

TOWNSHIP OF UNION BOARD OF EDUCATION  
WORKSESSION MINUTES - November 9, 2021  
6:00 p.m. – Executive Session  
7:00 p.m. - Worksession

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, November 9, 2021 at 6:00 p.m. at the Administration Building, 2369 Morris Avenue, Union, New Jersey pursuant to the notice sent to each member. Action was taken.

Mr. McDowell called the meeting to order at 6:10 p.m.

PRESENT AT ROLL CALL:

Mrs. Yocasta Brens-Watson, Dr. Guy Francis, Mr. Ronnie McDowell, Dr. Kalisha Morgan, Mr. John O’Shea, Mrs. Nellis Regis-Darby

ABSENT AT ROLL CALL:

Mrs. Nancy Minneci, Mrs. Kim Ruiz (arrived 6:21 p.m.), Mrs. Mary Lynn Williams (arrived 7:07 p.m.)

ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT:

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

ALSO PRESENT:

Mr. Christopher Buggy, Esq.

Mr. McDowell 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.

Mr. McDowell read the district’s mission statement.

MOTION FOR EXECUTIVE SESSION:

Moved by Mrs. Regis-Darby, seconded by Dr. Morgan, that the Board go into Executive Session at 6:14 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: personnel matters; student’s transportation issue.

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, Dr. Francis, Dr. Morgan, Mr. O'Shea,  
Mrs. Regis-Darby, Mr. McDowell

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED

The Board returned to public session at 7:03 p.m.

Comments from Public on Resolutions in **BOLD** only:

None

Approval of Minutes:

Minutes will be approved at next week's meeting.

Communications:

Communications are part of personnel and there is a thank you letter from the Vauxhall Historical Society.

Mrs. Williams arrived at meeting at 7:07 p.m.

Superintendent's Report:

Dr. Taylor stated next week he will give an update on the transmission rates, professional development work we are doing with teachers; Gerry Benquista will give an update on employees vaccinated, how the testing program is going; Washington and Jefferson students will be spotlighted and he is asking the student liaisons to talk about what is going on in the schools.

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. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT OF HIB**

Superintendent's Report of Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying (HIB) for the period October 20, 2021 to November 9, 2021, 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 October 13, 2021 to October 19, 2021, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

DISCUSSION:

None

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

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED

Mrs. Regis-Darby gave an update from the Education Committee meeting. Mrs. Regis-Darby stated the committee meeting met last night – we spoke about Tomorrow's Teachers and taking classes and Kean University and this will fulfill the internship part of the certification. We spoke about the expanding of the pre-k from two classes at the YMCA to nine classes – which is amazing. The waiting list for the 4-year old, based on income, these 4-year old's need the invention piece. Dr. Taylor stated it is a first come first serve list.

We spoke about the Strategic Plan – we have 80 people signed up for that. Please send those flyers home so we can get more people to support the kids in the district. This is about them and we need your input to support them. It is November 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> and dinner will be served and day-care provided for grades 1-5. Sign up at the website. Dr. Taylor will be sending copies to the PTAs and principals so they can send it out.

Mrs. Brens-Watson talked about the dress code and we believe that the policy committee needs to take a look at the dress code policy. As we are changing we need to look at certain things to make adjustments. Mrs. Brens-Watson stated it is way past time that we take a look at that.

Mrs. Regis-Darby stated we talked about the NHS and Dr. Taylor promised and made a commitment to the Board members and public that he is going to look at that. As a parent and Board member feel strongly that we need to take a look at it. Dr. Taylor stated the Education Committee received an email about two hours ago – take a look at it, it has a lot of data in it.

Mrs. Ruiz presented the Education/Student Discipline Committee agenda.

#### DISCUSSION:

Mrs. Regis-Darby stated I looked at E-3, which is the pre-k curriculum, I was surprised that the program has been in place for three years and using the same curriculum and yet we made no adjustment to the curriculum. Each year you make adjustments to the curriculum; but three years ago the same thing was posted. I find that hard when there is no adjustment in the curriculum.

Also, question #5 – equity – there was no mention in that piece that allows students to have a voice. Even though they are 3-4, student voice was eliminated and I think students do have a voice and we need to recognize that in the class. Dr. Taylor stated they are using creative curriculum and there had been updates made. Mrs. Regis-Darby stated there was no adjustment to curriculum and think they should reword it to show that adjustments have been made. Dr. Taylor stated you want to have Ms. Walker update the wording before Tuesday night? Mrs. Regis-Darby stated she can update as she goes on – it is something that should be done.

Fiscal and Planning Committee Resolutions:

Upon recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the following resolution was moved by Mr. O’Shea, seconded by Mrs. Williams, for adoption:

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.

DISCUSSION:

None

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

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED

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

Mr. O’Shea stated there has been some improvements in the financial end – Mrs. Koon has updated us on the moneys from the cafeteria, the past dues, originally we started off at \$63,000 and as of yesterday it is down to \$47,000. Hopefully we can recoup that money.

He would like Mrs. Guilfoyle to report on the ESSER next week on how we are spending the moneys; a tremendous amount is going into instructions and programming. We are taking 20% of the grant for special ed. He also stated that we have three years to spend the money. Dr. Taylor stated she will give a presentation at the December 21<sup>st</sup> meeting.

DISCUSSION:

None

Operations Committee Resolutions:

Dr. Francis presented the Operations Committee agenda.

DISCUSSION:

None

Personnel Committee Resolutions:

Dr. Francis presented the Personnel Committee agenda.

DISCUSSION:

None

Upon recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the following resolutions were moved by Dr. Francis, seconded by Mrs. Ruiz, 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 SUBSTITUTE LISTS**

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

**DISCUSSION:**

None

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

**NAY:** None

**ABSTAIN:** None

**MOTION CARRIED**

**Policy Committee:**

Dr. Morgan presented the following policies for first reading and asked Board members to review the policies; second and final reading is next week:

**POL-1. POLICY 1648.14 – SAFETY PLAN FOR HEALTHCARE SETTINGS IN SCHOOL BUILDINGS (NEW).**

Approve Policy 1648.14 – Safety Plan for Healthcare Settings in School Buildings, in accordance with the information in the hands of each Board member (*First Reading*).

**POL-2. POLICY 2425 – EMERGENCY VIRTUAL OR REMOTE INSTRUCTION PROGRAM (NEW)**

Approve Policy 2425 – Emergency Virtual or Remote Instruction Program, in accordance with the information in the hands of each Board member (*First Reading*).

**POL-3. POLICY 5751 – SEXUAL HARASSMENT OF STUDENTS**

Approve Policy 5751 – Sexual Harassment of Students, in accordance with the information in the hands of each Board member (*First Reading*).

**POL-4. REGULATION 5751 – SEXUAL HARASSMENT OF STUDENTS**

Approve Regulation 5751 – Sexual Harassment of Students, in accordance with the information in the hands of each Board member (*First Reading*).

**DISCUSSION:**

None

Residency Committee Resolutions:

Mrs. Williams presented the Residency Committee agenda.

Technology Committee:

Dr. Taylor stated that the district will be launching their new website in the spring.

Approval of Bills:

Bills will be approved at next week's meeting.

Unfinished Business:

None

New Business:

Mrs. Regis-Darby stated Mr. O'Shea mentioned that we are hanging strong with our budget; any money that we have left over, especially since Franklin is a Title I school, I went into Franklin last Tuesday and we need to do a lot of work – from the bathrooms, water faucets dripping all day long – that school needs a lot of repair. Whatever money we have left over, please put money into Franklin.

Mrs. Ruiz stated I think we started this project late 2018, it was the marijuana vaping sensors in the bathrooms. I have two high schoolers and they are both telling me that you can't go into the boys' bathroom at the high school because the marijuana smoke is so strong. Our kids should be able to use the bathrooms without being subjected to that. Do we have the sensors in the bathrooms? What is going on in the high school?

Mr. Benaquista stated it depends on what bathrooms. Mrs. Ruiz stated I thought all bathrooms in the high school were getting these sensors. Mr. Benaquista stated we bought them to try them out; I would like to know what bathrooms they are talking about because there are sensors in some and so this way I can know if the sensors are working. Before COVID we installed four.

Mrs. Ruiz asked do they pick up marijuana and the vaping? Mr. Benaquista stated I think it is the vaping – I will have to go back and look at the machines we bought and also confirm that they are working. Vaping is out of control with the kids. I think education with the parents and children; the medical side of it – I think a lot of people shifted too because they thought it would be safer and a lot of things are coming out that it is worse than cigarettes, but they shouldn't do either. With cigarettes it was easier to catch. These things are small and, in their hands, but the other thing that we were able to do because of the fire side of the cigarettes was we were issuing summons because the Town created an ordinance. Ms. Hall stated it is a violation of the Clean Act. Any smoking on school property is a violation of the Clean Act.

Mr. Benaquista stated you have to get the parents involved. Mrs. Ruiz asked what are the consequences? I'm asking because the kids are doing it no matter what. Mr. Benaquista stated we know that suspension doesn't solve it; it is the counseling. One of the students I reinstated and Mrs. Hall has followed up with them consistently with counseling and we spoke about other things that came out of the reinstatement but it is the counseling side and getting the parents to support us. Every school is dealing with us. It is about continually making sure we are trying to prevent it. It is about surveillance, going in and out of the bathrooms often, I will speak with Mr. Spekhardt tomorrow about what kind of rotation they have. Dr. Taylor has been involved this year and we are short of bodies in the high school. There are not enough monitors. Our staff across the board are covering classes every day because we don't have substitutes, we don't have teachers so they are covering 7<sup>th</sup> period. In years past we had a ton of teachers to rely on when we needed coverage.

It is a large building, we need more security, more monitors. Mrs. Ruiz stated maybe more sensors. Mr. O'Shea stated the sensors are not going to stop the student from smoking. Growing up, there was a teacher in every bathroom. The only way you are going to do it is participation by the parents and you have to talk about staff.

Mr. Benaquista stated when I was in the high school, smoking was a big issue. We had security guards who took ownership of it and he was going in and out of the bathroom and the kids knew they were going to get caught and they stopped. It comes down to continual monitoring – will they still try it, yes, will they still get away with it, yes, but it will minimize it. Ms. Hall has done programs and getting more parents to understand and support us. The bodies cost money. Unfortunately the high school is short right now with security because of needs around the district. Now we have two schools that have security, that never did because of different issues in the elementary.

Mrs. Regis-Darby stated a letter was sent out on October 29<sup>th</sup>, I always say when letters are sent out and if there are consequences without any accountability, it is a waste of paper being sent home. The memo listed four steps that will be taken if the student got caught with these things. You say it is continuing, so what is the purpose of the memo. You put the memo out as a directive. You put a memo to parents to talk to their students about this and if they get caught, this is what is going to happen but it is not being followed.

Mr. Benaquista stated I had a parent and child in my office – I'm sure their following the Code of Conduct. I haven't seen the letter; I'll take a look at it. Mrs. Regis-Darby stated that is a problem in itself if you haven't seen the letter. Mr. Benaquista stated I know people are being sent to me because they are at the point where it needs to be referred.

Mr. McDowell stated it has been decriminalized, I think it is making it less serious with parents. Mrs. Williams asked do you think the increase could be the kids self-medicating for anxiety. If that is the reason for the increase, then you have to treat it a different way. If they are anxious with COVID and going back to school, it could be a different way to treat what is going on and possibly not getting kids to do it in the first place, as opposed to catching them and punishing them.

Mr. Benaquista stated in previous years when we would catch someone with cannabis, it would be in a larger amount. Today what we are finding is kids have small amounts which is more of use. If they go out for a drug test, they come back positive. When we sat with the prosecutors and local police, they are not touching it any more. That support is not there any more – you used to get arrested. I'm sure Mrs. Williams you are right in some degree. Once they get the relief they need, they will depend on it if it is helping them. In school we still have to do what we are supposed to do. It will take more bodies to support us in monitoring that building. It is not just the high school that has issues. There is another school that Dr. Taylor and I spoke about and we implemented some things because we needed to know daily of the incidences we were finding out second hand. Today is a tough time in education with personnel.

Mrs. Ruiz stated during COVID they updated Genesis so that we could mark our children absent, you didn't have to call in. We can still do that but what happens is sometime when you mark your child absent, it goes through and there is no issue but other times you mark your child absent and you get the robo call that says "this is the attendance office" – I'm not sure where the disconnect happened. Dr. Taylor you mentioned a few meetings ago that when a child is marked absent for sickness that those will automatically be excused and we were not going to require a doctor's note – was a decision made about that. Dr. Taylor stated there wasn't a resolution on that but I can return to it. It was something I was contemplating. Mrs. Ruiz stated if they are excused then it won't be towards that threshold. Dr. Taylor stated it is something worth revisiting.

Mrs. Ruiz stated the college visit. Mrs. Regis-Darby stated if you have a confirmation email, they should be marked excused not absent. Mrs. Ruiz stated if a student is visiting colleges it is supposed to be an excused absent but we are still getting the notifications that the child had an unexcused absent for that day. Mr. Benaquista stated I'm emailing Ann Hart right now.

Mrs. Brens-Watson stated I'm still seeing notices about getting some type of incentive for signing up for school meal plan. There are still two things happening in my head – one, I'm concerned about us doing some outreach to families in helping them understand the system and how to sign up for it. We need to offer better outreach for incoming families that are new to the district. I would hate for us to start the new school year without having some training for those families – whether a video or scheduled online Zoom. I don't think it is difficult to create a video to show parents how to register their kids. I know there were issues this year – not understanding all of the documentation that they needed to upload in order to register their kids in the district. They get on but they are missing paperwork and we need to do a better job.

Mrs. Koon stated the PaySchool for meals is Meg Berry but then she mentioned registration, so that would be HR, Donna Hubbard. Mr. Benaquista stated I want to get Craig involved in putting a team together for a video.

Mrs. Brens-Watson stated they are two different issues. I'm focusing on the education part and the outreach part on both of those concerns.

Dr. Taylor stated the Board retreat should happen in late January. For those of us who will be with us in January, I'm gaging your availability for a Friday, if that is not good we can do a Saturday, and I need the majority. I'll be reaching out to our new Board members. I was thinking January 28<sup>th</sup> from 8 a.m. -3 p.m. Mrs. Regis-Darby stated my district pays me \$325 a day, are you going to pay me \$325? Dr. Morgan stated this is a volunteer position. Dr. Taylor stated for real? Please make a note to get back to me if you can't do the 28<sup>th</sup>. Marissa and Kim, the new Board members stated they can do a Friday. Chastity, I will reach out to you and go from there. If we can't do the 28<sup>th</sup>, we can do the 29<sup>th</sup> of January at Kean University.

Mrs. Ruiz stated I would like to remind everyone to share that the UHSPAC's play is opening on Friday, Saturday and Sunday. It is called "All Together Now" – it is a medley of classic show toons. They have worked very hard. They are here from 7:30 a.m. to 9 p.m., as well as the staff, so they put in a lot of hours. Please go and support them and buy your tickets. The show is never disappointing. These kids are amazing. Please go out and support our performing arts kids.

Mrs. Regis-Darby asked do we know how many parents filled out that 2021-2022 lunch forms? Mrs. Koon stated we do know, but I don't know it off hand, but I will get that information to you. We did select two parents regarding the giveaway of the laptops – elementary and high school.

#### Comments from the Public:

Jill Hall stated the conversation of marijuana and vaping – there are so many things I can say. The first thing is there are so many facets to this. There is no question that we are seeing the increase of the vaping due to pandemic stress, COVID stress – I had kids say to me today "if you knew how I felt inside, you wouldn't ask me why I use". They are struggling. We need to get back to that connection. What we are talking about is a shift in the school culture where the kids no longer step back, where the kids take over the bathrooms and say you need to get help for that and this is not o.k. in our building any more. It involves all of us. It involves the education piece, we have to teach differently about marijuana. We sent 46 kids out since September. Fourteen came back negative so that means they are vaping nicotine. We haven't talked about cigarettes and nicotine in years. Now we have to talk about that, talk about weed, THC, anxiety, mental health – we have to talk about all of those things. I'm dancing as fast as I can and all the counselors are – they are one step ahead of us. We have done the parent programs, we have another one coming up on the 16<sup>th</sup> – Connecting with Your Teen – there is a Zoom link going out for that. We are doing a vaping curriculum in the building. We had Sam Anthony speak. We are pushing it into the classes. I will take all that money that you have but please don't buy any more vape detectors. They are not connected to central monitoring and even if they were they would need to be monitored all the time. Every kid that vapes knows how to beat that monitor. It is not money well spent. They know to vent into their shirts; they are very skilled at it. I do agree that we need to send that message that it won't be tolerated but the most important piece after discipline is the restorative piece. It is the conversations and the groups that we have and the kids that get together and talk about their stories. You wouldn't worry about the discipline if you heard their stories. It has been tough. Keep supporting that work and we are going to get it

and it is going to be the security and all these things. But it is going to be the parents of this community changing the way we talk to our kids about this behavior.

David Arminio stated the girls went to the final of the sections in soccer and lost in overtime 4-3 – they had a fantastic year. The football game Friday night is home – 7 p.m. against Paterson Eastside. We will be going to the finals. Union is 8-1.

Dianna Canton stated I'm a pre-k teacher at Hannah Caldwell. I want to thank the Board, the union, Dr. Taylor, Mr. Benaquista for all the hard work that you have been putting forth in regards to the mandates and the testing policies and procedures. However, I have not be able to locate the Board approved policy and procedures – so if I can get a copy or show me where I can get them; that would be greatly appreciated.

Thank you for providing me as well as my colleagues the saliva test option. Many of us had serious concerns in testing weekly with the PCR nasal swab testing. In speaking with many teachers and listening to the teachers across New Jersey, there seems to be a great amount of discourse between staff and administration. In dealing with Mr. Benaquista and the union, I do not feel lack of harmony here in the district. I am truly blessed to be part of the union team.

With that being said, I still have many unanswered questions and concerns that need to be addressed and resolved. Does the Board plan to create a COVID testing committee so the unvaccinated staff can be made part of the decision making process. I would love the opportunity to work more closely and collaborate with the administration in resolving issues and putting forth policies and procedures in place for all. These mandates affect us greatly and ultimately they are affecting our jobs and careers and home life, our family life – this is all on the line. If we could figure out a way to work together please let's do so. Let me know if we can put a committee in place.

I sent an email in October asking to have a second day test option in the event that the staff is absent on the test day (Tuesday). I believe they are delivered at noon time on Tuesdays and picked up on Wednesdays. I was hoping we could have a Wednesday morning test option.

Dr. Taylor asked did you reach out to Mr. Benaquista? Ms. Canton stated no I did not. I emailed him and got a response saying you were doing it at that time but if they are being dropped off at noon time and picked up noon time the next day, if it is possible to have the Wednesday morning test option.

Dr. Taylor stated it is a good opportunity to remind all our faculty that if you have questions like yours, all you have to do is reach out to me or Mr. Benaquista – you don't have to come to a Board meeting. Mr. Benaquista has been working tirelessly.

Mr. Benaquista stated I will let Ms. Esposito set something up a meeting or call with you. The truth of it is the first three weeks have been bumpy with Mirimas. I was on the phone again with the supervisor and an employee updating our portal and I went school by school – close to two hours during the day. I'm the one that is labeling the test. I wasted more hours away from my primary job when we are paying them to do that. It will work itself out and as far as your

concerns, I am working on that. I have to get Mirimas to give me the test in the bags with the right locations, with the right people and then I will work out other things. I would like to speak with you to make sure I understand your concerns that you spoke to your colleagues about. The nurses are helping me distributing and collecting. It has to be centralized. The nurses have been very helpful.

Kathleen Brunsmeyer stated the policy for normal sickness and what we expect people to do with their kids when their kids are sick, and I'm not talking about COVID, I'm talking about the throw-up, the fever, the normal things – it is not standard across the board. One child is not being treated the same way and I'm only talking elementary right now, from school to school it is different. When I asked several people on what is the policy because on our district homepage, it says if your child has a fever, they have to be fever, vomit free for 24 hours. I have been told that is not our policy; that is our recommendation. I would like there to be a policy or the policy updated so that it is clear for all teachers across the board. Then everybody knows what to expect.

The second thing is I'm really excited about the new pre-k classes. My question is will we have more 4's so now we can keep those kids. I know we don't have a lot of space. Dr. Taylor stated Gerry and I have been talking about the future of the childhood program and potentially do something with a school like Hamilton or move our pre-k kids to one building. Gerry had brought that to my attention when I came here. It may require a referendum or an infusion of funds.

Ms. Brunsmeyer stated I was on the planning committee with Mr. Tatum and we took a tour of the building and that building needs a lot of work. Dr. Taylor stated it is only a vision right now and that would not happen for at least another two years.

Mr. Benaquista stated as a teacher, you are saying some teachers allow the kids to stay in school and some say you have to go home. It is going to the nurses offices and then you are getting different results from there.

Cathy Sharpe stated I wanted to thank the Board members and also Mr. Benaquista and Dr. Taylor. I was here last month and I had a lot of uneasy feeling about COVID. I expressed it and it did not fall on deaf ears because a lot of things were improvised to make the staff feel more comfortable. I do appreciate that. There is one thing I'm getting calls about, the emails being sent out to the staff about their COVID testing – there is more than one person mentioned in the email and some of the staff feel that is in violation of their HPPA. Mr. Benaquista stated have that staff member reach out to me. The only people on it are the people that are supposed to be aware.

Ms. Sharpe stated this is something none of us thought of before when you had multiple people on it but this is a very private thing. Mr. Benaquista stated please have that person reach out to me.

Ms. Sharpe stated some of the people are missing 3-4 weeks of testing. They sent their paperwork in and they sent their second set of paperwork in and some said they sent their third

in. I understand Mr. Benaquista is working as hard as he can. It shouldn't be his job but it seems it is falling in his lap. The staff is a little uneasy about that. They want to cooperate; they are trying their best to go along with the rules that were set up. If some how we can get that ironed out. Nobody is blaming him. They realize it is a very hard problem and we do appreciate what everybody is trying to do to make everybody at ease.

I hope Mr. Benaquista and Dr. Taylor don't get upset but I did send them an email on the subject of visitors coming into our building. All of a sudden they can come in, the PTA and do parties and come in for events. As a staff member, I'm upset. As a staff member I have to show proof of vaccination or testing. We will allow PTA members to come in and do it without showing this. This is disrespectful to the staff. The teachers I have spoken to don't feel it is really necessary to expose the children to this. We had a trial run at Halloween. The PTA parents sent a craft in. We did it with the kids; there were no problems. We had the parade outdoors so parents could be there. I understand I was a parent. I understand they want to come in to the events and work with the parents. They feel they want to help and we are really appreciative of what they do for us but we just feel at this time – I hate to say we, maybe it is me, but I don't think so from the calls I got, let them come in but they should have to follow the same rules – either prove vaccination or show proof of testing. I would really appreciate if you would take that under consideration. Dr. Taylor did tell me he would get back to me on it. I appreciate it. It happened just this week. Thank you.

Mr. Benaquista stated the ones that we are having issues with HPPA, were the ones that we were self-labeling and they were tested. I was ironing these things with Mirimas. There shouldn't be an issue starting tomorrow. I was given blank tests that we were labeling so people were tested.

Cathy Jacovitz stated teacher at Kawameeh Middle School. President Biden has never made a mandate for vaccines and masks. Individual governors, 15 of the 50 are taking it upon themselves to mandate. If Governor Murphy gets back in, I don't know if the Board is for it or not, the vaccine mandates because if it is true, he plans on doing that, if you are not, I'm hoping that you will consider that if all boards stick together, and the boards that don't agree with making it, which I don't agree with that it is a personal liberty and the constitution, are you thinking of banning together with other boards in the County and the United States, I know there were over 32 districts prior to his mandate, that were banning together to go up against our Governor to say this is an illegal concept and we have to protect our civil liberties for ourselves, our employees, etc.

MOTION TO ADJOURN:

There being no further business before the Board in public session it was moved by Mrs. Regis-Darby, seconded by Mrs. Williams, that the meeting be adjourned at 8:16 p.m.

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

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,

YOLANDA KOON  
BOARD SECRETARY

