

TOWNSHIP OF UNION BOARD OF EDUCATION
REGULAR MEETING AGENDA – MARCH 16, 2021 – 7:00 p.m.

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, March 16, 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. Public could participate in person or via Zoom.

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

PRESENT AT ROLL CALL:

Mrs. Yocasta Brens-Watson, Dr. Guy Francis, Mr. Ronnie McDowell, Mrs. Nancy Minneci, Dr. Kalisha Morgan, Mrs. Nellis Regis-Darby, Mrs. Kim Ruiz

ABSENT AT ROLL CALL:

Mr. John O’Shea, Mrs. Mary Lynn Williams (arrived 7:16 p.m.)

ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT:

Mr. Gerald Benaquista, Mrs. Yolanda Koon, Mr. Barry Loessel, Mrs. Sandra Paul, Mr. Craig Wojcik

ALSO PRESENT:

Mrs. Christine Soto, 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. Ruiz read the District’s mission statement.

COMMENTS FROM PUBLIC ON RESOLUTIONS:

None

Approval of Minutes:

Moved by Mrs. Regis-Darby, seconded by Mrs. Minneci that the following minutes be adopted:

1. January 7, 2021 – organization meeting
2. January 7, 2021 – executive session
3. January 12, 2021 – worksession
4. January 12, 2021 – executive session #1
5. January 12, 2021 – executive session #2

5. January 19, 2021 – regular meeting
6. January 19, 2021 – executive session
7. January 20, 2021 – Special Meeting
8. January 20, 2021 – executive session

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

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: Mrs. Minneci (#2, #5, #7, #8), Dr. Morgan #7, #8) MOTION CARRIED

Communications:

REQUEST FOR LEAVE – MINNOIA

Request for unpaid FMLA/NJFLA (concurrently) from Francesca Minnoia, special education teacher-Battle Hill Elementary School, March 1, 2021-May 31, 2021.

REQUEST FOR LEAVE – RAND

Request for paid child rearing leave followed by unpaid FMLA/NJFLA (concurrently) from Tiffany Rand, teacher-Washington Elementary School, April 12, 2021-December 31, 2021.

REQUEST FOR INTERMITTENT LEAVE – VICIDOMINI

Request for intermittent FMLA from Julia Vicidomini, Executive Administrative Assistant-Central Office, March 1, 2021-March 1, 2022.

LETTER OF RETIREMENT – BARSİ

Letter of resignation, for the purpose of retirement, from Michelle L. Barsi, mathematics teacher-Burnet Middle School, effective July 1, 2021.

LETTER OF RETIREMENT – DENNIS

Letter of resignation, for the purpose of retirement, from Maureen Dennis, paraprofessional-Connecticut Farms Elementary School, effective May 1, 2021.

LETTER OF RETIREMENT – GILMORE

Letter of resignation, for the purpose of retirement, from Joan Gilmore, paraprofessional-Jefferson School, effective July 1, 2021.

LETTER OF RETIREMENT – LAIRD

Letter of resignation, for the purpose of retirement, from James Laird, social studies teacher-Union High School, effective June 30, 2021.

LETTER OF RETIREMENT – KAHN

Letter of resignation, for the purpose of retirement, from Angela Kahn, teacher-Battle Hill Elementary School, effective July 1, 2021.

LETTER OF RESIGNATION – WRIGHT

Letter of resignation from Rhonda Wright, mathematics teacher-Union High School, effective April 23, 2021.

LETTER OF RETIREMENT – SIEIRA

Letter of resignation, for the purpose of retirement, from Brenda Sieira, greeter-Washington Elementary School, March 2, 2021.

LETTER OF RETIREMENT– TAVERNARIS

Letter of resignation, for the purpose of retirement, from Irene Tavernaris, part-time bus driver-Transportation Department, effective February 19, 2021.

REQUEST FOR EXTENSION – O’HOLLA

Letter of extension of unpaid non-FMLA, non-NJFLA leave from Laura O’Holla, teacher-Jefferson School, new return date September 1, 2021.

LETTER OF RESIGNATION – DAMATO

Letter of resignation from Andrea Damato, LDTC/LCSW-district wide special services department, effective March 3, 2021.

LETTER FROM TOWNSHIP OF UNION PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER

Letter from Township of Union Public Information Officer requesting use of parking lots at Hannah Caldwell Elementary School and Union High School/Cooke Drive on Saturday, May 8, 2021 for the Township’s Annual “Food Truck Fest & Inflatable Village”.

LETTER FROM TOWNSHIP OF UNION RECREATION DEPARTMENT

Letter from Township of Union Recreation Department requesting use of Jefferson School and Livingston Elementary School parking lots on Saturday, April 3, 2021 for the “Easter Bunny Tour” event.

LETTER OF RESIGNATION – WILSON

Letter of resignation from Michelle Wilson, part-time bus aide-Transportation Department, effective February 1, 2021.

REQUEST FOR LEAVE – KORINIS

Request for paid child rearing leave followed by unpaid FMLA/NJFLA (concurrently) from Christina Korinis, school psychologist-Union High School, April 14, 2021-January 2, 2022.

REQUEST FOR LEAVE – NUFRIO

Request for unpaid FMLA/NJFLA (concurrently) from Christina Nufrio, resource program in-class-Washington Elementary School, April 6, 2021-June 24, 2021.

REQUEST FOR LEAVE – RAMIEREZ

Request for NJFLA leave from Jennifer Ramirez, art teacher-Burnet Middle School, March 1, 2021-June 22, 2021.

Superintendent's Report:

Mr. Benaquista stated welcome everyone – we are excited that we are here. It is great to have everyone back. We have been working very hard to open up our schools. I have received many correspondence and parents are happy that their children are back and I have received a lot of positive feedback.

Attendance for the month of February: 96.8% students; 97.9% staff and there were no HIB cases this month to report.

Sophia, a third-grader at Battle Hill submitted a video of “I have a dream” contest; video was shown at meeting.

Mrs. Williams arrived at 7:16 p.m.

Mr. McDowell stated because of technical difficulties we will delay meeting for approximately three minutes so that the issue can be fixed.

Mr. Benaquista stated Congratulations to Sophia – she did an amazing job and we are proud of you. Keep working hard and striving for excellence.

Student liaisons will report next month and they will share with us the transition back.

This will be a short superintendent report – an opening video with schools and communications went out. Next month we will highlight our graduate students, athletic signings and the colleges are recognizing their academic and athletic abilities. I will highlight our art program.

I will be sending a survey to the community next week on the opening of schools – hybrid – in person learning, as well as virtual learning. I would like to hear from as many community members so we can get a perspective from as many people to reflect and see if we need to change anything.

Thank you everyone for your support along the way and getting our schools open. Without everyone collaborating together, working together – I don't know if we would have gotten it done for our students.

We will continue communicating with the community and making sure everyone is aware of how it is going.

A video clip of opening day was played.

Mr. Benaquista stated I want to thank the teachers, support staff, our leadership – administration, maintenance/custodial, our transportation department, central office has been supporting me and a lot of people behind the scenes working very hard to provide an in-person learning for our students.

Mr. McDowell stated a lot of effort went into opening our schools. Thank you to everyone.

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 March 9, 2021 worksession (Superintendent report of HIB-February 17 to March 9, 2021)*

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

Superintendent's Report of Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying (HIB) for the period March 9 to March 16, 2021 (no incidences to report) (*no vote required; for reporting purposes only*).

E-2. APPROVE 2021-2022 SCHOOL CALENDAR

Approve 2021-2022 school calendar, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

E-3. APPROVE ACCEPTANCE OF NJDOE ALLOCATION

Approve the acceptance of the following allocations from the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE), in accordance with the information appended to the minutes: (a) ESSER II - \$2,973,652, (b) Learning Acceleration - \$190,834, (c) Mental Health Supports and Services - \$45,000.

E-4. APPROVE CBI SITE AND SLE

Approve Community Based Instruction Site (CBI) and Structured Learning Experiences (SLE) for the 2020-2021 school year: (a) Union High School Cafeteria, administered by Pomptonian Food Services, located at 2350 North Third Street, Union, New Jersey.

E-5. APPROVE REVISED 2020-2021 SCHOOL CALENDAR

Approve the revised 2020-2021 school calendar, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

DISCUSSION:

None

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

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED

Fiscal and Planning Committee Resolutions:

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

F-1. TREASURER'S REPORT

That the Treasurer's Report dated February 28, 2021 be accepted.

F-2. SECRETARY'S REPORT

That the Secretary's Report dated February 28, 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 February 28, 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 February 28, 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 2020-2021 STATE CONTRACT VENDORS

Approve the amended list of the 2020-2021 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	Athletics	UHS/Athletics - Lou Rettino Scholarship	\$1,000.00
Union High School	2227/Senior Class	UHS/Senior Class – Zolnier Graduate LLC-purchase caps/gowns for Class 2021	\$12,060.00 (not to exceed)
Union High School	2227/Senior Class	UHS/Senior Class – Prestige Laser Engraving – gifts for Class of 2021	\$7,350.00
Union High School	2049/NHS	UHS/NASSP – purchase pins, cords and certificates	\$1,136.13
Union High School	2227/\$Senior Class	UHS/O'Donnell Sign Company-graduate lawn signs	\$2,775.00

F-10. APPROVE 2020-2021 OUT-OF-DISTRICT STUDENT PLACEMENT LIST

Approval be given to amend the 2020-2021 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
Johnny Napkins Fundraiser	April-June 2021	UHS/Softball Club – to raise funds to support the softball program.
Chipotle Fundraiser	March 27-April 30, 2021	UHS/National Honor Society – to raise funds for cords, pins, stoles and certificates
Fruit Snack Fundraiser	April 1-June 2021	UHS/National Honor Society – to raise funds for cords, pins, stoles and certificates
Baseball Program/Yearbook	March 17-April 30, 2021	UHS/Baseball-Baseball Diamond Club – raise funds for Winter Zone workouts, team food, middle school game night
BSN Sports Apparel	March 17-April 15, 2021	UHS/Baseball-Baseball Diamond Club – raise funds for Winter Zone workouts, team food, middle school game night
BSN Sports Funding Club	March 17-April 15, 2021	UHS/Baseball-Baseball Diamond Club – donations used for Winter Zone workouts, team food, middle school game night
BSN Sports Clothing Sale	March 17-June 2021	UHS/Softball Club – to raise funds to support the softball club

UHSPAC Logo-Mask/Hat Sale	March 19-April 15, 2021	UHS/Advanced Musical Theatre – to raise funds for theatre productions
Chipotle Event	March 19-April 30, 2021	UHS/Advanced Musical Theatre – to raise funds for theatre productions
Gertrude Hawk Chocolates	March 19-April 2, 2021	UHS/UHSPAC – to raise funds for spring musical
Apparel/Accessory Sale	March 20-April 20, 2021	UHS/UHSPAC – to raise funds for spring musical
Advertisement/Patron Package	April 1-May 15, 2021	UHS/UHSPAC – to raise funds for spring musical
Gertrude Hawk Candy Sale	April 10-June 30, 2021	UHS/Boys Basketball – to raise funds for senior night and summer/fall leagues
Districtwide Black History Game Night	March 27, 2021	UHS/Roots: Black Excellence Club – to raise funds for Juneteenth Celebration
Crewneck Shirt Sale	March 19-March 31, 2021	UHS/Roots: Black Excellence Club – to raise funds for Juneteenth Celebration
Teacher Raffle	April – June 2021	UHS/National Art Honor Society – to raise funds for the NAHS

RESOLUTIONS F-12 THROUGH F-16 CONCERN THE PROPOSED BUDGET FOR THE 2021-2022 SCHOOL YEAR

F-12. APPROVE GENERAL FUND TAX LEVY

Approve the General Fund tax levy of \$95,524,677 in the 2021-2022 school year (includes use of banked cap), in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

F-13. APPROVE TRAVEL EXPENDITURE MAXIMUM

Approve Travel Expenditure Maximum (\$85,000), in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

F-14. APPROVE ESTABLISHING A MAXIMUM DOLLAR LIMIT – PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

Approve establishing a maximum dollar limit for professional services (\$3,328,000), in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

F-15. APPROVE USE OF EXCESS SURPLUS FUNDS

Approve the Board of Education to include in the General Fund Budget \$1,692,313 of the Board of Education’s excess surplus funds (@ 6/30/20 per audit) to help reduce the local tax levy.

F-16. APPROVE USE OF BANKED CAP

Approve in the final budget the adjustment for banked cap in the amount of \$253,531, in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-10.3(b). The District has fully exhausted all eligible statutory spending authority. The adjustment will be used for instructional supplies and materials and will complete this by June 30, 2022 and acknowledges that it cannot be deferred or incrementally completed over a longer period of time.

F-17. APPROVE NJ SAFE SCHOOLS – ONLINE PROGRAM

Approve staff and student use of online courses through the NJ Safe Schools program, at no cost to the district, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

F-18. APPROVE INCREASE TO TOTAL EXPENDITURE – KID CLAN SERVICES

Approve increase to the total expenditure for Kid Clan Services to conduct occupational therapy, physical therapy and speech language evaluations for district students to \$22,500.00 from the previous BOE approved amount of \$14,000.00. The cost of each evaluation is as follows: \$370.00-occupational therapy, \$370.00-physical therapy and \$335.00-speech language [Account #11-000-219-320-01-19].

F-19. APPROVE INCREASE TO TOTAL EXPENDITURE – KID CLAN SERVICES

Approve increase to the total expenditures for Kid Clan Services to conduct psychological and educational evaluations for district students to \$59,000.00 for the 2020-2021 school year, from the previous BOE approved amount of \$32,000.00. Each evaluation will cost \$400.00 [Account #11-000-219-320-01-19].

F-20. APPROVE EDUCATIONAL SERVICES COMMISSION OF NJ – BEDSIDE INSTRUCTION

Approve teachers employed through The Educational Services Commission of New Jersey to provide bedside instruction for district students at the rates of \$48.00 per hour provided by hospitals, and \$69.00 per hour when provided at Children's Specialized Hospital. This will be on an "as needed" basis for the 2020-2021 school year (not to exceed \$10,000.00), in accordance with the information appended to the minutes [Account #7693/11-150-100-320-01-19]. (Contract under attorney review)

F-21. APPROVE KID CLAN SERVICES – BILINGUAL EVALUATIONS

Approve Kid Clan Services to conduct the following evaluations at the indicated rate for district students: Bilingual Speech - \$425.00; Bilingual Social - \$40000; and Bilingual Psychological - \$475.00 (total expenditures not to exceed \$6,000.00 for bilingual evaluations) for the 2020-2021 school year, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes [Account #11-000-219-320-01-19].

F-22. *Agenda item approved at March 9, 2021 worksession (Education and Communication Consulting)*

F-23. *For informational purposes only – vote not required.* List of legal services for the 2020-2021 fiscal year, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

DISCUSSION:

None

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

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED

Grievance/Negotiations Committee:

Upon recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Grievance/Negotiations Committee presents the following resolution for the Board’s consideration:

G-1. *Agenda item approved at March 9, 2021 worksession (MOA with ACMTE)*

Operations Committee Resolutions:

Upon recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, moved by Dr. Francis, seconded by Mrs. Brens-Watson that the “Discussion Items” be added to the agenda as O-2 and O-3 for adoption.

DISCUSSION:

Mr. Benaquista stated the discussion items are annual requests and because of timing they should be approved at tonight’s meeting and they will follow CDC protocols.

Dr. Francis asked will the Township have insurance? Mr. Benaquista asked if they will provide Certificate of Liability Insurance. Mr. Loessel stated yes and we are waiting on that information. If you approve it tonight we will put a stipulation that if they don’t get the proper insurance they can’t have it.

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

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED

Upon recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the following resolutions were moved by Dr. Francis, seconded by Mrs. Ruiz 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 2020-2021 school year, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

O-2. APPROVE REQUEST FOR USE OF PARKING LOTS

Approve request from Township of Union Public Information Officer requesting use of parking lots at Hannah Caldwell Elementary School and Union High School/Cooke Drive on Saturday, May 8, 2021 for the Township’s Annual “Food Truck Fest & Inflatable Village” event, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

O-3. APPROVE REQUEST FOR USE OF PARKING LOTS

Approve request from Township of Union Recreation Department requesting use of Jefferson School and Livingston Elementary School parking lots on Saturday, April 3, 2021 for the “Easter Bunny Tour” event, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

DISCUSSION:

None

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

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED

Personnel Committee Resolutions:

Mr. Benaquista asked that P-6 be voted on first because of the additional P-1 item that will be handed out to the Board members.

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

P-6. APPROVE JOB DESCRIPTION – ACTING DIRECTOR OF CURRICULUM, INSTRUCTION AND ASSESSMENT

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

DISCUSSION:

None

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

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED

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

Approve Substitute Lists for the 2020-2021 school year in accordance with the information in the hands of each Board.

P-3. ACCEPT LETTERS OF RESIGNATION/RETIREMENT

Accept letters of resignation/retirement from the following staff:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Position</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Eff. Date</u>	<u>Reason</u>	<u>Notes/ Corrections</u>
Michelle L. Barsi	Teacher of Mathematics	BMS	7/1/2021	Retirement	
Maureen Dennis	Elementary Paraprofessional	Connecticut Farms	5/1/2021	Retirement	
Joan Gilmore	Paraprofessional	Jefferson Elementary	7/1/2021	Retirement	
James Laird	Teacher of Social Studies	UHS	6/30/2021	Retirement	
Angela Kahn	Elementary Teacher	Battle Hill Elementary	7/1/2021	Retirement	
Rhonda Wright	Teacher of Mathematics	UHS	4/23/2021	Resignation	Letter indicates "60 days notice" from letter dated 2/22/2021
Brenda Sieira	Greeter	Washington	3/2/2021	Retirement	Last physical day will be 3/2/21
Irene Tavernaris	Part Time Bus Driver	Transportation	2/19/2021	Retirement	
Andrea Damato	P/T LDTC/LCSW	Special Services Dept.	3/3/2021	Resignation	
Michelle Wilson	Part Time Bus Aide	Transportation	2/1/2021	Resignation	

P-4. APPROVE LEAVES

Approve leaves for the following staff:

Name	Position	Location	Leave Dates	Leave Type	Notes/ Corrections: All tentative approvals are pending required documentation.
Francesca Minnoia	Special Education Teacher	Battle Hill Elementary	3/1/2021-5/31/2021 Return 6/1/2021	Unpaid FMLA/ NJFLA (Concurrently)	FMLA/NJFLA (Concurrently) entitlement not to exceed 12 weeks.
Tiffany Rand	Elementary Teacher	Washington Elementary	4/12/21-12/31/21	Paid Child Rearing Leave followed by Unpaid FMLA/ NJFLA (Concurrently)	FMLA/NJFLA (Concurrently) entitlement not to exceed 12 weeks.
Julia Vicidomini	Executive Administrative Assistant	Central Office	Intermittent 3/1/2021-3/1/2022	Intermittent FMLA	FMLA entitlement not to exceed 12 weeks.
Laura O'Holla	Elementary Teacher	Jefferson	Extension- Return 9/1/2021	Unpaid Non/FMLA Non/NJFLA Leave	FMLA/NJFLA time exhausted. Org. leave began 10/8/2020
Christina Korinis	School Psychologist	UHS	4/14/2021-1/2/2022 Return: 1/3/2022	Paid child rearing leave followed by unpaid FMLA/NJFLA (concurrently)	FMLA/NJFLA (concurrently) entitlement not to exceed 12 weeks
Christina Nufrio	Resource program in-class	Washington	4/6/2021-6/24/2021	Unpaid FMLA/NJFLA (concurrently)	FMLA/NJFLA (concurrently) entitlement not to exceed 12 weeks
Jennifer Ramirez	Teacher of Art	BMS	3/1/2021-6/22/2021	NJFLA	NJFLA entitlement not to exceed 12 weeks. Reasons previously listed under FFCRA (now expired) now covered under NJFLA only

P-5. APPROVE STUDENT TEACHERS AND INTERNSHIPS

Approve student teachers and internships for the 2020-2021 school year, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

DISCUSSION:

Dr. Morgan asked P-1A are all new hires – are they separately numbered. Mrs. Ruiz stated they are. Dr. Francis stated it is P-1A-6. Mrs. Ruiz stated we can vote on each line. Mr. Benaquista stated you can abstain or you can vote on each item. Dr. Morgan stated it should be on the agenda like that. Mr. Benaquista stated that is something we would need to discuss in executive session – it is what the Board wants but it can be long at times. Dr. Morgan stated I was just asking.

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

NAY: Dr. Morgan (P-1A-6), Mrs. Regis-Darby (P-1A-6)

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED

Policy Committee:

The following policies were moved by Dr. Morgan and seconded Mrs. Ruiz for first reading (no vote required):

POL-1. APPROVE POLICY 1648 – RESTART AND RECOVERY PLAN

Approve Policy 1648 – Restart and Recovery Plan, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes (*first reading*).

POL-2. APPROVE POLICY 1648.02 – REMOTE LEARNING OPTIONS FOR FAMILIES

Approve Policy 1648.02 – Remote Learning Options for Families, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes (*first reading*).

POL-3. APPROVE POLICY 1648.03 – RESTART AND RECOVERY PLAN – FULL-TIME REMOTE INSTRUCTION

Approve Policy 1648.03 – Restart and Recovery Plan – Full-Time Remote Instruction, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes (*first reading*).

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 as of March 16, 2021 (1 from elementary) or a total of six (6) students for the 2020-2021 school year] who are not domiciled in this school, in accordance with the non-public information appended to the minutes.

R-2. APPROVE TO REMOVE STUDENT

Approval to remove student #330769 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,
Mrs. Regis-Darby, Mrs. Ruiz, Mrs. Williams, Mr. McDowell

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED

Approval of Bills:

Upon recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools and moved by Mrs. Brens-Watson, seconded by Mrs. Regis-Darby, 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,
Mrs. Regis-Darby, Mrs. Ruiz, Mrs. Williams, Mr. McDowell

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED

Unfinished Business:

Mrs. Minneci stated we had a discussion about the additional aide we received. Some of us were disappointed with the amount, I still think we are lucky that we received it because some districts lost money. I'm appreciative of the money that we did receive. Mr. McDowell stated I concur.

Mrs. Williams stated I want to disprove what was talked about in February. A member of the community came up and said we were in the red zone for COVID. We are in the orange zone now and when he was speaking we were in an orange zone. I just want to make sure people make their decisions on accurate information. CVS has been getting great reviews on their vaccinations and getting people in and out. If you looking to get vaccinated register at <https://covidvaccine.nj.gov/>.

Mr. McDowell stated I was glad that teachers can now get vaccinated. They should have been able to get vaccinated sooner. Mr. Benaquista stated we are trying to give opportunities for the staff to get vaccinated.

Mr. McDowell stated just an update to the public on the superintendent search – we had 37 candidates apply for the position and we narrowed that down to 12 and we will be starting the

interview process next week. We are behind schedule but hopefully we will have a new superintendent by next month.

New Business:

Mrs. Minneci stated I want to recognize two of our former students that have been in the news this past month. Nija Charles who received a Grammy on Sunday – her third; she graduated 2015. Elizabeth Duffy, graduated in 2006, and she works for NASA and she is a mechanical engineer and she developed the arm of the rover that is on Mars. I think it was CBS Science that interviewed her and it is quite amazing. I think it is wonderful that we have so many talented former students and current students. I just wanted to recognize them.

Mr. McDowell stated Union has a lot to be proud of.

Mrs. Brens-Watson stated thank you to all the students, staff and administrators for a wonderful first day for the students. It was very successful. A shout out to Jefferson School for their live videos on FaceBook and for bringing all of the energy out. They had a lot of energy and trying to get them motivated and making everyone feel welcome. Thank you Jefferson School.

I also wanted to give a report on the Union County School Board Association meeting last week. We saw the report last week from Mrs. Koon and the budget and the funding gap from last year. There is going to be additional funding for sanitation purposes but the district needs to apply for that.

Also, I would like to propose to this Board and it was mentioned last week, advocacy to our legislators and government officials for increased funding for our district. I like to propose to this Board to actually look into scheduling a meeting with Town officials to make our case and I will be happy to start the ball rolling and I would like to see how you felt about it.

Also we will be participating in the Unsung Heroes program and I know Mr. Benaquista has been working on this. It is an award that goes specifically to students that don't receive the regular awards at the schools for academics or sports.

Mr. Benaquista stated it is a touching program and I'm excited to find out who is representing the district.

Mrs. Brens-Watson stated something else that was said at this meeting was that New Jersey is actually applying to the federal government for a waiver for the standardized testing. I don't know the specifics but we need to keep an eye out for that.

Dr. Francis stated Jamal Holly made an announcement on Friday that the Township was given \$60 million from the federal stimulus and Union will receive \$15 million.

Mr. Benaquista stated the Township is getting \$15 million and we need to speak with them regarding getting money for our ventilation. Money that is coming, they want the district to focus on the safety of buildings – ventilation. We have until 2023.

Dr. Francis stated I received an email from a parent – she was wondering if we could celebrate our academic students as well. Every year we make announcements in terms of sports, where they are going and playing in college. Can we do the same for academic students?

Mr. Benaquista stated I spoke with Mrs. Ahearn earlier and I'll follow up with her again about highlighting our students strictly for academics.

Dr. Morgan stated I would like to make a recommendation – May 1st is the day they have to choose where they are going and I'm hoping that you can highlight where the students are going to college.

Mr. Benaquista stated not just decision day but highlight the students throughout the year.

Comments from the Public:

Jill Hall stated congratulations to the students who came in. With regard to recognition for academics, I would also suggest that we don't exclude students who are not going to college. Some of our students go on to trade schools, into the military or other areas. They deserve recognition also. We like May 1st because typically the students wear the sweatshirt of the school they decided to attend.

Lastly the third in our series of parent presentations will be on April 12th, it will be combined with Springfield and Hillside, on mindfulness. Also if parents or members of the Board have a topic that they would like us to prepare a presentation please share that with me.

Kathleen Bruns-Meyers stated this is not against anyone but at home the viewing and sound is horrible. Whenever someone from the Board or Mr. Benaquista speak, it goes in and out. Is there a place to find this recording by tomorrow because I can't hear what the comments have been.

Mr. Benaquista stated the video will get up on the district website tomorrow.

Sydney Darby stated I have concerns about attendance – what is the district going to do about it – my privacy is important?

Paul Casey stated two-thirds of the district is still not in school and I think it is important that we recognize some of the kids that are not able to come back to school – the emotions of seeing students back in school – we celebrated and that was great but the students have been home for a year and we need to keep in mind how can we celebrate the students at home.

I was glad to hear Mrs. Brens-Watson speaking about reaching out to our legislators in regards to funding. It is challenging to hear that we should be grateful and we should be pleased with the funding that we are receiving but we are underfunded. We are receiving \$5.4 million for special education funding and \$13 million of that goes to the 130 children who are receiving services outside the district. Those children that most need it are underfunded and we should be advocating that the district receives more money to be at the same level that we need to be for all

of our students. It is unfortunate that we are speaking as if we should be satisfied. We need to advocate for more funding especially to bridge that gap.

Making light of the fact that some people are more concerned than others in regards to what zone we are in is really unfortunate. Some people have a certain level of concern and New York and New Jersey are the two highest risks in the country. It is really unfortunate to hear from a Board member that we are down and made light of that. Keep in mind that everybody is in a different place and being considerate of feelings.

Susan Lipstein stated I wanted to follow up on several meetings ago about the possibility of having pre-k students be evaluated so by the time they get to kindergarten they are classified and there was funds for pre-k. I never got a specific answer from Mr. Benaquista and Mrs. Conti. I would like to get an answer on that. Specifically how many students are registered to come back to school as of now?

Mr. Benaquista stated approximately 2700 students returned – approximately 40% and I'll give you a call tomorrow.

Elsie Mackie stated job well done to the district – Mr. Benaquista – you did a good job with the teachers, the staff, administrators – when you make it about children, everything works out. Seeing the energy, it shows what this district can do when we come together and focus on the children.

The pictures and posts you see on the internet – is Mrs. Nunes and you don't give her enough credit. She isn't getting paid but she should be getting a stipend. Thank you to her.

What are goals of the Board with special services – we would like to know. Mrs. Brens-Watson spoke about engaging local officials and I want to commend her for saying that and bringing it up. You should start talking. It doesn't matter what side you are on. We are a community and we need to work together. This is not about individuals, talk to teachers, families, special ed families. Thank you Mrs. Brens-Watson. Thank you Mr. O'Shea for bringing suggestions for special education. I'm encouraged – let us know about the goals.

Chasity Santana stated right before we shut down last year, one of the things we were working on was the reorganization of schools. You might think it doesn't make sense now. If we are going to do it, I think now is the time to do it because there aren't many children in the school. I thought it was a great plan from what I heard of it; I heard positive things and a lot of people working on it.

My five beautiful kids and one only has three kids in her class, the other one has five – they are back and they are loving the social engagement even if it is only for two days. All I got the first day was smiles and I love school and I'm so happy to be back. Whoever made this possible, whether you like me or not, thank you so much. Thank you for all that you do for our children.

Member of the public asked has the Board given any consideration into potentially including a member of the parent community, as well as a teacher or someone, as part of the final decision for superintendent. Mr. McDowell said we are down to 12 candidates. I think as being transparent and representing the community, we heard so many great things about how parents are feeling these days. I think having someone on the committee that represents the parents/teachers/staff/community to potentially have a little bit of input as to who the final superintendent choice will be. I don't know if this could be considered. I know we have a Board and people who are qualified to make these decision but it gives everyone a sense of transparency. It is just a suggestion. I know it would make me feel more comfortable.

Like to commend everyone – the energy the district is feeling right now is amazing. Kudos to Mr. Benaquista and everyone on his team. We have not seen energy like this like we are seeing today. Thank you to everyone who made it possible.

I want to make sure people are aware that you can have all the qualifications in the world but if your heart is not in the right place then things don't go as planned and as well.

Jeffrey Monge stated welcome everybody to those that returned to school; kudos to everyone involved, Mr. Benaquista, teachers and the Board. I want to commend the Board thank you for putting a process together. I think 35% of kids did go back. I have an idea about a virtual open house. Have a virtual open house where the parents can actually see the teachers in the classroom and it will get the comfort level up for the kids and parents.

As it pertains to the district goals, there was a discussion about equity, diversity but that didn't come up in the planning session – those conversations should be had.

Lastly as it pertains to funding, it is a formula based issue. You talked about special education funding and insurance is up. Mrs. Brens-Watson I appreciate you mentioning reaching out to legislators. This is just an FYI, when I was on the Board, we met with the Township and it was productive. I don't know if it still happens but you should do that again.

MOTION FOR EXECUTIVE SESSION:

Moved by Mrs. Regis-Darby, seconded by Mrs. Brens-Watson, that the Board go into Executive Session at 8:31 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: student matters.

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, Mrs. Minneci, Dr. Morgan,

Mrs. Regis-Darby, Mrs. Ruiz, Mrs. Williams, Mr. McDowell
NAY: None
ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED

The Board returned to public session at 9:13 p.m.

MOTION TO ADJOURN:

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

AYE: Mrs. Brens-Watson, Dr. Francis, Mrs. Minneci, Dr. Morgan,
Mrs. Regis-Darby, Mrs. Ruiz, Mrs. Williams, Mr. McDowell
NAY: None
ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,

YOLANDA KOON
BOARD SECRETARY

