

TOWNSHIP OF UNION BOARD OF EDUCATION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES – December 21, 2021

NOTICE OF MEETING:

TO ALL BOARD OF EDUCATION MEMBERS:

The regular meeting of the Board of Education of the Township of Union was held on Tuesday, December 21, 2021 at 7:00 p.m. at the Union High School Library, 2350 North Third Street, Union, New Jersey pursuant to notice sent to each member.

Mr. McDowell called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

PRESENT AT ROLL CALL:

Mrs. Yocasta Brens-Watson (via Zoom), Dr. Guy Francis, Mr. Ronnie McDowell, Mrs. Nancy Minneci, Dr. Kalisha Morgan (via Zoom), Mr. John O’Shea, Mrs. Nellis Regis-Darby, Mrs. Mary Lynn Williams (via Zoom)

ABSENT AT ROLL CALL:

Mrs. Kim Ruiz (arrived 7:10 p.m.)

ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT:

Dr. Scott Taylor, Mr. Gerald Benaquista, Mrs. Yolanda Koon, Mrs. Sandra Paul

ALSO PRESENT:

Mr. Lester Taylor, Esq.

Mr. McDowell led the Board and audience members 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.

Mrs. Minneci read the district’s mission statement.

Mr. McDowell asked the UTEA President, Ann Margaret Shannon to speak.

Ann Margaret Shannon stated UTEA President. Tonight I have the sad job of saying good-bye to a long-term district employee. Recently our community lost a beloved Union High School chemistry teacher, Mr. John Rickel. I personally enjoyed working with John for 12 years at Union High School. He was sometimes my biggest critic; he was a pleasure to work with. I will miss him. A colleague from the science department, Will Eichert will say a few words.

Will Eichert read the following statement:

“John Rickel was a Science Teacher at Union High School for more than 15 years, mainly teaching Chemistry and Freshman science. He was a good person that wanted the best for his students, fellow teachers, and the world around

him. He was genuine. What you saw is what you got. He did his own thing in life by following his head and heart. Before becoming a teacher, John originally worked on Wall Street. After spending some time there, he traveled to live on the beautiful beaches of Barbados, escaping the hustle that comes with working on Wall Street. He eventually made his way to education. He came into the profession with a burning passion to share what he knew with students because he wanted to help them understand science and ultimately become more well-rounded and responsible citizens. John always kept his ear to the ground for new research, opening our eyes to upcoming technology and discoveries. He loved reading, being one with nature, the news, and soccer - and was actually one of the soccer coaches at UHS for a number of years.

He was easy to approach and talk to and usually provided great tidbits of wisdom that had you pondering for a very long time. This is one of the many great qualities that made John a great teacher. As I said before, he was a good man that improved the lives of the students, staff, and the entire Union Community in which he interacted with. John was due to retire this year after serving the community he loved. We are better people for having known him and the world is a better place for having had him here. He will truly be missed, but the mark he left will definitely live on in all of us for many years to come. Thank you!"

Mrs. Ruiz arrived at 7:10 p.m.

Mr. McDowell stated thank you for those words. I ask for a moment of silence in memory of John Rickel.

COMMENTS FROM PUBLIC ON RESOLUTIONS:

None

Approval of Minutes:

Moved by Mrs. Minneci, seconded by Mr. O'Shea, that the following minutes be adopted:

1. October 12, 2021 – executive session
2. October 12, 2021 – worksession
3. October 19, 2021 – regular meeting
4. October 19, 2021 – executive session

DISCUSSION:

None

AYE: Mrs. Brens-Watson, Dr. Francis, Mrs. Minneci, Dr. Morgan, Mr. O'Shea,
Mrs. Regis-Darby, Mrs. Ruiz, Mr. McDowell

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: Mrs. Williams

Communications:

LETTER FROM CROSSROADS CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

Letter from Crossroads Christian Fellowship requesting the use of Battle Hill School gym from 7:00 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. every Thursday beginning Thursday, January 6, 2022 through Thursday, April 7, 2022 for the volleyball/basketball programs and requesting waiver of rental fee; Certificate of Insurance to be provided.

LETTER OF RESIGNATION – HURD

Letter of resignation from Cecelia Hurd, part-time bus aide-Transportation Department, effective December 31, 2021.

LETTER OF RETIREMENT – LOGUIDICE

Letter of resignation, for the purpose of retirement, from Michael Loguidice, custodian-Washington Elementary School, effective January 2, 2022.

LETTER OF RESIGNATION – MELILLO

Letter of resignation from Thomas A. Melillo, custodian-Burnet Middle School, effective November 15, 2021.

LETTER OF RETIREMENT – JOHNSON

Letter of resignation, for the purpose of retirement, from Ralph Johnson, custodian-Washington Elementary School, effective January 1, 2022.

LETTER OF RESIGNATION – MUELLER

Letter of resignation from Lynn Mueller, ELA teacher-Burnet Middle School, effective December 1, 2021.

LETTER OF RETIREMENT – PALUMBO

Letter of resignation, for the purpose of retirement, from Anna Marie Palumbo, paraprofessional-Union High School, effective January 1, 2022.

LETTER OF RESIGNATION – RIVERA

Letter of resignation from Catherine Rivera, school counselor-Union High School, effective December 11, 2021.

REQUEST FOR INTERMITTENT LEAVE EXTENSION – ALAGO

Request for extension of intermittent FMLA/NJFLA from Margaret Alago, 12-month Confidential Administrative Assistant-Central Office/Business Office, now through June 30, 2022.

REQUEST FOR INTERMITTENT LEAVE – CLARK

Request for unpaid intermittent FMLA from Mary Clark, science teacher-Union High School, December 1, 2021-June 30, 2022.

REQUEST FOR EXTENSION OF LEAVE – COHEN

Request for extension of unpaid FMLA/NJFLA followed by unpaid non-FMLA/NJFLA from Amanda Cohen, science teacher-Kawameeh Middle School, now through June 30, 2022.

REQUEST FOR LEAVE – GREEN

Request for paid medical leave followed by unpaid FMLA from Ruth Green, paraprofessional-Battle Hill Elementary School, October 13, 2021-December 14, 2021.

REQUEST FOR LEAVE – CHI

Request for paid medical leave from Virginia Chi, school nurse-Washington Elementary School, October 26, 2021-January 3, 2022.

REQUEST FOR LEAVE – DAMJANOVIC

Request for paid child rearing leave followed by unpaid FMLA/NJFLA (concurrently) from Lisa Damjanovic, social studies teacher-Kawameeh Middle School, March 3, 2022-October 15, 2022 (tentative).

REQUEST FOR INTERMITTENT LEAVE – DESROSIERS

Request for unpaid intermittent FMLA/NJFLA child rearing leave from Johnny Desrosiers, security-Burnet Middle School, January 1, 2022-June 30, 2022.

REQUEST FOR LEAVE – DRIVAS

Request for unpaid FMLA/NJFLA from Christine Drivas, teacher-Hannah Caldwell Elementary School, December 13, 2021-March 17, 2022.

REQUEST FOR INTERMITTENT LEAVE – MANCINELLI

Request for intermittent FMLA/NJFLA (concurrently) from Lynne Mancinelli, school librarian/media specialist, December 6, 2021-June 30, 2022.

REQUEST FOR INTERMITTENT LEAVE – MARANO

Request for intermittent FMLA/NJFLA (concurrently) from Denise Marano, teacher-Battle Hill Elementary School, November 29, 2021-June 30, 2022.

REQUEST FOR LEAVE – MATIAS

Request for paid child rearing leave followed by unpaid FMLA/NJFLA (concurrently) from Catarnia Matias, special education math teacher-Burnet Middle School, April 25, 2022-June 30, 2022.

REQUEST FOR LEAVE – McKEE

Request for paid child rearing leave followed by unpaid FMLA/NJFLA (concurrently) from April McKee, English teacher-Union High School, February 2, 2022-June 30, 2022.

REQUEST FOR INTERMITTENT LEAVE – NOVOA

Request for intermittent FMLA/NJFLA (concurrently) from Connie Novoa, school nurse-Union High School, November 15, 2021-November 15, 2022.

REQUEST FOR LEAVE – VILLARINO

Request for child rearing leave under unpaid NJFLA from Darcy Villarino, teacher-Connecticut Farms Elementary School, January 19, 2022-April 13, 2022.

REQUEST FOR LEAVE EXTENSION – WOJCIK

Request for extension of paid medical leave from Karen Wojcik, 12-month secretary-special services/Hamilton, new return date January 3, 2022.

LETTER FROM VAUXHALL HISTORICAL SOCIETY – REQUESTING USE OF JEFFERSON SCHOOL GYM

Letter from Vauxhall Historical Society requesting the use of Jefferson School gymnasium to hold a program in celebration of Black History Month on February 5, 2022 (alternate date February 19, 2022) from 11 a.m. – 2 p.m.

REQUEST FOR INTERMITTENT LEAVE – ASKEW

Request for unpaid intermittent NJFLA/FMLA (concurrently) from Robert Askew, custodian-Union High School, January 3, 2022-June 30, 2022.

REQUEST FOR LEAVE EXTENSION – FILIPPONE

Request for extension of unpaid FMLA/NJFLA (concurrently) followed by unpaid non-FMLA/NJFLA child rearing leave from Nicole Filippone, special education teacher-Hannah Caldwell Elementary School, through January 30, 2022.

REQUEST FOR LEAVE – GRAUL

Request for paid medical leave and unpaid FMLA from Kathleen Graul, 10-month secretary-Burnet Middle School, January 18, 2022-April 13, 2022.

REQUEST FOR LEAVE EXTENSION – RAPKE

Request for extension of paid medical leave from Angela Rapke, 10-month secretary-Burnet Middle School, through February 28, 2022.

REQUEST FOR LEAVE EXTENSION – OSBORNE

Request for extension of unpaid FMLA/NJFLA (concurrently) followed by unpaid non-FMLA/NJFLA child rearing leave from Melissa Osborne, special education teacher-Burnet Middle School, through March 31, 2022.

REQUEST FOR LEAVE EXTENSION – STROBEL

Request for extension of unpaid FMLA from Patricia Strobel, 10-month secretary-Union High School/Attendance, through January 31, 2022.

REQUEST FOR LEAVE – VALIA

Request for paid child rearing leave followed by unpaid FMLA/NJFLA (concurrently) from Cindy Valia, teacher-Livingston Elementary School, November 18, 2021-April 26, 2022.

LETTER OF RESIGNATION – SHAW

Letter of resignation from Health Shaw, 10-month secretary-Union High School

Superintendent's Report:

Dr. Taylor stated Dr. Perez is here tonight to speak but first I will introduce Mr. Shaw, the principal of Burnet Middle School and he will speak about the coach and students.

Mr. Shaw stated good evening. Thank you for inviting me this evening. I'm here to introduce a group of students and staff that are no strangers to the spotlight. This group has proven again this year to be the best E-Sports Rocket in the State. Their win last week at Rutgers made them the two-time defending champion. I would like to introduce Eric Churlus, the E-Sport coordinator and Mr. Tony McGown who is our podcasting coordinator.

Eric Churlus stated I'm the coaching coordinator at Burnet. We are the two-time defending champion for rocket league at the middle school level; with two undefeated seasons. We have never lost a game, let alone a match. We played at Rutgers University, they have their own set up and team there. It was a great experience. One of our players, Daniel Campbell, was invited to practice with Rutgers that weekend. We are currently scheduling a match with NJCU. We are excited and looking forward to that.

We are developing a great podcasting program with Mr. McGown. Tony McGown stated I'm currently working with the E-Sports program; some of the games I coach myself and I'm also working on the podcast for non-players. We think it is important to include as many so we are not focused on students who play video games. We are looking for kids that want to broadcast and social media and perhaps podcast. We couldn't facilitate this club without competition. Our next project is to enter a contest hosted by National Public Radio, also known as NPR. We really looking forward to continuing to build this program.

Mr. Churlus stated in coordination with Union High School, I'm looking forward to seeing the expansion of this program. Students that have gone through this program have an opportunity to earn scholarships. The students in this program are Leandro Burgos, Jose Carrasquillo, Bright Kitivi, Darian Cancel, Donovan Jimenez, Joset Lazo Valle, Dennis Leyva, Yadier Yi.

Dr. Taylor stated all the students will receive a certificate and they will be sent out after the winter break.

No student liaisons attended meeting.

We are fortunate to have our new Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment - Dr. Gretel Perez here. We approved Dr. Perez at our last Board meeting and she will be starting January 18th.

Dr. Perez stated thank you for giving me the opportunity to be on this team of excellence. I look forward to growing professionally and personally and looking to see how the students can be uplifted as well as uplifting our teachers and administrators as well. I am looking forward to working with Dr. Taylor.

Dr. Taylor presented the State of the Schools (the full live presentation can be viewed on the district website); a summary is below:

The current state of health and safety – COVID – 48 cases in town – 7-day average as of December 17, 2021.

The health department will work with us if we need to go to half days. A 1.5-2% quarantine of students' triggers shifting to half days. If over 2% will shift to virtual. High School is virtual, Franklin is virtual as of today and Burnet starting tomorrow will be virtual.

At elementary level, the health department states the metric is 3-4 classrooms and we closed the 5th classroom in Franklin – that is why they are virtual.

Maintaining communication – daily updates from the principals; now to include elementary classroom closures and zero-case info; semi-daily phone messages from Dr. Taylor; Friday email updates; live updated COVID dashboard.

I have received many questions and present the most common questions received and the answers that we are providing.

How to deal with the holiday break? A message will go out on Thursday regarding this.

Health department feels that with close contact, you must quarantine for 7 days and you can return as long as your PCR test is negative. This quarantine chart information is on the district website. The State only allows those students who have been directed by a school district to quarantine or to remain home because of a matter associated with the pandemic to receive virtual instruction. Close contact is anyone not wearing a mask or not distancing.

Shout out to the nurses; I called them to thank them last week and to tell them the district will do whatever it can to relieve some of their stress and anxiety. Also remember, the nurses are just the messengers. Nurses are not making decisions about who has COVID and whether we go to half days or all days. The nurses are the front line and they are working tirelessly and we are short staffed and there is a nursing shortage.

Every year the school district is required to have their annual HIB review meeting and props go out to Nicole Ahearn, she is our supervisor of guidance and HIB coordinator for the district. We talked about if our procedure is sound.

Compliance reporting – HIB – 12 cases; 5 cases confirmed to be HIB and 7 cases not confirmed to be HIB. There was an article in USA Today stating there is an uptick in acts of violence and HIB; kids having PTSD; shortage of substitutes, nurses, bus drivers, paras and aides and anxious about getting COVID is making the education field very difficult. We need to do something to release stress.

When we come back in January I will report to you on an initiative I have planned with the principals to incorporate more social emotional wellness.

Mrs. Ruiz stated she is disappointed that we can't close after break. I think we should operate under the assumption that there will be people traveling and gathering. It is inconvenient to working families when we bring down the hammer all of a sudden so you need to give family time to plan for their children. Students vaccinated - do they need to quarantine if they were exposed? Dr. Taylor stated he will follow-up because things have been changing and he would get back to the Board.

Education/Student Discipline Committee Resolutions:

Upon recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the following resolutions were moved by Mrs. Ruiz, seconded by Mrs. Regis-Darby, for adoption:

E-1. *Agenda item reported at December 14, 2021 Worksession (Superintendent's Report of HIB-November 17-December 14, 2021)*

E-1A. *Agenda item approved at December 14, 2021 Worksession (Affirm Superintendent's Determination of HIB-November 10-16, 2021)*

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

Superintendent's Report of Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying (HIB) for the period December 15, 2021 to December 21, 2021, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes (*no vote required; for reporting purposes only*).

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

Affirm the Superintendent's determination of Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying (HIB) for the period November 17, 2021 to December 14, 2021, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

E-2. APPROVE TITLE I SCHOOL PARENT AND FAMILY ENGAGEMENT POLICIES

Approve Title I School Parent and Family Engagement Policies for Franklin Elementary School, Connecticut Farms Elementary School, Jefferson School, Burnet Middle School and Union High School, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

E-3. APPROVE STUDENT CLUB – UHS – MY SCHOOL VOTES CLUB

Approve the establishment of the following student club: UHS – My School Votes Club, Donald Erdman – advisor (no stipend requested), in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

E-4. APPROVE STUDENT CLUB – UHS – CODING COUGARS

Approve the establishment of the following student club: UHS – Coding Cougars, Jaclyn Franey – advisor (no stipend requested), in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

E-5. APPROVE NJQSAC STATEMENT OF ASSURANCE AND DPR – 2021-2022

That the Board approve the NJQSAC Statement of Assurance and the DPR for the 2021-2022 school year, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

DISCUSSION:

None

AYE: Mrs. Brens-Watson, Dr. Francis, Mrs. Minneci, Dr. Morgan, Mr. O’Shea,
Mrs. Regis-Darby, Mrs. Ruiz, Mrs. Williams, Mr. McDowell

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

Fiscal and Planning Committee Resolutions:

Upon recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the following resolutions were moved by Mr. O’Shea, seconded by Mrs. Minneci for adoption:

F-1. TREASURER’S REPORT

That the Treasurer’s Report dated November 30, 2021 be accepted.

F-2. SECRETARY’S REPORT

That the Secretary’s Report dated November 30, 2021 be accepted.

F-3. CERTIFY TREASURER’S AND SECRETARY’S REPORT

Pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:23-2.11(a), I certify that as of November 30, 2021 no budgetary line item account has obligations and payments (contractual orders) which in total exceed the amount appropriated by the district Board of education pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:22-8 and 18:22-8.1.

/s/ Yolanda Koon

Yolanda Koon, Board Secretary

_____ Dated

Pursuant to N.J.A.C.6A:23-2.2(h), we certify that as of November 30, 2021 after review of the secretary’s monthly financial report (appropriations section) and upon consultation with the appropriate district officials that to the best of our knowledge no major account or fund has been over-expended in violation of N.J.A.C. 6A:23-2.2(d)3 and that sufficient funds are available to meet the district’s financial obligations for the remainder of the fiscal year. This certification is solely based on the information provided by the School Business Administrator and Board Secretary and is assumed by the Board to be correct.

F-4. APPROVE APPROPRIATION TRANSFERS

Approve appropriation transfers in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

F-5. APPROVE LIST OF CONTRACTS/PURCHASE ORDERS

Approve the attached list of contracts and/or purchase orders pursuant to the requirements of N.J.S.A. 18A:18A-5 (bid exceptions to requirement for advertising) and 18A:18A-10(a)

(purchase through State agency; procedure), in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

F-6. APPROVE DISTRICT WIDE TRAVEL AND RELATED EXPENSES

Approve district wide travel and related expenses pursuant to the requirements of N.J.S.A. 18A:11-12, N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-7 and Board Policy File Code 6471 and in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

F-7. PRE-APPROVE DISTRICTWIDE STUDENT FIELD TRIPS

Pre-approve districtwide student field trip destinations and purposes pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-5.8 in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

F-8. APPROVE LIST OF 2021-2022 STATE CONTRACT VENDORS

Approve the amended list of the 2021-2022 State Contract Vendors pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:18A-10(a) (purchase through State agency; procedure) to facilitate schools' purchasing, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

F-9. APPROVED LIST OF CONTRACTS/PURCHASES (STUDENT ACTIVITY)

Approve the attached list of contracts and/or purchases pursuant to the requirements of N.J.S.A. 18A:18A-5(21) (paid by funds raised by or collected by students), in accordance with the information appended to the minutes:

School	Account/Department	Vendor/Description	Amount
Union High School	2077/Music/Theatre	Squeek Lights LLC-lighting rental, design, technician for UHSPAC – All Together Now	\$7,999.72
Union High School	2077/Music/Theatre	Audio Inc.- audio equipment rental-UHSPAC-All Together Now	\$5,464.74
Union High School	2072/Science	Fundraising.com – fundraising material	\$1,560.00
Union High School	2083/Dance Club	JCM Associates – dance team gear	\$1,210.00
Union High School	2077/theatre	11hourDesign – design services for fall production	\$6,430.07

F-10. APPROVE 2021-2022 OUT-OF-DISTRICT STUDENT PLACEMENT LIST

Approval be given to amend the 2021-2022 out-of-district student placement list, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

F-11. APPROVE FUNDRAISERS

Approve the following fundraisers, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes:

Event Name	Date	Purpose
Famous Amos Cookie Sale	December 2021-January 2022	UHS/National Honor Society – raise money for NHS scholarships, stoles and dues
T-shirt Fundraiser	December 2021-January 2022	UHS/National Honor Society – raise funds for NHS scholarships, stoles and dues

Welch's Fruit Snack Fundraiser	December 16, 2021- January 8, 2022	UHS/National Honor Society – to raise money for NHS club and activities
Food/Can Drive	December 16, 2021- April 1, 2022	UHS/National Honor Society – to collect food to donate to local food banks
School Store Valentine Telegrams Month-long Read-a-Thon Buds to Blooms Fun Run	January-June 2022 February 2022 March 2022 April 2022 May 2022	Washington/4 th Grade Student Council - various fundraisers to raise moneys for equipment for playground area for students to sit during recess
UHS Dress Down Day	December 10 or December 17, 2021	UHS – to raise funds for a UHS family due to a fire
Sponsor-a-Day Calendar	January 18-February 14, 2022	UHS/Marching Band – to raise funds to offset costs of Winter Percussion and Winter Guard programs

F-12. *Agenda item approved at December 14, 2021 worksession (Accept Donations).*

F-13. APPROVE CONTRACT – COMMISSION FOR THE BLIND AND VISUALLY IMPAIRED

Approve additional Service Contract with the State of New Jersey, Department of Human Services, Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired, for educational services for student in the district for the 2021-2022 school year, in accordance with the non-public information appended to the minutes.

F-14. TUITION CONTRACT – ROSELLE PARK

Tuition Contract Agreement for E.C. between the district and the Roselle Park Board of Education, in accordance with the non-public information appended to the minutes.

F-15. APPROVE UCESC NONPUBLIC SCHOOL SECURITY INITIATIVE PROGRAM SPENDING PLAN - UCESC

Approve the Union County Educational Services Commission (UCESC) Nonpublic School Security Initiative Program spending plan for St. Michael School located within the district for the 2021-2022 school year, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

F-16. APPROVE MEMBERSHIP TO NJ EDGE CONSORTIUM

Approve membership to NJ Edge Consortium for Sandra Paul, IT Director, at no cost to the district.

F-17. APPROVE SUBMISSION OF NJSDA AND NJDOE EMERGENT AND CAPITAL MAINTENANCE NEEDS CERTIFICATION AND PROJECT LISTING FORM

Approve submission of the New Jersey Schools Development Authority (NJSDA) and New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) emergent and capital maintenance needs certification and project listing form in support of receipt of FY2022 funding in the amount of \$166,963, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

F-18. *For informational purposes only – vote not required.* List of legal services for the 2021-2022 fiscal year, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

F-19. *Agenda item approved at December 14, 2021 Worksession (Educational Services Commission of NJ-Bedside Instruction).*

DISCUSSION:

None

AYE: Mrs. Brens-Watson, Dr. Francis, Mrs. Minneci, Dr. Morgan, Mr. O'Shea,
Mrs. Regis-Darby, Mrs. Ruiz, Mrs. Williams, Mr. McDowell

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

Operations Committee Resolutions:

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

O-1. APPROVE SECURITY DRILL/BUS EVACUATION REPORTS

Pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:41-1 and P.L. 2009, Chapter 178, approve the following security drill and bus evacuation reports for the 2021-2022 school year, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

O-2. REPORT ON OFFICIAL REPORT OF ANNUAL SCHOOL ELECTION

Report on the Official Report of the annual school election held on November 2, 2021 as follows (*report only, no vote required*):

Three-year term:	Kimberly Scott-Hayden	5,948
	Chastity Santana	5,537
	Marissa McKenzie	5,441
	Ronnie McDowell	4,161
	Misael Guzman	3,965
	Ronald Brangman	3,857
	Kevin Costello	878
	Wesley Woodford	634
	Jeffrey P. East	513
	Jay Spinelli	476
	Rafael Prisco	286
	Stefan J. Erwin	238

O-3. APPROVE AMENDMENT TO SRO SERVICE AGREEMENT

Approve Amendment to School Resource Officer Service Agreement for the 2021-2022 school year, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

O-4. LETTER FROM CROSSROADS CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP REQUESTING USE OF BATTLE HILL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL GYM

Letter from Crossroads Christian Fellowship requesting the use of Battle Hill Elementary School gym from 7:00 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. every Thursday beginning Thursday, January 6, 2022 through Thursday, April 7, 2022 for the volleyball/basketball programs and requesting waiver of rental fee; Certificate of Insurance to be provided.

O-5. APPROVE RESOLUTION AWARDING CONTRACT – AMCO ENTERPRISE

Approve resolution awarding contract to AMCO Enterprise for the ESSER II Mechanical Systems improvement at five district schools (Connecticut Farms, Hannah Caldwell and Washington Elementary Schools, Kawameeh Middle School and Union High School, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

DISCUSSION:

None

AYE: Mrs. Brens-Watson, Dr. Francis, Mrs. Minneci, Dr. Morgan, Mr. O’Shea,
Mrs. Regis-Darby, Mrs. Ruiz, Mrs. Williams, Mr. McDowell

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: Mrs. Ruiz (O-4)

Moved by Dr. Francis, seconded by Mrs. Minneci, that the discussion item be placed on the agenda as O-6 and be adopted:

O-6. APPROVE REQUEST FROM VAUXHALL HISTORICAL SOCIETY – REQUESTING USE OF JEFFERSON SCHOOL GYM

Approve request from Vauxhall Historical Society requesting the use of Jefferson School gymnasium to hold a program in celebration of Black History Month on February 5, 2022 (alternate date February 19, 2022) from 11 a.m. – 2 p.m.

DISCUSSION:

Mrs. Regis-Darby stated we do this every year; what if we shut down for COVID? Mr. McDowell stated there are two dates, two weeks apart and subject to COVID.

AYE: Mrs. Brens-Watson, Dr. Francis, Mrs. Minneci, Dr. Morgan, Mr. O’Shea,
Mrs. Regis-Darby, Mrs. Ruiz, Mrs. Williams, Mr. McDowell

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

Personnel Committee Resolutions:

Mr. Benaquista stated that P-1B-59 will be removed from the backup and not voted on.

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

P-1A. PERSONNEL ACTIONS – NEW HIRES

Personnel Actions-New Hires 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-1C PERSONNEL ACTIONS – TRANSFERS

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

P-2. APPROVE CENTRAL OFFICE RESOLUTION

Approve resolution providing salary and benefits for all staff in Central Office for the period July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2022, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

P-3. ACCEPT LETTERS OF RESIGNATION/RETIREMENT

Accept letters of resignation/retirement from the following staff:

Name	Position	Location	Eff. Date	Reason	Notes*
Cecelia Hurd	P/T bus aide	Transportation Department	12/31/2021	Resignation	
Michael Loguidice	Custodian	Washington	1/2/2022	Retirement	
Thomas A. Melillo	Custodian	BMS	11/15/2021	Resignation	
Ralph Johnson	Custodian	Washington	1/1/2022	Retirement	
Lynn Mueller	ELA teacher	BMS	12/1/2021	Resignation	Effective date of 12/1/2021 accepted
Anna Marie Palumbo	Paraprofessional	UHS	1/1/2022	Retirement	
Catherine Rivera	School Counselor	UHS	12/11/2021	Resignation	
Heather Shaw	10-month secretary	UHS	1/7/2022	Resignation	

*Resignations/retirements - approvals are subject to contractual notice to be given accordingly.

P-4. APPROVE LEAVES

Approve leaves for the following staff:

Name	Position	Location	Leave Dates	Leave Type	Notes
Margaret Alago	12-month Confidential Administrative Assistant	Central Office/ Business Office	Now through 6/30/2022	Extension of intermittent FMLA/NJFLA	FMLA/NJFLA (concurrently) entitlement not to exceed 12 weeks; org. intermittent

					leave began 10/5/2021
Mary Clark	Science teacher	UHS	12/1/2021- 6/30/2022	Unpaid intermittent FMLA	FMLA entitlement not to exceed 12 weeks
Amanda Cohen	Science teacher	KMS	Now through 6/30/2022 Return Date: 9/1/2022	Extension of unpaid FMLA/NJFLA followed by unpaid non-FMLA/NJFLA	FMLA/NJFLA entitlement ends 1/7/2022
Ruth Green	Paraprofessional	Battle Hill	10/13/2021- 12/14/2021	Paid medical leave followed by unpaid FMLA	FMLA entitlement not to exceed 12 weeks
Virginia Chi	School nurse	Washington	10/26/2021- 1/3/2022	Paid medical leave	
Lisa Damjanovic	Social studies teacher	KMS	3/3/2022- 10/15/2022 (tentative)	Paid child rearing leave followed by unpaid FMLA/NJFLA (concurrently)	FMLA/NJFLA (concurrently) entitlement not to exceed 12 weeks
Johnny Desrosiers	Security	BMS	1/1/2022- 6/30/2022	Unpaid intermittent FMLA/NJFLA child rearing leave	FMLA/NJFLA (concurrently) entitlement not to exceed 12 weeks
Christine Drivas	Teacher	Hannah Caldwell	12/13/2021- 3/17/2022	Unpaid FMLA/NJFLA	FMLA/NJFLA (concurrently) entitlement not to exceed 12 weeks
Lynne Mancinelli	School librarian/media specialist	Districtwide	12/6/2021- 6/30/2022	Intermittent FMLA/NJFLA (concurrently)	FMLA/NJFLA (concurrently) entitlement not to exceed 12 weeks
Denise Marano	Teacher	Battle Hill	11/29/2021- 6/30/2022	Intermittent FMLA/NJFLA (concurrently)	FMLA/NJFLA (concurrently) entitlement not to exceed 12 weeks
Cartarnia Matias	Special education/math teacher	BMS	4/25/2022- 6/30/2022	Paid child rearing leave followed by unpaid FMLA/NJFLA (concurrently)	FMLA/NJFLA (concurrently) entitlement not to exceed 12 weeks
April McKee	English teacher	UHS	2/2/2022- 6/30/2022	Paid child rearing leave followed by unpaid FMLA/NJFLA (concurrently)	FMLA/NJFLA (concurrently) entitlement not to exceed 12 weeks
Connie Novoa	School nurse	UHS	11/15/2021- 11/15/2022	Intermittent FMLA/NJFLA (concurrently)	FMLA/NJFLA (concurrently) entitlement not to exceed 12 weeks
Darcy Villarino	Teacher	Connecticut Farms	1/19/2022- 4/13/2022	Child rearing leave under unpaid NJFLA	NJFLA entitlement not to exceed 12 weeks
Karen Wojcik	12-month secretary	Special services/ Hamilton	Return: 1/3/2022	Extension of paid medical leave	

Robert Askew	Custodian	UHS	Intermittent 1/3/2022- 6/30/2022	Unpaid intermittent NJFLA/FMLA (concurrently)	FMLA/NJFLA (concurrently) entitlement not to exceed 12 weeks
Nicole Filippone	Special education teacher	Hannah Caldwell	Extension through 1/30/2022 Return 2/1/2022	Extension of unpaid FMLA/NJFLA (concurrently) followed by unpaid non-FMLA/NJFLA child rearing leave	FMLA/NJFLA entitlement ends 1/28/2022
Angela Rapke	10-month secretary	BMS	Extension through 2/28/2022 Return 3/1/2022	Extension of paid medical leave	
Kathleen Graul	10-month secretary	BMS	1/8/2022 through 4/13/2022	Paid medical leave followed by unpaid FMLA	FMLA entitlement not to exceed 12 weeks
Melissa Osborne	Special education teacher	BMS	Extension through 3/31/2022 Return 4/1/2022	Extension of unpaid FMLA/NJFLA (concurrently) followed by unpaid non-FMLA/NJFLA child rearing leave	FMLA/NJFLA entitlement ends 3/14/2022
Cindy Valia	Teacher	Livingston	11/18/2021- 4/26/2022 Return 4/27/2022	Paid child rearing leave followed by unpaid FMLA/NJFLA (concurrently)	FMLA/NJFLA (concurrently) entitlement not to exceed 12 weeks
Patricia Strobel	10-month secretary	UHS/ Attendance	Extension through 1/31/2022 Return 2/1/2022	Unpaid FMLA	FMLA entitlement not to exceed 12 weeks

P-5. APPROVE STUDENT TEACHERS AND INTERNSHIPS

Approve student teachers and internships for the 2021-2022 school year, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

P-6. APPROVE JOB DESCRIPTION – DISTRICT HOMELESS LIAISON

Approve Job Description for District Homeless Liaison, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

P-7. APPROVE JOB DESCRIPTION – DIRECTOR OF INSTRUCTIONAL TECHNOLOGY

Approve Job Description for Director of Instructional Technology, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

P-8. APPROVE JOB DESCRIPTION – DISTRICT DIRECTOR, INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AND OPERATIONS

Approve Job Description for District Director, Information Technology and Operations, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

P-9. APPROVE UPDATED JOB DESCRIPTION – DIRECTOR OF CURRICULUM, INSTRUCTION AND ASSESSMENT OF STEM

Approve updated Job Description for Director of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment of STEM, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

P-10. APPROVE UPDATED JOB DESCRIPTION – DIRECTOR OF CURRICULUM, INSTRUCTION AND ASSESSMENT OF HUMANITIES

Approve updated Job Description – Director of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment of Humanities, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

P-11. APPROVE SUBSTITUTE LISTS

Approve Substitute Lists for the 2021-2022 school year in accordance with the information in the hands of each Board.

P-12. APPROVE \$1.5 MILLION FROM ARP ESSER III GRANT – 2021-2022 TEACHERS’ SALARIES

Approve \$1.5 million from the ARP ESSER III Grant for teachers’ salaries for the 2021-2022 school year. Due to COVID-19 and CDC guidelines in order to keep staff and students safe, it is important to retain teachers to maintain class size reduction and to prevent learning loss, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

DISCUSSION:

None

AYE: Mrs. Brens-Watson, Dr. Francis, Mrs. Minneci, Dr. Morgan, Mr. O’Shea,
Mrs. Regis-Darby, Mrs. Ruiz, Mrs. Williams, Mr. McDowell

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

Policy Committee:

Upon recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools and the Policy Committee, the following policy(ies) were moved by Dr. Morgan, seconded by Mrs. Regis-Darby for adoption:

POL-1. POLICY 1648.11 – ROAD FORWARD COVID 19-HEALTH AND SAFETY

Approve Policy 1648.11 – Road Forward COVID 19 Health and Safety, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

POL-2. POLICY 2480 – ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAM

Approve Policy 2480 - Alternative Education Programs, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

POL-3. POLICY 8600 – STUDENT TRANSPORTATION

Approve Policy 8600 – Student Transportation, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

POL-4. REGULATION 8600 – STUDENT TRANSPORTATION

Approve Regulation 8600 – Student Transportation, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

POL-5. POLICY 3216 – DRESS AND GROOMING

Approve Policy 3216 – Dress and Grooming, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

POL-6. POLICY 4216 – DRESS AND GROOMING

Approve Policy 4216 – Dress and Grooming, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

POL-7. POLICY 5511 – DRESS AND GROOMING

Approve Policy 5511 – Dress and Grooming, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

DISCUSSION:

Mrs. Regis-Darby stated that Dr. Taylor will be meeting with students regarding the dress code to get their input for the Code of Conduct. Dr. Taylor stated January 10th.

Dr. Francis asked what is the specialized software that we will be using. Mrs. Koon stated the transportation software is Transfinder. It determines mileage, formulate routes, it houses our maintenance for our fleet. It does a plethora of things.

AYE: Mrs. Brens-Watson, Dr. Francis, Mrs. Minneci, Dr. Morgan, Mr. O’Shea,
Mrs. Regis-Darby, Mrs. Ruiz, Mrs. Williams, Mr. McDowell

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

Residency Committee Resolutions:

Upon recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the following resolutions were moved by Mrs. Williams, seconded by Mrs. Minneci for adoption:

R-1. APPROVE LIST OF STUDENTS REMOVED FROM ROLLS

Approval be given to amend the list of students removed from the rolls [three (3) students exited the month of November 2021 (4 from elementary, 2 from secondary and 2 from high school) or a total of sixteen (16) students for the 2021-2022 school year] who are not domiciled in this school district, in accordance with the non-public information appended to the minutes.

R-2. APPROVE TO REMOVE STUDENT

Approval to remove student #301046 from the attendance rolls as the student has been determined to be ineligible to attend the Township of Union Public Schools as a resident student.

R-3. APPROVE TO REMOVE STUDENT

Approval to remove student #288179 from the attendance rolls as the student has been determined to be ineligible to attend the Township of Union Public Schools as a resident student.

R-4. APPROVE TO REMOVE STUDENT

Approval to remove student #298070 from the attendance rolls as the student has been determined to be ineligible to attend the Township of Union Public Schools as a resident student.

R-5. APPROVE TO REMOVE STUDENT

Approval to remove student #311273 from the attendance rolls as the student has been determined to be ineligible to attend the Township of Union Public Schools as a resident student.

R-6. APPROVE TO REMOVE STUDENT

Approval to remove student #244033 from the attendance rolls as the student has been determined to be ineligible to attend the Township of Union Public Schools as a resident student.

R-7. APPROVE TO REMOVE STUDENT

Approval to remove student #310787 from the attendance rolls as the student has been determined to be ineligible to attend the Township of Union Public Schools as a resident student.

R-8. APPROVE TO REMOVE STUDENT

Approval to remove student #268285 from the attendance rolls as the student has been determined to be ineligible to attend the Township of Union Public Schools as a resident student.

R-9. APPROVE TO REMOVE STUDENT

Approval to remove student #246583 from the attendance rolls as the student has been determined to be ineligible to attend the Township of Union Public Schools as a resident student.

DISCUSSION:

None

AYE: Mrs. Brens-Watson, Dr. Francis, Mrs. Minneci, Dr. Morgan, Mr. O'Shea,

Mrs. Regis-Darby, Mrs. Ruiz, Mrs. Williams, Mr. McDowell

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

Technology Committee:

Upon recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the following resolutions were moved by Mrs. Regis-Darby, seconded by Mrs. Minneci for adoption:

T-1. APPROVE RECYCLING OF DEVICES

Approve list of devices for recycling, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

DISCUSSION:

None

AYE: Mrs. Brens-Watson, Dr. Francis, Mrs. Minneci, Dr. Morgan, Mr. O’Shea,
Mrs. Regis-Darby, Mrs. Ruiz, Mrs. Williams, Mr. McDowell

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

Approval of Bills:

Upon recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools and moved by Mr. O’Shea, seconded by Mrs. Minneci, that the Board concur with the bills listed in the permanent bound register appended to these minutes and be ordered for payment.

DISCUSSION:

None

AYE: Mrs. Brens-Watson, Dr. Francis, Mrs. Minneci, Dr. Morgan, Mr. O’Shea,
Mrs. Regis-Darby, Mrs. Ruiz, Mrs. Williams, Mr. McDowell

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

Unfinished Business:

Mrs. Ruiz stated I mentioned previously as parents we can mark our children absent through Genesis, we still get the robo call that says our children are absent. I’m also hearing from parents that when they call to notify the school that their child is out because of COVID, they are still getting absent phone calls every day. Is there a way to fix that? Mr. Benaquista stated that Ms. Hart put out a survey to the community and based on the feedback, the community expressed that they need more information on Genesis. As far as the calls, I will find out from the schools but I think it may be if the child has access to the parent’s account and the child is marking himself out. It is just an extra, so the parent knows the child is out, just in case but I will look into it.

Dr. Taylor stated if you are vaccinated, you do not have to quarantine unless you are symptomatic. Mrs. Ruiz stated that makes no sense because you can be vaccinated and still pass it. They may be vaccinated and still pass it to others.

Mr. Taylor stated the position stated by the Superintendent is in compliance with State regulations and guidance. It is not the Superintendent's or the board of education's discretion or decision to implement it rather they are following State guidelines. It is not the Superintendent's directive that he made up, it is in compliance with State law.

Mrs. Ruiz asked can we go beyond that? Isn't that the minimum requirement? Mr. Taylor stated arguably the answer is yes. My suggestion would be to refer to the direction of health experts on the State and local level. To the extent that the Board may want to consider any deviation from that, it would be based on your policy setting and that should be discussed in closed executive session. It is a confidential, legal and potential human health matter.

Dr. Taylor stated I will raise the issue with the local health department.

Mrs. Brens-Watson stated I appreciate that you have contacted the nurses and your request to the public that our nurses are simply following policies, they are not making the policies. Once again, I ask the Board to seriously look at remedying the situation in regard to staffing of our nurses. If I heard you correctly they are also now doing contact tracing. We know when we come back things will be worse, we have to provide our nurses with some relief before we lose them. We need to find the funds to get additional nurses in the school before we lose the good staff that we have and then we will be in a worse situation. We speak about the health and well being of our students, our educators; we need to think of the well being of our nurses because they are caring for every single one of us in the district. I don't know if the funds we received from the government can be used to hire additional staff. If that is the case, we need to push to do this.

New Business:

Mrs. Regis-Darby stated thank you Kalisha, Kim and Ronnie for your dedication; the time on the Board has not been easy; thank you for sharing your knowledge and commitment to district. Kalisha, the educator in you was admired; Kim, the lawyer in you will be missed especially in executive session; Ronnie, your kindness will be missed and thank you for your leadership during this time. I will miss you.

Mr. McDowell stated I hope you received my email. You asked me to take a look at the Route 22 overpass. According to Policy 8600, the Board has the right and responsibility of designating that as a hazardous route. I will read that part of the policy. "The Board will approve all bus routes each year. Bus routes for all non-remote students who must walk to and from school along hazardous routes will be designated and approved by the Board. The Board may consider, but shall not be limited to, the criteria outlined in NJSA 18A:39-1.5 in determining hazardous routes."

I have driven by there – Stuyvesant Avenue where it intersects West Chestnut. Construction has been going on for the past 6-7 months, but it is at a point where it is dangerous to walk. When you are coming underneath the parkway, there is a sign that says you have to cross to the other side and there is construction on the other side. In my opinion it is a hazardous route. I think it is our responsibility to designate it as so. I would like to hear the thoughts and opinions of the other Board members.

Dr. Taylor stated I did speak with Gail Calderone, Director of Transportation, after the last Board meeting and although I agree based on principle, it will be tough affording additional routes and finding additional drivers. Two drivers left us for other opportunities and rumor has it that I will have another 2-3 more drivers retiring. We are talking about replacing current drivers on top of looking for additional drivers. Don't get me wrong, this is a very important step that we need to take. We have to consider the cost and viability.

Mr. Taylor stated with the statement and commentary that you made, is it the intention to propose a resolution to designate it as a hazardous route this evening? Mr. McDowell stated I think that it might be appropriate. I asked Board members to take a look at it last week. We are prepared to discuss it and if we can make a resolution we should.

Mr. Taylor stated one, I would respectfully suggest to the Board to get a professional opinion from an engineer and/or a traffic planner and/or study because the designation of a hazardous route is more a legal and technical term versus a personal opinion of a lay person. Second, since this is an outgoing Board, we have three Board members who will no longer be on the Board effective January 1st and this action will take effect in the future because there has to be personnel, contracts, etc. – under the provision of the law, an outgoing board cannot bind a future board. To the extent that the Board is technically a legal living entity, the issue can be put on a “tee” and the next board can figure out if they want to run with it. The application tonight would not take effect until the future.

Mr. McDowell stated I understand what you are saying. I'm just looking at this as our responsibility as a Board to consider designating that as a hazardous route. It is my opinion that it is a hazardous route. There are other members on the Board.

Mrs. Williams stated I did a drive by and looked at the area. I reached out to the Township and the Township reached out to the Police Department and they reached out to the DOT. It is my understanding that they are only going to be doing work there for another two weeks and one of those weeks the kids will be out of school. I think it would be in our best interest to call the Police Department and get an officer out there for the duration of the project.

Mr. Taylor stated the designation of hazardous route also needs to be done in conjunction with the municipality. In addition to getting a traffic/engineering study, also consult with the municipality as it may involve public safety, policy, emergency services, etc. with respect to traffic patterns. If you want to pass a resolution that it is the Board's intent to further study this that is great. If you want to pass a resolution to direct the administration to designate and provide the personnel may be a bit premature.

Mr. O'Shea stated this is an important situation but the work is being done by the State. It is a County road. I think what we should do is to move forward, let's start with the Township Business Administrator requesting the Director of Safety put a temporary situation with the police. If this project is still going on when the children get back to school, also have him direct the engineer of the Town to review it and do a traffic study. If this is a delayed situation, we can take this forward, advise the municipality and the County of our concerns of the students. It is

very bad there, there is no question. We need to put the municipality on notice of helping us. We need to remedy this before we do a resolution. Mr. McDowell stated it sounds reasonable.

Dr. Francis stated I agree as it stands today it is a hazardous route. I hear Mr. O'Shea but trying to get the agencies to come together and give an answer – that bridge will be built already. That bridge is not going to be completed in two weeks that will go on for another several months to a year. I drove by it and on the right hand side towards Connecticut Farms, there is no sidewalk. The other side is nothing but trucks. We are not changing the policy, we are asking that we designate a route for those kids that are on the east/south side of Chestnut. The Police Department has known about this for a long time and there hasn't been a consistent police officer in that area. As it stands today it is a hazardous route in my opinion. We should not have to wait until a new board is seated to make a decision today. I don't think it ties the hands of the new board. I think you have to be more considerate and help focus on children rather than a possible monetary issue where we would have to pay more to bus a few more children. I'm in agreement with Mr. McDowell. I see it as a hazardous route; that is today, you don't know what tomorrow will bring. I want to protect the kids today.

Mrs. Regis-Darby stated we all think that. I don't think anyone on this Board has done their due diligence in terms of reaching out to the right people; documenting by email or a letter so we can get appropriate answers on what we can and cannot do. I did drive by and I wouldn't have my kids walk in that area but we need to reach out to everyone. This is where we can be supported by the Town if we can get documentation and ask the right people for the support that we need. I don't see anyone in the community saying no to what is best for the kids; especially their safety. I don't have a problem with the resolution but I disagree with Mr. Taylor. The community voted for us to make decision whether we are coming or going out. I do believe this is a collaboration with the Town and the Board of Education.

Mr. Taylor stated it is not my personal opinion, it is my legal opinion, I don't disagree that legally and ethically a Board member has the power to vote and make decisions until you are not a board member. My comment was that to the extent you are taking action tonight that will take effect at a future date; that would be illegal based upon the "lame duck" board as quantified in case law in the State of New Jersey. My point is if you vote tonight, with the expectation and intention that the administration effectuate this in January, they will be people hired, contracts, bus routes with vendors, etc.; all that takes place in the future. All I'm saying that is an outgoing board cannot point personnel or enter contracts that take effect after their term expires. That is my advice.

In addition, I reference that a hazardous route designation determination likely should be supported by a professional opinion of an engineer, traffic study and/or be done in conjunction with the municipality as it pertains to other elements of public safety.

Thirdly, Dr. Francis referenced a policy for transportation and whether the board can waive the conditions for eligibility for transportation by way of bus; to the extent there is a policy that needs to be amended by way of this action – there is a process to change policies. There has to be a first reading and second reading and that wasn't done and it wasn't on the agenda tonight. I'm not saying you can't do it, I'm procedurally it is premature.

Dr. Francis stated we are not changing the policy. We are using what the policy says what we should be doing in the policy which should be designating a route to be hazardous. We don't know if we need to hire buses or anything. If there are kids that travel that route, there are already buses that go that way. It is just a matter of allowing those children, if they need to, have transportation.

Mr. Taylor stated you said you don't know if you need more buses. Pursuant to the Code of Ethics, NJSA 18A:12-24.1(h-k) – it specifically says the Board members will not take action until consulting with those affected or impacted (i.e. your administration) and it will vote upon recommendations from the administration. To the extent that this action you are taking is more of an administrative action versus a policy action, you are directing an administrative action, that should be done in consultation with your administration, your superintendent referenced this evening that it would need more study, investigation and consultation with other entities in the city. I'm not saying you can't do it, my recommendation is that you do it in a more methodical manner particularly since it raises issues about an outgoing board taking action that will bind a future board, it is raising issues about public safety, legality as to whether it would be binding. I don't know if you have the power unilaterally in designating a hazardous route particularly now that I'm hearing that it may be a County road versus a municipal road. It sounds like more diligence need to be done. If it wasn't done in the past, I can't correct that. It sounds like the charges to do that diligence going forward so that recommendations can be made to the board to take appropriate actions.

Dr. Francis stated this is not the first time Dr. Taylor is hearing about this. This is not the first time he reached out to the Town about it. It has been done in consultation. What we are saying is the policy says that the Board has the role to designate, in consultation, a road to be hazardous. It is our role, our job. As a board, you don't have to vote yes, you can vote no. It is a hazardous route, the kids have to travel it and I'm here to protect the children. I'm not here because it may cost more money, we don't know that – it is an assumption.

Mrs. Minneci stated I did speak with Mr. McDowell and the first thing I said was absolutely but my concern was the busing because of the situations with the drivers having COVID and people resigning/retiring. My concern is if we change it and then we can't accommodate the students. We promise it and in the end we can't do it because we don't have the staff.

Mr. O'Shea stated we can discuss about putting a resolution out or not; the bottom line is you can put a resolution out but it does not mean anything is going to be done immediately. I agree with our attorney because we are dealing with multi-agencies, everyone has to be notified. You need to move as fast as possible to get the studies done immediately and that will take some time. If you want to do a resolution requesting the superintendent to get in touch with the Business Administrator, the police and engineer of this time.

Mr. McDowell stated this has nothing to do with the State or the County. It is up to this Board, it is our policy, we can designate that as a hazardous route. As a school board, it only

effects our students. It doesn't effect anyone driving to and from. Mr. O'Shea stated it effects every part of the community.

Mr. McDowell stated this is not the police department; this is the Board of Education and based upon our policy we can designate it has a hazardous route and that is all we are doing. There are repercussions there, but they only affect the schools; they don't affect the Town or County. Mr. O'Shea and Mrs. Darby disagrees.

Mr. McDowell stated the Board has the authority to designate the route as a hazardous route. We can't make the police patrol there. We can't make the Town do anything. It is the school board thing. For our students walking this route is a hazardous.

Mr. O'Shea asked how will that remedy the problem? Mr. McDowell stated it is a hazardous route. In my opinion it is up to the school board to designate it as such. We can make that resolution and vote on it tonight and we can notify the Town that we designated that as a hazardous route for our students. What does the Town have to do about that? Not much.

Mrs. Regis-Darby stated I think everyone has valid opinions but I don't think this is going to be solved right here. We as a board should discuss this in a different setting. I also believe that we should reach out to those different parties and see what they can do so that we have everything in place. There is no one in this Town who is not going to do what they need to do to protect the safety of the students. The Board has an opportunity to vote; if you as the president brought it to the Board for a vote, you can and everyone has the right to say yes or no. I do believe there are other solutions out there.

Mrs. Ruiz stated if you were to walk on this resolution and this Board votes yes to designate this route as a hazardous route, does that then trigger an obligation for the district to provide busing? If it does, when does that obligation kick in? Does the district need to provide busing tomorrow? Three weeks from now? Three months from now? I agree it is a hazardous route and I agree we must take action. I'm also concerned, whether you agree or disagree with Mr. Taylor, does bring up a valid point. We would be violating lame duck if we take this decision and we have a future board member in the audience and now I have bound them to take action that they did not partake in. They may do it anyway. If we say yes, what would that mean to Dr. Taylor and this district? Does this mean that Ms. Calderone tomorrow has to hurry up – she can't get bus drivers to show up as it is. What does it mean to the district?

Dr. Francis stated I think it means that Dr. Taylor and Gail Calderone have to do their job; what they have been hired to do – figure it out. How many students does it affect? It is not for us to do. Mrs. Ruiz asked what would need to be done? That matters Dr. Francis because if that has to be done tomorrow, I think it is unfair to do that to the district when they are juggling everything that is happening. If that has to be done three weeks from now, I don't think we can do it because of the lame duck language. Dr. Taylor, if we said yes this is a hazardous route, do you know when the responsibility kicks in to provide busing?

Dr. Taylor stated I can't speak to when the policy would kick in but I will tell you since I had to cancel eight routes today – it could not happen overnight and gut tells me if we go this

route and I have to be upfront with everybody, I get it – thinking realistically, we will have to put money out there and I have talked to the bus drivers and they are all saying they are underpaid and I compared them to other districts and they are right and now we are talking about more pay, additional pay to attract more drivers, it will cost money.

Mrs. Minneci stated which is fine and if we vote on this and it has to start January 2nd and we don't have the staff – where does that leave us if we can't provide the transportation? How do we remedy that?

Mrs. Williams stated we just don't have the staff if there is a surge after the holiday. Our best interest is to reach out to the police department. It is a hazardous route. The kids are following the signs and directions and keeping themselves safe. What if we don't have enough staff and they are sick with COVID and we have to cancel the route.

Mr. McDowell stated I did speak with Director Zieser about this situation and he said the County or whoever is doing the construction, notifies him a day ahead of time that they will need a police officer there and he said if one is available he would have one there.

It looks like other things need to be considered and I understand that. It is the Board's responsibility and if you see a problem, you need to alleviate the problem. After this discussion, I will not put a resolution on the table this evening, but I would like to charge the incoming Board to pick this up.

Comments from the Public:

Brenda Rivera stated thank you Mr. McDowell for initiating the presentation. I have also presented at other Board meetings. I think it is important that you cannot vote or decided not to vote. You don't know what the repercussions are going to be. It is a decision, name it hazardous and see who comes out the door and figure it out what needs to be done. Money should not be an issue. I don't know how many needs we have. We may not have that many because a number of students are home. I think today could have been a good opportunity. Aside from that I would like to speak to the transportation policy because my daughter has been excluded from getting a bus pass because according to your software system we are 2.48 miles away from Union High School. Any current tracking system, my daughter would have to walk at least 3 miles depending on the route. I would like you to disclose the name of the software being used and the version. I also think school policy should state what address you are using on that system because my recommendation to the Board is to use the physical address of the school. Do not use a door that is going to exclude my daughter. My daughter is beyond 3 miles. The transportation department chose to use a side door of the school. Why are you looking for a door that says no when you can use a door that says yes. This Board should take into consideration any decisions made by the previous administration. Mr. Tatum, six years ago, granted my family a bus pass. Why because when I knocked on his door, he understood walking from five points is a hazardous route. Mrs. Koon stated the system is called TransFinder.

Jill Hall stated want to wish you all a restful break and happy holidays. Thank you Mr. McDowell, Dr. Morgan and Mrs. Ruiz for the children in the community and faculty and staff as well. We had a difficult run. There has been so many things that have come up. You made us

talk about things that were hard to talk about but you did it with grace and integrity and always about the kids. I so appreciate it.

Chastity Santana stated I wanted to shed some light on the unfinished business you were talking about calling in and receiving calls back. Mr. Benaquista said maybe the kids finding the password. I really don't think that is it. Process of elimination since September, whenever my children that are in three different schools have been called out and even the COVID protocol, I would do it in Genesis and then one school kept calling me even if the Genesis thing happened. I called the school that doesn't call me and see what the difference is and the difference are nurses. We have a huge nurse shortage and they are overwhelmed. There is one nurse and maybe her rhythm is better, she has it down pat where she knows what time she needs to put everything in so that the parents don't get the call. When you have sub nurses or other things going on, and that is how we get that recurring call even though you called out your student.

Our nurse are everything and I didn't know how important they were until my son was diagnosed. We need nurses and school bus drivers.

Ronnie, in your true fashion, you leave us defending our kids. Thank you for your time on this Board. We might not always see eye-to-eye. I thank you for everything you have done for the children. Mrs. Ruiz, thank you for your time; we may have not seen eye-to-eye but you were here through the pandemic. Dr. Morgan, thank you for your time and showing up for our children.

Parent (on Zoom) stated parent to Battle Hill student, an issue I have is and I know we are short staffed with teachers and aides; if the kids are going to have recess in the auditorium, and they will watch a movie for 20 minutes, a parent should have input on what they should be able to watch. My kids only have one hour of week of screen time.

Susan Lipstein stated as President of the Education Foundation, I want to thank the community for all of their support. Because of their support we were able to award grants for the next school year – 2022-2023. The applications are due March 15th and they will be on our website. A copy of the grant application is available to all staff members.

Personally, I was very sad to hear of the passing of John Rickel. I first met him in 2009 when he applied for a grant. I still remember his enthusiasm.

Thank you to Mrs. Ruiz, Dr. Morgan and Mr. McDowell for the hard work and dedication. I have known Mr. McDowell for a long period of time. Your hearts have always been in the right place. Thank you for your service and wish everybody a happy and health holiday and new year.

Paul Casey stated the protocols for COVID – I think we should consider some form of testing for people coming into our schools. Thank you Mr. McDowell, Dr. Morgan and Mrs. Ruiz for their service as a board member. The work of a board of education member is not easy,

it is difficult work and time consuming. Unfortunately, also thankless. I hope that the incoming board members are independent.

Mr. Benaquista asked did anyone here the name of the parent from Battle Hill? So we can reach out to him.

Mrs. Monge stated thank you Mrs. Ruiz, Dr. Morgan and Mr. McDowell for their services to our students and always advocating for them. Sacrificing time from your families for our students. I really appreciate that.

Dr. Morgan stated I'm excited that this is my last meeting. I learned a lot about this Town and we must recognized that children are not political pawns and we must work together. The education of our students is very important; however, until we are able to work together the children will suffer. Dr. Taylor, I know I am leaving and I pray that you will be able focus on what matters – the teaching and learning of our students; ensure that students can read by the 3rd grade, raising our SAT scores and ensuring that all students' social emotional needs are met. I am excited to see what you and the new assistant superintendent will do. Politics should not be in the classroom and for this reason I'm begging all parents to mobilize and hold the school district accountable for the education of our children. Unfortunately for me it didn't work for either one of my children. We are now out of the district. However, I will still be watching and I hope we will do it together for the sake of all children. I know there are many people say it works for me but until it works for all we will never rise. Stay safe.

Jennifer Brooks stated thank you for your services Mrs. Ruiz, Dr. Morgan and Mr. McDowell. Of what you were talking about, maybe crossing guards may be a solution. If you care for the safety of the students, I would suggest to sign a petition. The testing of students, we are relying on inaccurate data. We are testing each other to report of our students do have COVID or not. Some are reporting some are not. We need testing in order to make sure we are all being accountable for the safety of these students. Some students having full days and some having half days, is inequality of education. Some students are getting three hours of days and some getting six hours of day – we cannot sustain this and say we are have equality of education.

MOTION TO ADJOURN:

There being no further business before the Board in public session it was moved by Mrs. Ruiz, seconded by Mrs. Regis-Darby, that the meeting be adjourned at 9:16 p.m.

AYE: Dr. Francis, Mrs. Minneci, Dr. Morgan, Mr. O'Shea,
Mrs. Regis-Darby, Mrs. Ruiz, Mrs. Williams, Mr. McDowell

NAY: Mrs. Brens-Watson

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,

YOLANDA KOON
BOARD SECRETARY

