replace classroom sink and countertops	\$ 10,000
RHE Install upper cabinets in classroom	\$ 2,000
RHE Locks on vestibule doors	\$ 6,000
RHE Aux gym basket ball hoop	\$ 10,000
CO Fire Alarm Panel Replacement	\$ 12,147
District Kilns	\$ 20,000
Waterbug All wet locations	\$ 38,850
Total	\$ 1,573,673

### **3.4 Travel and Related Expense Reimbursement**

The Livingston Board of Education recognizes school staff and Board members will incur travel expenses related to and within the scope of their current responsibilities and for travel that promotes the delivery of instruction or furthers the efficient operation of the school district;

**And**, N.J.A.C. 6A:23A Subchapter 7 requires Board members to receive approval of these expenses by a majority of the full voting membership of the Board and staff members to receive prior approval of these expenses by the Superintendent of Schools and a majority of the full voting membership of the Board;

**And**, a board of education may establish, for regular district business travel only, an annual school year threshold of \$150 per staff member where prior Board approval shall not be required unless this annual threshold for a staff member is exceeded in a given school year (July 1 through June 30);

**And**, travel and related expenses not in compliance with N.J.A.C. 6A:23A Subchapter 7 but deemed by the board of education to be necessary and unavoidable as noted on the approved Board of Education Out of District Travel and Reimbursement Forms;

**Be it Resolved**, the Livingston Board of Education approves all travel not in compliance with N.J.A.C. 6A:23A Subchapter 7 as being necessary and unavoidable as noted on the approved Board of Education Out of District Travel and Reimbursement Forms; and

**Be it Further Resolved**, the Livingston Board of Education includes in the tentative budget travel and related expense reimbursements in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:23A Subchapter 7, to a maximum expenditure of \$176,369 for all staff and board members for the 2026-2027 school year. The maximum travel expenditure amount for the 2025-2026 school year is \$169,016.24, of which, \$62,319.71 has been spent and \$43,053.47 is encumbered to date.

The School Business Administrator/Board Secretary shall track and record these costs to ensure that the maximum amount is not exceeded.

Mr. Cohen seconded the motion.

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

**PERSONNEL**

Mrs. Chirls moved 4.1 to 4.2, with the additional walk-in item 4.3:

**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>Catherine Bitar</i>	TOSD	Resignation	Hillside	June 30, 2026
<i>Caroline Godino*</i>	TOSD	Resignation	BHE	April 17, 2026
<i>Jalyza Dragunov</i>	Teacher of Art	Resignation	LHS	May 18, 2026

*\*as amended from a previous agenda*

**4.2 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.

<b>Name</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Tenure Track/LOA or LT Replacement</b>	<b>Replacing</b>	<b>Guide</b>	<b>Step</b>	<b>Salary</b>	<b>Effective Date</b>
<i>Foster Wisusik</i>	LHS	Teacher of Physics	First Year Tenure Track	A. Fonarev	MA	6	\$71,401	8/26/2026
<i>Vivian Brock</i>	Harrison	Teacher of Music	First Year Tenure Track	M. Matten	BA	9	\$69,225	8/26/2026

*\*as amended from a previous agenda*

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

**4.3 Memorandum of Understanding**

**Resolved**, that the Livingston Board of Education approves the Memorandum of Understanding between itself and the Livingston Education Association dated March 24, 2026.

Mr. Cohen seconded the motion.

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

**MISCELLANEOUS**

Mrs. Chirls moved the following:

**5.1 HIB Report**

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

Mr. Cohen seconded the motion.

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

**Old Business**

There was no old business.

**New Business**

There was no new business.


**ADJOURNMENT**

At 7:55 p.m., Mrs. Chirls made a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Mr. Cohen seconded the motion.

Vote all in favor.

**Respectfully submitted,**



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**Jessica Rapp  
Board Secretary**