

TOWNSHIP OF UNION BOARD OF EDUCATION  
WORKSESSION MINUTES – JUNE 14, 2022

NOTICE OF MEETING:

TO ALL BOARD OF EDUCATION MEMBERS:

The worksession meeting of the Board of Education of the Township of Union was held on Tuesday, June 14, 2022 at 7:00 p.m. at the Administration Building, 2369 Morris Avenue, Union, New Jersey pursuant to the notice sent to each member. Action was taken.

Mrs. Williams called the meeting to order at 7:08 p.m.

PRESENT AT ROLL CALL:

Mrs. Yocasta Brens-Watson, Dr. Guy Francis, Mrs. Nancy Minneci, Mr. John O’Shea, Mrs. Nellis Regis-Darby, Ms. Chastity Santana, Mrs. Kimberly Scott-Hayden, Mrs. Mary Lynn Williams

ABSENT AT ROLL CALL:

Ms. Marissa McKenzie (arrived 8:58 p.m.)

ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT:

Dr. Scott Taylor, Mr. Gerald Benaquista, Dr. Gretel Perez, Mrs. Yolanda Koon

ALSO PRESENT:

Mr. Christopher Buggy, Esq., Mr. Lester Taylor, Esq.

Ms. Santana led the Board in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mrs. Koon read the statement required under the “Open Public Meetings Act”, a copy of which is on file in the office of the Board Secretary.

Ms. Santana read the district’s mission statement.

Comments from Public on Resolutions:

None

Approval of Minutes:

Minutes will be approved at regular meeting.

Communications:

Communications are part of personnel and operations.

### Superintendent's Report:

Dr. Taylor will present the State of the Schools, Battle Hill Student Spotlight, education support personnel of the year recognition and the NJDOE School Self-Assessment District and School Grade Report – HIB next week.

### Education/Student Discipline Committee Resolutions:

Upon recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the following resolutions were moved by Mrs. Scott-Hayden, seconded by Dr. Francis, for adoption:

#### E-1. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT OF HIB

Superintendent's Report of Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying (HIB) for the period May 18, 2022 to June 14, 2022, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes (*no vote required; for reporting purposes only*).

#### E-1A. AFFIRM SUPERINTENDENT'S DETERMINATION OF HIB

Affirm the Superintendent's determination of Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying (HIB) for the periods May 11, 2022 to May 17, 2022, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

### DISCUSSION:

None

AYE: Mrs. Brens-Watson, Dr. Francis, Mrs. Minneci, Mr. O'Shea,  
Mrs. Regis-Darby, Ms. Santana, Mrs. Scott-Hayden, Mrs. Williams

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED

Mrs. Scott-Hayden presented the Education/Student Discipline Committee agenda.

### DISCUSSION:

Mrs. Regis-Darby asked for background on E-2 – NJDOE self-assessment and E-5 – the summer programs. Dr. Taylor stated that Dr. Perez will be making a presentation next week on the summer programs. E-2 is an annual self-assessment which we are doing ourselves – we look at professional development and protocols. Mrs. Regis-Darby stated fidelity is a big thing when it comes to this particular survey. Schools are 79 out of 79 and then you have schools that were more authentic, they are 69 out of 78. Are we relying on this for anything? Dr. Taylor stated I will ask Nicole Ahern to put something together so that I can share next week on how we went about this.

Mrs. Regis-Darby stated on E-5 – this is a lot of Title I or ESSER funds money – how are we identifying students for this particular program to give them that extra RTI intervention and supports. Are we sending a blast out because parents are asking for summer programs and the parents don't know about it? I think we need to do a better job of getting that message out to the parents. Dr. Perez stated the only concern right now is staffing. Even if we have huge

student enrollment, our concern is that we may have to turn them down or cancel the program for lack of staffing.

Dr. Taylor stated the Star Ledger interviewed me about our programs and they will do a piece about our 13 programs. It will be a nice public relations piece for us. We have 1,036 students registered for our summer programs and we only have about 200 more slots.

Mrs. Regis-Darby asked on E-6, why is the first day of school a half day? Mr. Benaquista stated professional development for the teachers; mandated training. Mrs. Regis-Darby asked did you think about doing a professional development day for the teachers and then start the school day one day later? Mr. Benaquista stated it would push back the end of the school calendar. We have three PD half days, per the UTEA contract language.

Ms. Santana stated the way it is being communicated – I have received about 20 different emails and robo calls from the Washington, Jefferson and Kawameeh.

Mrs. Minneci asked will we have the staff to service those kids? Dr. Taylor stated I have concerned but I don't have data. My sense is educators are burnt out this year.

Mrs. Minneci stated about the beginning of the year, when I was a teacher, the first couple of days is to get to know the kids. Mr. Benaquista stated the first few days of school to have success is to getting to know the kids. The half-day can be used to do activities so the students get to know the teacher and the teacher gets to know the students.

#### Fiscal and Planning Committee Resolutions:

Mr. O'Shea presented the Fiscal and Planning Committee agenda.

#### DISCUSSION:

Mrs. Koon stated on F-20 – First Hope Bank – we have 12 buses that should be retired but due to budget constraints, we can only afford seven new buses. This is approving the loan to purchase the buses so we are in compliance.

Mrs. Santana asked F-22 – food service funds - do we currently have this in place so it won't happen again? Mrs. Koon stated the Board approved to use general funds to cover about \$205,000 over a period of three years. This is year two. We are still left with \$65,000. At the beginning of this year to now, the outstanding debt is around \$45,000. Meg Berry was the liaison and was promoted to VP so it is leaving a vacancy in trying to bridge the gap. On the agenda we have the food coordinators job description – once approved, I can get someone on board. The Free and Reduced expire on June 30<sup>th</sup>; so we have to start collecting lunch applications. Whoever we bring on, we have to figure out how can we mediate that – letters on a weekly basis or semi-monthly basis to keep the parents informed if the student reaches a certain threshold; makes calls to follow-up. I'm recommending a full-time position paid out of the food service fund.

Ms. Santana stated there was something broken in our system to get to that \$200,000 level. What can stop it? Phone calls, letters? Mrs. Regis-Darby stated there is a policy in place

that is not being followed. Mrs. Williams stated you do not have the floor. You consistently interrupt people when they are trying to speak. You don't address the chair. Mrs. Regis-Darby asked Mr. Taylor, can Board members speak at the table? Mr. Taylor stated formally the chair should recognize the speakers.

Mrs. Regis-Darby stated there is a policy the Board is not following and that is why we are getting stuck every year – when you miss two lunches, there is protocols in place and they are not being followed. Ms. Santana stated my goal is that we don't get here next year.

#### Operations Committee Resolutions:

Mrs. Minneci presented the Operations Committee agenda.

The discussion item will become O-8 - Letter requesting the use of the Union High School Facility Site for the Union Township Chamber of Commerce's 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Mayor's Day 5K Run on Sunday, September 25, 2022

Next week, Mrs. Koon will add two additional items to the agenda. There are two bids out – first, kitchen repairs services – Abele Mechanical and second, remodeling Burnet's cafeteria – kitchen and the line service. There was a question if we fix this and eventually, we redo Burnet, this all can be moved into the new facility.

Mrs. Koon stated in the food service fund, we are yielding a profit. Unfortunately, the Department of Agriculture does not allow you to use that profit to pay for the lunch debt. Districts are looking for ways to spend the money. We looked at Burnet and the bid came in at \$348,000 to renovate the serving line and we thought that would be a good place to put the funds. There was a question if we did go out for a referendum, is it possible to use that equipment and move it into a new facility and they said we could.

Ms. Santana stated if we do go out for a referendum and everything gets redone, there are currently kids in there right now and it is in need of some help. If it could be used where they actually eat, we want our kids to have light and positive and open spaces with good energy. Mrs. Koon stated I think that can be possible. Lighting, painting, pictures – we can be creative and do that.

Two more discussion items will be added to next week's agenda – Class of 1971 for use of the high school and request for the Township of Union Ed Foundation to use Jefferson; they want it approved so they have time for planning.

#### Personnel Committee Resolutions:

Mrs. Scott-Hayden presented the Personnel Committee Resolutions.

#### DISCUSSION:

Dr. Francis stated about the hiring of the new trainer. I noticed that person is receiving a salary already and there is extra pay for that person for a stipend. Why are we giving them a stipend on top of what is expected of them during the school year? We are voting on it tonight,

the extra pay. Mr. Benaquista stated we can hold off until next week. I will look it up. It is the athletic trainer. Dr. Taylor stated we are trying to lay out all the new hires over two nights.

Ms. Santana asked what are we tabling? Mr. Benaquista stated P-1A-2 and I have to look up the extra pay. (P-1B-2, P-1B-9, P-1B-40).

Upon recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the following resolutions were moved by Mrs. Scott-Hayden, seconded by Ms. Santana for adoption:

**P-1A. PERSONNEL ACTIONS – NEW HIRES AND GRANT FUNDED**

Personnel Actions-New Hires and grant funded be approved in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

**P-1B PERSONNEL ACTIONS – EXTRA PAY**

Personnel Actions-Extra Pay be approved in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

**P-2. APPROVE SUBSTITUTE LISTS**

Approve Substitute Lists for the 2021-2022 school year, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

**P-1D PERSONNEL ACTIONS - SALARIES FUNDED THROUGH GRANTS**

Personnel Actions - Salaries Funded Through Grants, as reflected below and approved as part of P-1A (Grant Funded):

Name	Position	Location	Salary	Effective Date	Grant
Rosemary Nardo	Preschool Nurse	Districtwide-preschool program	\$81,037	9/1/2022	Preschool Expansion Aid

**P-16. APPROVE UPDATED JOB DESCRIPTION – DIRECTOR OF INSTRUCTION AND FUNDED PROGRAM**

Approve updated Job Description for the position of Director of Instruction and Funded Programs, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

**P-17. APPROVE JOB DESCRIPTION – FACILITY MANAGER OF BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS**

Approve Job Description for the position of Facility Manager of Buildings and Grounds, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

**P-18. APPROVE JOB DESCRIPTION – ASSISTANT FACILITIES MANAGER OF BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS**

Approve Job Description for the position of Assistant Facilities Manager of Buildings and Grounds, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

**P-19. APPROVE JOB DESCRIPTION – TRANSPORTATION DISPATCHER**

Approve Job Description for the position of Transportation Dispatcher, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

**P-20. APPROVE JOB DESCRIPTION – FOOD SERVICE COORDINATOR**

Approve Job Description for the position of Food Service Coordinator, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

**DISCUSSION:**

None

**AYE:** Mrs. Brens-Watson, Dr. Francis, Mrs. Minneci, Mr. O’Shea,  
Ms. Santana, Mrs. Scott-Hayden, Mrs. Williams

**NAY:** None

**ABSTAIN:** Mrs. Regis-Darby

**MOTION CARRIED**

Dr. Francis left Board meeting.

**Policy Committee:**

Ms. Santana presented the following policies for first reading:

**POL-1. POLICY 2416.01 – POSTNATAL ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS (NEW)**

Policy 2416.01 – Postnatal Accommodations, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes. (*First Reading*)

**POL-2. POLICY 2417 – STUDENT INTERVENTION AND REFERRAL SERVICES**

Policy 2416 – Student Intervention and Referral Services, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes. (*First Reading*)

**POL-3. POLICY 3161 – EXAMINATION FOR CAUSE**

Policy 3161 – Examination for Cause, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes. (*First Reading*)

**POL-4. POLICY 4161 – EXAMINATION FOR CAUSE**

Policy 4161 – Examination for Cause, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes. (*First Reading*)

**POL-5. POLICY 5512 – HARASSMENT, INTIMIDATION AND BULLYING**

Policy 5512 – Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes. (*First Reading*)

**POL-6. POLICY 2530 – RESOURCE MATERIALS**

Policy 2530 – Resource Materials, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes. (*First Reading*)

Residency Committee Resolutions:

Mrs. Minneci presented the Residency Committee agenda.

Technology Committee:

Mrs. Brens-Watson stated that the district will be rolling out the new district website July 1, 2022. Thank you Mrs. Paul for all the hard work.

Dr. Taylor stated Gerry would like to see us branding – banners on street lights. Mr. Benaquista stated around the football field.

Approval of Bills:

The bills will be approved next week.

Unfinished Business:

None

New Business:

Mrs. Minneci stated next week Mrs. Scott-Hayden will have a list of highlights. Sunday there was beautiful article about the boys' baseball team and the event that they held and the money they raised. I sent it to Mr. Benaquista and Dr. Taylor.

Yesterday in the Ledger there were pictures and an article about the Special Olympics and TCNJ. There were two great pictures of our students. It is past due that we get recognized for the great things that do go on here.

Mrs. Hall said it the best at the soiree – the students that were in the contest that won the three scholarships for their essays – they were wonderful, they brought many people to tears and Mrs. Hall said this is Union High School.

Ms. Santana stated I know when we do new business we bring up all these great things. I know that each of us has a school, so I think moving forward it would be a good idea to bring to the table things from our designated school and the high school bring everything to the table.

Dr. Perez stated I had spoken with supervisors and explained that we have to move away from thinking that everything that happens at the high school because we are missing opportunities with our younger kids who may not have somebody who is tapping into their potential early on. We don't know how many kids that don't have that but have that potential and if we can tap into that sooner than later. We can capitalize on addressing some of the weaknesses through what their talent and skills are.

Comments from the Public:

Ann Margaret Shannon stated UTEA president and Happy Flag Day. E-6 – the calendar, the half-day had a lot to do with the teachers' training but we have a lot more to do with SEL for the kids. My first three days are icebreakers and getting to know each other. It works to both the educators and the children.

F-30 – ABA – we have paras that do ABA services and they don't get \$70/hr. I don't know how to fix that but we need to recognize our paras and what they do.

UTEA sponsored the first annual Juneteenth celebration in Union and we will do so again on June 18<sup>th</sup>. You are all invited. You get a free book and lots of goodies. Enjoy the food trucks and vendors.

On June 28<sup>th</sup>, the UTEA is bringing back our golf outing at Galloping Hill. Each year we give out \$8,000 in scholarships but we want to get it up to \$10,000. I want to thank Joe Daly. He is our assistant golf coach and a math teacher at UHS. He is organizing this event. We have a lunch only ticket if you are not a golfer.

Our community schools committee and we are winding down our first year and we interviewed residents – our event is August 16<sup>th</sup> and we will have a block party at Rabkin Park. The first 2,000 get a \$10 gift card/voucher. We will do a taste of Union, instead of food trucks, we will ask the restaurants to come and have tents with food. We want it to be all Union.

#### MOTION FOR EXECUTIVE SESSION:

Moved by Ms. Santana, seconded by Mrs. Minneci, that the Board go into Executive Session at 8:07 p.m. to discuss the following subject matters without the presence of the public in accordance with the provisions of N.J.S.A. 10:4-12b: Collective Bargaining negotiations; litigation – Lowery and Elbanna; update on an investigation report

Please take notice that minutes will be taken of the discussion conducted during the executive session and the Board will disclose the minutes of the executive session when the disclosure will not result in unwarranted invasion of individual privacy or prejudice to the best interests of the Board of Education and provided that such disclosure does not violate federal, state or local statutes and does not fall within the attorney/client privilege.

Action may be taken when the Board reconvenes in public session.

AYE: Mrs. Brens-Watson, Mrs. Minneci, Mr. O'Shea,  
Mrs. Regis-Darby, Ms. Santana, Mrs. Scott-Hayden, Mrs. Williams

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

**MOTION CARRIED**

The Board returned to public session at 9:50 p.m.



MOTION TO ADJOURN:

There being no further business before the Board in public session it was moved by Mrs. Minneci, seconded by Ms. Santana, that the meeting be adjourned at 9:50 p.m.

All present voting YES

MOTION CARRIED

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,

*Yolanda Koon*

YOLANDA KOON  
BOARD SECRETARY

