

**UNION TOWNSHIP BOARD OF EDUCATION
WORKSESSION MINUTES – JUNE 12, 2012**

Meeting held at James M. Caulfield Administration Building, 2369 Morris Avenue, Union, New Jersey.

PRESENT AT ROLL CALL: Mr. Gary Abraham, Mr. David Arminio, Mrs. Linda Gaglione, Mr. Richard Galante, Mr. Thomas Layden, Mrs. Versie McNeil, Mr. Vito Nufrio, Mr. Francis R. Perkins, President and Mrs. Judy Salazar

ABSENT AT ROLL CALL: None

The meeting was called to order by Mr. Perkins at 7:00 p.m.

Mr. Layden led the board members and audience in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. Damato read the statement required under the "Open Public Meetings Act" a copy of which is on file in the office of the Secretary.

Mr. Perkins stated that he was changing the agenda slightly to allow the students from Union High School to do their presentation on proposed community service project at this time.

PRESENTATION:

UHS Student Government – Community service requirement for high school students - Dr. Martin said that it was a few months ago that the topic of community service came up and the idea of perhaps making it a requirement for graduation in Union High School, as many high schools throughout the state already do. He said that after that conversation, he met with Mr. Gibbons, principal of Union High School; Mr. Benequista, Vice Principal at Union High School and also Ms. Eidel and Ms. Brady, the moderators of the Student Government at the high school along with some student government representatives. Dr. Martin said that it became rapidly clear to the group that the Student Government members themselves were very interested in this topic and wanted to take a leadership position on it. He said that the group has put together a presentation for the board and the public to get the ball rolling; their ideas on what such a program might look like to begin the discussion.

Student members of the Student Government gave an overview of some activities that students at the high school have done during the past school year. They said that the group has organized fundraisers and has also met with members of the Township Committee to participate in some town-wide activities in order to unite students with the community.

The students indicated that community services was an important part of psychological and intellectual development and studies have shown that if a student participates in some type of community service, they are more likely to graduate from high school and college. The students indicated that there would be a requirement of five hours per year of community service making a total of twenty hours at the end of a student's high school career and either the English teachers, guidance counselors or gym teachers would keep track of the progress of the students. The students came up with many community service opportunities both outside of the school and within the high school that everyone will enjoy. The students thanked the board for listening to their proposal.

Mrs. Gaglione said that she was very proud of the students present for coming up with this proposal. She said that she has made suggestions that there should be a community service requirement for graduation because there are many other towns in the State that already have these programs in place. Mrs. Gaglione said that volunteering and community service fosters compassion.

Mr. Arminio asked what would happen if a student fails to do the required twenty hours before graduation. The students said that they discussed whether it would be a graduation requirement or whether it would be a requirement to participate in the graduation ceremony.

Dr. Martin said that he has gotten to know the students and moderators involved in the Student Government over the past year. He said that there have been countless meetings and they are great leaders. Dr. Martin said that they are seen that way by not only the faculty but also their peers. He said that the students have stepped it up and put together some great programs over the past few months that have engendered school spirit. Dr. Martin thought that this was another initiative that will bring Union High School to higher levels. He recommended that a formal proposal be prepared and presented to the board for adoption at a board meeting.

Mr. Gibbons said that this is really a student run initiative and the credit goes to the students present at the meeting and their classmates.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Perkins stated that the minutes of the regular meeting of April 24th 2012 would be adopted at next week's meeting.

COMMUNICATION

Mr. Damato stated that all communication has been referred to the proper committee for consideration.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Dr. Martin said that he wanted to compliment the first set of standardized test scores that have been received by the district. He said that these scores are for the 11th grade students. Dr. Martin said that all 11th grade students take the HSPA (High School Proficiency Assessment) and those scores come back from the State first. He said that students did considerably better again this year in both Language Arts and Mathematics. Dr. Martin complimented the high school faculty for this achievement. He said that at this point the district is 88% pass rate on Language Arts. Dr. Martin said that the rest of the standardized test scores also showed improvement last year and he was anxiously awaiting the results from this year's tests which will come in during the summer. He said that he knew that the faculty, staff and administration has worked exceedingly hard to prepare students do to well on the tests. Dr. Martin said that these standardized test scores are a part of what the district is measured by and the district must take these results very seriously.

Dr. Martin said that he also wanted to speak about the remediation teacher positions. He said that this is something that presents something of a dilemma to the school district because there is a position and then there are people in the position and the district has to be as sensitive as possible to the difference. Dr. Martin said that the remediation teacher position in this district as it stands right now has some deficiencies and problems. He said that the biggest problem is that as Superintendent of Schools he believed that the district has to offer guidance counseling services to students throughout the district and certainly in the elementary schools. Dr. Martin said that the district must offer these services because children today in the modern elementary school come in with a variety of needs and challenges. He said that a guidance counselor at the elementary level is necessary to appropriately address those needs and challenges. Dr. Martin said that the district's remediation teachers, who used to be called interventionists, are seen as the "go to" person for many of the counseling needs of the schools. He said that he has personally seen remediation teachers put in the position of working with troubled

children and counseling those children. Dr. Martin said that the problem is that state law says that if a district is offering guidance services to children in a public school, the individual must have a school guidance counselor certification and training. He said that he believed it was important to offer these services to students in school and he also thought that the time has come to make sure that if the district is offering counseling services to children that the people offering those services are recognized by the State Department of Education as having the proper training and certifications to do that. Dr. Martin said that first and foremost his obligation was to the children in the district. He said that the district must make sure that the proper training and certifications are behind the adults that are offering the services. Dr. Martin said that the district is in a dilemma because it has remediation teachers who are looked upon to offer counseling services but some of the remediation teachers do not have guidance counselor certifications. He said that this is not a "knock" on the remediation teachers that the district has and he believed that they do very fine work and this is not a negative statement toward them at all. Dr. Martin said that the concern is that guidance services are offered appropriately. He said that when he met with each of the remediation teachers last Friday, he did ask them if they had or were close to getting their guidance counselor certification. Dr. Martin said that he told each one of them that he would have "jumped through hoops" to work with them if they were in the process of obtaining this certification. He said unfortunately some of the remediation teachers have not begun the program. Dr. Martin said that he, in no way, did he want to indicate that the remediation teachers were doing a poor job, they are not up to the task or they had let the school district down. He said that the district must confront this issue.

Dr. Martin said that he personally saw several instances where remediation teachers were asked to work with difficult children with some serious needs. He said that had the remediation teacher missed something that a trained guidance counselor would have picked up on, and had the child gone home and perhaps run away or hurt himself or others because the behavior that was exhibited was not picked up on appropriately, that would not be right. Dr. Martin said that if the district is going to put the children in its care with professionals for counseling services, the district has to do it the right way. He said that it is his recommendation to the board of education that the remediation teacher position in each elementary school be supplanted with certified school guidance counselors. Dr. Martin said that the district has to put the students first.

Dr. Martin said that the board will go through its agenda and then there will be an opportunity for the public to make comments.

EDUCATION/STUDENT DISCIPLINE COMMITTEE

Mr. Arminio said that the committee met earlier in the evening and he presented the agenda.

Mr. Perkins asked if Dr. Martin wanted to amplify any of the education committee resolutions. Dr. Martin said with regard to resolution E-9. He said that this is the typical monthly report on Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying – he distributed a copy of the report to all board members present. Dr. Martin said that the final version will contain what is on the handout plus any HIB incident which occurs before next week's board meeting.

Mrs. Salazar asked if resolution E-10 was for the regular school year and E-15 was for the extended school year. Ms. Conti said that was correct. She said that she tries to do things in advance but sometimes the numbers and the district's needs change drastically. Ms. Conti said that there had to be some last minute shifting of either re-titling certain self-contained classes that is why some classes had to be eliminated and some classes had to be established. She said that most of the time no classes are "lost" they are just relabeled.

Mr. Tatum said that with regard to resolution E-3, there was a request that the board look at some comparative data over the previous three school years. He said that he would have the data available for next week's meeting.

FISCAL AND PLANNING COMMITTEE

Mrs. Gaglione said that the committee met and she presented the agenda.

Mr. Arminio asked how many annuity companies did the district presently have. Mr. Damato said there were five or six at this time.

Mrs. Gaglione asked about the RFP that were distributed before the meeting and when would they be listed on the agenda for approval. Mr. Damato said that they would be on next week's agenda and they will be discussed later in the evening.

OPERATIONS COMMITTEE

Mr. Layden said that the operations committee met earlier in the evening and he presented the agenda items.

Mr. Layden said that some of the rental fees were "rounded up" because there was some confusion last year with rental fees.

Mr. Abraham said that he thought resolution O-7 should be moved from Operations to Education on next week's meeting. Mr. Perkins thought that was right and asked that the correction be made for the regular meeting.

Mrs. Gaglione asked if the board was in agreement with regard to resolution O-9 and was there any interlocal agreement that covers this service and would the board receive any reimbursement for this. Mr. Damato said that the district has had an ongoing relationship with the town and they provide the district with a variety of services such as tree removal, tree trimming and road salt for use during inclement weather. He said that when those services are received from the town, they are at no charge to the district. Mr. Damato said that the district is trying to do some cooperative purchasing with the town. Mr. Perkins said that the board of education supplying transportation for Recreation Department field trips is a long standing practice and it is permitted by law. Mr. Damato said that it would be easier if all of the agreements with the town would be incorporated into one agreement. Mrs. Gaglione said that she has an issue with always giving and not getting in return. She suggested that everything be documented. Mr. Damato said that Mr. Wiggins maintains a ledger to keep track of everything.

Mrs. Gaglione said that she would like to bring up the issue of bus service bids for Villani. She said that the district received a bid from them for field trip transportation services and she received calls from a concerned parent at Kawameeh Middle School that students were going on a field trip which was to leave at 6 a.m. and the bus service did not arrive until 7 a.m. Mrs. Gaglione said that the parent called the bus company to question what the delay was and the bus company hung up on the parent without even saying anything. She said that she was also advised that the same thing happened at Burnet Middle School and the bus arrived 45 minutes late. Mrs. Gaglione said that she takes issue with any vendor who has a contract with the district that is not following their agreement. She said that if the company has a shortage of employees, then they need to correct that and

meet the district's needs. Mrs. Gaglione asked if this matter could be investigated. Mr. Damato said that Mr. Zurka is working on this, he is aware of the situation and it will be resolved.

Mr. Perkins asked Mr. Damato to address resolution O-8. Mr. Damato said that the law allows the board of education to renew the Aramark contract without public bidding for two times after the initial award of the contract. He said that this is the second year following the award of the original bid to Aramark.

Dr. Martin said that state law mandates that at the end of the school year there be an annual HIB report presented at the last public meeting of the school year. He said that he will be giving a Superintendent's report at next week's regular meeting that gives far more detail such as the number of incidents at each school for the entire year, the nature of the incidents and the discipline imposed as well as all the training that was given to each of the schools' staffs.

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

Mr. Galante reviewed the agenda items which would be presented for voting next week.

Mr. Abraham asked if there would be an opportunity to discuss several of the personnel matters in Executive Session. Mr. Perkins said that if issues involve specific individuals, no employees have been RICED for this meeting. Mr. Abraham asked how the board could discuss questions regarding specific salaries. Mr. Damato said that these issues can be discussed in Executive Session.

Mr. Nufrio said that at the last meeting wasn't Mr. Damato appointed as the Affirmative Action Officer. Mr. Damato said that there are different Affirmative Action Officers for different things. He said that he was the Affirmative Action Officer for bidding, contracts, etc., and Mr. Tatum is the Affirmative Action Officer for employees of the district.

Mrs. Salazar asked why the purchase order referred to in resolution P-24 has to be increased. Mrs. Conti said that she tries to project the number of neurodevelopmental evaluations that will be required for the year to determine if students are eligible for special education related services and usually the amount is set around the number that was set in the previous year. She said that sometimes she cannot control if she needs a higher amount and this is why the purchase order had to be increased for this school year.

Mr. Layden said that he had a question regarding P-5. He wanted to know how the figure of \$250 per meeting for Mrs. Hubbard was arrived at for attendance at residency hearings. Mr. Damato said that for many years, the district paid the transcribers at board of education meetings a fee per meeting which at the time was approximately \$250 per meeting. He said that since then the responsibilities for attending meetings and transcribing minutes has been included in the salary of the Board Secretary's Administrative Assistant and has become a part of the job responsibilities. Mr. Damato said that when Mrs. Hubbard attends residency committee meetings it is after the school day and she receives a stipend for each meeting that she attends. He said that this was an established practice for many years of \$250 per meeting. Mr. Layden said that resolution P-33 should be corrected to say Middle School Academy instead of Saturday Academy.

Mr. Arminio said that there is a bill pending that all minutes of committee meetings will have to be recorded. Mr. Nufrio said that this bill has not gone through yet. Mr. Arminio asked if these minutes will also have to be transcribed or can they just be kept on tape? Mr. Damato said that he will have to wait to see how the legislation is actually approved but his guess would be that if the State is asking the district to record committee meetings, that they are asking them to be transcribed and put them into written form. Mr. Arminio asked if the district would be reimbursed for all of that. Mr. Damato said that it will be another unfunded mandate.

Mr. Perkins asked if he was correct in stating that as of the moment there is no requirement for verbatim transcript for any of the board's activities that we are talking about. Mr. Damato said that was correct. Mr. Perkins said that there is not a requirement for verbatim transcripts. Mr. Damato said that was correct.

Dr. Martin said that there should be a sentence added to the end of resolution P-33 stating "This money does not come from district funds. It comes from tuition that the students pay for the academy."

APPROVAL OF BILLS

Mr. Perkins stated that the bills would be presented for payment next week.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Mr. Arminio said that the board was e-mailed the first three sections of the revised policy manual. He said that Mr. Nufrio, Mr. Damato, Mr. Vieira and he reviewed all of these policies and made some changes. Mr. Arminio said that he had a "hard" copy of these policies if anyone would like to look through it. Mr. Arminio said that he would like to get these three sections approved by the board so that the next sections can be worked on. He said that these sections were the "easy" part of the policy manual. Mr. Arminio asked the board to review the first three sections and if anyone had any questions or changes, they should contact him, Mr. Nufrio or Mr. Damato. Mr. Perkins asked Mr. Arminio if the procedure was that the committee took the material forwarded by NJSBA and "tweaked" those policies. Mr. Arminio said that was correct. Mr. Nufrio said that it is important to note that the committee did not "create" policy. He said that the policies were reviewed, some corrections and/or changes were made and Mr. Damato made sure that the policies were up to date as far as the law was concerned.

NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Arminio said that Mr. Damato has created a resolution to be presented to a nurse at Union High School who helped save the life of a student and he would like the board to present it to her next week.

Mr. Arminio said that he would also like to read the names of winners of an essay/picture contest sponsored by the Township of Union Historical Society at next week's meeting.

Mrs. Gaglione asked Dr. Martin if the students that have received guitar lessons from the Traveling Guitar Foundation will be performing at the meeting next week. Dr. Martin said that they are scheduled to come. Mrs. Gaglione asked if there would also be a resolution prepared to present to the instructor. Dr. Martin said that will be done.

Mr. Perkins said that he attended the Central-Five Science Fair at Connecticut Farms School which was organized by Ms. Petricco. He said that he was sure that this type of learning was taking place at other schools as well and he understood that this was the first time that a Science Fair like this was done with fifth graders. Mr. Perkins said that he was "floored" by the students, the work that they did and the education that is taking place in the district.

Mr. Perkins said that he recently had a meal with some of the Union County Scholars and talked to them about what they have learned and where they are going. He was impressed with how smart the students are, how centered they are, how much they know about the world and their sense of purpose.

Mr. Perkins said that in yesterday's Star Ledger there was an article which featured Ms. Picula and Ms. Hrevnak, teachers at Connecticut Farms Elementary School, and it dealt with a Writer's Workshop which they coordinate at that school. He said that he and his wife have known these two teachers for many years. Mr. Perkins said that he commented in the Education Committee meeting earlier this evening that the district has many good teachers who really care about the education of the district's students to the point where they will come in early, spend their own money and put forth an effort that goes above and beyond what they are required to do under the contract because it is good for the students. He said that these are people who have been classroom teachers for a long time and while he does not denigrate at all the aspirations of people to move up the corporate ladder to become supervisors and principals, he thought that the district owed a special debt of gratitude to the classroom teachers who are really the heroes.

Mr. Arminio said that in coordination with Dr. Martin's HIB presentation at next week's meeting, a student from Burnet Middle School will be reading a poem about bullying that she read at the Poetry Slam that was held a few weeks ago at Van Gogh's Ear. He said that it is a very short poem and it is fantastic. Mr. Arminio said that Washington School will also be doing a presentation regarding bullying at the meeting also.

Mrs. McNeil said that the student turnout at the Memorial Day parade was phenomenal; she thought the floats were also great but she particularly enjoyed the Kawameeh Middle School float.

Mr. Layden said that the Fairway Civic Association sponsored its first annual Senior Scholarship which was opened to all public and private schools in the area. He said that he wanted to recognize Ricardo DaSilva, a senior at Union High School who received the award this year.

COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

Ms. Shannon referred to resolution F-11. She said that she was not aware that the district paid the tuition for the vocational-technical schools. Mr. Perkins said that the district pays for the transportation of students also. Mrs. Gaglione said that the district pays for a portion of the tuition for

these students. Ms. Shannon said that she did not understand F-13 and asked if someone could explain it to her. She asked if students who attend charter schools also have the tuition paid by the district. Mrs. Gaglione said that when a student goes to a charter school, the district must pay the tuition and it is approximately \$9,000 per student. Ms. Shannon said she thought that the State paid for this tuition. Mr. Vieira said that the State does pay a share of the tuition directly to the charter school. Ms. Shannon asked if P-16 concerned a UTEA member. Mr. Damato said that it was not a UTEA member. Ms. Shannon commented on P-36. She said that she did not know much about the Naviance program and asked if it could be explained to her. Ms. Shannon asked what is being "tracked". Dr. Lishak said that the students are in the CTE (Career and Technical Education) are tracked during their time at the high school and where they go after. Ms. Shannon said isn't the CTE program only a course here and there? Dr. Lishak said that CTE covers cosmetology or any program that is funded in any way by the Perkins Grant. She said that any student who takes a course that is funded by the Perkins Grant must be tracked and reported to the State.

Ms. Jackson, said that she is the Supervisor of Guidance in Union. She said about two years ago she sat in this room and she received a contract from the Board of Education. Ms. Jackson wanted to share her experiences and to thank the Board for the support which she received for some of the initiatives that she had put to the Board that have benefited students. She said that the first was the granting of the Naviance program which has been extremely helpful to the guidance department as it has provided the high school with the opportunity to process all college applications wirelessly and to submit transcripts, track students and provide real time information for current students and the students that are coming up. Ms. Jackson said that Ms. Rau was able to help the guidance department implement this program in a great way that has not been done by other school districts in such a short period of time. She said that this year a four year tracking plan has been instituted for the freshman class in course planning and linking it to careers. Ms. Jackson said that next year this program will be moved down to the eighth grade and working through it year by year so that all students know where they are going, how the classes that they are taking now relate to careers and that is a part of the CORE curriculum content standards for guidance. She said that this is a great tool that was really needed at the high school to bring it up to the 21st Century as far as technology in guidance. Ms. Jackson said that it has allowed the guidance department to gather information has been invaluable in advising students as to their chances of getting into colleges, opening up their eyes to other colleges that they may qualify for, keeping track of

statistics as far as award letters and so forth. She felt that this program was well worth it and hoped that the district would continue the program in the future.

Ms. Jackson said that the board also supported her freshman orientation program that occurred last summer. She said that 419 students attended on a budget of less than \$2,000. Ms. Jackson said that she was able to pull it off with the help of staff who came in during the summer, help and not be compensated for that. She said that there were also had a group of about 36 peer mentors who ran the program and gave her lots of feedback. Ms. Jackson said that there was no way she could have done it all by herself with no summer staff and pull off a program such as that. She thanked all staff members who came in for the Activity Fair without being compensated and all of the administrators that participated. Ms. Jackson said that this orientation program gave freshman the opportunity to have a building tour, meet with their Vice Principal to learn the policies and procedures, meet with their guidance counselor, connect with upper classmen and have their first Naviance lesson before the school began. She was happy that the orientation will be continued this summer. Ms. Jackson said that the two years that she has been in the district has been a great opportunity for her and she honestly can say that there was not one day that she didn't want to come to school with the idea of making things better. She said that the reason she was able to feel grateful for the opportunity was because of the staff that she had. Ms. Jackson said that she was supported by her staff who took on the vision and the mission which she brought to the district and they are continuing it. She thought one of the greatest earmarks of a leader is that once they leave, that they are not an indispensable person. Ms. Jackson said that she has the greatest confidence in the staff that she leaves behind that they will continue the work that she has started based on the values and goals that the district has for the students. She said that her staff was always very supportive of her and it has been a wonderful experience for her. She is sorry that her contract was not renewed for the next school year but she is not sorry for anything that happened during the time she was in the district.

Ms. Bo-Pinkney wanted to speak about the remediation teacher positions that are being eliminated at the elementary schools. She said that Ms. Osty, the remediation teacher at Franklin School, was the extension of a mom. Ms. Bo-Pinkney said that Ms. Osty has been at Franklin for some time but the last year as been the hardest year that Ms. Bo-Pinkney has had. She said that her Mom passed away in August and she was diagnosed with breast cancer in December. Ms. Bo-Pinkney said that her son is a student at Franklin School and her daughter attends

Burnet Middle School and they have had a very difficult time. She said that she spoke to Ms. Osty before she had to travel to North Carolina and Ms. Osty has always been there and very supportive. Ms. Bo-Pinkney said that Ms. Osty speaks to the children and she felt that even though Dr. Martin said that the schools need guidance counselors, Ms. Bo-Pinkney felt that Franklin already has counselors. She said that her son does see one of the counselors once a week because she feels that it was good for him to speak about his feelings. Ms. Bo-Pinkney said that she did not understand how Franklin School can let someone like Ms. Osty leave. She said that the Board is not always dealing with these children. Ms. Bo-Pinkney said that when her son had a bullying problem she called Ms. Osty and the problem was handled. She felt that Ms. Osty was an extension of her and all the parents in the school as Ms. Osty has always been there for her. Ms. Bo-Pinkney presented a petition signed by the parents and teachers at Franklin School on behalf of Ms. Osty.

Mr. Perkins said that he is concerned and has expressed on a personal level, concern about this issue. He said that he has had many discussions with Dr. Martin and Mr. Damato. Mr. Perkins said that there is no question that the individuals involved are all very valuable members of the educational team in the district. He said that the comments he made earlier this evening about individual teachers does extend to those individuals as well. Mr. Perkins said that there is a problem with the lack of guidance certifications and the bottom line is that "you've got to have the ticket" and unfortunately some of the individuals involved do not have guidance certificates. Ms. Bo-Pinkney said that Franklin School has other individuals who are counselors five days a week. Mr. Perkins said that the person with the certificate is the guidance counselor. Dr. Martin said that those counselors are part of the Child Study Team and the remediation teachers that are in the schools are looked upon as "counselors". He said that the district has to come to grips with the fact that the remediation teachers have been counseling students, have been given the task of counseling students and they have counseled them to the extent that a teacher can counsel a student but some of these students have significant needs and the guidance that should be given by anyone working with youngsters in the district if it going to be called guidance, should be given by a certified guidance counselor.

Dr. Martin said that he saw some instances this year where remediation teachers were put in a position of giving guidance to students in situations where it wasn't proper and negative results could have happened. He said that it was not right to continue it. Ms. Bo-Pinkney said that she understood what Dr. Martin was saying but if there are already

counselors in the school five days a week, why does the district have to employ another guidance counselor. Mr. Perkins said that then the question may be, "What does the remediation teacher do?" He said that all of the remediation teachers will remain in the district; they will continue to be paid at the same rate of pay they receive now. Ms. Bo-Pinkney asked if that meant that Ms. Osty would still be at Franklin School. Mr. Perkins said he was not sure where Ms. Osty would be.

Dr. Martin said that tomorrow at 2 p.m., the principals are meeting here to talk about how to place the remediation teachers in a way which is the most productive for the school district. He is not sure what will come of the meeting and he did not want to guarantee that every remediation teacher will stay in his or her building but there certainly will be a great effort put at making sure that the individuals are properly placed. Dr. Martin said that the district is not losing these individuals. Dr. Martin said that there are many instances in the schools when a student with a guidance question is not sent to one of the counselors but is sent to the remediation teacher and if the remediation teacher does not have the proper guidance certification and a mistake is made, something is missed or the counseling given to a student is not correct and something happens with the student, it is his responsibility as chief school administrator to see that and to say that it is not right. He said that said that no matter how wonderful the individual is, if a mistake is made and a child is in anyway harmed, that is not a good answer. Ms. Bo-Pinkney said that she can understand that the children come first and she knew that if there was a meeting with the children of Franklin and hear what they have to say about Ms. Osty, things might be different. She said that she cared about all of the children in the district and she felt that it would be a shame for Franklin School to lose Ms. Osty as a member of the faculty. Mrs. Bo-Pinkney said that Ms. Osty benefits the children.

Ms. Titmas said that she has worked in Union for seventeen years and is presently a remediation teacher. She wanted to clarify the issue of guidance by remediation teachers. Ms. Titmas said that she personally does not counsel a student as a guidance counselor would. She said that if a serious enough problem presents itself, no one person makes the decision by themselves. Ms. Titmas said that her school has adopted a Crisis Intervention Plan that goes into place; there is a team of people involved which includes the principal, child study team members, etc.; the decision would never be made by just one person. She said that if a student comes to her with a serious problem she will facilitate and refer it to the proper person but she would never make a decision alone. Ms. Titmas said that the posting for the remediation teacher position indicated

"principal certification preferred" and she does have that. She said that she does do a lot in her school, it manifests itself and some parents may see her as a guidance counselor, but if the situation presents itself she will tell parents that she is not a guidance counselor. Ms. Titmas said that the remediation teachers are like the "glue" of the building that keeps so many things together by running programs, etc., and more and more tasks are given to her every year. She said that as someone who also lives in Union, she agreed that there should be guidance counselors in the schools, but losing the remediation teachers and putting them back into a classroom is kind of a "slap in the face". Ms. Titmas thought there had to be a compromise.

Ms. Halinewski, the nurse at Franklin School, said that she has worked very closely with Ms. Osty over the years. She said that what Ms. Osty does is "intervene". Ms. Halinewski said that she has never cared for the title "remediation teacher" because who knows what that is. She said that Ms. Osty is an Interventionist. Ms. Halinewski said that when a child is crying hysterically that they don't want to come to school and the parent can't decide whether to put them in the car and take them home or encourage them to stay in school, Ms. Osty intervenes before that child become a school phobic and needs a counselor and when there is a bullying incident on the playground Ms. Osty intervenes before that becomes an unmanageable crisis and that child needs to have counseling. Ms. Halinewski said that this is what an Interventionist does and it is a very valuable role in the Union School System. She respectfully disagreed with Dr. Martin and Mr. Perkins and she asked that the board rethink this decision.

Mr. Thomas said that he had twin boys who attended Franklin School and was at the meeting in support of Ms. Osty. He said that he clearly understood the conundrum that the district has certain select students who need mental health professionals and certified guidance counselors. Mr. Thomas said that if Ms. Osty is replaced with a certified guidance counselor that will service the need of those "select" students but it will leave 80% of what the Interventionist do such as student advocacy, intervention, etc. He said that when his sons started kindergarten, it was Ms. Osty to help diagnose and evaluate his son from a behavior problem to ADHD which is treatable. Mr. Thomas said that as a parent his concern was that while the board is addressing a critical issue concerning a select number of students, he wanted the board to understand that there are so many other roles that the Interventionist plays in the school and if this position disappears there are many more students that will be adversely affected by not having that person in that position. He said that this will be

an immediate effect and who does a parent go to if there is a problem in the school. Mr. Perkins suggested that parents can speak to the building principal. Mr. Thomas said that the Mr. Lowery is a great administrator but his hands are full and he does not have time, like Ms. Osty does, to troubleshoot throughout the day and do fact finding. He said that the principal must make a split second decision based upon immediate information. Mr. Thomas said that Ms. Osty is a huge support to Mr. Lowery. He said that he recognizes the board's dilemma and clearly the district has to accommodate the "select" students that Ms. Osty should not be giving that type of mental evaluation services to those students but he said that if Ms. Osty is simply going to be replaced with a guidance counselor, the parents will be at a loss.

Mr. Perkins said that both of his sons went through the Union School System and when his younger son was in first grade he had an issue of wanted his son to have a particular teacher because that teacher had the characteristics that have been attributed to Ms. Osty and that is a nurturing, caring disposition. Mr. Perkins said that he and his wife were very upset when their son was not assigned to her class. He said at that point in life he was acting the same way that the parents present tonight are acting, as the parent of an individual child. Mr. Perkins said that his now his son is grown and he is the president of the school board and he is looking at the educational system in Union as an entire school district. He said that the board has a responsibility to look from the point of view as an entire district. Mr. Perkins said that he did understand the feelings of the parents present tonight.

Ms. Shannon, the President of the U.T.E.A., said that she has spoken to Dr. Martin about this issue on numerous occasions about this ongoing concern and she has told the remediation teachers that they are teachers and the assignment a teacher is given, is what we are given; however these individuals applied for the "remediation teacher" positions under certain circumstances a number of years ago and things have changed. She did agree that every school needs a guidance counselor and even a vice principal. Ms. Shannon said that she has spoken to Dr. Martin about compromise and is there some way to utilize the remediation teachers, not just in a classroom. She said that it was not the remediation teachers' fault that things have changed and she hoped that these individuals do not have to suffer.

Mrs. Thomas said that intervention is something that is new, different and progressive in the way that things are treated but definitely not in a guidance counselor way. She said that intervention brings people together

to come up with a solution that fits everyone. Mrs. Thomas said that the district contracts out to vendors that serve a purpose for mental health of students in the district. She said that intervention to her is slightly different and it serves a different type of niche. Mrs. Thomas said that another good thing about intervention is the immediacy, being able to have access to that type of mediation in a situation right away.

Ms. Wright asked why the remediation teachers could not become the Vice Principals in the elementary schools instead of being put back in the classroom. She said that this would enable them to continue to do what they have been doing in the schools.

MOTION FOR EXECUTIVE SESSION

Moved by Mrs. McNeil, seconded by Mr. Arminio that the Board go into Executive Session to discuss personnel and negotiation matters without the presence of the public in accordance with the provisions of N.J.S.A. 10:4- 2b. The Board will disclose the discussion conducted during the executive session, with notice to the public, 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.

AYE: Mr. Abraham, Mr. Arminio, Mrs. Gaglione, Mr. Galante,
Mr. Layden, Mrs. McNeil, Mr. Nufrio, Mrs. Salazar and
Mr. Perkins

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION WAS CARRIED

THE BOARD RETURNED TO PUBLIC SESSION

Mr. Nufrio said that when the members of the public were speaking earlier this evening the parents were focusing on what the individuals do but the district does not have a choice in this matter. He felt that the parents did not want to hear that fact. Mr. Nufrio said he did not feel that the parents who were at the meeting realize that there is nothing the district can do to reverse these personnel actions because the State no longer recognizes "interventionists" or "remediation teacher" as they should be. Dr. Martin said that the term "remediation teacher" does not describe the functions that these individuals perform at all. He said that they totally agree with that and why

not just change the title. Mr. Nufrio asked if Dr. Martin explained that a "guidance counselor" does primarily what these individuals do now and a principal does almost everything that a guidance counselor does. Dr. Martin said that the guidance work that these individuals are presently doing is improper. Mrs. Gaglione asked how many people are involved. Mr. Nufrio said that there were five individuals who were affected. Dr. Martin said that there were seven individuals; there are seven elementary schools and each school has a remediation teacher. He said that two of the seven have guidance counselor certifications, so there are really five that are doing the job of a remediation teacher that do not have that certification. Dr. Martin said that at Hannah Caldwell School there are two individuals, one of whom is a school psychologist but does not have a guidance counselor certification. He said that to him this was a simple situation.

Dr. Martin said it is a situation that gets overly complicated. He said that there were several events that occurred this year that could have ended in a tragic event. Mr. Nufrio suggested that if these individuals continue to make their "plea", the simple answer is that the district cannot create job titles that the State does not recognize. He said that he is totally in favor of researching and somehow coming up with the concept and agreement that some of the elementary schools, if not all, do need a Vice Principal. Mr. Nufrio said that he thought that there had to be at least 500 students in a building before it needed a Vice Principal, but he said that he understands that there is justification even if there are only 300 students in a building. He said that there will no longer be interventionists/remediation teachers there will be a guidance counselor instead but a guidance counselor does not do administrative work and every principal will be overwhelmed. Mr. Nufrio said that the district is creating another possible nightmare by doing what has to be done but all the work that the remediation teachers have been doing is now being shifted back to the principal.

Dr. Martin said that there is a guidance counselor, Ms. Hoffman, that is now working as a remediation teacher at Central-Five School and she does all the things that the other individuals are doing successfully. He said that the only difference between that individual and the other remediation teachers in the elementary schools is that Ms. Hoffman holds a guidance counselor certification. Dr. Martin wanted to know why this couldn't be replicated and why can't the district find other people who have a guidance counselor certification who can fit into the role as Ms. Hoffman has. Mr. Nufrio said that the guidance department should not handle discipline with the exception of bullying and harassment. Dr. Martin said that he had nothing at all against Vice Principals and he thought that the district look into that issue but he also wanted to remind everyone that twelve months ago,

the district was laying people off due to budgetary problems. He said that after he was told that the budget had to be cut by \$5 million and the district went ahead and did that, the \$5 million was found and he wanted to proceed slowly. Dr. Martin said that he was told at the beginning of the year that the new anti-bullying initiative was going to "run the school district into the ground" and "it was going to destroy public education as we know it because nobody could handle it and it would overwhelm everyone". He said that by October or November the schools discovered that there were ways of handling the new policy. Dr. Martin said that he first wanted to know how this situation pans out and see how much more work will be put on the building principal and he really wants to be sure that the district can afford it before individuals are hired. Mr. Nufrio said that he foresaw big problems with the evaluation system and more disciplinary problems that will not get done because of the overwhelming work involved that the principal will have to do plus as a teacher, he would love to work in a school where there are "few" discipline problems and usually this is a school that is run correctly by the right administrators and if there is a large population of students in the building, there should be a Vice Principal who will be able to shoulder some of the load. Dr. Martin said that he agrees. He said that this action was not taken last year because it would have meant putting the "remediation teachers" back into the classroom causing five more novice teachers being laid off. Dr. Martin said that this year the district is in a position where there are classroom positions that need to be filled and everyone will keep a job. Mr. Arminio said that there was a Vice Principal position posted for Hannah Caldwell School. He said that in one year the population at Hannah Caldwell will decrease by 200 students. Mr. Arminio asked what would be done to justify the Vice Principal at that school. Mr. Galante said that when Central-Five is re-opened, the Vice Principal will go to Central-Five. Mr. Nufrio said that there would still be over 500 students at Hannah Caldwell School and he never worked in a school that big that did not have a Vice Principal. Dr. Martin said that the district has to make sure that it has the finances to back it up.

Mr. Damato said that the proposals for professional services were handed out. He said that there was a snafu with the architectural services because the posting did not make it on the website in a timely fashion. Mr. Damato said that posting has been extended until next Friday. He asked that most of the services that the district received proposals were from the same firms that the district has done business with in the past. Mr. Damato said that with regard to environmental engineering contract, the district has used PMK for years which became Birdsall and then recently on the Central-Five project the district has had the opportunity to work with Omega. He said that Omega has done a fine job on that project and their prices are much lower

and he would like to use them for the upcoming school year. Mr. Damato said that Suplee, Clooney are the only proposers for audit services; they have always done a fine job with this and he thought that the district should continue to use this firm. He said that the same applies to the law firms that the district has done business with in the past. Mr. Damato said that each one has their own little niche of expertise and they are used judiciously and try to manage as much of the work "in house" as possible. He said that he is giving the board the benefit of looking over all of the proposals and any board member can call him if they have any questions. Mr. Damato said that the first four on the chart are the firms that the district has used in the past. He said that this year for the first time he sent out an RFP for civil engineering services separate from architectural services. He believed that the district will save money by contracting directly with a civil engineering firm as opposed to having it go through an intermediary.

MOTION TO ADJOURN

There being no further business before the board, it was moved by Mr. Arminio, seconded by Mr. Nufrio that the meeting be adjourned. All present voting yes.

Respectfully submitted,



JAMES J. DAMATO
BOARD SECRETARY