

TOWNSHIP OF UNION BOARD OF EDUCATION
WORKSESSION MINUTES – October 12, 2021

NOTICE OF MEETING:

TO ALL BOARD OF EDUCATION MEMBERS:

The worksession meeting of the Board of Education of the Township of Union was held on Tuesday, October 12, 2021 at 6:00 p.m. at the Administration Building, 2369 Morris Avenue, Union, New Jersey pursuant to the notice sent to each member. Action was taken.

Mr. McDowell called the meeting to order at 6:10 p.m.

PRESENT AT ROLL CALL:

Dr. Guy Francis, Mr. Ronnie McDowell, Mrs. Nancy Minneci, Dr. Kalisha Morgan, Mr. John O’Shea, Mrs. Nellis Regis-Darby, Mrs. Kim Ruiz

ABSENT AT ROLL CALL:

Mrs. Yocasta Brens-Watson (arrived at 6:45 p.m.), Mrs. Mary Lynn Williams

ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT:

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

ALSO PRESENT:

Christopher Buggy, Esq., Robert Moorman, Esq.

Mrs. Regis-Darby 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.

Dr. Morgan read the district’s mission statement.

MOTION FOR EXECUTIVE SESSION:

Moved by Mrs. Ruiz, seconded by Mrs. Minneci, that the Board go into Executive Session at 6:13 p.m. to discuss the following subject matters without the presence of the public in accordance with the provisions of N.J.S.A. 10:4-12b: personnel matters and matters falling under the attorney-client privilege.

Please take notice that minutes will be taken of the discussion conducted during the executive session and the Board will disclose the minutes of the executive session when the disclosure will not result in unwarranted invasion of individual privacy or prejudice to the best interests of the Board of Education and provided that such disclosure does not violate federal, state or local statutes and does not fall within the attorney/client privilege. Action may be taken when the Board reconvenes in public session.

AYE: Dr. Francis, Mrs. Minneci, Dr. Morgan, Mr. O'Shea, Mrs. Regis-Darby, Mrs. Ruiz,
Mr. McDowell

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED

The Board returned to public session at 7:00 p.m.

Comments from Public on Resolutions:

None

Approval of Minutes:

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

Communications:

Communications are part of personnel.

I. Superintendent's Report:

Dr. Taylor stated he will be presenting the State of the Schools next week and the student liaisons will be at the meeting and in January, when the Board reorganizes, to consider getting the kids involved in a greater level than currently involved in the meeting. Also, every month he will be doing Student Spotlight to recognize students who usually flies under the radar and every month in different schools, kids will be highlighted. He wants Gerry to present tonight on a great program and we have some guests in the back.

Mr. Benaquista stated I had the pleasure of sitting with Ms. James and Dr. Good. They will present to you the interactive learning group. Ms. James is part of our community and owns a center that has been here for 12 years. Based on needs of our community, have seen a change and they are at full capacity, but with the aftercare. We had a nice conversation and said let me check with Dr. Taylor and he is very supportive of presenting a program that could benefit us and they are right down from Jefferson School. Maybe the Board can consider another after school opportunity for our parents and kids.

Ms. James stated I'm from Brainiacs Shop on Springfield Avenue. I have been there for 12 years. I have a lot of kids in district that filter into the schools nearby. I'm down the street from Jefferson. I know they don't currently have anything for after school so we are just addressing the needs of the community and giving parents the option to have something for after school. We would like to present an academic program as well as a social/emotional program for those students right now and maybe at some point moving out to where you guys would have us.

Dr. Good stated these are the talking points (same is attached to minutes). We are both former educators of Newark Public Schools and we both ventured off to do something within the education field. She has led Brainiacs Childcare for the last 12 years in Union and I have led

Good Education Group which is a professional development provider offering services to teachers and principals throughout several districts in the State.

When we came together and spoke about the need because my child also attended Brainiac Childcare and we started talking to parents about the challenges they were having in terms of students being able to come home with their homework completed, tutoring. With the COVID epidemic and this unfinished learning that needs to take place, we decided to come together and join forces and create Interactive Learning Group.

Last summer we partnered with several charter schools in New Jersey and we were able to provide the academic support and enrichment by employing teachers to work full time to offer supplemental services within the summer school enrichment as well as social/emotional learning.

We also want to notate that the social/emotional learning component wasn't only for students, it also in captured engaging with parents, as well as our teachers because we know it has to be holistic effort to improve student outcome. The handout is just a few area and bullet points as to what is the need, how are we different than what is existing.

We also have yoga, mindfulness and small SEL groups, where students had the opportunity to talk and engage with their teachers, as well as parents doing that as well via the Zoom platform and the teacher professional development component.

What we are offering tonight is the ability to provide the academic support, the tutoring that is needed for our students after school and also the social/emotional learning component.

Ms. James stated speaking to a lot of my parents, because I do have some of the overflow from Jefferson, they have participated in another afterschool program here in Town and a lot of their complaints are that homework is incomplete. That's a main concern to pick your children up at 6 p.m. and you still have to come home and complete homework. Not only are the parents tired but so are the kids. We want to try to find solutions to that problem and at least commit to that part being done and if kids need any other extra help because we do intend to hire certified teachers so they can find some individualized tutoring as well if needed.

Mrs. Minneci asked would you provide your service in the school or your facility? Dr. Good stated in the school.

Mrs. Ruiz asked what would be the cost associated for the parents? Ms. James stated probably the same as the Y, we are trying to figure out how it can be paid for. It is still something that we have to figure out in district.

Dr. Morgan asked are you just starting at Jefferson and then expand? Ms. James stated I would like to start it at Jefferson because there is a need and that is the community I am in.

Mr. O'Shea asked would this be the first public school district that you are working with other than the charters and making this a test pilot to see if you are going to broaden this out to the rest of our district?

Ms. James stated this would not be the first public school that I worked with. When supplemental education was a thing in New Jersey, I did several districts in New Jersey. I have experience in managing programs.

Mr. O'Shea stated you will start with the main focus being Jefferson. Ms. James stated yes.

Mr. McDowell stated it will be in Jefferson. Ms. James stated yes.

Mrs. Ruiz asked the summer program, did you do that at the charter school you were partnering with? Ms. James stated it was in the charter schools.

Mrs. Regis-Darby asked do you have high liability insurance? Ms. James stated yes.

Dr. Francis asked this is K-8? Ms. James stated it is just Jefferson right now. Dr. Francis stated I thought you were going to provide for the community for afterschool? Dr. Morgan stated I think she said they would start with Jefferson and hopefully expand. Ms. James stated right. Dr. Francis stated I thought it was for any student in the Vauxhall area.

Mrs. Regis-Darby asked do you have a ratio amount of students that you can cater to in terms of staff to student? Do you have a team already? Do you have a ratio? Ms. James stated we do have a ratio, we don't have a team because we would like to hire teachers that are in the school because they know those students best. The ratio would depend upon how many students register for the program.

Mr. O'Shea asked normally, what is your ratio of teachers to students? Ms. James stated would normally would like 15:1

Mrs. Ruiz asked what would be the hours? Ms. James stated after school to around 5:30-6 p.m. I have to see how late the building will stay open.

Mrs. Benaquista stated when Dr. Good and Ms. James and I met, this is more of an introduction to see if we are interested in something like this. If that is the case, we will get back together and work out this. Before we waste their time and really building something for our community, I wanted to make sure there was an interest because if there is an interest, we have to get back together and talk about if it is similar to the Y and what does that look like in terms of cost. We know there is a need.

Mrs. Ruiz asked should we send a survey to the Jefferson parents to see what their interest level is.

Mr. Benaquista stated if there isn't enough interest in the Jefferson population, there is a lot of need in that area and maybe once the bus drops brings them home and somebody walks them to Jefferson from 4-6 p.m. and maybe set up different pods based on grade levels. We can

discuss and see if those capabilities are there. Ms. James stated we are comfortable and both educators. If that opportunity comes about, we are ready for it.

Mr. O'Shea stated I think we need to talk about it more.

Mrs. Regis-Darby stated I'm reading your paperwork and you talk about designing professional learning experiences of the teachers – what would that look like? Dr. Good stated that was just outlining our past performance. What that looks like within the program is although they are hired teachers who are working within the schools, we still engage them in professional learning to ensure that they have the equipment and materials, as well as the capacity to work with students after school. There are still needs teachers have that we will address.

Mr. O'Shea stated I would like to make a recommendation that we go further with this and that we should have a meeting privately and Gerry can find out the cost factors, what we are looking at so we can get back to these people.

Mrs. Ruiz asked if we could discuss this further in the Education Committee? Mr. O'Shea stated yes, do it that way.

Education/Student Discipline Committee Resolutions:

Mrs. Ruiz presented the Education/Student Discipline Committee agenda.

E-1. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT OF HIB

Superintendent's Report of Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying (HIB) for the period September 22, 2021 to October 12, 2021, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes (*no vote required; for reporting purposes only*).

DISCUSSION:

Mrs. Brens-Watson asked if there were any other changes to the calendar other than Juneteenth? Dr. Taylor stated no.

Fiscal and Planning Committee Resolutions:

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

Mr. O'Shea stated the out-of-district students are around 143 and the price is around \$13 million. They have raised their prices dramatically and we have eight less students. This is something we have to look at.

The approval of the acceptance of additional ARP ESSER funds – originally it was \$6,683,092. We picked up an additional amount of money for a total of \$7,550,824. Dr. Taylor has put together a committee with Maureen Guilfoyle, Yolanda Koon, educators, parents and a Board member to figure out where we are going to distribute it in these programs. I have a plan and a discussed it with the committee, I don't know if this plan is going to totally work, we won't know until we have numbers of where we are going as far as this education system. We have to stop doing the patch work. There are major problems we need to do as far as curriculum,

programs, instruction and infrastructure. The infrastructure of these buildings have been abused and unattended. I have a plan, discussed it with Dr. Taylor and Mrs. Koon, we hope this plan will be working out. I can't go any further than that until we know what is really needed. We are moving this district forward. In November, at our next meeting, Dr. Taylor will explain it. I think you all will like it, the parents, students and the entire community. This is a good opportunity to bring us forward. We are all on board here; just need to get the numbers and explain our plan next month. I think you will be just as excited as I am.

Of the moneys, we don't have to spend it all in one year. It can be spent over a three-year period of time.

Mr. O'Shea continued presenting the agenda.

Mrs. Regis-Darby asked why such a large carryover in F-16? Mrs. Koon stated because of COVID, it wasn't a normal year – a lot of virtual as opposed to going out. Professional Developments weren't as rigorous as they would normally be. Speaking with Maureen, her colleagues stated this was pretty good compared to other districts as to a carryover. Mrs. Regis-Darby asked can't the Title I buildings spend some of that money instead of carrying over? Dr. Morgan stated many districts did not have the opportunity to spend it because you were not in person for more than half of the year. We didn't have to pay for busing, additional paraprofessionals, extra teachers. This is a low.

Mrs. Regis-Darby asked is there a goal for this carryover? Mrs. Koon stated we will push and spend it. Because of COVID, they were flexible. Dr. Morgan stated this would be a good time to look at Saturday programs in place, one-to-one tutoring in place – this is a good time to look at those children who suffered because of COVID and make sure they get what they need.

Mrs. Brens-Watson asked if we get penalized for carrying over that much? Mrs. Koon stated no.

Mrs. Regis-Darby stated but there is no plan for this money. Mrs. Koon stated I wouldn't say that. Maureen is spear heading that and I'm pretty sure she has some ideas for the Title I schools. Dr. Morgan stated each school will be able to determine what is best for them.

Dr. Taylor stated I anticipate the new Assistant Superintendent will be working hand in hand with Maureen.

Mr. O'Shea continued presenting the agenda.

Mrs. Regis-Darby stated all the schools have the same needs in their budget plan. Mrs. Koon stated it is general required maintenance. Mr. O'Shea stated it is a requirement that we have to do.

Mr. O'Shea asked how many students are we sending to the vocational school? Mrs. Koon stated I sent you an email last night – it was 163, including shared time, and of that 163 – 53 are shared. It broke it down to 6-7 programs – career and technology institute, career and

institute for sped kids, transitional, academic, allied health, AIT and magnet school as well. Dr. Morgan asked are we providing busing? Mrs. Koon stated I believe it is aid-in-lieu. We went out to bid to the commission and transportation has been a problem this year. Last year's budget amount was \$718,000 for vo-tech and this year it went up to \$828,000. Vo-tech's are increasing. To combat that we might want to look at some of our programs to see if we can start to build some of this vo-tech programs here.

Dr. Morgan stated the students that leave aren't going to trade; they are going because they feel we are not able to meet their needs here. I know many students that have gone to vo-techs and they are not doing trades. We need to see what is going on there that needs to come over here.

Upon recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the following resolutions were moved by Mr. O'Shea, seconded by Mrs. Regis-Darby, for adoption:

F-21. APPROVE 123 ABA – BEHAVIOR TECHNICIAN

Approve 123 ABA for behavior technician at the rate of \$70.00 per hour (not to exceed \$250,000.00) for the 2021-2022 school year [Account #11-000-216-320-01-19], in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

F-23. APPROVE GOHEWEC HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS CONNECT – NURSING SERVICES

Approve Gohewec Healthcare Providers Connect, Inc. to provide nursing services to district students at a rate of \$72.00/hr. for RN and \$55.00/hr. for LPN for the 2021-2022 school year (not to exceed \$90,000.00) [Account #11-000-216-320-01-19/7043], in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

DISCUSSION:

None

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

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED

DISCUSSION:

None

Mr. O'Shea presented the balance of the Fiscal Committee agenda.

DISCUSSION:

Mrs. Ruiz stated F-24 – how much is that costing the district to provide the testing onsite for the unvaccinated members? Mrs. Koon stated it is provided by the State. The Governor

issued \$267 million and they contracted out to these medical centers to provide these tests so it is not costing the district anything.

Mr. Benaquista stated it may but minimal money to get people to help us manage this. Mrs. Ruiz asked they don't provide staff? Mr. Benaquista stated they just drop off the kits. Dr. Taylor stated the teachers will take them home and bring them back.

Mrs. Ruiz asked how do we ensure there is no tampering of the tests? Mr. Benaquista stated sometimes you have to go with the honor system. Mrs. Regis-Darby stated these are adults, we have to trust that they are doing the right thing.

Mr. Benaquista stated we hand them out, they give us enough kits for the month, they come pick them up from the nurses office, they take them home, they bring them back Friday, we send them out via Federal Express; we get the results over the weekend in the portal. We will need people to look at that information in the portal within the buildings and let people know if any of them are positive. This is a whole new thing that we have to adapt and figure out where our bumps are and change course. We are all learning.

Mrs. Ruiz asked when will the staff members test? Mr. Benaquista stated take it Thursday and bring it back Friday so we have it for Monday. Once a week. We will deal with if they are absent – we have a lot of things outside. This is a huge undertaking so we might need some extra manpower, extrapay; people will have to check over the weekend. I don't know if the nurses would want it or not. We will have to get people to help us. By tomorrow I should have how many are unvaccinated.

Mrs. Ruiz asked won't the results go to the individual that test? Mrs. Brens-Watson stated it goes to the employer. Mrs. Regis-Darby stated I think it goes to both.

Mr. Benaquista stated I know on the information I saw, there is no email or phone number for the employee; unless something changes. The company is very hard to get in touch with. We are waiting to ask questions. I'm meeting again tomorrow with Mrs. Ionta and Ms. Berry to play through this as more things come up. Every one that is not vaccinated has to sign off on a HPPA form. After that, they will send the kits and we will probably start the end of next week.

Mrs. Ruiz asked do we know how many staff members are not vaccinated. Mr. Benaquista stated I have a number now but I will know a better number and I will share with Dr. Taylor tomorrow and he can push it out to you. I extended the deadline because people had questions. I have been more flexible in accepting other forms of proof of vaccination. The executive order stated adequate proof. I went with Docket but we are opening it up to hopefully get more responsive. Some people had issues – the app would not work on his phone. We should have the number by 12 noon tomorrow.

Mrs. Brens-Watson stated you stated about adding staff – please do not send any more work to the nurses. They are super stretched, overworked, I can't imagine giving them yet another thing to do.

Operations Committee Resolutions:

Dr. Francis presented the Operations Committee agenda.

DISCUSSION:

Mrs. Regis-Darby stated in terms of the organizational chart, can we discuss the gifted and talented program in the Education Committee? Dr. Taylor stated yes.

Mrs. Ruiz asked if the donation of novels is for the library or the classroom? Dr. Taylor stated in our current library collection.

Personnel Committee Resolutions:

Dr. Francis presented the Personnel Committee agenda.

DISCUSSION:

Dr. Taylor stated I want to give you an update on the timeline for the hiring of the Directors of Curriculum, Personnel and the Assistant Superintendent. I mentioned to Personnel Committee last night, we anticipate recommending finalists for Director of Personnel and Curriculum positions at next week's meeting. I will have a finalist for the Assistant Superintendent available in November.

There are two committees of stakeholders meeting with candidates which is starting next week. We have teachers on the first round, members of the association, the second round will include the Board personnel committee, Mary Lynn will be here for most of that and then step out. Gerry and I, as well as Yolanda will be on that committee. We had 34 applicants for the Assistant Superintendent position. I can't speak to the directors' positions.

Mrs. Brens-Watson asked the Director of Personnel – how is this different from your position Mr. Benaquista. Mr. Benaquista stated years ago we had a Director of Personnel which was me. The amount of work that goes on in this office, it is needed. It is different from mine because I feel like I'm doing the Director of Personnel's job compared to getting out and doing stuff. If we are ever going to change in this district, we have to start doing things that make a difference instead of putting band-aides on and catching up and dealing with the fires that are coming through your door on a daily basis.

If you want to talk about elevating teaching, it can't be just one person going out, you have to be in schools all the time.

Dr. Taylor stated just today, we had to handle a situation that consumed at least an hour of our time, paraprofessional assignments, because we are short so many. We had to update our protocols for how principals are assigning the paras. That is nuts and bolts work that he and I should not be tending to because we need to be hovering 30,000 feet above.

Mrs. Brens-Watson stated there was an interim director of curriculum over the summer. Mr. Benaquista stated yes until June 30th – from April to June it mirrored my time.

Policy Committee:

Dr. Morgan presented the Policy Committee agenda. She stated that the Policy Committee met on October 4th to review the policy alert and asked for the Board to review these policies. Some of the abolished policies have been replaced with new policies.

I'm exciting that the Policy Committee is back on track and hope that will continue with the new chair once I'm off the Board.

DISCUSSION:

None

Residency Committee Resolutions:

Mrs. Minneci presented the Residency Committee agenda.

DISCUSSION:

None

Technology Committee:

Mrs. Regis-Darby presented the Technology Committee agenda.

DISCUSSION:

Mr. O'Shea asked what are we doing with them? Mrs. Regis-Darby stated we will get rid of them, they are obsolete. Mr. O'Shea stated he knows someone who recycles Chromebooks to be used in other countries for use for children in need. I will ask him to give us a letter with all the details. I think it is a good program. Mrs. Regis-Darby stated she would follow-up with Mrs. Paul.

Approval of Bills:

Bills will be approved next week.

Unfinished Business:

None

New Business:

Mrs. Regis-Darby stated the NHS – National Honor Society – the deadline to apply is today. I think as a district, and I think Mr. Taylor said I don't need to go to public to speak as a parent, we need to do a better job in terms of giving every child what he or she needs to become successful. The kids are applying for National Honor Society and they don't know that there is a rubric associated with the application. They don't know what score they need to get into NHS. Also, they are not given guidance in terms of what to do and what they shouldn't do. They are given a limited amount of feedback when they don't get accepted into the NHS. We have kids that have not gotten into NHS with GPA's of weighted 4.7 and unweighted 3.9. I think that is a problem. We need to look at that whole rubric; it does match the application because I took a look at it. It does not match and kids have no access to it. You want them to do writing, but you don't give them a rubric, it doesn't make sense. Who does that in the classroom right now? You

can't assign a writing assignment to kids when you don't give them a rubric. Who does that? It's crazy. I think we are failing our kids and we are continuing to fail them in this district and we need to do something better. This is not working.

Mrs. Ruiz asked if the students are identified as meeting the requirements for NHS, they get an invitation if you have a 3.5 or better, you got the community service hours, you got the clubs, I identified you as a student that is qualified to be in NHS. Why do they then have to submit an application with an essay if I already identified you as meeting all of the NHS requirements? I don't understand why we are making them go through the extra.

Mrs. Regis-Darby stated the policy online doesn't say anything about any of this. It is a three-line policy about how you get into National Honor Society – you need a 3.5 GPA. It doesn't give the kids any direction. Mr. O'Shea stated I have to agree with you because my own grandchild went through that situation here and I never figured out why with a 4.15 average she never got into the honor society.

Mrs. Regis-Darby stated the rubric is flawed, it is terrible and it sets the kids up in the system for failure. Mr. O'Shea stated I don't know if that is a NHS flaw. Dr. Taylor stated there are certain standards that the National Honor Society held us to. But one thing it doesn't is the protocol of how you apply and that is what I'm hearing in your concern. I do know the Education Committee did discuss changing the GPA to the minimum and that is something I would be exploring – not this year because it is too late.

Mrs. Ruiz stated look at the process overall because if they are meeting each of these requirements that the policy says they have to have 3.5 GPA, community service, at least two clubs – why then if they have all the qualifications – now apply? They have all the qualifications, they apply, but this was told to a student by the advisor for the program, “you can have all the qualifications but if your essay doesn't cut it, you don't get in”. The kid may be a great math student, and English isn't their thing, and we are going to deny them NHS. There is something flawed in that system.

Dr. Morgan stated this is exactly what I have been saying since I have been on this Board when we talk about equity. Who is making these decisions because if you meet all the qualifications, I don't think an adult should say no to that. I have been a high school principal for six years, if you met the qualifications, I'll let you in. I think a lot of this comes down to who you know, who you like and we have to stop that. I don't know exactly why they are not getting in, but if they meet the qualifications – our we nitpicking an essay – I hope that is not the case.

Mrs. Regis-Darby stated I hope that somebody on this leadership team will take a look at this rubric. I work from a rubric perspective when it comes to giving kids writing assignments. The writing assignment in the rubric does not match. There is nothing in there that tells me, in terms of being a writer in this rubric. It doesn't match, it doesn't make any sense.

Dr. Morgan stated I heard this argument from Columbia High School, if we don't have certain qualifications, everybody gets in – well you might want to look at your grading practices because if everybody has a high GPA, that is your grading practices, not your students.

Dr. Taylor stated I will report back to the Education Committee but I would like to wait until I meet the new Directors of Curriculum. I don't have the resources right now to do that. I do have to reiterate that the Strategic Plan incorporates a whole piece about equity. I consider myself a social justice warrior. If you don't codify some of these things somewhere it is going nowhere.

Dr. Morgan stated you must take a stand, people are not going to be happy about it but you must take a stand somewhere. Dr. Taylor stated it will happen.

Mrs. Minneci stated I will ask you Mr. McDowell if you would allow Mrs. Hall at next week's meeting to say a few words about a program that was at the high school last week. I was at the evening presentation and there weren't many parents there or community members as we would have hoped. He was great. I think the people that were there got a lot out of it. It was a great program and they are hoping to have the freshman and seniors have that program later in the year. It was only for 10th and 11th graders. If he comes back, hopefully we can get more parents and community members to attend. He had a lot of information and being someone that was in that position, you can identify and other parents can hear that you are not the only one. Don't turn a blind eye.

Dr. Taylor stated we can wrap that in to my State of the School's Report.

Mr. McDowell asked if there was a video available? Ms. Hall stated he has a couple of things on YouTube and he has two books he authored but it is much better in person.

Mr. McDowell stated the football team is 4-1. Mrs. Ruiz stated I love the energy at the stadium and how the community is really coming out. There are people that come to our games that don't have kids at Union High School or the opponent's high school. I love seeing that.

Comments from the Public:

Cathy Sharpe stated F-24 – I have great concerns for the way this is being set up. I feel you are putting a lot of your staff members and all your students at risk. Myself I got vaccinated; that was my choice. I do not have real qualms with people who have reasons why they don't want to be vaccinated. My problem is they come in, get a test tube, they take it home and then they bring it back. I'm sorry, they are my co-workers but I don't trust all of them to say that tube coming back is their test. Mrs. Ruiz stated I was trying to be nicer.

Mrs. Sharpe stated I love my co-workers but I'm here working every day. I worked all through COVID, anything the school told me I had to do to keep my job – I did. At least 90% of the rest of your staff tried to follow the rules. This is a slap in the face to the people who are trying to protect themselves and keep a job in this district. I think a lot of the staff will be very uneasy coming back in the building know that the tube may not be the staff's saliva. I strongly urge you to think about your entire staff. Testing is fine – it is supposed to 1 or 2 – you picked one, I understand, it could be a cost factor but to say here take this home and come back and you can work. It is not just us, it is putting all the children in this district in jeopardy. Thank you for listening to me.

Mr. Benaquista stated we can look at how an employee produce a test on Monday morning – that would be the only other option to make sure it is them taking it – is having them go to facility on Sunday and bring results on Monday to show up for work.

I understand like you what your comment was about, and I won't even say your members, just all our employees – I tried to do what was right with the Docket App because you can't falsify that but you can Google fake vaccination cards – I got push back from the Docket App so I opened it up for more – do I think everyone is going to hand in a card that is accurate – I'm hoping but I don't know – I won't have any proof that the vaccination card is legit. Docket app is tied to the Department of Health and you can't falsify that.

Kathleen Brunsmeyers stated it doesn't work all the time.

Mr. Benaquista stated Dr. Taylor and I will speak tomorrow about possibly what plan we are doing. That is how the plan works that we accepted the grant money and the other option would be to have employees get tested on Sundays.

Mrs. Ruiz stated I don't understand why it can't be done on site at their buildings. Mr. Benaquista stated we heard from one Board member – what if one nurse has 60 people in a room spitting. We need manpower. Mrs. Ruiz stated you do need the manpower to do that. Mr. Benaquista stated manpower comes with money – we talk about all these things in this district but it keeps coming back to fiscal. We don't want to attack the real issue that is driving everything here – fiscal. I want everyone to be happy this district.

Mrs. Regis-Darby stated this is only for unvaccinated. Mr. O'Shea stated let's see how the plan comes out and go from there.

Jill Hall stated we are having another parent presentation tomorrow – this is a Zoom and I hope we can get more people to log on – it is in collaboration with the Union County Association of Students and Professionals – it is called how to improve your child academic profile through SEL. I don't know if it will be taped but I will find out so we can post it. It is particularly geared toward post-COVID situation that we are facing and looking at the SEL concerns that many of us have had.

Ann Margaret Shannon spoke about the Caldwell Parsonage Museum in collaboration with the historical society – it was so successful that they will continue this again. This Saturday and Sunday it begins with Battle Hill and Connecticut Farms. The UTEA in conjunction with NJEA supplied PD but because of Ida it was postponed and the UTEA will provide that training on November 2nd. In regards to Play Unified, the UTEA supplies grants to this project. We love that project. Also to help the UHS basketball program, the UTEA for the first time and hopefully continue, is sponsoring an elementary school basketball league. Lastly, when the Board or the district makes decisions and the Superintendent and the Assistant Superintendent and the Board of Ed President agree that it is something beneficial to the district, I find it beyond disturbing that individuals can derail those decisions and I just hope that the Board of Ed would

consider what the Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent and Board of Education feel it is important to this district.

Brenda Rivera stated I was here at the last Board meeting regarding transportation issue with my daughter and being denied a bus pass. Mr. Tatum had approved for my family. Dr. Taylor is denying the pass because we are 2.48 miles from the high school. Technically, that is 2.5. Mr. Tatum issued the pass for my kid because he understood the distance issue and that we cannot bring our kids to the school and to walk from 5-points to Union High School is quite a distance. Currently there is construction going on at Chestnut Street. There is no way my daughter is going to make it through that construction traffic safely here to the school. Again, I want to remind this Board that it is a safety issue with my daughter. The fact that your Transportation Department and Dr. Taylor can remove something that was already granted to me is worrisome. They state that other people have asked for a bus pass. I don't see them here. I don't know how many of those people are within that .02 that my daughter falls into. I want to ask you Mr. McDowell to please find out how many parents are inquiring for a bus pass at a distance of .02 and I also would like to know how many seats in our buses are being occupied because my daughter's friends who live a block from me are saying the buses have empty seats yet you are denying a seat to my daughter who needs to come to school safely. Like the Board member here said, we need to meet the needs of our students. My student is a straight "A" student. She is in the orchestra in school; she is in a club with Dr. Paul. She needs transportation. She needs to make it to school safely. She is a great student. Why wouldn't you be able to accommodate her. Let's look at that route that my kid has always taken to Union High School. I have had two kids go through the district and see if there is an empty seat for my daughter. Why wouldn't you be able to grant that to a student who deserves it. I have no time to waste. My husband has been leaving work early for a month now to pick up my daughter because we are in COVID, we don't have family nearby to give her a ride. Parents are not picking up their kids around me if they are on a bus. I can't wait. At the last meeting I was told that it would be discussed in the executive meeting. Dr. Taylor was still not budging on his "no" so that tells me that maybe this topic was not discussed because when I left here at the last Board meeting, I was hopeful that my situation would be considered. I cannot accept that something that had been granted could be removed by your Transportation Department and Dr. Taylor.

MOTION TO ADJOURN:

There being no further business before the Board in public session it was moved by Mrs. Regis-Darby, seconded by Mr. O'Shea, that the meeting be adjourned at 8:34 p.m.

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

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,

YOLANDA KOON
BOARD SECRETARY

