

**TOWNSHIP OF UNION BOARD OF EDUCATION
PLANNING SESSION MINUTES
FEBRUARY 17, 2022**

NOTICE OF MEETING:

TO ALL BOARD OF EDUCATION MEMBERS:

The planning meeting of the Board of Education of the Township of Union was held on Thursday, February 17, 2022 at 7:00 p.m. at the Administration Building, 2369 Morris Avenue, Union, New Jersey pursuant to the notice sent to each member.

Mrs. Williams called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

PRESENT AT ROLL CALL:

Ms. Marissa McKenzie, Mrs. Nancy Minneci, Ms. Chastity Santana, Mrs. Kimberly Scott-Hayden, Mrs. Mary Lynn Williams

ABSENT AT ROLL CALL:

Mrs. Yocasta Brens-Watson, Dr. Guy Francis (arrived 7:12 p.m.), Mr. John O'Shea, Mrs. Nellis Regis-Darby (arrived 7:03 p.m.)

ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT:

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

Mrs. Minneci led the Board in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mrs. Koon read the statement required under the "Open Public Meetings Act", a copy of which is on file in the office of the Board Secretary.

Mrs. Minneci read the district's mission statement.

Discussion Items:

Mrs. Williams stated we have nine items on the agenda and three tie into each other.

- Superintendent goals
- Board Goals
- Strategic Plan
- Referendum (new middle school, district wide school improvements)
- Neighborhood schools' initiative
- Social Emotional Learning follow-up/monitoring
- Restorative practices program implementation
- Budget Update
- Board Retreat (dates, objectives and goals)

Dr. Taylor stated I recommend that the Board consider when it evaluates me, according to goals that the Board has to establish and tie the strategic plan goals to the superintendent goals. The strategic plan goals will drive everything going on. They are broad but they will be driving how the team evaluates people, budget items.

I don't know what this Board has done in the past regarding superintendent evaluation. I use the NJSBA's evaluation system.

Mrs. Williams asked does anyone have goals for our superintendent? I think that once we move forward with the strategic plan, a lot of that will tie into his goals and our goals in terms of what we want to accomplish for the district.

If you don't want to talk about the Board goals, if you want to leave it with the strategic plan and tying those two things into the strategic plan and the Board goals.

Ms. Santana stated being that we have more tenured Board members, in the past how have you done it with superintendents? Mrs. Williams stated New Jersey School Boards.

Ms. Santana asked how did that work out? Mrs. Williams stated we never had a strategic plan so this year is a big deal because we are putting that into place and it is something that the district has needed to keep us focused on what we are doing and accomplish things that our students need.

Dr. Taylor stated the evaluation process has me sharing documents that are supposed to reflect my ability to meet the goals or at least show progress and then the Board has a whole separate piece. Goals are just one part of the evaluation. The Board can write whatever it wants about my performance. Evaluation feed back I received from other boards that include the way I met goals or made progress and a separate section with board input.

Mrs. Minneci stated I am not allowed to participate in the superintendent evaluation but I have seen it. It is detailed. Dr. Taylor gives us his section and then there is a section where we can state where we can improve, what we have done well. Mrs. Williams stated when he puts in his information, we go through it, critique him, what we think could be better, what he has accomplished. It is a lot of information.

Ms. Santana asked Mrs. Regis-Darby how has it be done – I like to get your input. Mrs. Regis-Darby stated in the past, when Mr. Tatum was here, and I have been on the Board for seven years, he was evaluated twice. It is supposed to be every year. There are many categories on the evaluation. You evaluate his write up and give him feedback. I think there are 5-6 components. It is tedious but you want to do your due diligence and whether or not his has met those particular goals. You want to give him intentional feedback.

Dr. Taylor stated then I speak with the Board President and talk about the feedback. Mrs. Regis-Darby stated after everyone's feedback is reflected, then you sit collectively as a Board and merge those particular goals. Dr. Taylor stated you can rice me and talk about me in closed session.

Ms. Santana asked is it progressive since we have you for five years? Mrs. Williams stated yes.

Mrs. Williams stated with respect to Board goals – what would we like to accomplish?

Mrs. Scott-Hayden stated I had a conversation with Mr. Benaquista and we were talking about providing afterschool services for students and parents – similar to the EAP's. We need to make sure both students and parents receive services. In Ms. Piano's town, they offer Care Plus for students everyday after school for students who need extra support – mental health, crisis or anything else. My thinking was to have it wrap it around so it encompasses the parents as well with partnerships in the community. Whatever the district is not able to cover, perhaps we can partner with them. We send a form to the family and the family says they want to participate and in that form they would provide their insurance information to see if the insurance company will pick up the cost. It is something we should look at.

Dr. Francis arrived at 7:12 p.m.

We also talked about services for children that need therapy. We discussed stress care, Rutgers has a program. This was in reference to the student for the hearing that we had. We talked about the email you sent and I was pleased to see that we expedited that. We directed the parent as well to services. Trinitas also has a program that is in school and you go to their services five days a week. This is for the mental health of the student and also the academic side. It is an all day program – most of the day is dealing with the mental health piece and then the small component of the day deals with the academics. We talked about reaching out to Rutgers and Trinitas to partner with them. Mr. Benaquista also spoke about bringing back adult learning for some of our ELL at night and I'm interested in all of those things.

Dr. Taylor stated if the Board wants to align it's goals with the strategic plan goals, we can do that. We find a way to modify a goal or find a goal that it fits into and make it an action step.

Mrs. Williams stated Dr. Taylor and I were talking about adding an elective class to the strategic plan that exams and explores vocational opportunities for our kids. A lot of our kids can't afford college and technical schools. If some of our students are exposed to different vocations and we can incorporate that into the strategic plan.

Dr. Taylor stated I would like to plug in things to the plan that I would like to see – restorative practices. The community will help flush this out on Wednesday night so we have the right to add stuff.

Mrs. Scot-Hayden stated the staff also needs to be trained so when they are dealing with our students, they know what the process should be and what it should look like and universal across the board.

Mrs. Regis-Darby asked what would measurement look like for that? Dr. Taylor stated by the end of next year, I will have to have a dean in place. Mrs. Regis-Darby stated you are talking about more money to create a position. Dr. Taylor stated yes. I would also have to make sure that I have identified restorative practice leaders that will turnkey to their peers. We want teacher buy in.

Ms. Santana stated whenever it comes to performance reviews, I see it the other way where everyone knows expectations. Dr. Taylor stated you have the community Wednesday night, guiding us on what the expectations should be of me but maybe the Board should say Scott this is what we expect of you.

Ms. Santana asked what KPIs do you have to measure yourself? I'm all for theory and I want equality in all schools. What metrics do we have to measure it? Dr. Taylor stated you can talk with the School Board liaison about that but I have not been accustomed to having been quantitatively evaluated. There is nothing wrong with the Board meeting without me about these are things we want to make sure he does.

Ms. Santana stated I hate standardized testing but are they ever measured to your goals? Dr. Taylor stated it could be. A lot of the superintendents have merit goals, personally I don't believe in. It's ridiculous – you are doing your job and you are getting extra pay. Those merit goals are tied to metrics. I don't believe test scores measure your success.

Mrs. Regis-Darby asked when do you anticipate the Strategic Plan to be completed? Dr. Taylor stated by July 1 – I would like it implemented.

Mrs. Regis-Darby stated there are four goals in the strategic plan. If the Board wants to hold the superintendent to the strategic plan, the plan won't be implemented until July 1st – what percentage of those goals do you want completed by then? If I use the Strategic Plan as part of your evaluation, by July 1 you have completed a Strategic Plan, I'm looking at how much you have mastered. What is going to tell me whether or not you are going to be successful or not is those measurable steps that the community gives back to you. I think the Board as a whole should be looking at those measurable steps. Put a percentage to those measurable steps.

Dr. Taylor stated you will see on the school board evaluation instrument that there are three options to indicate whether you have met your goal – you haven't, processing and success. In my previous evaluations I put processing because to me you never get to a goal because you are constantly adding stuff. I hear you so maybe we add a percentage. Mrs. Regis-Darby stated my recommendation would be to consider the percentage of the action steps. I don't know if the Board wants to use this as part of his evaluation but that is what I would do.

Mrs. Williams stated "referendum" that is something John had spoken with Dr. Taylor but he is not here. Did he discuss any of that with you Mrs. Koon? Mrs. Koon stated no, he did mention that he was interested in it and he would speak with Dr. Taylor and that he had contacts with the folks at the State and he was very excited to work with Dr. Taylor and the Board in trying to come up with a referendum. He didn't go into any details. It is a big undertaking.

Dr. Taylor stated the idea of a referendum is you put for a vote the passing of a certain dollar amount/debt that the district is willing to incur – usually through bonds to pay for large scale facilities. Mrs. Koon stated it has to be approved by the community.

John and I spoke about this and I'm aware that the last referendum that was passed, that debt is retiring this year. Mrs. Koon stated I think next year but I will have to check. Dr. Taylor stated the taxes that went up will be reduced because the debt will be retired. The timing for the referendum is good.

Besides the fact that we have needs to upgrade the facilities, we know there are other changes that need to be done at the high school and Burnett. We have a committee where Chastity and others are serving called "The Neighborhood School Task Force" – talking about potentially putting the two middle schools together, creating an early childhood school, doing something with Jefferson and we will talk about that next week, but it certainly appears that we need money to do a lot of that work. If we were to merge Kawameeh and Burnet, we need a new middle school. The referendum timing could be very good for various reasons.

I sketched a timeline. I met with a retired superintendent, Brian Zukowski, a previous superintendent of North Brunswick and now the Vice President of Kean – like him or not, he has passed a lot of referendums and he is a pro at it. The most recent one had to do with a new middle school and North Brunswick is the same size as ours. I picked his brain and developed a timeline. I'm not ready to share with the full Board because I haven't shared it with the president, vice president or John. I would propose that we start looking at the referendum in May and then put it up for a vote to the community next January which would have us do some facility work that spring.

Mrs. Regis-Darby stated it has to go on the ballot. Mrs. Minneci stated November and June. Mrs. Regis-Darby stated that timeline is off. Mrs. Koon stated January would be a special election.

Dr. Taylor stated there would have to be conversations with the Finance Committee about concepts – what do you want to see happen; then we bring in the architect. Ms. Santana stated we should get it ready for November to be transparent. Mrs. Scott-Hayden stated and to organize; to make your pitch to the community on why you need it. Dr. Taylor stated it is an aggressive timeline – you need an architect, a public relations campaign. North Brunswick entered into an agreement with the local labor union and in return they helped market and support the referendum. It all takes time.

Mrs. Williams stated I want to hear from the Board if we had a billion dollars to do whatever we wanted with this district, what would be some of the things you would like to see done?

Ms. Santana stated I would like early childhood that Nellis has been talking about for years and high school revamped, middle school revamped, programs for special education. Go into our schools – I hate that we have to farm our special education to different schools. Have the neighborhood schools have all the programs.

Mrs. Scott-Hayden stated neighborhood schools – making Jefferson into a neighborhood school. Being part of the NEA, we are proactive and engaged in neighborhood schools but we are engaged from a perspective where the community owns what happens in their neighborhood schools. By in from the community so that they have a stake in it so when it is created, it is created by them and for them. I think if it is done correctly, it can be beneficial to the neighborhood but I don't want it to be looked at from a lens of black and white kids in the Vauxhall section and then the resources aren't there to support that school. We have to do it effectively. We have to look at the models that they have done it successfully in whole lot of communities. Districts need to sign up for this program and work with those schools to make sure the neighborhood schools are done correctly and make sure the stakeholders are at the table and making decisions – busing, everything that goes into that school is done by the community. You can do it right, effectively and equitable. It has to be done correctly. We should look at what they have and I will bring in the book. If it is not done with the community behind it, I'm against it.

Mrs. Minneci asked is there anybody you can bring in. NEA has the greatest model and they send boots on the ground to do it correctly.

Dr. Taylor stated Mr. Benaquista is here but is dealing with something in one of our elementary schools and he will come in as soon as he can.

Mrs. Williams stated social emotional learning and how to follow-up and monitor – Dr. Taylor and I talked about the student that had been suspended for 10 days and I asked what happened once they returned to school and we moved into follow-up practices that we can implement and talked about the social emotional learning – I would love to hear some of your feedback on how we can follow-up with our children, special needs or not special needs, and help them and monitor their success in terms of having a behavioral issue and being suspended and coming back to school and getting back on track.

Mrs. Regis-Darby stated as we go through these bullet points and after the Board has discussed them, if we could come to a conclusion and tell me what the action steps will be.

Ms. Santana stated superintendent goals – what was the action? Mrs. Williams stated we talked about the Strategic Plan and tying it into his evaluation, percentage and how to determine success of the Strategic Plan.

Referendum – that will be a discussion with John O'Shea, Dr. Taylor and Mrs. Koon. We will have a discussion, coming up with some ideas and being aggressive to have it ready for November and then present to the Board. Ms. Santana stated more realistically 2023.

Ms. Santana stated the Strategic Plan – completion was July 1st and March 23rd is the community event.

Mrs. Williams stated Board Goals – the referendum. Ms. Santana asked should we get together to put Board goals together? Mrs. Williams stated I think we should. Dr. Francis stated we can talk about that at the retreat.

Mrs. Williams stated neighborhood schools – I asked what you would like to see? Kim gave information about using the community and I would like to hear in terms of the referendum with the neighborhood schools because one of the things we discussed, with the referendum we can start that process so we can make the elementary schools.

Ms. Santana stated I loved the model that was presented before COVID by the committee Ms. Hall was on. It was pre-k to 6 for all elementary; 7th and 8th would be Burnet; so Kawameeh would be elementary, and the high school would remain and it would have a 9th grade academy where all 9th graders would be groomed so they won't be scared in this new big world. I love that idea. I don't know what happened to it.

Dr. Taylor stated our school task force meeting is March 24th.

Mrs. Williams stated social-emotional can also be an action step when we revisit that presentation – have it represented and get community feedback. Ms. Santana stated the biggest thing is it has to be all day every day from everyone – teachers to janitors. Social-emotional learning is not a time or a class or a PD day – it is a way of living. We have to want to help our children and it not be about dollars and cents. There are protocols in place but once we start putting structure together in these schools for processes, things will get easier. Sitting on the Board I see lack of processes.

Dr. Taylor stated Maurice Alliance, he insists it be a mindset. He is not a practitioner, he is a psychologist professor at Rutgers. I did point out that you need structures. Mrs. Williams stated the culture needs to change. When Annie Moses was here they had some training and the teachers pushed back hard. Dr. Taylor stated if you want to win the race, you have to get the buy in and you have to do it carefully.

Ms. Williams stated I wish we were more proactive because the kids now really need the help and we are not ready. If we had things in place prior to COVID, we would have been able to build on what we had in place and address a lot of the things that are going on with our kids.

Mrs. Regis-Darby stated the district is not moving in the direction of how education is moving. We are stuck and we shouldn't be especially when you have lives that depend on the movement of education. We have been stuck for a very long time. Dr. Taylor stated you hired me to “unstuck” it. Mrs. Regis-Darby stated we keep doing the same thing over and over.

Mrs. Williams stated I think this Board has the energy and the commitment is going to “unstuck” us. We have a superintendent that gets it, is open to it and I think we are going to do some great things in this district over the next couple of years.

Ms. Santana stated I got a call from the school secretary and she said she wanted to stay anonymous, I saw the Board meeting and I'm so proud that we finally have one cohesive board

of education that gets along and is willing to work together. I also feel that perception is reality. If we look for commonalities for our children that is how we do better.

Mrs. Williams stated restorative practice actions – are build into the Strategic Plan. Ms. Santana stated it includes you creating a new position. Mrs. Scott-Hayden stated UTEA can give free PD.

Dr. Taylor stated having a Dean position – my vision is that it is a faculty position, a teacher's salary, not an administrative level position. Mrs. Regis-Darby stated I'm not a big fan of a dean position because it becomes a dumping ground for the dean. Dr. Taylor stated I have had success with this – it took four years. I'm following that model and making adjustments.

Mrs. Williams asked when would we see this happen? Dr. Taylor stated if the budget can support it and the Board approves the job description, I would like to hire this person in May and start September 1. This person would be at the high school. I propose we start at the high school and we can filter this down to the middle school.

Ms. Santana stated our high school is bleeding and we need all hands-on deck. If we can get it together at the high school level, it will domino effect into the middle and elementary schools.

Mrs. Williams stated I think we will get more community buy in and what we are trying to implement, we are not going to get a lot of push back because they see we are committed, unified and looking to make progress.

Budget update - Mrs. Koon stated we are scrubbing through the budget. Yesterday I met with Dr. Taylor and the administrators on trying to pull the budget together. We are looking at the cap which is \$1.9 million of tax levy (2%). The State did give us an enrollment waiver of roughly \$346,000. Right now we are budgeting for State aid – flat. There was a vote on Monday evening stating that the Governor postponed his budget address until March 8th. I spoke with the County BA and everyone is wondering how that will impact our dates. They said to continue status quo. We are looking through the budget for areas that we can reduce our expenditures. It is a challenge because all of our unions are up for negotiation. As far as health insurance, since we moved to Aetna it is remaining relatively flat this year. If we said with Horizon it would be another \$3 million. Dr. Taylor has tasked the administration to look at our enrollment to make sure we have enough teachers that we need for the classes. They are debating whether or not we should increase class sizes or not. We are all in discussions right now. Right now 25 is our maximum. I did receive the insurance for our line of coverages and that went up \$200,000. I heard on a training webinar that they will give us a refund on our workers comp but our workers comp went up from \$600,000 to \$800,000. All coverages is \$1.6 million versus \$1.3 million. We are looking through our leases.

Mrs. Regis-Darby asked do the building principals submit a rationale for the budgets in their buildings? Mrs. Koon stated during the budget process in December, the rationale form, when they input their budget, we still go through it because I found a couple of areas where they said they needed it but when I checked, they couldn't justify it.

Mrs. Regis-Darby asked have you looked at the vendors? Mrs. Koon stated that is why I was trying to expand our purchasing power by being part of other coops. I did notice that we typically go with the State and the State doesn't necessarily offer a more competitive pricing. We now belong to 3-4 different consortiums. I have asked certain vendors to stay flat because it can't hurt to ask.

Mrs. Regis-Darby stated there is a lot of money being spent on 6th period stipends – what can we do? Ms. McKenzie stated rescheduling.

Mrs. Koon stated Dr. Taylor and Dr. Perez have tasked the secondary schools to take a look so we can see what it looks like. Mrs. Regis-Darby stated buy the program for scheduling. Maybe you need a more efficient program. It is crazy the amount of money we are spending for the stipends. Mrs. Koon stated or hire a consultant. They have been tasked to revamp their schedule. But I'm preparing as though they didn't because I don't want to be at a loss if it doesn't happen.

Mrs. Regis-Darby stated the senior class this year – 563 students – at least half of those seniors don't need to be in the building passed 11:30 because they have completed their credits. Mrs. Koon stated graduation credits have changed. We tasked them to it. Dr. Taylor will follow up to see how realistic it can be. We thought we were doing that this year.

Dr. Francis stated before Dr. Taylor came on board, Mr. Tatum instructed the principals of the middle schools and high school to come up with a schedule so that they could eliminate 6th and 7th period stipends. The rumor was that they accomplished that but the kick back was from the union – the teachers rely on that money and they acquiesce – they couldn't get it done; that was the story I was told.

Dr. Taylor asked Dr. Perez to share the results of the meeting today. Dr. Perez stated there have been lengthy conversations about the schedule. One of the issues in moving the 7th/8th period or going back to lesser period days, we are essentially increasing the class size to 27-29. The other concern of reducing the high school schedule, we have to go back to the books, the proposal that was provided did not include the vocational tech schedule – start and end time. Even though on paper it looked like it was going to work, it was a conflict with our vocational kids. The other concern was by reducing the number of periods in the day, and the number of classes that are going to be offered, what are we doing with all these kids. Now you are going from a said number of course offerings to now reducing the number of course offerings so we are going to be increasing class size. There are pros and cons and right now the one thing holding us back from removing those periods is the teacher contract and the language of what can be done in terms of when they can start, how many kids they can have in the classroom – that unfortunately is a big part of it.

Mrs. Koon stated the good part of it is we are in negotiations now so now is the time for that language to be revisited and any recommendations.

Dr. Taylor stated to clarify what we mean by the contractual constraints – Mark Hoyt was talking about going from a nine to eight period day and having zero period to make up for some of these additional classes that the kids would want to take. The zero period day would start during the 20-minute period or something like that – that contractually the teachers do owe us but if we go with a 46 minute period, which is what we have now, we have 26 minutes that we have to figure out and fit it into the contract. Maybe the contractual negotiations would involve give us another 26 minutes and we can make it happen.

Dr. Perez stated the other issue is, even though in the contract there is language about a flex start time or end time for instructors where if you start early you can leave your day earlier, one of the concerns was what happens to the kid that can't come in the morning and is looking for that teacher that they need help with after school and that teacher is gone for the day. What was thrown out was we have tier one afterschool programs but again if the student has connected with the teacher, who better to provide additional support before or after school than the teacher giving that course. More conversations need to be had and is scheduled for next week. It is still work in progress.

Dr. Francis asked is there a law that determines how many periods we have to have? Dr. Perez stated no.

Dr. Francis stated I always felt that more classroom time that kids have available, they do better – that's my opinion. It is more time to talk to the teacher and go over the material if I don't know it instead of coming early in the morning or after school because sometimes, we have sports after school. When they cut the class time down, I felt they are missing instruction. Dr. Taylor stated you are calling for a block schedule – 70-minute periods.

Mrs. Koon stated last year the Board decided to use the ESSER III to retain approximately 14 staff members; it runs out in June so that compounds some of our challenges.

Mrs. Regis-Darby asked how many of those teachers are tenured? Mrs. Koon stated I'm not sure; I can find out.

Dr. Francis stated I thought because of COVID we should have a surplus because the school wasn't physically open so there has to be some where we saved money. I know we had to pay peoples salaries. I thought that 2019-2020 budget would be rolled into this 2021 and what was left in that would be rolled into this up-and-coming budget. Mrs. Koon stated on Tuesday they spoke to you about the surplus in the audit and we were able to put some things into the reserves. There were pockets of savings. Statutorily they made us continue, even though everyone was home, paying for contracted services for transportation. We were paying our people. The buildings weren't fully functional so some utility bills there was some savings.

Mrs. Scott-Hayden asked were the contracted services like the full year was in effect or pro-rated. In East Orange we had certain contracts and special ed came in to stop a contract because we are remote but by law you have to pay a percentage. I'm just making sure we are not paying a full year of something we weren't using. Mrs. Koon stated we were allowed to

negotiate but the second year they didn't. Last year we paid a full year – 100%. When COVID started we negotiated.

Ms. Santana stated paras were still working, OT/PT was still working – it wasn't like people were just sitting home. Our special education still needed services. Dr. Taylor stated we still had to provide compensatory education.

Ms. McKenzie stated ESIP programs – when did it start? What did it cover? Are we seeing any savings from it? When is it going to wrap up? Mrs. Koon stated it started three years ago. \$14 million – broken into two phases. I have a list of things that are being covered under each phase. We are in the process right now and about 85% complete. One school is officially up and running concerning solar – Connecticut Farms. Most of the savings are coming from solar but in order to do the solar you have to have sturdy roofing and that is why the roofing was done first and a couple of more need to be done – Washington and Franklin.

We had run into quite a few challenges but I have been on them and we meet almost every week to see where we are. A lot of the projected savings we won't see for another year or two.

Ms. McKenzie asked Mrs. Koon to send the list of items being covered. Mrs. Koon stated I believe it is on our website and asked them for a PowerPoint presentation so we can promote that. Each school has a monitor where it will show the kids where we are saving with the solar – that is supposed to be implemented.

Ms. McKenzie asked who is the contractor? Mrs. Koon stated the project manager is Schneider Electric. Pfitzer is the contractor for the solar. Safeway is doing the roofing.

Mrs. Williams stated just send the list to everyone because Mrs. Scott-Hayden needs to leave. The Board retreat – in terms of goals and what the Board wants to accomplish. In terms of how we want to facilitate the retreat, the days that were available and what we want out of it – what do we want to accomplish during the retreat.

Ms. Santana stated we just need to do it? Dr. Francis asked did you want to do it on a Friday or Saturday? Mrs. Williams asked if Saturday would work? Dr. Francis, Ms. McKenzie, Mrs. Regis-Darby, Mrs. Scott-Hayden were available.

Mrs. Williams stated from 9-2 p.m. Dr. Taylor stated we can do it at Kean. Mrs. Williams stated we need dates – March 5, 12, 19, 26, April 2, 9, 16, 30, May 14, 21, June 4, 11, 18? It was decided that April 30th would work and Mrs. Williams will reach out to Mr. O'Shea and Mrs. Brens-Watson.

Mrs. Regis-Darby asked for the purpose of this meeting? Mrs. Williams stated Board goals and Dr. Taylor has a speaker. Dr. Taylor stated Larry Leverit, he was the superintendent in Plainfield. He wants to meet with Mary Lynn and Nancy to form the agenda.

Mrs. Scott-Hayden left meeting at 8:28 p.m.

Comments from Public:

Jill Hall stated I'm all about cohesion, but a little spice is good too. The reason we have been stuck for so long is because everybody just said "yes". I like to hear respectful disagreement so keep that moving.

I want to bring up something that when my Model UN kids brought up about the mask mandate – that was our debate this week and she asked if the district decides to go with mask optional, would the teachers still have the right to require students to wear masks in their individual classrooms? I thought that was a well asked question. Dr. Taylor stated I will bring it up with the Board attorney.

Ms. Hall stated in looking at all the things on here, I can't help but think about school climate and when you look at all these things, the one common thread is each one of these speaks to improving school climate. Restorative practices, SEL, strategic plan, reconfiguring the schools, better addresses the development stages that our kids are in and what they are going through. I would also like to see work on the discipline code because we can't improve the climate in the buildings without adjusting the Code of Conduct and the discipline code. Restorative practices are a big part of that but it is all together.

I think the time to get the buy-in from the teachers is right now because they know it is not working the way it is now. When we start to roll out something different, we can strike while the iron is hot because they are tired and frustrated and they want something to get better. This may be what is exactly needed.

Ms. Santana asked do you know what you would want in terms of discipline? Ms. Hall stated I talk to the kids all the time and the thing I hear is they feel no body listens. They get three lates and they get put in ISS but not asked that they have the responsibility of dropping off their younger sibling and then they try to get to school on time but they can't. I know our students of color feel targeted. I don't know how to rectify that. What we are doing now discipline wise is not working. I usually like to come to the table with a solution, I don't have a solution for this one. I just know something needs to be done.

MOTION TO ADJOURN:

There being no further business before the Board in public session it was moved by Ms. McKenzie, seconded by Mrs. Minneci, that the meeting be adjourned at 8:32 p.m.

AYE: Dr. Francis, Ms. McKenzie, Mrs. Minneci, Mrs. Regis-Darby, Ms. Santana,
Mrs. Williams

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,

YOLANDA KOON
BOARD SECRETARY