

NOTICE OF MEETING:

TO ALL BOARD OF EDUCATION MEMBERS

The regular meeting of the Board of Education of the Township of Union will be held on Tuesday, March 17, 2015 at 7:00 p.m. at Kawameeh Middle School, 500 David Terrace, Union, New Jersey 07083

The regular meeting of the Board of Education of the Township of Union was held at Kawameeh Middle School, 500 David Terrace, Union, New Jersey on March 17, 2015 at 7:00 p.m. pursuant to notice sent to each member.

PRESENT AT ROLL CALL: Mr. David Arminio, Dr. Guy Francis, Mr. Richard Galante, Mr. Thomas Layden, Mr. Ron McDowell, Mr. Vito Nufrio, Ms. Nancy Zuena

ABSENT AT ROLL CALL: Ms. Lois Jackson and Mr. Angel Salcedo

ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT: Mr. James Damato, Dr. Noreen Lishak, Mr. Gregory Tatum, Mr. Manuel Vieira

Mr. Arminio called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Mr. Arminio led the board and audience members 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 Board Secretary.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Moved by Mr. Nufrio, seconded by Mrs. Zuena that the minutes of the Work Session and Executive Session of February 10, 2015 be approved.

AYE: Dr. Francis, Mr. Layden, Mr. McDowell, Mr. Nufrio, Mrs. Zuena, Mr. Arminio

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: Mr. Galante MOTION WAS CARRIED

Ms. Jackson entered the meeting at 7:06 p.m.

COMMUNICATIONS:

Mr. Damato stated the Communications have been referred to the appropriate committees and there are a number of resolutions on personnel reflecting these as well.

Mr. Arminio stated that he would like to point out and he is sure that HR has sent out letters to all of the retiring teachers and people who have spent years of their careers here at Union, especially Kathy Arminio retiring from Washington School, Donna Mamish from

Hannah Caldwell School, Nicole Cardinale, teacher from Washington School, Mary Karen DeMichael, guidance counsel at Union High, there are a number of people that have spent many years in Union and are leaving for retirement. Patricia Battinelli, teacher from Livingston School, Catherine Stewart-Schackman from Franklin School, Esmeralda Senczakiewicz, from Special Education Department, Leonard Gallo from the high school and Janice Hibbard, 12-month secretary from the Maintenance Department. She has been there a long time and is retiring. Congratulations to all those people that are retiring.

#### LETTER OF RESIGNATION - CARDINALE

Nicole Cardinale, teacher assistant at Washington School, submitted a letter of resignation for the purpose of retirement, effective February 27, 2015.

#### LETTER OF RESIGNATION – ARMINIO

Kathy Arminio, teacher at Washington School, submitted a letter of resignation for the purpose of retirement, effective July 1, 2015.

#### LETTER OF RESIGNATION – RAB (MAMISH)

Donna J. Rab (Mamish), teacher at Hannah Caldwell School, submitted a letter of resignation for the purpose of retirement, effective July 1, 2015.

#### LETTER OF RESIGNATION – GRANO

Gray Grano, custodian at Kawameeh Middle School, submitted a letter of resignation for the purpose of retirement, effective August 1, 2015.

#### LETTER OF RESIGNATION – DeMICHAEL

Mary Karen DeMichael, guidance counselor at Union High School, submitted a letter of resignation for the purpose of retirement, effective July 1, 2015.

#### REQUEST FOR MATERNITY AND UNPAID FAMILY LEAVE – TARTAGLIA

Nicole Tartaglia, French Teacher at Union High School, submitted a request for maternity and unpaid family leave, for the period May 1st through the end of the 2014-2015 school year.

#### LETTER OF RESIGNATION – BORMANN

Heather Bormann, assistant varsity softball coach position for the 2014-2015 school year, submitted a letter of resignation.

#### REQUEST FOR MATERNITY AND UNPAID FAMILY LEAVE - GIORDANO

Jennifer Giordano, special education teacher at Union High School, submitted a request for maternity and unpaid family leave, for the period April 13, 2015 until November 30, 2015.

#### REQUEST FOR MATERNITY LEAVE – AMOROSA

Megan Amorosa, teacher assistant at Connecticut Farms School, submitted a request for maternity leave for the period April 27th through June 21, 2015.

**REQUEST FOR INTERMITTENT UNPAID FAMILY LEAVE – CALDAROLA**

Anne Marie Caldarola, art teacher at Franklin School, submitted a request for intermittent unpaid family leave, for the period February 13, 2015 through February 12, 2016.

**REQUEST FOR FAMILY LEAVE AND ADDITIONAL UNPAID MEDICAL LEAVE – INGRASSIA**

Mary Ingrassia, teacher assistant, submitted a request for family leave and additional unpaid medical leave, for the period January 13, 2015 through May 1, 2015.

**REQUEST FOR EXTENDED UNPAID MEDICAL LEAVE – GOLDING O'BRIEN**

Maura Golding O'Brien, teacher at Franklin School, submitted a request for extended unpaid medical leave, for the period February 1st through March 20th, 2015.

**REQUEST FOR USE OF UNION HIGH SCHOOL'S FOOTBALL FIELD – UNION COUNTY SNAPPLE BOWL**

Request from Scott Miller, Commissioner of Union County Snapple Bowl, Kenilworth Public Schools, for use of Union High School's football field to host practice for Union County Snapple Bowl All Start team on the following dates: July 6 from 6 to 8 p.m.; July 7 from 6 to 8 p.m.; July 8 from 6 to 8 p.m.; July 9 from 6 to 8 p.m.; July 13 from 1 to 3 p.m. and July 14 from 6 to 8 p.m.

**REQUEST FOR USE OF UNION HIGH SCHOOL – RANGLA PUNJAB ACADEMY**

Request from Sukhvir Singh, from Rangla Punjab Academy for use of Union High School Auditorium on May 2 or May 23, 2015 for Academy Dance Recital from 2 p.m. to 9 p.m.

**REQUEST FOR MATERNITY AND UNPAID FAMILY LEAVE - LEON**

Deanna Leon, teacher at Connecticut Farms School, submitted a request for maternity and unpaid family leave, for the period March 6 through May 31, 2015.

**LETTER OF RESIGNATION – KELLER**

Wendy Keller, teacher assistant at Battle Hill School, submitted a letter of resignation effective March 17, 2015.

**LETTER OF RESIGNATION – BATTINELLI**

Patricia Battinelli, teacher at Livingston School, submitted a letter of resignation for the purpose of retirement, effective July 1, 2015.

**REQUEST FOR MATERNITY LEAVE – RAMIREZ**

Jennifer Ramirez, art teacher at Burnet Middle School, submitted a request for maternity leave, for the period from March 11, 2015 through June 15, 2015.

**LETTER OF RESIGNATION – STEWART-SCHACKMAN**

Catherine Stewart-Schackman, speech therapist at Franklin School, submitted a letter of resignation for the purpose of retirement, effective July 1, 2015.

**LETTER OF RESIGNATION – SENCZAKIEWICZ**

Esmeralda Senczakiewicz, secretary for Special Services Department, submitted a letter of resignation for the purpose of retirement, effective October 1, 2015.

#### REQUEST FOR INTERMITTENT FAMILY LEAVE – McGUIRE

Nicole L. McGuire, teacher at Jefferson School, submitted a request for intermittent family leave, for the period February 25, 2015 through April 1, 2015 (working every Wednesday and Thursday).

#### REQUEST FOR FAMILY LEAVE – SOTO

Helen Soto, world language teacher at Kawameeh Middle School, submitted a request for family leave, for the period from March 16, 2015 and returning on March 30, 2015.

#### LETTER OF RESIGNATION – GALLO

Leonard Gallo, teacher at Union High School, submitted a letter of resignation for the purpose of retirement, effective July 1, 2015.

#### LETTER OF RESIGNATION – HIBBARD

Janice Hibbard, 12-month secretary for the Maintenance Department, submitted a letter of resignation for the purpose of retirement, effective July 1, 2015.

#### SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT:

Mr. Tatum stated that he was happy to say he was not retiring. He also stated that with respect to the PARCC testing all network issues appear to be resolved. This exam will conclude April 2<sup>nd</sup>. Both middle schools recently held school plays – Burnett Middle School presented Milan Jr. on February 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> and final production on March 1<sup>st</sup>. Kawameeh Middle School presented their rendition of Hair Spray Jr. on March 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup>. Franklin Elementary School held an assembly during Presidents' week under the direction of Mr. Jack Saroka about the life and time of Abraham Lincoln and he was joined by fellow Franklin School faculty members as the support cast. Two of our elementary schools participated in Jump Rope for Heart fundraisers recently; Hannah Caldwell raised \$4,552.47 and Connecticut Farms raised \$7,502. We thank them for their efforts and other schools participated in this program and it is a worthy cause. Foreign language national honor society induction ceremony - the foreign language national honor society conducted their annual honor society induction today at Union High School. This program was scheduled yesterday but due to scheduling conflicts, it was rescheduled for today. District re-registration – Union Township Board of Education district wide re-registration - the re-registration; the Union County Board of Education once again is engaged in the district-wide re-registration process. Students in grades 4, 5, 8 and 10 will receive re-registration packets from the student data-base. Parents are asked to verify and correct information as needed. The requested information must be returned to specific schools on the dates indicated. We will continue to pursue re-registration on a bi-annual basis so we can continue to ensure that students who attend our schools actually belong here.

#### EDUCATION/STUDENT DISCIPLINE COMMITTEE RESOLUTIONS:

Moved by Dr. Francis, seconded by Mrs. Zuena that the following resolutions be adopted:

E-1. AMEND 2014-2015 OUT-OF-DISTRICT SENT AND RECEIVED ATYPICAL STUDENT PLACEMENT AND TUITITION LISTS

That the board amend the 2014-2015 out-of-district atypical student placement list and students exited from out-of-district placement in accordance with the information in the hands of each board member.

E-2. APPROVE LIST OF STUDENTS REMOVED FROM THE ROLLS

That the Board approve the list of students removed from the rolls [two (2) students exited from February 1st through February 28th 2015 or a total of thirty-four (34) students for the 2014-2015 school year] who are not domiciled in this school district and three (3) students who will be allowed to complete the 2014-2015 school year in accordance with the information in the hands of each board member.

E-3. APPROVE COMPREHENSIVE HEALTH/FAMILY CURRICULUM

That the board approve Comprehensive Health/Family Curriculum Guide Grades K-4 for the 2015-2016 school year, in accordance with the information in the hands of each board member.

E-4. APPROVE EXTENDED SCHOOL YEAR PROGRAM

That the board approve Battle Hill Elementary School as the location of the Extended School Year Program for July 2015.

DISCUSSION: None.

AYE: Dr. Francis, Mr. Galante, Ms. Jackson, Mr. Layden, Mr. McDowell, Mr. Nufrio, Mrs. Zuena, Mr. Arminio

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION WAS CARRIED

FISCAL AND PLANNING COMMITTEE RESOLUTIONS:

Moved by Ms. Jackson, seconded by Mr. Layden that the following resolutions be adopted:

F-1. ACCEPT TREASURER'S REPORT

That the Treasurer's Report dated February 28, 2015 be accepted.

F-2. ACCEPT SECRETARY'S REPORT

That the Secretary's Report dated February 28, 2015 be accepted.

F-3. CERTIFY TREASURER'S AND SECRETARY'S REPORTS

Pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:23-2.11(a), I certify that as of February 28, 2015 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.

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James J. Damato, Board Secretary

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Dated

Pursuant to N.J.A.C.6A:23-2.2(h), we certify that as of February 28, 2015 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 LINE ITEM TRANSFERS**

That the Board approve line item transfers in accordance with the information in the hands of each board member.

**F-5. APPROVE CONTRACTS AND/OR PURCHASE ORDERS**

That the Board approve the attached list of contracts and/or purchase orders pursuant to the requirements of N.J.S.A. 18A:18A-5 and 8A:18A-10(a) and in accordance with the information in the hands of each board member.

**F-6. APPROVE DISTRICTWIDE TRAVEL AND RELATED EXPENSES.**

That the Board 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 in the hands of each board member.

**F-7. APPROVE CONTRACTS AND/OR PURCHASES**

That the board approve attached list of contracts and/or purchases pursuant to the requirements of N.J.S.A. 18A:18A-5(21) in accordance with the information in the hands of each board member: (a) Cherrydale Farms – not to exceed \$7,000 – football fundraiser – Union High School Athletics; (b) Gogashi-Designs – not to exceed \$3,000 – baseball fundraiser – Union High School Athletics; (c) Passaic Valley Coaches – not to exceed \$4,000 – transportation for ski/snowboard trip – Kawameeh Middle School; (d) Audio, Inc., - \$5,050 – main audio rental for “Sophisticated Ladies” – Union High School; (e) Home Depot Credit Services - \$5,561.91 – scenery for UHS Performing Arts Company Season – Union High School; (f) Rose Brand - \$2,745 – draperies for “Sophisticated Ladies” – Union High School; (g) All American Tours & Travel - \$8,000 – final payment, Festival of Disney – Union High School; (h) CMT Sound - \$3,768 – sound system for school play – Mulan – Burnet Middle School; (i) CMT Sound Systems LLC - \$4,575 – sound system for KMS musical – Kawameeh Middle School.

**F-8. APPROVE DISTRICTWIDE STUDENT FIELD TRIP DESTINATIONS AND PURPOSES**

That the Board pre-approve districtwide student field trip destinations and purposes pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-5.8 in accordance with the information in the hands of each board member.

**F-9. APPROVE INCREASE IN GENERAL FUNDS**

That there should be raised for General Funds \$84,295,227 for the 2015-2016 school year (includes \$1,000,000 for increased health benefits).

**F-10. APPROVE 2015-2016 BUDGET**

That the board include in its proposed 2015-2016 budget an additional amount of \$1 million for increases in health benefits in accordance with the information in the hands of each board member.

**F-11. APPROVE WITHDRAWAL FROM CAPITAL RESERVE TO CAPITAL OUTLAY (FUND 12)**

That the board approve withdrawal from Capital Reserve to Capital Outlay (Fund 12) in the amount of \$1,155,000 for the following projects (a) Asbestos Removal – Districtwide - \$55,000; (b) Bathrooms- Burnet Middle School - \$33,000; (c) Bathrooms – Union High School - \$165,000; (d) Bathrooms – Washington School - \$33,000; (e) New Classrooms – Burnet Middle School - \$825,000; (f) Sidewalks – Districtwide - \$44,000 in accordance with the information in the hands of each board member.

**F-12. APPROVE WITHDRAWAL FROM MAINTENANCE RESERVE**

That the board approve withdrawal from Maintenance Reserve in the amount of \$600,000 for required maintenance in accordance with the information in the hands of each board member.

**F-13. APPROVE TRAVEL EXPENDITURE MAXIMUM**

The committee recommends and I so move that the board approve Travel Expenditure Maximum in the amount of \$80,000 in accordance with the information in the hands of each board member.

**F-14. APPROVE MAXIMUM DOLLAR LIMIT FOR PROFESSIONAL SERVICES AND PUBLIC RELATIONS**

That the board establish a maximum dollar limit for professional services and public relations in accordance with the information in the hands of each board member.

**F-15. APPROVE SUBMISSION OF 2015 SAFETY GRANT PROGRAM APPLICATION**

That the board hereby approves the submission of grant application for the 2015 Safety Grant Program through the New Jersey Schools Insurance Group's ERIC NORTH Subfund for the purposes described in the application, in the amount of \$12,084.00 for the period July 1, 2015 through June 30, 2016 in accordance with the information in the hands of each board member.

Mr. Arminio asked if Mr. Damato could speak about the EPIC North grant. Mr. Damato stated that it is going to be a project to enhance the security of our schools districtwide and did not want to get into the exact details; but that grant is specifically for security enhancements and we have been getting this grant for a number of years. There is no match required of the Board of Education. It is less than what we received last year; nevertheless, it is money that we did not expect to receive so we are thankful to receive it and put it to good use. Mr. Nufrio asked if it a recurring grant. Mr. Damato stated that the subfund works on a fiscal analysis of the year so if

they wind up the year with their operations at a certain levels, than the grants reflect that level. This past year the grants went down a little. In the past we have received \$25,000, \$35,000, \$45,000 but I expect that it will be back up to that level in next few years.

DISCUSSIONS: None

AYE: Dr. Francis, Mr. Galante, Ms. Jackson, Mr. Layden, Mr. McDowell, Mr. Nufrio, Mrs. Zuena, Mr. Arminio  
 NAY: None  
 ABSTAIN: None

MOTION WAS CARRIED

OPERATIONS COMMITTEE RESOLUTIONS:

Moved by Mr. Layden, seconded by Mr. Galante that the following resolutions be adopted:

O-1. REPORT ON RECEIPT OF BIDS

Report receipt of bids received on March 6, 2015 for proposed electrical upgrades at Union High School.

O-2. AFFIRM SUPERINTENDENT'S RESOLUTION OF HIB

That the board affirm the Superintendent's resolution of Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying (HIB) conclusions for the period February 6, 2015 to March 6, 2015.

O-3. APPROVE SECURITY DRILL AND BUS EVACUATION REPORTS

That pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:41-1 and P.L. 2009, Chapter 178, the board approve the following security drill and bus evacuation reports for the 2013-2014 school year in accordance with the information in the hands of each board member.

O-4. ACCEPT DONATION FROM CONNECTICUT FARMS PTA

That the Board accept donation from Connecticut Farms PTA of three (3) benches to be installed at Connecticut Farms community garden, in accordance with the information in the hands of each board member.

O-5. AWARD BID FOR ELECTRICAL UPGRADES AT UNION HIGH SCHOOL

That the Board award bid for proposed electrical upgrades at Union High School in the base bid amount of \$1,326,244 which includes a \$79,474 contingency allowance to Manor II Electric, Inc., 3 Ardsley Court, Holmdel, New Jersey 07733, in accordance with the information in the hands of each board member.

DISCUSSION: None

AYE: Dr. Francis, Mr. Galante, Ms. Jackson, Mr. Layden, Mr. McDowell, Mr. Nufrio, Mrs. Zuena, Mr. Arminio  
 NAY: None  
 ABSTAIN: None

MOTION WAS CARRIED



**PERSONNEL COMMITTEE RESOLUTIONS:**

Mr. Nufrio stated that we are removing P-5 from this list. Otherwise, we have P-1 through P-7 (excluding of course P-5) submitted for consideration.

Moved by Mr. Nufrio, seconded by Mrs. Zuena that resolutions P-1 through P-4 and P-6 through P-7 be adopted:

**P-1. APPROVE PERONNEL ACTIONS**

That Personnel Actions be approved in accordance with the information in the hands of each board member.

**P-2. AMEND SUBSTITUTE LISTS FOR 2014-2015**

That the Board amend Substitute Lists for the 2014-2015 school year in accordance with the information in the hands of each board.

**P-3. ACCEPT LETTERS OF RESIGNATION**

That the board accept letters of resignation from the following staff: (a) Kathy Arminio, teacher at Washington School, effective July 1, 2015 (retirement); (b) Donna J. Rab (Mamish), teacher at Hannah Caldwell School, effective July 1, 2015 (retirement); (c) Gary Grano, custodian at Kawameeh Middle School, effective August 1, 2015 (retirement); (d) Mary Karen DeMichael, guidance counselor at Union High School, effective July 1, 2015 (retirement); (e) Nicole Cardinale, teacher assistant at Washington School, effective February 27, 2015; (f) Heather Borman, resigning assistant varsity softball coach position for 2014-2015 school year; (g) Wendy Keller, teacher assistant at Battle Hill School, effective March 17, 2015; (h) Patricia Battinelli, teacher at Livingston School, effective July 1, 2015 (retirement); (i) Catherine Stewart-Schackman, speech therapist at Franklin School, effective July 1, 2015 (retirement); (j) Esmeralda Senczakiewicz, secretary for Special Services Department, effective October 1, 2015 (retirement); (k) Leonard Gallo, teacher at Union High School, effective July 1, 2015 (retirement); (l) Janice Hibbard, 12-month secretary in Maintenance Department, effective July 1, 2015 (retirement).

**P-4. APPROVE LEAVES FOR STAFF**

That the board approve leaves for the following staff: (a) Nicole Tartaglia, French teacher at Union High School, maternity and unpaid family leave for the period May 1 through the end of the 2014-2015 school year; (b) Jennifer Giordano, special education teacher at Union High School, maternity and unpaid medical leave for the period April 13 through November 30, 2015; (c) Megan Amorosa, teacher assistant at Connecticut Farms School, maternity leave for the period April 27 through June 21, 2015; (d) Anne Marie Caldarola, art teacher at Franklin School, intermittent unpaid family leave for the period February 13 2015 through February 12, 2016; (e) Mary Ingrassia, teacher assistant, unpaid family leave and additional unpaid medical leave for the period January 13 through May 1, 2015; (f) Maura Golding O'Brien, teacher at Franklin School, extended unpaid medical leave for the period February 1 through March 20, 2015; (g) Deanne Leon, teacher at Connecticut Farms School, maternity and unpaid family leave for the period March 6 through May 31, 2015; (h) Jennifer Ramirez, art teacher at Burnet Middle School, maternity leave for the period March 11, 2015 through June 15, 2015; (i) Nicole

McGuire, teacher at Jefferson School, intermittent family leave for the period February 25, 2015 through April 1, 2015 (working Wednesdays and Thursdays); (j) Helen Soto, teacher at Kawameeh Middle School, family leave starting March 16, 2015 and returning on Monday, March 30, 2015.

**P-5. RESOLUTION P-5 WAS PULLED FROM AGENDA AND TO BE CONSIDERED AT FUTURE MEETING.**

(The Superintendent recommends, the committee concurs and I so move that the board approve Settlement Agreement and Release for Employee #10991 in accordance in the information in the hands of each board member.)

**P-6. APPROVE SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT**

That the board approve Settlement Agreement and Release for Employee #10125 in accordance in the information in the hands of each board member.

**P.7. APPROVE SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT**

That the board approve Settlement Agreement and Release for Employee #10306 in accordance in the information in the hands of each board member.

**DISCUSSION: None**

**AYE:** Dr. Francis, Mr. Galante, Ms. Jackson, Mr. Layden, Mr. McDowell, Mr. Nufrio, Mrs. Zuena, Mr. Arminio  
**NAY:** None  
**ABSTAIN:** None **MOTION WAS CARRIED**

**APPROVAL OF BILLS:**

Moved by Ms. Jackson, seconded by Dr. Francis 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:** Dr. Francis, Mr. Galante, Ms. Jackson, Mr. Layden, Mr. McDowell, Mr. Nufrio, Mrs. Zuena, Mr. Arminio  
**NAY:** None  
**ABSTAIN:** None **MOTION WAS CARRIED**

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

Mr. Arminio asked Dr. Lishak to inform the Board on the field trip handout. Dr. Lishak stated the very last item was added by UHS Model UN Club. Our students at UHS have been invited to partake in the Model UN in the actual United Nations in New York. Dr. Lishak stated that they will have the opportunity to compete against other countries in different debates and categories, this Friday, Saturday and Sunday. We are excited about that and congratulate the students that were invited as well as Mr. Fiorito who is taking his own time to go and bring his

students over on the weekend and take part in this amazing opportunity. Mr. Arminio stated it is a great thing for our students.

Mr. Arminio asked Mr. McDowell to inform the Board on a seminar he attended. Mr. McDowell stated that he, Mr. Arminio and Mrs. Zuena attended the Union County School Board Association meeting at the Westwood last week. One of the presentations - legal issues concerning technologies at board meetings - was very timely. The presentation was given by the law firm of Adams Gutierrez and Lattiboudere. Some of things that they spoke about was the Open Public Meetings Act. The definition of meeting according to the Open Public Meetings Act is any gathering where court rule or means of communication equipment. We had a meeting where I had to participate by phone. Those are the things that the lawyers made clear - we need to have a policy on how to do that, in fact if we have members of the board participate by electronic means - I thought that was very enlightening. They also stated that an urgent issue needs to exist in order to participate by electronic communication. One of the other things they spoke about was emails. If our President was to send an email to all of us and someone "replied to all" - they could constitute a meeting. So this is one of things we need to be careful about. If you go to reply to a single member or to all the members, you don't want to "reply to all" because again it could be construed as a meeting. We need to be careful of email chains and sometimes emails can be subpoenaed. We should keep our personal emails separate from our board of education emails and they suggested that we have a board of education email address that we can use for communicating to each other so that is separate from our own personal emails. They spoke about record keeping -- if emails get construed as a meeting, our personal emails could be open to deposition or questions from outside agencies. An example, the last couple weeks with Hillary Clinton and her emails. Again it is very important to keep our personal emails separate from our business emails. They also spoke about cyber bullying and one interesting thing with respect to bullying is where a young girl texted photos of herself of a sexual nature and she was only 14 years but she was prosecuted for that and now she is listed a sex offender at the age of 14. The law has been changed so that it has to be two people under the age of 18 - the person that committed the act and the subject, that is something we should all be careful - like the teachers should be careful about using personal email to contact students. That's one of the things that should not be stated but should be understood - something we may need to improve in our policy. Mr. McDowell stated he thought it was a very informative meeting. Mr. Arminio stated that next time there is a NJSBA workshop he will make sure that all board members are informed so that we all can go and it is free. Mr. Nufrio asked Mr. McDowell if the law firm indicated these as recommendations. Mr. Nufrio asked Mr. Damato if these are recommendations or are they mandates? Mr. Nufrio asked Mr. Damato could do some research and find out which are recommendations and what are mandates so that we can understand what to do and not to do. Mr. Damato stated he would look into this. Dr. Francis asked what are the concerns about when we all cannot attend the meetings, say a special meeting, doing it over the phone. Mr. McDowell stated that they gave an example - would we have all members participate by phone. We certainly would not. I think it is very important to us that we set a policy. We need to have a policy in place that is reasonable. If you participate by phone should the public be able to - it opens up another can of worms if we don't have a policy. Mrs. Zuena stated if we were going to participate by phone it would have to be a 2-way communication not just one way. Mr. Arminio stated that in addition to that, if you are in Executive Session and you are attending by phone, how do we know that there isn't any one

sitting with you. Mr. Damato stated that this is a very good point. As to the public meeting, the meeting is taking place in public and all of the discussion is in public, the speaker phone is on the table, and everyone who comes to the room to hear the meeting would be able to hear all of the discussion even among the people who are on the telephone and others. Mr. Damato stated that various agencies in the State of New Jersey permit this because the statute specifically says by "electronic communication" that is not by accident. The legislature intended when they adopted that law to make it available and available technology to groups like the Board of Public Utilities and other groups to conduct their meetings by telephone if the need arose. Is it always better to have everybody in the room? I think it is always better. I like to look at the faces and the expressions and I think that people get a lot out of that but I think that the words are the most important thing. The words are what are reflected in minutes so that I think overall as long as all the discussions held in public so that everybody can hear in the place that we noticed the meeting to be in, I don't have a problem with it. The issue about Executive Session – I 100% agree; so far we have not conducted an Executive Session by telephone and I would prefer to leave it that way because of the issue that Mr. Arminio raised. The same goes for emails that are not attached to a particular person but maybe to a group of people. Those are the kinds of things that you can send a confidential communication, you want it to go to the board member and to no one else so that no one else can open that email other than the board members. There is no law per say that requires that but it is extremely good practice – we have discussed this in the past as a board and we welcome the board's decision on implementing that. Mr. Nufrio asked Mr. Damato to add this to the list and that Mr. Damato and Mr. Nufrio can meet to formulate with the assistance of the other board members by their input a policy which would govern electronic communication at a meeting. Mr. Damato agreed.

Mr. Damato stated that he wanted to take this opportunity to acknowledge his assistant, Mrs. Ditri, at her last public meeting of the board of education and to just say that I guess in the course of life there are only a handful of times, opportunities maybe, in life where you meet someone who has the whole package, the integrity, the work ethic, the professional demeanor, the moral character and all of those things put together in one person is very rare in my experience. Her family has come to support her at her last meeting and it is wonderful to know that she has a great support system and family. Mr. Damato stated that he is honored to know her and he deeply respects what she has done for him over so many years. He stated that he will always count Pat as an esteemed colleague not necessarily my secretary per say but my esteemed colleague and friend that could certainly be counted on in every circumstance. He is very grateful to have known Pat.

Mr. Arminio stated that he wanted to thank Mrs. Ditri for all her years of service to the Township of Union Board of Education, the students, the Board Members and he stated that he has made calls to the board office and Pat always had the answer. I don't remember a time where Pat said I don't know, she said I know I'll give you the answer now or I will get back to you with an answer. Mr. Arminio stated thank you so much on behalf of all past board of education members you have worked with for the past 29 years. Thank you.

Mr. Nufrio stated that he wanted to share the same sentiments. He continued by saying that she will be missed and retirement is not a time to look back, it is a time to look forward and he personally he wished her good health, happiness to both you and your family. God bless.

Dr. Francis stated that he has only known Mrs. Ditri for about 2 years and he wanted to thank her for welcoming him when he first came you made things very easy, because a few times I may have forgotten to sign in. But he stated that he asked her what she was going to doing when she retires and he said that Mrs. Ditri said she would take care of her husband and I wish you good health, as well as your family and that he was happy to have gotten to know her during this short period of time.

Mr. Layden stated Mrs. Ditri is an absolute delight and pleasure to work with you. I wish you the best in your retirement and I thank you for all the dedicated years of service.

Mr. Galante stated thank you for the assistance you have given me since I have been on the board and I have known you a heck of a lot longer than that but appreciate all you have done and wish you the best.

Mr. Tatum stated he wanted to thank Mrs. Ditri for all the support she has given him throughout the years. He stated that one final act as your Superintendent, he will require her (together with all retirees) to return for any festivities that the board has in the administration building and he expects to see her there and to visit on occasions and certainly that Mrs. Ditri is always welcome and the door is always open. This night I not an end it just starts a new chapter. So congratulations on your retirement but I know everyone will miss you immensely, he stated he certainly will. Thank you for your service.

Ms. Jackson stated that she will miss Mrs. Ditri's emails and thank her for keeping her on her toes and bless Mrs. Ditri and her family.

Mr. Arminio stated that Washington School, Mrs. Mason's 3<sup>rd</sup> grade class collected over 600 cans of soup and donated it to the Union Food Bank of Connecticut Farms Presbyterian Church. Thank you Mrs. Mason and your 3<sup>rd</sup> grade class on this charitable effort in collecting these soup cans. This coming Saturday, March 28<sup>th</sup> at Union High School Cafeteria at 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. is the Family Resource Fair. Mr. Arminio stated that he remembers last year going to the Resource Fair and it was an eye-opening of all of the resources available to the people of Union. It doesn't cost anything, there are a lot of handouts and a lot of information is available on the resources available to the people of Union. Mr. Arminio stated that he advises everyone to go and pick-up some of the handouts and find out all that is available to you in the Township of Union. Finally, the Jr. ROTC won the New Jersey State drill team championship last week. Congratulations to the New Jersey State drill team and the Jr. ROTC of Union High School.

#### NEW BUSINESS:

Mr. Arminio stated that he has two items under New Business. A reminder to the Board Members that you will be receiving two things in the very near future from Mr. Damato – the Superintendent evaluation which needs to be completed by April 30<sup>th</sup> and the Board of Education self-evaluation. He stated that he doesn't know if everyone read through last year, I think we need to fill it out again – we spoke about it at one of the meetings. It takes about 15-20 minutes

– you have a whole month to do it. We talked about our self-evaluation – what we have accomplished during the course of the year. So those two evaluations will be sent electronically.

Mr. Arminio asked if there was any more new business. None.

#### COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC:

Mr. Arminio asked if there were any comments from the public and to remember that you have 5 minutes to make comments.

Jill Hall stated that she wanted to extend her congratulations to Mrs. Ditri - so many people have turned to Mrs. Ditri and she wishes Mrs. Ditri the best. Ms. Hall also stated she wanted to congratulate Mr. Fiorito on being able to get the delegation in the UN. I have been privileged to be a UN advisor for the last 9 years and we recently attended a weekend in January and it was an amazing experience and the connections the students will make moving forward for college and connections in business are great opportunities. At Kawameeh, this is the 2<sup>nd</sup> year we are doing our March madness. This year we had a representative from a non-profit called “Love One Forty-Six” which is an agency working to eliminate human trafficking around the world. The gentlemen came down to speak with the students at the end of February at the beginning of our festivities. We are currently in the middle of pennies war – currently the 8<sup>th</sup> graders are being smashed by the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> graders. It is a coin collecting thing and on April 17<sup>th</sup> in the afternoon we are doing hungry hungry hippo where we will have students and teachers riding scooters, grabbing balls from the middle of the gym trying to get them in the goals and raising some money. Also on April 24<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m. at Kawameeh Middle School, our first of a continuing series, will be dancing with the staff. We have 10 staff members currently signed up to dance with the students to a variety of music, everyone has a category. We have a DJ coming in and someone to MC, we have some judges and a flash mob in the middle and then an all teacher dance. All the moneys that we raise, in addition to selling t-shirts, are going to go to Love One Forty-Six. Ms Hall stated that she will send a calendar to Mr. Arminio so that he knows what is going on in the school.

Mr. Williams of 294 Hyatt Street stated he wants to welcome Mr. Dowell and he is looking forward to what he brings to the board. Mr. Williams continued by saying the following: I do not look to this board to solve my problems and I don't look to government to solve my problems. People solve their problems. One of the things that was said by your board attorney which was interesting was moral character, integrity, professionalism and work ethic. I was taught that my whole life. I am a man that speaks my mind. I speak my mind to people. I walk my talk and I am not perfect and do choose to do the right thing. So I am not self-righteous and I choose to live in righteousness. We all have choices. The reason I came, my son's case is settled and part because you the board had to vote on it. But I am really here because 17 months ago, this District and my child, it was never about my child, your special education department is atrocious. I went to the Superintendent told him how we were treated because I am not done with this district, I am not done with the special education department because I don't want any other parent to go through what my wife and I have gone through. The disrespect, the non-calling and not calling us by Mr. & Mrs. Williams. I thought that we would not get any justice. To this day my wife is still not called Mrs. Williams by the Director of Special Education. Mr. Damato stated to please stay away from disparaging comments to individuals. If you speak

about the issues, I can understand that, but please do not speak about the individuals. Mr. Williams stated I respect your right and I hear what you are saying and I will continue its not disparaging either, it is my personal opinion. You don't have to agree – we can agree to disagree. Mr. Williams stated that his son is out of district now – he is a special needs child – he has ADHD and attention deficient and impulsivity. Mr. Williams stated that God felt that we were the right parents to take care of this little boy. Mr. Williams stated that he started the litigation because he was lied to and the point that he was making is the point that the way that we were treated, the outright disrespect, the changing of transcripts, the lies, that the special education got is beyond what you can fathom when you talk about the honor there was none. Even if you disagree, it doesn't take 17 months to decide what is best for your child. It was never about my child, it was about posturing, it was about trying to break me financially, spiritually and mentally and that was never going to happen because of vendictiveness. My child needed help and this board is suppose to be about the children and you are sitting here – some of you have children in the district and some of you do not. I have three children that have gone through this district, one who is not going because now he is place that he needs. The people that come like Susan Lipstein whose child is no longer here - she comes to fight for children – she doesn't have to do that. Roxanne Campi whose child also went through this – there are children who need help and they are not being helped because you don't have the honor or integrity to really make it about the children and not about their agenda, not about the funding of the government for special education, not about your title, but about these children. The reason why I am here because my little boy in three days of being in his new environment (what I was fighting for for 17 months), he is 11 years old, he has the right to be able to blossom and have a chance to be the best that he can be by people that believe in him. He went to a school every day that not only labeled him but didn't want to see him, didn't support him. I got a call every day and I was not going to yell at my child anymore. I was fighting for the right environment for 17 months with no cooperation besides the disrespect. The reason why I am here is because I am determined not to have any parent go through what my child went through. If you say you care about these children, then you need to rethink and now my son is in a great place. I am going to ensure, as one God has put breath in my body that no parent goes through what my wife and I went through at the hands of specialist caring for the children and doing their job.

Mr. James Keyes stated that he is the father of Ja'Lene Keyes. I have four children that graduated from this school district, one is currently a senior. On January 15<sup>th</sup> our daughter Ja'Lene was assaulted in the bathroom during the lunch period. Shortly after a group of girls came into the bathroom and was assaulted in the bathroom and one of those girls attacked my daughter unprovoked, the other girls did not intervene and there were approximately 15 bystanders who did nothing while this fight was taking place. This resembles something along the lines that happened at McDonalds in New York City at the same time. That day I arrived to pick up my daughter from the nurses office with two other family members after that speaking with my daughter and alerted the school administration there were students in the bathroom that were recording the incident and to our knowledge nothing was done to confiscate those phones and footage that was destine to land on social media which it did we are in possession of some videos and hoping that all of the board members by this time have seen the videos. Sadly to our knowledge did not move quickly, have not seen any reports, I haven't been reassured that the Principal nor the Assistant Principal moves quickly to prevent this from happening. I was told by the Principal that the surveillance video was inaccessible because the IT person or the person

responsible for the video was not at work that day. After conversations that we had, we found out that the video was available to all the Principals in the school. Later on I spoke with my wife who spoke with the Vice Principal and was told that the person who attacked her might not even face any disciplinary action. My daughter continues to be victimized by threats, by online bullying on the part of the attackers in spite the fact that she has not returned to school. Sadly, this incident is not isolated. Many of the girls that were in the bathroom that day in fact threatened my daughter when she was a 7<sup>th</sup> grader and they were 8<sup>th</sup> graders. We brought this to the attention of the Assistant Principal at the Burnet Middle School and apparently no steps were taken and reports not made and also they didn't ensure my daughter's safety and make sure she got home safely. We lost faith in the ability of the school district to keep up with her safety. Although our daughter has done wrong she now is delegated to home instruction which typically is used for students with special needs or students who are dismissed for whatever reason from their education. Each day that my daughter stays home is another day lost. I don't know of any parent who if they were in my shoes would take any chances on the life of your child. I am having a hard time trying to find out who is the advocate for our daughter who is the one who is going to ensure her safety, who is the one who is going to ensure her appropriate education. We are disappointed in all the years I have been and we have had our family in the school district, I haven't received a reasonable response.

Mrs. Keyes stated that she is the mother of Ja'Lene and basically our objective here to place our daughter in a school that is equal to or better than Union High School. Now we are under the impression that you make it safe for my daughter to be there. My daughter didn't know who her enemy was. She went into that bathroom to use it and she was drying her hands when she was approached when she was assaulted. Now if it is not a coincidence to me that something like that happened in McDonalds because it shined a bigger life on what is going on. We are mandated to protect – you are mandated, I am an educator myself, we are mandated to protect these children under our care. Every system that was suppose to be in place on January 15, 2015 in the high school failed my daughter. There was no monitor in the hall so there were 15-20 girls in the bathroom, she was trapped in the bathroom, she was assaulted in the bathroom, she was verbally abused in the bathroom. No one was caught, everyone ran, she had to name her victims – the people who victimized her – we don't know what happened to them, they are back at school. She is not at school. This is a student that you would never have heard her name unless she was being awarded for her academic or being in some sport. But now she is at home. Her life has totally changed. It has blown up. This girl has had nightmares, this girl has asked to sleep with her mother and she is 14 years old. Her world was just destroyed, all on school property, in the bathroom, during lunch time. There were students in the cafeteria that should not have been there. The monitoring of cafeteria was not there that day. Security came after the fact so to tell her that it is a safe environment, we would be negligent parents to put our daughter in an environment where it has already been proven it is not safe - to place her back in that environment would be ridiculous. To do the same thing and looking for a different result is not smart. So we need your help. That is what we have been asking you the entire time. We have been asking the administration at the high school, which totally failed us, we have been talking to the Superintendent's office which has failed us and basically what we are asking for is that you help us place us in a school. No we do not have the funding to send her to a private school. We have six children – four of them are in college right now. So no we don't – one of our children is about to graduate from Union High School and yes she still attends the building – but she is on a



totally different tract, she has nothing to do with these girls – so yes the building is safe for her because she has AP classes, she is an honor roll student – we know she will be fine. So place my daughter who is here back in that environment is ludicrous and we have been watching this play out in the media, we have been watching this girl who was beat up in McDonalds and it was painful. The first time I saw it I cried because it reminded me of what happened to my daughter in the bathroom and we are coming to you today to plead with you. If you have a daughter, if you have a daughter-in-law – it could have been your daughter and if you ever saw the video tape as her mother, my daughter could have died in the bathroom. Her head came so close to that sink in the bathroom she could have died and it could have totally been a different story and we are here because we are advocates for young people and we like the gentleman before us, we don't want to see this happen to another child. Things need to be changed. In the interim, we need your help for our daughter. Thank you.

Mr. Arminio asked if there were any more comments from the public. None

**MOTION TO ADJOURN:**

There being no further business before the board, it was moved by Mr. Nufrio, seconded by Ms. Jackson that the meeting be adjourned at 7:57 p.m.

AYE: Dr. Francis, Mr. Galante, Ms. Jackson, Mr. Layden, Mr. McDowell, Mr. Nufrio, Mrs. Zuena, Mr. Arminio

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

**MOTION WAS CARRIED**

Respectfully submitted,

JAMES J. DAMATO  
BOARD SECRETARY/GENERAL COUNSEL