

TOWNSHIP OF UNION BOARD OF EDUCATION
WORKSESSION MINUTES – May 9, 2023 – 7:00 p.m.

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, May 9, 2023 at 7:00 p.m. at the Administration Building, 2369 Morris Avenue, Union, New Jersey pursuant to the notice sent to each member. Action was taken.

Ms. McKenzie called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

PRESENT AT ROLL CALL:

Mrs. Yocasta Brens-Watson, Ms. Dixiana Carbonell, Ms. Marissa McKenzie, Mrs. Nancy Minneci, Mrs. Nellis Regis-Darby, Ms. Chastity Santana, Mrs. Kimberly Scott-Hayden, Mrs. Mary Lynn Williams

ABSENT AT ROLL CALL:

Mr. John O’Shea (arrived 7:28 p.m.)

ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT:

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

ALSO PRESENT:

Mr. Christopher Buggy, Esq.

Mrs. Scott-Hayden led the Board in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mrs. Koon read the statement required under the “Open Public Meetings Act” that adequate notice was published in The Union County Local Source, The Star Ledger and/or Tap into Union, posted in the Administration Building and the Clerk’s Office of the Township; a copy of which is on file in the office of the Board Secretary.

Mrs. Scott-Hayden read the district’s mission statement.

COMMENTS FROM PUBLIC ON RESOLUTIONS (agenda action items only):

None

MOTION FOR EXECUTIVE SESSION:

Moved by Mrs. Scott-Hayden, seconded by Mrs. Williams, that the Board go into Executive Session at 7:08 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, legal update, litigation update.

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, Ms. Carbonell, Mrs. Minneci, Mrs. Regis-Darby,
Ms. Santana, Mrs. Scott-Hayden, Mrs. Williams, Ms. McKenzie

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED

The Board returned to public session at 8:00 p.m.

Approval of Minutes:

Minutes will be approved at next week's Board meeting.

Communications:

Communications are part of personnel.

Superintendent's Report:

The Superintendent will report next week on the State of the Schools, Student Spotlight and report on the School Self-Assessment for Determining Grades for 2021-2022.

Education/Student Discipline Committee Resolutions:

Ms. Carbonell presented the Education/Student Discipline Committee agenda.

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

E-1. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT OF HIB

Superintendent's Report of Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying (HIB) for the period April 26, 2023 to May 8, 2023, 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 April 19, 2023 to April 25, 2023, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

Mr. O'Shea stepped out of the meeting.

DISCUSSION:

None

AYE: Mrs. Brens-Watson, Ms. Carbonell, Mrs. Minneci, Mrs. Regis-Darby, Ms. Santana,
Mrs. Scott-Hayden, Mrs. Williams, Ms. McKenzie

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED

Fiscal and Planning Committee Resolutions:

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

DISCUSSION:

Ms. Santana stated F-26 – it is not cost effective to have ESS. Mrs. Regis-Darby stated ESS goal was for them to get students back into the district and we have more students going out. For the cost of ESS, we can hire our own staff.

It was agreed by the Board to remove F-26 (Effective School Solutions for 2023-2024) from the agenda. Ms. McKenzie stated and maybe not go forward with them. It is better to hire our own staff.

Grievance/Negotiations Committee:

Upon recommendations of the Superintendent of Schools, the following resolution was moved by Ms. McKenzie, seconded by Ms. Santana, for adoption:

G-1. APPROVE TO GRANT THE RELIEF REQUESTED IN GRIEVANCE NO. 2022-23-2 WHEREAS, the UTEA filed Grievance No. 2022-23-2 alleging certain violations of the Collective Bargaining agreement between the Board of Education and the UTEA; and

WHEREAS, the Board, without admitting any wrongdoing, agrees to grant the relief requested in the grievance as it pertains to the October 28, 2022 memorandum.

DISCUSSION:

None

AYE: Ms. Carbonell, Mrs. Minneci, Ms. Santana, Mrs. Scott-Hayden, Mrs. Williams,
Ms. McKenzie

NAY: Mrs. Brens-Watson, Mrs. Regis-Darby

ABSTAIN: Mr. O’Shea

MOTION CARRIED

Operations Committee Resolutions:

Ms. Santana presented the Operations Committee agenda.

The following discussion item is done yearly and it will be placed on the regular meeting agenda for adoption:

Request from First Baptist Church of Vauxhall to use Jefferson School parking lot for parking for their 117th Church Anniversary on Sunday, July 16, 2023 from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

DISCUSSION:

Ms. Santana stated that we are looking at all of our buildings to ensure that we are keeping up with them.

Personnel Committee Resolutions:

Mrs. Scott-Hayden presented the Personnel Committee agenda.

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

P-16. APPROVE VIRTUAL ATTENDANCE AT EDWEEK LEADERSHIP SYMPOSIUM – PEREZ

Approve Dr. Gretel Perez, Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction, to virtually attend EdWeek Leadership Symposium (May 10-12, 2023) for a total cost not to exceed \$650.00.

DISCUSSION:

Mrs. Regis-Darby stated she has questions about P-10, P-11 and P-12 and will ask them next week during executive session.

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

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED

Policy Committee:

Mrs. Williams presented the following policies for FIRST reading:

POL-1. POLICY 9100 – ABOLISHED

Abolish Policy 9100 – Public Relations.

POL-2. REGULATION 9140 – ABOLISHED

Abolish Policy 9140 – Citizens Advisory Committees.

POL-3. REGULATION 7510 – USE OF SCHOOL FACILITIES (M)

Approve Regulation 7510 – Use of School Facilities, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

POL-4. REGULATION 5420 – REPORTING STUDENT PROGRESS (M) (NEW)

Approve Regulation 5420 – Reporting Student Progress, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

POL-5. BYLAW 0144 – BOARD MEMBER ORIENTATION AND TRAINING

Approve Bylaw 0144 – Board Member Orientation and Training, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

POL-6. POLICY 2520 – INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPLIES (M)

Approve Policy 2520 – Instructional Supplies, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

POL-7. REGULATION 2520 – INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPLIES (M) (NEW)

Approve Regulation 2520 – Instructional Supplies, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

POL-8. POLICY 3217 – USE OF CORPORAL PUNISHMENT

Approve Policy 3217 – Use of Corporal Punishment, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

POL-9. REGULATION 4217 – USE OF CORPORAL PUNISHMENT (NEW)

Approve Regulation 4217 – Use of Corporal Punishment, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

POL-10. POLICY 5305 – HEALTH SERVICES PERSONNEL (M)

Approve Policy 5305 – Health Services Personnel, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

POL-11. POLICY 5308 – STUDENT HEALTH RECORDS (M)

Approve Policy 5308 – Student Health Records, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

POL-12. REGULATION 5308 – STUDENT HEALTH RECORDS (M)

Approve Regulation 5308 – Student Health Records (M), in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

POL-13. POLICY 5310 – HEALTH SERVICES (M)

Approve Policy 5310 – Health Services, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

POL-14. REGULATION 5310 – HEALTH SERVICES (M)

Approve Regulation 5310 – Health Services, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

POL-15. POLICY 6112 – REIMBURSEMENT OF FEDERAL AND OTHER GRANT EXPENDITURES (M)

Approve Policy 6112 – Reimbursement of Federal and Other Grant Expenditures, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

POL-16. REGULATION 6115.01 – FEDERAL AWARDS/FUNDS INTERNAL CONTROLS – ALLOWABILITY OF COSTS (M) (NEW)

Approve Regulation 6115.01 – Federal Awards/Funds Internal Controls – Allowability of Costs, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

POL-17. POLICY 6115.04 – FEDERAL FUNDS-DUPLICATION OF BENEFITS (M) (NEW)

Approve Policy 6115.01 – Federal Funds-Duplication of Benefits, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

POL-18. POLICY 6311 – CONTRACTS FOR GOODS OR SERVICES FUNDED BY FEDERAL GRANTS (M)

Approve Policy 6311 – Contracts for Goods or Services Funded by Federal Grants, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

POL-19. POLICY 9140 – CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Approve Policy 9140 – Citizens Advisory Committee, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

POL-20. POLICY 7440 – SCHOOL DISTRICT SECURITY

Approve Policy 7440 – School District Security, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

Residency Committee Resolutions:

Mrs. Minneci presented the Residency Committee agenda. Mr. Benaquista stated going forward residency will be presented to better clarify those students that were investigated and who voluntarily removed their students from schools. It will be “for the Board’s information”, instead of a voting item.

Approval of Bills:

Bills will be paid next week.

Unfinished Business:

Mrs. Regis-Darby stated the sign at Hannah Caldwell has been removed; however, the new sign is not up and there is a family who has a service dog that is unable to come on school grounds. She also stated that responses to questions from the public should be addressed at the next meeting. Dr. Taylor stated Mr. Benaquista or myself follow up with the parents/community. Mrs. Koon stated she sent an email to the Facility Manager regarding the status of the new sign.

Mrs. Brens-Watson asked about the status of the 7th period stipends. Dr. Taylor stated he had prepared documentation regarding this and will be addressing this by September 1st. He had spoken with the Board attorney. He stated he would forward the documentation to Mrs. Brens-Watson concerning this.

New Business:

Mrs. Regis-Darby asked if there was something in place for a parent who has a GT student in PreK and wants to move the student to 1st grade. Dr. Perez stated you also have to look at the age development of the child and the district would need all the data and documents if it could be granted. Please have the parent email me with the request and information.

Mrs. Minneci stated she visited Battle Hill and had a nice tour of the school and classrooms. It is a nice, bright and cheerful school on the inside. She stated she sent an email to Dr. Taylor with some of the minor things that need to be done. On Saturday she attended the Hannah Caldwell market place and it was very well attended.

Ms. Santana stated the special Olympics were in Old Bridge and our students participated and it was wonderful. Mrs. Minneci asked Dr. Taylor if we could bring our athletes in to spotlight.

Comments from the Public:

Ann Margaret Shannon stated F-26 – get rid of ESS; they never came back with the data we asked for. She informed the Board and community that Marlene Debaere, who is retiring after 40 years, from Livingston Elementary School, was on the View for Teacher Appreciation Week.

Jill Hall stated that the Board members should come back into the schools to speak with staff and students. F-26 – we lost a mental health provider and \$650,000 would provide a lot of coverage. We do not have enough staff for all the students. Ms. McKenzie stated we spoke a lot about this and asked Dr. Taylor when will the posting go out.

Cathy Jakositz stated Kawameeh has not been able to get math books. She volunteered to be on the committee and the 6th, 7th and 8th grade teachers all agreed on one series of books but Mr. Eichert stated we don't have money for the books. Education is first and not having money for books is not acceptable. We have one responsibility and that is to educate our students. I know cutting the budget is hard, but students should be first.

Dr. Francis stated UHS track team competed in the Union County Relay Championships on Thursday and Friday. The boys sprint medley relay earned 1st place, the girls and boys 4x400m earned 1st place, the boys 4x110 shuttle hurdle relay earned 2nd place, the girls distance medley earned 3rd place, the boys 4x100m relay earned 4th place, the girls 4x200m relay earned 4th place, the boys 4x 200m relay earned 5th place. He also stated that all the kids had different uniforms on – we need to have one uniform. We need our kids to feel and look good.

Kristen Nunes stated she is the elementary at large for the UTEA. The SEL labs, we are paying Kean but we can't afford cafeteria help. She also stated the responsive classrooms at Connecticut Farms takes about 30-40 minutes each day and it takes away from reading in the classroom. Substitute coverage – ESS workers are coming in slippers – can someone address this. The gate to the football field needs to be replaced. Regarding the track team uniforms, it is hard to get the uniforms back from the students.

Richard D'Avanzo stated UTEA vice president. The Board approved additional half days so curriculum training could take place before September. Where was the need for half-day PD days; now it is on the principals. We need to change direction.

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 9:00 p.m.

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

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,

Yolanda Koon

YOLANDA KOON
BOARD SECRETARY

