

UNION TOWNSHIP BOARD OF EDUCATION
WORKSESSION MINUTES – December 13, 2016

Meeting held at the James Caulfield Administration Building, 2369 Morris Avenue, Union, New Jersey at 7 p.m. on December 13, 2016. Action was taken.

The meeting was called to order by Mr. Nufrio at 7:03 p.m.

PRESENT AT ROLL CALL:

Mr. David Arminio, Dr. Guy Francis, Mr. Steven Le, Mr. Ron McDowell, Mr. Jeffrey Monge, Mr. Vito Nufrio, Mrs. Nellis Regis-Darby, Mrs. Nancy Zuena

ABSENT AT ROLL CALL:

Mr. Angel Salcedo

ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT:

Mr. Gregory Tatum, Mrs. Annie Moses, Mr. Gerry Benaquista, Mr. Gregory Brennan, Mr. Barry Loessel, Mrs. Kim Conti, Mrs. Ann Hart, Mrs. Sandra Paul

ALSO PRESENT:

Paul Griggs, Esq.

Mr. Gerry Benaquista led the Board and audience in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. Brennan read the statement required under the “Open Public Meetings Act”, a copy of which is on file in the office of the Secretary.

COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC ON RESOLUTIONS IN BOLD:

None

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Mr. Nufrio stated minutes listed on the agenda will be approved at the regular meeting.

COMMUNICATIONS:

Mr. Nufrio stated the communications are most likely repeated in the Personnel and will also be next week.

SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT:

Mr. Tatum stated next week we are going to have presentations by our District Supervisors. We will hear from Nicole Ahern – Guidance Department and Joseph Seugling – Special Services Supervisor. We will also have those three young ladies that I had the pleasure of filming the TV show with at Franklin School. I can introduce them to the public. Also next week we will have highlights for the second annual Union Relay for Life program that will be taking place on June 3rd.

Mr. Nufrio stated I just wanted to let everyone know that I did speak with Mr. Tatum and I indicated that I was so taken and pleased by the musical that I attended with my wife last Saturday night that I took the liberty to send a complimentary note to Mr. Mosser and also indicating that we would love to have them come for the December 20th meeting and maybe play a clip from the musical for our entertainment and more importantly to recognize the kids, the staff and all of their accomplishments. My wife has a musical background and she said the kids were amazing because to sing and dance is an extremely difficult task to accomplish successfully. As a novice of musicals that I have attended, they were Broadway quality.

EDUCATION/STUDENT DISCIPLINE COMMITTEE RESOLUTION:

Mr. McDowell presented the Education/Student Discipline Committee agenda.

Moved by Mr. McDowell, seconded by Mrs. Zuena, that the following resolution be adopted:

E-7. APPROVE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT LIBRARY

That the Board approve the professional development library for the middle school teachers; reinforce PLC collaboration, best practices and moving student learning to the next level at a cost of \$9,800.00, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

DISCUSSION:

None

AYE: Mr. Arminio, Dr. Francis, Mr. Le, Mr. McDowell, Mr. Monge, Mrs. Regis-Darby, Mrs. Zuena, Mr. Nufrio

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED

Mr. Arminio stated I would like to congratulate the Central Office staff for E-5 – establishment of Academy for Policy and that is going to be going into effect.

Mr. Tatum stated that is an initiative that we use to call the Middle School Academy and it was a stroke of luck that we were able to put this program back together just by virtue of some of the budgetary work that myself and the other members of Central Office worked on over the summer. I am interviewing right now and the recommendations will be on next week's agenda and we should be able to get started. This is a program that will take place in the afternoon after school. It will center around a student's ability to analyze information and debate specific issues that come before them. We have these academies and we never really see the end result. Once we select the academy administrator to possibly have a demonstration – a live debate with students before a live audience. Do it on a Saturday afternoon or evening or one evening during the course of the week so the parents can come and see the fruits of all that goes into this activity.

It is a pilot program this year and we are hoping that if it catches on that we will be able to expand it next year. The good news is that even if it goes beyond the number of students that would be selected, there is room to grow even this year. I think it is another step in the right

direction in terms of moving the District forward and adding additional activities for our students.

Mr. Monge asked how do you scream this from the rooftop because the good stuff that we do falls on deaf ears. Mr. Tatum stated I think our public relations people that we have put in place and you gave us a nice place to advertise and that correspondence that you gave me last week, I actually did talk to one of our teachers that is working on this and she does have some affiliation with that particular newspaper. We can also do an announcement, especially in the middle schools, that the program is back and those interested can sign up. There are other avenues that we can pursue – the website and let people know we are moving this back into our program. It is exciting to start to see things unfold and that we are getting ourselves back in the right direction. Once we get the staff completed and I will have it done by Tuesday. You will have recommendations on there.

Mrs. Zuena asked how long is the program? Mr. Tatum stated it should start in January and go to May and then we will look on how we can expand it and get it started earlier for next school year. We are working on a new budget for the upcoming school year and we are doing a lot of work on that right now to try to reconfigure some of the dollars that we have available to us to make it more student based and put more money back in the hands of the school buildings.

Mr. Nufrio asked what are the hours that the students will attend? Mr. Tatum stated I believe it is an hour after school and I believe it is three days of week.

FISCAL AND PLANNING COMMITTEE RESOLUTIONS:

Mr. Monge presented the Fiscal and Planning Committee agenda. Mr. Monge stated F-15 and F-16 pertains to the audit that was just completed and handed out to the Board members. We will be presented next Tuesday for a Q&A and just an FYI, we are going to have a conversation with them tomorrow to ask a couple of questions. If anyone has questions, you can shoot them over to Mr. Brennan. If anyone wants to join that conversation, please reach out to Mr. Brennan or you can next week if you have any questions.

It was a very clean audit – so kudos to management here.

Moved by Mr. Monge, seconded by Mr. Le, that the following resolution be adopted:

F-19. APPROVE TECHNOLOGY BASED RESOLUTION

That the Board approve the attached technology based resolution authorizing the execution and delivery of a Master Tax-Exempt Lease Purchase Agreement, and related instruments, and determining other matters in connection therewith between the Board of Education and US Bank, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

DISCUSSION:

Mr. Arminio asked for clarification of resolution. Mr. Monge stated I will leave it to Mr. Brennan. Mr. Brennan stated I shared an amortization schedule today with the Finance Committee and this is to purchase the 2400 Chromebooks that Mrs. Paul has requested for the

high school and this is the lease purchase plan. The total cost of the 2400 Chromebooks is \$734,000. We have a great rate at 2%. We went out for another quote on a rate from Dell and it was 3.4% so this is a really good deal and it is very necessary for the high school for the one-to-one initiative.

Mrs. Paul stated from the survey that was done the kids decided that they wanted the Dell Chromebooks so that is what I'm purchasing. The books are coming in completely configured. When I get the books, all I have to do is take them out of the box, a parent and student signs for them and they are ready to use. Mr. Nufrio stated at the agenda review meeting, at the top of the Dell proposal it stated .34. Mrs. Paul stated that was a typo. Mr. Nufrio asked did Dell even attempt to be competitive with the financing? Mrs. Paul stated I didn't tell them I got financing from someone else. I have never told another company or bank what one gave me. Mr. Nufrio stated Dell is the manufacturer of the book. They don't care where their money comes from but maybe if they heard we could get a better rate from the bank.

Mr. Monge stated my experience on leasing plans, there is a cost of capital that they have in the rate and the rate ends up being the rate to sway a 100 basis points or 1% - that is a big difference in financing. Even when folks would move, even if they would in this case because most of the time their cost of capital is what it is and they are not going to move a full 1%. The other thing to mention and we talked about and I agree, rates are going to move and this is a locked rate. Mr. Brennan stated as I showed you Mr. Monge, the rate was given to us back in September when Ms. Paul was initially looking at the Chromebooks and then found that we really needed to put the infrastructure in place at the high school first before the Chromebooks. That original agreement expired November 6th but they are still guaranteeing this rate now in December as rates are going up.

Mr. Nufrio stated there is a second part to this that the public and the Board needs to know. This is paid over a 3-year period and then next year we are going to contract with them for the middle schools which will overlap for another three years. Be cognoscente to the fact that the first third payment will be \$250,000, but next year that will be increased by the second contract for the middle school Chromebooks so we need to plan accordingly and be sure that we have the money in the budget for next year and so the public is aware that next year it will be more.

Mr. Monge stated an issue we had for the last couple of years, we didn't have enough computers for the PARCC and we had kids in computer classes not able to use computers because other kids were using them. This is going to reduce the period of time that kids will be able to take the PARCC at the high school. Mr. Benaquista stated I think they will get it down to about 6 days - which we were at 30 days last year.

Mr. Nufrio stated it is important for the public that is here and next week I will re-emphasize this opening on television is that this Board is about seeking out the best possible sources for the least amount of cost for the value of what we request and perhaps this is not the time but I will say, such is the case for the Board and that is why I posted what I did last night in response to some comments which were obviously expected at some point questioning different things that this Board may or may not have done and I can say there will be more postings to

come and the focus will be that we are being as fiscally minded and as frugal as possible with every dollar that you and I and everybody in this room who is a taxpayer pays. As long as the public understands that everybody has an opinion but there is always two sides of story and then there is a third which is usually never talked about. There is a third side to this story.

Mr. Arminio stated next year when we go to the middle school, does this get re-bid? Can Dell come back and bid lower than their 3.4% and beat out this other company? Mr. Brennan stated yes, it will be a separate lease purchase. Mr. Arminio stated it won't be an add on to the existing. Mr. Brennan stated no. Mrs. Paul stated it will be a completely separate project. Mr. Arminio stated next week when you explain it – to make sure that everyone knows about the bandwidth and that has been increased and all the Chromebooks will work. Mr. Nufrio stated I hope the same financing will be available next year.

AYE: Mr. Arminio, Dr. Francis, Mr. Le, Mr. McDowell, Mr. Monge, Mrs. Regis-Darby,
Mrs. Zuena, Mr. Nufrio

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED

Mr. Nufrio stated I want to complement Mrs. Paul for doing the type of work that we expected when we first appointed her and that is to look out for not only the kids but for the tax dollars as well. Job well done, thank you.

OPERATIONS COMMITTEE RESOLUTIONS:

Mrs. Zuena presented the Operations Committee agenda.

Moved by Mrs. Zuena, seconded by Mr. Monge, that the following resolution be adopted:

O-3. REPORT RECEIPT OF BIDS

Report receipt of three (3) bids for Burnet Middle School Intercom System Replacement, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

O-4. ACCEPT BID

That the Board accept the bid received from Coskeys TV & Radio Sales & Service for Burnet Middle School Intercom System Replacement for the 2016-2017 school year, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

O-6. APPROVE AUTHORIZATION – BURNET MIDDLE SCHOOL

That the Board approve authorization to Parette Somjen Architects to submit all necessary plans and paperwork to the Department of Education concerning the door replacement at Burnet Middle School to serve as an application to the Office of School Facilities and an amendment to the District's Long Range Facility Plan. This is an "Other Capital" project and the District is not seeking State funding but will fund the project through the District's Capital Reserve (Fund 12) Account.

O-7. APPROVE AUTHORIZATION – KAWAMEEH MIDDLE SCHOOL

That the Board approve authorization to Parette Somjen Architects to submit all necessary plans and paperwork to the Department of Education concerning the door replacement at Kawameeh Middle School to serve as an application to the Office of School Facilities and an amendment to the District's Long Range Facility Plan. This is an "Other Capital" project and the District is not seeking State funding but will fund the project through the District's Capital Reserve (Fund 12) Account.

O-8. APPROVE AUTHORIZATION – LIVINGSTON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

That the Board approve authorization to Parette Somjen Architects to submit all necessary plans and paperwork to the Department of Education concerning the door replacement at Livingston Elementary School to serve as an application to the Office of School Facilities and an amendment to the District's Long Range Facility Plan. This is an "Other Capital" project and the District is not seeking State funding but will fund the project through the District's Capital Reserve (Fund 12) Account.

O-9. APPROVE AUTHORIZATION – CONNECTICUT FARMS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

That the Board approve authorization to Parette Somjen Architects to submit all necessary plans and paperwork to the Department of Education concerning the door replacement at Connecticut Farms Elementary School to serve as an application to the Office of School Facilities and an amendment to the District's Long Range Facility Plan. This is an "Other Capital" project and the District is not seeking State funding but will fund the project through the District's Capital Reserve (Fund 12) Account.

O-10. APPROVE AUTHORIZATION – WASHINGTON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

That the Board approve authorization to Parette Somjen Architects to submit all necessary plans and paperwork to the Department of Education concerning the door replacement at Washington Elementary School to serve as an application to the Office of School Facilities and an amendment to the District's Long Range Facility Plan. This is an "Other Capital" project and the District is not seeking State funding but will fund the project through the District's Capital Reserve (Fund 12) Account.

O-11. APPROVE AUTHORIZATION – BATTLE HILL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

That the Board approve authorization to Parette Somjen Architects to submit all necessary plans and paperwork to the Department of Education concerning the door replacement at Battle Hill Elementary School to serve as an application to the Office of School Facilities and an amendment to the District's Long Range Facility Plan. This is an "Other Capital" project and the District is not seeking State funding but will fund the project through the District's Capital Reserve (Fund 12) Account.

O-12. APPROVE AUTHORIZATION – FRANKLIN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

That the Board approve authorization to Parette Somjen Architects to submit all necessary plans and paperwork to the Department of Education concerning the door replacement at Franklin Elementary School to serve as an application to the Office of School Facilities and an amendment to the District's Long Range Facility Plan. This is an "Other Capital" project and

the District is not seeking State funding but will fund the project through the District’s Capital Reserve (Fund 12) Account.

O-14. APPROVE REQUEST – USE OF JEFFERSON SCHOOL

That the Board approve request from Michael Boll requesting the use of Jefferson School on December 18, 2016 from 7:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. for Santa in Blue toy drive, Free Holiday Breakfast and waiver of fees, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

DISCUSSION:

Mr. Arminio asked on O-14 should we amend that resolution? Mr. Monge stated no, the wrapping is at the Senior Center. Mrs. Zuena stated some Santa in Blue will be done there. Mr. Monge stated they are having the breakfast there too.

Mr. Monge stated the intercom project and the doors project is part of the Capital Improvement Plan that was budgeted and approved.

Mr. Nufrio stated next Tuesday, our new auditors, Niscivoccia & Company will be at the Board meeting giving a summary of what they learned and we will be asking questions that evening as well.

AYE: Mr. Arminio, Dr. Francis, Mr. Le, Mr. McDowell, Mr. Monge, Mrs. Regis-Darby, Mrs. Zuena, Mr. Nufrio

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE RESOLUTIONS:

Mr. Arminio presented the Personnel Committee agenda.

Moved by Mr. Arminio, seconded by Mrs. Zuena, that the following resolution be adopted:

P-5. APPROVE AMENDED NON-UNIT HOURLY RATE WORKSHEET

That the Board approve the amended non-unit hourly rate worksheet, effective December 14, 2016, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

DISCUSSION:

None.

AYE: Mr. Arminio, Dr. Francis, Mr. Le, Mr. McDowell, Mr. Monge, Mrs. Regis-Darby, Mrs. Zuena, Mr. Nufrio

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED

POLICY COMMITTEE:

Mr. Arminio presented the Policy Committee agenda. Mr. Arminio stated the Policy Committee met several times, along with Mr. Benaquista, we went over the three policies presenting the first reading this evening and next week will be the second and we can vote on next week. The first one is a medical marijuana policy that is State mandated.

Policy 2 is not mandated but eventually it will be. The week before I saw in the newspaper a Narcam Policy that was being adopted by a town in Ocean County. I hope that we never have to use it. Having it in place and having someone who is trained in administering Narcam is going to be something that we can be proud of. We are going ahead of the rest of the State and we are going to be able to administer Narcam in case but hopefully we will never have to use it and it is directed at both the high school and the two middle schools. Anyone can get the training. It is a win-win and I don't see any problem with it.

The policy on gender identity and expression – that is not State mandated yet but it will be in the near future. When you read it Board members, there is a process in identifying who they are. By first going to the principal and the guidance counselor and the parents come in and there is conferences – it is not something where someone can come in and say “I'm this today” and “I'm going to be something else tomorrow”. There is a whole process involved and I think we should consider it seriously and hopefully we will approve it next week.

Under new business, I will be presenting some more new policies.

RESIDENCY COMMITTEE RESOLUTIONS:

Mrs. Zuena presented the Residency Committee agenda.

DISCUSSION:

Mr. Nufrio stated discussion is not appropriate for any of this because it is all confidential.

APPROVAL OF BILLS:

Mr. Monge stated the bills will be paid next week.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

Mr. Monge stated I would like to get an update on Effective Solutions. We talked about trying to get periodic updates on how that is going. Mrs. Conti stated we are in full swing. Children have been identified and the parents have agreed to the program. They initially said that there is about 18 slots for the fee that we pay them. We filled approximately half of those spots and referrals are coming and we have good feedback about the program and they are having an ESS open house. The staff and everyone can come in and speak and meet the staff.

Mr. Monge stated correct me if I'm wrong and Mr. Griggs you can help out here – we are paying a fee for 18 slots so if we are at nine now, we are still paying for 18. Mrs. Conti stated when you are saying that there are eight assigned and agreed to, there are other work that is being done. For example there are still intake processes that have to go on for other children so

they discuss and work with families for considering students in the program so you are working with them. There is the professional development piece that they do work with. It takes time to work with the families and that was clear in the contract.

Mr. Griggs stated my understanding was that the program builds and they start off with their upfront work and it builds up to the total number. They don't start immediately with 18 kids. They have to gear those kids to that program.

Mr. Monge stated I had some issues with the agreement. Do we have any benchmarks on those agreements as it pertains to you should be able to get to x-amount of students by a certain time. If you have 9 students and they get paid 100% of their fee and we were expecting 18 students served but we only got 9, when we go to reconsider them, would we take that into consideration. Is there any benchmarks in place that we are monitoring.

Mrs. Conti stated not to put a dollar sign in regard to each individual student, what we are looking for is to include as many students as possible in least restrictive environment to bring them back to the District. When we did do the presentation, we talked about the average price for the out-of-district placements, we talked about the number of students where it becomes cost effective and that was part of the presentation that it didn't have to be all 18 where it would be cost effective for the District and more importantly to be effective for the students in getting a meaningful educational benefit.

Mr. Monge stated with all due respect, if we have a contract and the expectation is 18 – the sales pitch is if we have 2-3 it pays for itself but we are still be sold on the 18 and it is not acceptable. I don't think it would be acceptable at the end of the day if we were looking for 18 kids to be served and only nine were served at the end of the contract, they got 100% of their fee that would be a good presentation when we review the contract for the future.

Mrs. Conti stated the contract would be something we would discuss but the focus right now is to have a meaningful education benefit for the children of the District to bring them back to the least restrictive environment. Mr. Monge stated this is about maximizing it to the 18. I thought that 18 was a small number. Mr. Nufrio stated 18 was the max and I do agree with you and we said that in the beginning but if you only bring me 8 kids, it is not my fault. It is the process. Mrs. Conti and the entire Special Ed Department should be submitting possibly more students for them to review and assess because we are paying for it.

Mr. Griggs stated it doesn't work that way. When did the program start? Mrs. Conti stated November. Mr. Griggs stated so the program just started. Mr. Monge stated I got the update thank you, we need to look at it. Mr. Nufrio stated we will look at it again in January.

Mrs. Conti stated there are more referrals. I'm talking about children who are actively in the program but there are still children in the referral process so that is all part of it as well. Mr. Monge stated I get it. You should report back to them that we are asking questions and we see how they do when the contract is up. Mr. Nufrio stated it is a work in progress and we will keep reviewing it monthly.

Mrs. Regis-Darby asked can I get an update on the afterschool program – the YMCA. I know that they are sending out the parent-student survey in January. How is that going? How are the parents feeling about the afterschool program?

Mrs. Moses stated I have been in contact with them about the survey. They are sending out the survey when we come back. They hired teachers in the District. They put the posting out and we only received two teachers in the District that wanted to take on that position. Our plan is to have them come in January or February to talk more about that. They said that they have gotten a lot of good feedback from parents. They did the survey for the middle school. The State came in and we are looking at that for second semester.

Mr. Nufrio stated I have two questions for Mr. Brennan. One – going back to F-13, I just need an understanding – is this an unpaid bill and we are just catching up because according to Mrs. Conti, she did not put this on the agenda. Mr. Brennan stated this is for Nicole Ahern. Mr. Nufrio stated we need more understanding about it for next week.

This has to do with a term that I'm confused about. What is "other capital"? Mr. Brennan stated that is all the projects for the door. Mr. Nufrio stated but what is it because it says that it doesn't require any funding. Mr. Brennan stated because it has already been approved by the Board. Mr. Monge stated that is the capital projects moneys that we appropriate. Mr. Nufrio stated so "other capital" means it has to do with projects that are not funded by the State. Mr. Griggs stated yes, typically it is not funded by the State. Mr. Nufrio stated so it comes out of our capital reserve. No additional funding.

Mrs. Zuena with regards to residency – all those children that were listed to be removed from our rolls – each of those students were thoroughly investigated and certified to not be residents - is that correct? Mrs. Zuena stated correct.

Mr. Nufrio stated I think the public needs to understand that it is a very difficult process before you remove a student and we just want to make sure we are in compliance with the law and procedures and follow-up. Mr. Monge stated we are actually looking at strengthening those procedures and I know that Mrs. Moses has something that she is going to share and we have been talking for a while on how to improve the process. We are looking at not only strengthening those procedures and including in a policy but also looking at the technology aspect. Mrs. Paul is working with Mrs. Moses on trying to blend the policies and the like with the technology. Hopefully we will report on it in the next coming weeks.

Dr. Francis stated Mrs. Paul, I know we were talking about this before you came aboard – about moving our data from the servers to the cloud. Is that part of the infrastructure that is taking place right now? Mrs. Paul stated no. It is in the planning process and I have been having discussions with three vendors regarding that and getting from our partner some insight into really what we are looking for. But that is not part of the infrastructure right now. The reason being is one of the things that I'm concerned about is the time. Timing is an issue because if we do move in that direction, it is going to be in the middle of the PARCC and I can't afford that so I might have to wait but that may actually work for us because if I wait a little bit there is a chance that I can get the Federal government's E-Rate and they will cover the cost – the whole

thing because it is associated with your free and reduced lunch and your refund but through that we may be able to get back about 40-50% of whatever we pay for the services. I am concerned about the date of when we could actually implement it. They give me 90 days which is 3 months and that is about right where PARCC starts. I don't want to do anything to disrupt that process.

Mr. Nufrio stated the 90-day period is from the day that you sign-off on it. Mrs. Paul stated right and I don't want anything between March-May and I'm trying to be very careful.

Mr. Nufrio stated we don't want to disregard deadlines. Mr. Monge stated the infrastructure - the wiring of the high school - wi-fi, when is that going to be completed and tested and signed off on? Mrs. Zuena stated we talked about that in Operations so maybe you stepped out of the room. Mrs. Paul had addressed that and by the end of December is the deadline he had given them and they couldn't go a day into January. They needed to be completed. Mrs. Paul stated the testing and everything by December 31st.

Mr. Nufrio stated just so the public gets a better understanding - we are guided by rules, regulations, laws, bylaws and policies and once in while the guidance falls a little weak and that is human error and that is why we are very cognoscente that deadlines must be adhered to because we are not a private industry, we are a public entity and we are held by those deadlines and dates otherwise we all catch the proverbial hell. It is important that the Board is informed properly too.

NEW BUSINESS:

Mr. Arminio stated every year the County makes a presentation - one individual from each school district is recognized as an "unsung hero". It is for those students who aren't great athletes or 4.2 grade point averages. It is for someone who has done something whether personally in the District for their school and is recognized by the County. I do not remember Union ever having someone represent our District. I have gone to two of them and both times Union was not represented. This year I took it upon myself. When I go to the Union County Ed Services, I made sure that I got something and this is last year's letter from the Superintendent in Berkeley Heights who hosted the event. So two things, (1) I'm going to make sure that Mr. Tatum gets the person who is supposed to be doing this - someone to represent our high school and (2) Berkeley Heights has hosted this for the last three years and in our discussion I said I'll ask our Superintendent and it would be an hour using our auditorium on a Monday or Tuesday night, whenever we wanted to have it and somebody from each high school in the County and their parents and maybe the principals and Superintendents come and the individual gets up and gives a 30-second talk and say what they have done and it is over. I am going to see if we can host it. It is one more thing where we get recognition. Next week I will have more information for everyone and maybe we can have it under discussion, we don't have to make the decision right now. I'm just letting you know and we don't have to approve the individual, that is up to the principal in the high school to select someone. Hosting it would be something that we should do.

The second is for the policy committee and Mr. Nufrio said he wanted a technology report each month in a separate section. Mr. Nufrio stated I asked if it was doable but you have the info. Mr. Arminio stated I have the answer. We have a By-Law in the 9000's of our policy

manual where we have our standing committees and technology is not one of our standing committees and that is why you don't see it on the agenda. However, we can by a simple majority vote add an eighth committee – technology. However, we do also have Regulation 9130 that follows the By-Laws – it says the committee which is Education/Student Discipline, that is an education matter, including the use of educational technology, so all we would have to do is change that by crossing it out from there and adding a list of the regulations of what the technology committee would do. We would have to revise the regulation and add the word “technology” to the standing committees. This could be something we can do and vote on it. Would we need a first and second reading on that? Mr. Griggs stated yes.

Mr. Arminio stated next week we can show that and then the following month in January. Mr. Nufrio stated we are simply changing and not adding. Mr. Arminio stated we are adding a standing committee. Mr. Nufrio stated I saw Mr. Brennan's response that he thought that perhaps within the current Fiscal Committee. Mr. Brennan stated my only concern was are we going to have technology items at each and every meeting. Mr. Nufrio stated will Mrs. Paul bring a list of things to talk about. Mr. Arminio stated it could be just like the Policy Committee, if there is nothing brought before the Board, it is just blank. Mr. Nufrio stated I thought it was better to highlight instead of jumping into Fiscal or Operations and that if they had their own committee, whoever is assigned to that committee, would meet with Mrs. Paul for 5 minutes and get an idea of what she would talk about. I'm in favor of it because too many times they were meshed in with Fiscal or Operations. Mr. Arminio stated it is actually part of education.

Mr. Monge stated I think all these committees are important and one thing that we did talk about is having an update on what is happening in all the committees. We don't do that. Mr. Nufrio stated we want the public to see and hear each distinct category instead of being infused with the others. Mr. Monge stated what we are trying to do is create a committee for technology and hear about what is going on but we have a committee for finance and operations and we need to know what is going on instead of discussing what resolutions we have on the agenda. We do it sometimes but we don't do it as a general practice. Mr. Nufrio stated it helps to clarify for the public so they can see a distinct separation. It should be its own category because there is a lot to talk about.

Mr. Monge stated just a simple committee update. I'm not on Education so I don't know what you guys talk about and vis-a versa. I think that maybe if there is a bullet point committee update. Mr. Nufrio stated and if there is no update, that is fine.

Mrs. Zuena stated Mrs. Ionta and I talked about maybe adding an Athletic Committee and maybe it is not something that has to be met every month. It is obviously something that we don't need to talk about every month but maybe quarterly or seasonally. Mr. Nufrio stated put something together and bring it to the Board for discussion. Mr. Arminio stated bring it to the Policy Committee. Mr. Nufrio stated Mr. Arminio said it needs to go to Policy first. Ultimately he gets to say yes or no.

COMMENTS FROM PUBLIC:

Anne Margaret Shannon stated the Residency presentation has changed – why is that? Mr. Nufrio and Mr. Griggs stated it has to be that way. Ms. Shannon stated O-3 – the intercom system for Burnet – do staff have the ability to call out to parents like in C-5 or strictly internal. Mr. Loessel stated I'm not sure if you will be able to call the parents, I think it is just an intercom internal. Ms. Shannon stated it is a great feature to be able to call parents. Mr. Nufrio asked don't you have a phone in the classroom? Ms. Shannon stated no.

UTEA is very involved this Saturday in the Santa in Blue wrapping of toys and we are looking for volunteers if anyone wants to come and join us.

Lastly, I talked about Google training and I'm happy to say that we have had some training and I'm looking forward to lots of more training.

Jill Hall stated this probably doesn't mean anything to anyone but me but we continue to use the verbiage "Guidance Department" and "Guidance Counselor" and even with Mrs. Ahern's presentation next week it says from the "Guidance Department" and I know it is personal but we really need to get that updated. It is antiquated language and it is not used and we don't issue certificates to guidance counselors it is all school counseling. It is one of those things that is going to die a slow death and it is so hard because it is so engrained but we have to start trying to get use to using that terminology.

I wanted to applaud the Board on the policies that are being put in place. The medical marijuana policy is mandated but to be out in front with the gender identity and expression. There has been so much discussion throughout the State on how we can best address that to protect our kids so for us to get out there and have something in place and then see what the State puts out and adjust accordingly we really put that in a really good space.

With regards to the Narcam, Prevention Links which is the County provider for substance use education will provide free training for 10 or more people – you can't go as a Board or Board employees but if 10 individual citizens want to get together, they will train us and they will give each one of the participants a kit. Mr. Arminio stated I have to add that it is Mr. Le who started the whole thing with the Narcam and got me going on the policy. Ms. Hall stated I couldn't agree more that it is something that I hope we never have to use. I would love to have my kit in my pocketbook for the rest of my life and not have to use it. But if you have to use it once, we are talking about saving someone's life. If anyone is interested and if we can get 10 people together, independent citizens not of the Board, I think it would be a good thing.

Mr. Nufrio stated Mr. Griggs, as a certified student personnel services guidance individual, I don't know what caused the change in the terminology, but my question is those people like myself who maybe in that position with that certification, the new change in the title, will it affect them or just be grandfathered. Mr. Griggs stated you are grandfathered. Mr. Nufrio stated so the new title and preparation in the colleges/universities does not change the people who have had the position because if they are not certified as a school counselor than it becomes a problem. Mr. Griggs stated they are grandfathered.

Sue Lipstein stated E-4, E-5 and E-6 and I just want to talk about the elephant in the room which is the article in the newspaper and I don't know how much you can comment on it. I guess we are looking for an explanation about what transpired.

E-4 – I want information on what they are – maybe Mrs. Moses can say something and possibly email me so I have it in writing. Mrs. Moses stated the afterschool and/or morning programs, depending on the needs of the students in each individual building – the bottomline is extended programs for the students in the area of language arts, reading, writing, creative thinking, communication, as in project based learning and explaining and this is to help students with their academics; to enrich their academics and students are recommended by their teacher because there is a limited amount of space. It will run from January through May and as you know June is a social month for our students and they do a lot of activities given by the PTA. I can send you that and the back-up does explain and every program is different and based on the needs of the school.

Mrs. Lipstein stated the academy, I guess I can look at the back-up. Apex learning, what is that? Mrs. Moses stated the Apex learning is a comprehensive program that is designed to help students with credit recovery, stay on top of their academics and if they need that extra help – we have that to offer. That program is a blended learning program in which is on the computer and it is also facilitated by a teacher. The teachers that will be using this program used it last year in their summer program so they are familiar with the program. This program is not new to the high school. We want to make sure that our students don't fall behind. If there is anything that they are going through and they need this extra support. This can be during the school day, this can be in the afterschool program.

Mr. Tatum stated E-4 – I want it to be understood that this is the second year that this program has been in effect and once again this program was established through our current budget and when we put this money in place last year, we reallocated it again for this year. As you start to see programs emerge throughout the District, these are programs that I talked about being able to make them sustainable. This is an example of one that we are now looking to sustain as well as the academy. The other programs that we have coming ahead and as we continue to move forward with our budgeting practices, I hope we will be seeing more of this.

Mrs. Lipstein stated the other thing is what was in the paper about the issue about the bids and hoping to get information. Mr. Nufrio stated you will and in the very short post that I placed and I placed two and I did check with our Board attorney before submitting those but the subsequent statement that will come will be more comprehensive but we have to be mindful that it is still something that is in the third stage of three stages so to speak and we are working very diligently to address any and all issues surrounding that. So any comment, unless you would like to make a comment right now? Mr. Griggs stated I haven't talked to the Board yet. This is the first meeting and I talked to Mr. Nufrio and there is forthcoming a very detailed statement next week which will set forth dates, chronology and things like that. It will be very clear in terms of facts. Mr. Nufrio stated that will be for next Tuesday. I wanted to respond to people that we were not asleep at the wheel and we never have been. We are addressing any and all aspects of that and my comment tonight which is no different from last night, sometimes the word collusion may be an illusion.

Elsie Macky stated E-8 – this is awesome the million dollar grant for IEP for Life in the Community or our out-of-District students – that is amazing. I want to know the plans on monitoring this. Any plans on bringing the out-of-district kids back in District. What is the plan? Mrs. Conti stated just to clarify, this grant was something that the State Department of Ed and we had applied for and we talked about this earlier on that we partnered with the Morris Union Jointure Commission and we are part of that group. With that, they were granted the award and obviously since we were a partnering district and the Board graciously approved that we would partner and we are part of the grant money but keep in mind that there are multiple districts that are part of the jointure so we are sharing in the money. Part of it is to do a needs assessment and it is for primarily the students and trying to help them transition from school to work, work to school and post-secondary needs for life beyond graduation. This is for high school students. What they are looking for is to do part of the needs assessment to help the district grow their own programs in district for example community based instructions where they can go out in the communities and continue their real life learning. Part of this is also professional development as well where we will have the opportunity to at no cost to be able to have staff go and take advantage of professional development. For example, the New Jersey TIF travel training – some of that is part of it as well to help children negotiate travel within the community. I will be very happy to report back to everyone.

Mrs. Mackey asked is it in effect already? Mrs. Conti stated it is but we have to accept the funds and it is in effect. We are now going to be able to work with the jointure and all of the benefits that I discussed. We do have to accept the grants and I did speak about it with Central Office. I think they are in the first phase already. The Morris County Jointure had to work with the State to finalizing the grant. The State monitors what happens with the grant money so there will be a reporting period back to the State.

In terms of bringing students back to District, we certainly are always looking for the least restrictive environment to bring students back. It remains an IEP team decision; however, to assist the IEP team in making that decision and the more we bring back to our District and reinforce programs. Grants like this absolutely benefit the students and we are very proud of the grant and any grants we do receive.

Mrs. Regis-Darby asked what is the actual number that we are going to receive? Mrs. Conti stated we are sharing and I will clarify that for you as well. We are sharing with the other member districts so once we do the needs assessment, then they will see how the money is distributed. They are going to use the money to provide services to our District so we will be utilizing the services and we wouldn't be paying a fee for that so as the needs assessments – there are multiple parts of the grant as I understand it that we would have to do a needs assessment and based on what we need then we would be utilizing services and I would very much like to report back as it does unfold.

Mrs. Mackey asked in terms of the needs assessment, we know that these are kids that are ready to go into the community after high school – what determines needs assessment? There are different criteria for special services children. If this grant is here that is amazing but as a community how do you know which children are going to benefit from it? Mrs. Conti stated it

will be a discussion with the parents. In terms of who would benefit from it certainly I would not be making that decision that would be best left to the teams and the parents as well and I'm hoping that it will have a wide range reach because there was the professional development and different services that we can build with our programs. Even if some of the students aren't directly involved in the needs assessment per say but in building the programs, we can reach out to more children. I will be glad to come back and report.

Ladonna Hannah stated I work hands on with families that are in District that have children with special needs and they really would benefit from this program but how is this going to be advertised and how are they going to be made aware of this? The main issue is they have already had need assessments so is there a way with the Child Study Team that could use that information so we can save tax dollars so we could spread this out so that everyone could benefit from it. Mrs. Conti stated we certainly try to maximize and be as far reaching to the students as possible within the constraints. I would love to be able to come back and report.

Tracey Murray stated my grandson goes to Battle Hill and I have a lot of issues that I'm concerned about. In 2015, a teacher's assistant pulled a chair from under my grandson who still works for Union Township and I want to know how does that happen? Mr. Griggs stated we really can't talk, with all due respect, about student matters at this meeting. Have you approached the building principal? Mrs. Murray stated yes. Mr. Benaquista stated I talked to her. Mrs. Murray stated it was brought to my attention that during the investigation he was not supposed to be working. Mr. Griggs stated we really can't be talking about that because it is a Personnel matter, with all due respect and I mean that sincerely. We really can't be talking about it at this meeting.

Mr. Monge stated is it possible to give an explanation on why you can't speak to Personnel. Mr. Nufrio stated I'm going to simply say that any time it is a Personnel question, we are absolutely prohibited to even give any information that may or may not have resulted from an investigation but certainly you are entitled to contact the Superintendent. Mrs. Murray stated I did already. You all gave me your words that he would never be in any of the schools my grandson attends. Last week I had a bad feeling, you all gave me your word – your absolute word that he would never be anywhere near my grandson again. Mr. Nufrio stated are you speaking to Mr. Tatum or the Board? Mrs. Murray stated I'm speaking to Union Township who told me this information. Mrs. Moses stated when did this happen? Mrs. Murray stated 2015. Mr. Nufrio stated you can certainly revisit it again with Mr. Tatum. Mrs. Murray stated let me explain something to you, I don't want to revisit it no more. You understand. I just want an answer and let's be done with it. My problem is you gave me your word Ms. Conti. They gave me their word that he would never ever be anywhere near my grandson. Last Monday/Tuesday, I got a bad feeling and I told my son, I don't know why but I got this bad feeling like something is wrong. My son went to the school and the gentleman was at the school.

Mr. Nufrio stated I have to respect what the Board attorney is directing me and advising me. You can revisit this with Mr. Tatum and that would be on a personal level and make an appointment and discuss this thoroughly with him and whatever he recommends to the Board, we simply respond to that. Unfortunately, remember earlier when I said we are bound by rules,

policies, laws, bylaws – this is one of those and unfortunately it is a major one when it involves personnel or other students. We cannot have an open discussion on it.

Erica Young stated I have a general question about that. I work in a Newark district and whenever hands are laid on a kid, it is an investigation and people are brought in and that person has to stop working. Why not in this District? What are your procedures and policy for that? It seems like there is nothing in place. Mr. Nufrio stated there is. Mrs. Young stated this is District wide. This is not the first time I heard of this and this is going on and I say that some of these school districts and some of these staff members, security, subs are a little aggressive – over aggressive and our school district is like a police state.

I walked in the school last week to pick up my son early and when I was going to sign him out and getting ready to go into the office, the security guard held me back and as I looked up, it was Officer Sancster who had a kid (inaudible) against the wall. I am not saying any names and I don't know who the kid was but this needs to be said since it is brought out that you can't handle our kids like that and this is a problem and we need to know the procedure and every time we bring it to the principal, vice principals, Ms. Conti to investigate it – you can't get names of the persons that are doing these things, you can't get any feedback from anybody. The investigation from 2015 and you still don't have an answer to it – there is a problem with that. Mr. Young stated a cover-up. Mrs. Young stated the District is broken with those things.

Mr. Nufrio stated there are policies that govern that. The unfortunate thing is that nine Board members are sitting here and we are being apprised of something that happened two years ago and no follow-up may have been made even by the people that complained and that is important to understand. Just like any kind of complaint, if you are not getting the proper results, you still have the Superintendent in his office that you can schedule a meeting with. We as a Board are actually the last result if in fact if things are still not resolved properly, you can address it to the President of the Board and I have received emails and I do send them directly to Mr. Tatum.

With that, the word cover-up is a little offensive to me personally. We as a Board simply respond to what recommendations, if you see all the resolutions it says the recommendation of the Superintendent, now whatever may have transpired in that investigation or the other, certainly the Board can only react to what is brought to our attention.

Mrs. Young stated I understand that and the thing is when I write a letter or emails to our Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent and also the Director of Special Needs. Mr. Nufrio stated did you ever copy me? Mrs. Young stated no, but please make sure to share with the Board members and that is what I always say. Therefore, I am under the assumption, and you shouldn't ever assume really, that they are sharing this information and that the Board members know about this but now I see last year when we were at a meeting and there was some information that was given later on or after the fact. Mr. Young stated after I spoke about it. Mrs. Young stated we as the public really can't – when is there a time that we can meet with the Board. I have asked for meetings with the Board at your convenience. Mr. Nufrio stated there is a problem with that because when we have more than four Board members; the rules are crazy. Mrs. Young stated we can meet with three. Mr. Nufrio stated you can certainly make the request

via the Superintendent and the President of the Board to meet with the Personnel Committee. We have made exceptions in that area. The Personnel Committee is then only comprised of four people which by the regulation is all we are allowed to have in one room at any one time. Otherwise, it becomes an open public meeting and that we have to publicize and then everyone who wants to come can come. We do not in any way subscribe to cover-up or anything that is done underhandedly and I just want to put that on the record because this Board has been very much above board on all issues that are brought to our attention.

Mr. Young stated we are not speaking about the Board, we are speaking about who we dealt with. Maybe the issues don't come to the Board but believe me there are cover ups and there have been cover-ups with us personally, right Ms. Conti. Mr. Nufrio stated this has to be handled in a proper manner. Mr. Young stated with us speaking tonight, we are handling it the right way for us. Mr. Nufrio stated you have a higher authority to go to the Board. Email the President of the Board. I can assure you that there is no cover up when it comes to anything brought to my attention. Not that I'm saying that there is any cover up. Mr. Young stated I'm sure you don't know. Mr. Nufrio stated I do share. Mr. Tatum stated that is not true Mr. Young; not anything you brought to me. That is not true. Mrs. Young stated we are just frustrated. Mr. Young stated we are frustrated with you. Mr. Tatum stated last year when you came to the meeting and you brought information to me, the night that you came here, I had the information to bring to the Board and I provided you a copy that night because I said to you that this was going to be discussed before the entire Board but because it was a student matter, it has to be discussed in Executive Session and I provided you with a copy. Mr. Young stated after I spoke up. Mr. Tatum stated it was designed for you that night based upon your request for me to address it. Mrs. Young stated it was so long from when you got that information and it was months. Mr. Tatum stated it wasn't a month and that is totally unfair.

Mr. Nufrio stated this is a Board meeting and I'm guided by rules. Mr. Tatum I will ask you at this point to refrain from responding because it has come to my understanding that there is another level that this is already at and with that I am guided by the Board attorney. I don't mean to stifle you.

Suehay Monge stated I wasn't planning on addressing anything that pertains to special needs, as I sit in the room with parents who obviously have children with special needs as I do. I have to say that I totally understand and been there but what I want to say is every district by state is mandated to have a special needs advisory group and as you know Mr. Tatum has been very supportive of that. Elsie Mackey and I and I have to give her most of the credit, she took the lead on this and did an amazing job and she put together a meeting and so many parents came out and the response was amazing. Parents asking can you help us with this, can you give us our rights about this and we did it and it was great. We were so excited and we set up the next meeting and we had a parent advocate to come and talk about their rights and how everyone here on the Board has to educate themselves on their rights so that they know they are doing the right thing because you are all advocates for our students. We as parents are also advocates for our kids but unfortunately we were stifled in the process of trying to get the next meeting together because the person who was coming to speak, her title was parent advocate and I reached out to Ms. Conti and she wanted to know what needed to be discussed, what was going to be discussed on the persons agenda, removing the word advocate and if we didn't then special needs had to be

reviewed and we were trying to work together with the District and I think a lot of this should be avoided if the parent had a place to go to. Someone mentioned who do we go to and who can we talk to. We can talk to each other. We come back and say this is not being met and we come to the Board and someone says these are the needs that are not being met and we need to meet with special services and this is what we need and this is what we want and this is not what is being done. I don't know if it is a fear of having parents know what their rights are because they are going to demand more but it is a need and it is very hard to say I understand if you don't have a kid with special needs. It is a unique thing that if you don't have a child with special needs you will never understand. In order to help you guys, we have to know what we are doing too. Us knowing our rights is helping you guys. I think that a lot of work needs to be done with the special needs department in the District and Mr. Tatum I know you spoke with Elsie and you gave her the green light to go ahead but unfortunately the speaker we had lined up can no longer speak with us.

Ms. Hanna stated I understand now that reformed care is now in a position to provide an educational advocate so is that the reason why (inaudible). Mr. Nufrio stated I had a very short conversation before the Board meeting this evening at which I was informed that it was just a question of the word "advocate" and it was strongly recommended that the word "advisory" would be the correct verbiage. Once again we have a Board attorney who has to guide us. None of us are attorneys even if I were I couldn't present myself as an attorney. The change of the wording was all that was being asked from what I understand. Unfortunately it erupted into a more complicated issue which is unfortunate. Certainly parents can network with each other, as you said. You can bring issues to the Superintendent because that is the protocol. It goes to the Superintendent who then either assigns it to one of his assistants or handles it directly or to his directors and then brings it to the Board. Unfortunately, that is the process.

Mr. Monge stated we are mandated to have and support an advisory group. The reality is we didn't know about it. There was a group that we had and found online and as a father of a special needs son, we are very active parents and we didn't even know about it. The point we are trying to do is when you have parents that are stepping up and trying to meet a need that we are mandated to support, it is semantics when it is someone's title. I think the timing and Mr. Tatum definitely stepped up and seems to be able to deal with this but it shouldn't be this hard and I think that we all agree that it shouldn't be. I think that is the point. Anybody that is involved in that process, just to have a little patience and we will figure it out.

Mr. Nufrio stated this is the first time I learned that you guys didn't meet. Once we understood that the advisory group was going to be in place, I simply assumed incorrectly that it took place.

Ms. Mackey stated what we need everyone to understand, as parents we are already challenged raising special needs kids. The fact that the teachers, the Superintendent and the Board and everyone for all that has done for our kids; we don't walk in thinking we are on attack mode but you definitely have a hard job because it definitely can't be easy to take on that role. The goal is really coming together so we can all be on the same page. Mr. Tatum has been extremely supportive and I would be lying if I had anything negative to say against him. He has been supportive in this process but it has been very frustrating to come together to get something

off and I understand and that is why advocacy, advisory – who cares. It is parents coming together and if you look at all of us that have IEP's and on the back of it it has Span and if you go into Span it is filled with advocacy. Ultimately the goal is really for us to come together as a community to understand what is right and we are not trying to get over, we are trying to work together in one basket so we don't go into these IEP meetings and we are not getting memos and emails and we are not here taking over a Board meeting. It is supposed to run effectively for all special need students. That is the bottom line and all I'm saying it doesn't have to be cumbersome and nobody is here to go after anybody. Nobody is here to attack. It is just us really working together.

Mr. Nufrio stated and none of us is really sensing anything. I'm speaking for the Board, do we feel anything different in terms of what the purpose of this advisory group is. I know I do not.

Mr. Monge stated we do need to find out is and maybe Mr. Griggs you can help out with this, there was a question – there is one group and there is another group and then it was combined essentially to try to make sure that there are no questions. As a Board, do we have to designate a particular group as the group that we are mandated to support? Mr. Griggs stated no. It doesn't work that way. The Code is very simple and it simply says that every district needs to have an advisory group. Mr. Monge stated every district needs to support an advisory group. Mr. Nufrio stated I thought that was done. Mr. Griggs stated most groups I know it is run through the Department of Special Services. The Department of Special Services brings in speakers. Sometimes people from our firm go there just to answer questions and help out. When I became involved, it looked to me that there were two separate groups and then I asked the question and understood the District had a group and essentially they were the same group. The group's name was changed. Mr. Monge stated when it is a parent group, with my discussion with other folks like Span folks which help with these groups, a lot of times if you don't have the parents that take the leadership role and that is what Ms. Conti told me early on, to put together a parent group so now you have parents that have taken the leadership role to put this together, you are not the group and now we are one group and we are not dealing with that any more but it is not the District's responsibility to run a group, it is ideally the parents responsibility to run the group and we are supposed to support a parent group. We have to decide, the Board is not fair to parents to figure out if we are saying the District has to run this group or the parents run the group and the District supports it. We need to offer some straight black and white direction on this because how I read it and I read Span's information, it says that it should be a parent group and it is best if it was parents that ran it and supported by the District. But you are right, it is a paragraph, a couple of sentences, but everything that I have seen it speaks to the preferences for the parents to lead the parent group and that parent group is to come to the Board and provide advice that would lead towards helping us with policy as it pertains to students.

Mr. Griggs stated with all due respect, that is not the way that is interpreted in a lot of the Districts at all. Mr. Griggs stated I have never seen it in that mode before. What I have seen is a support group set up, parents involved, frankly in some districts parents don't get involved but other districts a lot parents get involved. But it is more of an educational type of group bringing people who can give you advice. The person who could not make it sounded knowledgeable and apologize that it got screwed up with the logistics and the schedule. My understanding it is not a

group put together to bring recommendations to the Board. My understanding it is a group to provide more information about special education. Mr. Nufrio stated or to receive more information. Mr. Monge stated or both; it is what we want to make it. I think we basically have parents that are trying to get together and trying to educate themselves first and foremost and if anything that comes out of that education to come here and offer us some education then why wouldn't we be open to that. Mr. Nufrio stated I didn't know we weren't open to that. Change the word advocate to advisory and that is all we said. I don't know all the particulars but to me it seems like we keep going in circle and it is a never ending circle which will never end unless you comply with whatever the legalities of naming that group. Mr. Monge stated there is an interpretation. Mr. Nufrio stated of the word advocate. Mr. Monge stated it is not just the word. Mr. Nufrio stated that is all I understood it to be.

Mrs. Mackey stated as a parent of special needs, I really don't want you to get stuck on "advocate" because we took away the whole advocate. You can definitely take that off the table. We didn't fight anymore because it is just a word. All I'm saying, as a community, let us know what direction we can go and if you say we can't do what we want to do then there are other avenues we as parents can do. Honestly, it is better for us all to come together and word it together collectively so we are all in bed together and we are all working collectively with ideas and we are all on a common goal but if legally we can't work together then we will see.

Mr. Nufrio stated I think we get the idea. At least I do and I'm sure everybody else here does. I think Mrs. Conti would like to answer that and she is entitled to have that right so please give her a chance.

Mrs. Conti stated as I did say in telephone conversations, I think you know how much I appreciate you and it is difficult when you are the Director of Special Services to make sure because you have a responsibility to everyone. When a flyer goes out and says supported by Special Services, and it is like anything else, to make sure what the speaker is speaking about. So when we asked for the agenda, it is not for censorship and what it is for is to make sure that the agenda and we are representing an entire district here and as I think I said was I want your support but when it says supported by Special Services, you must be responsible for all parents of the District on what is being presented. You never know what a topic could be or what a speaker might talk about and then you come back and say "well you supported that Department's Special Services" so all that we are saying here is if you want to go and have a parent group by all means there are no restrictions to anyone going out and have a group but once it says supported by Special Services then it becomes a responsibility on my part to make sure that if the speaker is not going to bring up maybe a controversial topic that might upset both but we do want the support very much so and when you are talking about Mr. Monge the two different groups, it is simply in the Special Education Code two lines and that is to bring back special education issues not to the Board as Mr. Griggs said, but to bring special education issues back to the Department of Special Services and what I was saying unless that happens, I really have to give an opportunity for District parents to come and give feedback to me and up until that point I'm responsible to that Code. It is not designed to have two different groups, it is designed to make sure that everyone has the opportunity in this District, whether they are part of the group that you reach out or part of the entire District so we have to make sure that comes together. That is all this is about. I really like working with you and really would like to have that and I

think that the speaker that you had is a great speaker but not knowing at first and having that responsibility by saying supported by special services and what if the speaker comes back and says something that is negative.

Mr. Nufrio stated ultimately the law will not look to you that you did something wrong, they will look to us and if our name is on anything and not too long ago there was a bulletin circulated throughout Vauxhall which had the Union Board of Education and we had not yet approved the use of that building. We had to quickly make sure that we did approve that use of the building because that is the regulation. We are held responsible for anything that comes out of this Board of Education from the Superintendent all the way down to the support services and what I'm hearing she is acting like the legal representative of the Board because if she didn't we would hold her responsible.

Mr. Monge stated I think the Board members need to see the language what I'm hearing is that we don't want to happen here and I think the parents want to be educated on things like IEP's. It is advocacy because if you don't know and you are helping someone. Mr. Nufrio stated it is like when a teacher has to get approval from the principal to bring in a speaker into a classroom. It is the same scenario.

Mr. Monge stated you don't want to be in a situation where Ms. Conti is being accused of censoring. Mr. Nufrio stated only by the fact if it says supported by the Special Ed. Mr. Monge stated then the question ends up being can you have this meeting in a school setting and you are supporting parents becoming educated on topics because the thing is if you have a topic that says preparing yourself for IEP meeting – is that something to be censored? Mr. Nufrio stated what is wrong with doing it the right way? Mr. Monge stated let me say this last piece and then I'm going to push it to Mr. Tatum for his leadership to work through this. At the end of the day, you are going to end up having a situation where you are going to have topics as if preparing yourself for an IEP meeting that may be viewed as controversial that you don't want to put in supported by Department of Special Services and if that is the case, for the parents to still have the opportunity to get together and hear this presenter here in this school because we are supporting this education, if that is fine then great. I give it to Mr. Tatum because he is obviously more educated on a lot and looking for your leadership to try to find this middle ground that I'm hearing. Mr. Nufrio stated the middle ground is simply that if the Special Ed Department meets with the representative of the group and you agree that Mr. Benaquista is going to come in tomorrow and talk and she is o.k. with it just like a teacher needs approval to bring a speaker into a classroom then there is no problem. Obviously there has to be a concerted effort. You can't just do it and expect us to rubber stamp it. It doesn't work that way.

Mrs. Mackey stated when we bring in special services, honestly, it is to get to the parent. I don't have a way to get to all the parents. We have the FaceBook forum but we are not guaranteed that is reaching all the parents and you don't want to put a lot of things on FaceBook because we want to protect the privacy of our children in-District so I can't put a lot of things out there. That is one of the reasons why we go through special services so that the flyers can go out and so we can reach the other children in District so that children that are out-of-district that everyone is responsible for can find out. Mrs. Conti stated we are more than happy to do it. We have to be careful.

Woman in audience stated it feels to me and being a parent and I was an employee that it is not accepted anyway by the Board to advocate for your child. I have come here quite a few times and just my years of being here has ended up in a stuck situation because I'm a person who likes to speak out. My kid's education is paramount. With special education I have contacted you a couple of times and you didn't even respond. Mr. Nufrio stated this is where I have to stop you. You cannot impugn an employee in a public meeting. You can't do it. I have to protect her otherwise I'm in trouble. Woman in audience stated so I reached out to her numerous times. Mr. Nufrio stated Mr. Tatum is your second shot and then it is us. Woman in the audience stated I'm a parent and I'm telling you how it comes off. You guys come off like you don't want us to advocate for our children. What you are saying may be the case but I'm telling you how it comes off to a parent. I have sat at Board meetings and I have sent extensive letters to Mr. Tatum. I have met with him in his office. With regards to the students, I was in the middle school, I see what happens there. I know what is going on there. It is not what supposed to be going on there. I see kids being integrated from special needs classes to main stream and expecting them to be successful. They are not going to be successful. My kid is o.k. but not an "A" student but I can't speak out for him and it is o.k. with everybody. I feel if I speak for my kid then I have to decide. Mrs. Young stated when you are talking about your kid, you are talking for every kid.

Mr. Tatum stated we talk a lot about communication, about how we feel things should be but there are regulations that we are imposed by which is unfortunate but sometimes to the degree that was spoken about tonight, sometimes there are timelines which we have to adhere to. This particular group that we are talking about tonight, I don't see anything that we can't work out. I have a committee that meets the fourth Tuesday of every month, I would love to take this one Tuesday night as one of our topics and we can talk about the logistics. Take your input and come back with some real tangible issues and then bring it to counsel and see if we can come up with something that is tangible so when you schedule your meeting, you can have your meeting. What I have been trying since this group came together is work along with them between the Special Services Department and the parents so you can have your meeting; that is what it really boils down to. I understand, I have been in District for a number of years and we are trying very hard to correct a lot of things that have not been addressed in the past. It may not be going as fast as some of you would like to go; however, we are working on a lot of those issues and I can say this much regarding what I know as a fact, we just went through a review this morning and we went through one yesterday and we are being told yes we are putting this District on the right course for a first time in a long time. So where people may believe that things are not happening and not going in the right direction, we are going in the right direction. Just step one that we had a meeting already of this group. We assigned a person from the Department of Special Services to be the liaison between the group and the parents. I think what we have to do is to work out the logistics. I think that certainly that this group has the potential to move forward and you certainly will have the support of all of us here. That goes without saying.

Mr. Nufrio stated under the advice of counsel, we keep saying the same thing and we understand your concerns. We haven't stopped listening but if it is a comment pertaining to this I will ask you to refrain only because I think this Board fully understands what Mr. Tatum has just said and what Mrs. Conti has said. They are receptive to the advisory group. They have to

be receptive. Mrs. Lipstein stated (inaudible) we just need to know. Mr. Nufrio stated you can ask him another time but we really don't want to disclose names at this time. Once again we are crossing into another territory where we are talking about people's names and that is not going to happen tonight.

Mrs. Young stated I have a general question. I want to know why do we outsource. We have how many children out of District? Mr. Nufrio stated that is a very complicated answer. Mrs. Young stated about 140 but if Mrs. Conti would bring us facts we would know an estimation or approximately how many kids are out of District. You said before at the last meeting \$100,000 per child and that comes to about \$14 million. Mr. Nufrio stated including transportation and that is public information. Mrs. Young stated Hamilton is a building in great condition, we are hiring a company just to take 18 kids and we have 140 out there. Mr. Nufrio stated you cannot isolate special ed students. Mrs. Young stated why don't we have a program in place. We have people. It would be cheaper to hire the people that we need whether therapist, behavioral specialists. Mr. Nufrio stated you cannot isolate special ed students. Mrs. Young stated you are not hearing me. But you isolate in the high school. Mr. Nufrio stated no, they are integrated. Mrs. Young stated have you seen the BD area? Mr. Nufrio stated as long as they are in the same building, mixed with general ed. They are under the same room. Mrs. Young stated they are not mixed. In Newark, if there is a 6th grade, they are on the 6th grade floor area. Mr. Nufrio stated mainstreaming is part of the regulations that we are guided by.

Mr. Griggs stated with all due respect, I'm talking and you are listening. We can't talk about your matters. We are involved in litigation with you. Mrs. Young stated I'm asking a general question. Mr. Griggs stated no you are not. I'm telling you and I'm instructing the Board and the Administrators not to discuss this matter. That is my response. Mr. Nufrio stated it is no longer part of discussion.

Mrs. Young stated it is a general question that I'm asking. Why would he take it personal? Mr. Nufrio stated you can direct that to Mr. Tatum directly. He is the Board attorney. Mrs. Young stated doesn't mean he is always right, then he is out of order.

Dawn Hutchins stated I'm here on behalf of my son to ask the Board with help in a situation. We had a situation recently in school. Mr. Nufrio stated let me stop you here. I will assure you that this will be discussed in Executive Session. Once again we are prohibited from discussing individual students, individual cases or personnel. We are going into Executive Session as soon as we are done and I assure you that I already have taken the steps necessary to inform the Superintendent and we will discuss it in Executive Session. I'm sorry but that is regulation.

Ann Margaret Shannon stated I don't teach special ed, I'm math in high school. There is one thing that I have to address and I just want to personally tell everyone that this central administration does acknowledge when there are situations that affect your children and they do walk people out of the buildings and they do not ignore when there are situations. I thought I heard someone say before that they ignore situations where children might be hurt and I assure you I have walked people out of the building. They do not ignore your children.

Mr. Nufrio stated I do want to say that you took the words out of my mouth but each case is different and each case is adjudicated by the Superintendent in conjunction with the Board President. That is also part of the statute that governs all of us.

Mrs. Murray stated my problem was not with Mr. Tatum or Mrs. Moses, they addressed the situation.

Cathy Sharp stated I worked in this District 32-33 years, I have worked in special ed the same number of years. I have worked under many special ed teachers, directors, supervisors, too many to even count. You don't know what it is doing to me sitting here listening to the complaints because I know this special ed department like the back of my hand. I would take any of the leadership, especially starting with the lady sitting back there that took a lot of abuse today. You might not get the answers that you want from her but she is doing the best for each one of these special ed kids and she is giving you the truth. It might not be what you want to hear, it might hurt you, she is giving you the truth and our special ed department I would put against many other special ed departments in other districts and we would come out on top. I can't talk from a parents' view point because I don't have my own special ed child but like I said I have worked with them for 33 years from the littlest to middle school age, they are my kids and I'm still doing it because they are my kids. Believe me if I thought they were being mistreated, ignored, taken advantage of, I would be one of the first people to speak because this Board and previous Board's know, I have stood up here and said things that were not what the Board wanted to hear but it was what I felt and I feel that the lady back there can sit with her head held high because she is doing the best she possibly can for her children.

Mrs. Monge stated I came in late so maybe I missed it on the agenda, any update on the evening program. Mr. Tatum stated we do have an update. We are conducting all the interviews and finishing up this week and the same with the academy program. They will be on the agenda next week. Our target is to start after the holidays, January 3rd. We are staying on course with that.

Mr. Nufrio stated I will close this public portion. I just want to make one final comment. This Board, every person in this District whether you know or may not know, serves at the pleasure of the Board. The minute this Board doesn't feel that pleasure, we take action and we have been taking action. The Superintendent makes the recommendations, we follow through – if we disagree, we disagree, if we agree, we agree but that is how it works. It is not a process that we invented. It is a process that we follow and it is the regulations that we follow. We have a Board attorney which we are mandated to have and certainly if you have a complaint about some other things, then it is the Department of Education that is the parent organization. Hopefully whatever was discussed tonight, at the end of the discussions, from what I have heard, yes there are some concerns and some complaints and you are entitled. Look at the national scene, you are damned if you do and damned if you don't but we are here and this is the family that is looking out for your interest and as I said everyone in the District serves at the pleasure of the Board, including the Superintendent, all of the staff members and certainly when it is brought to our attention to the Superintendent or directly to me, or who the President may be or Board member that brings it to the President and to the Superintendent, those things are handled and I assure you that they will continue to be handled.

MOTION FOR EXECUTIVE SESSION:

Moved by Mr. Le, seconded by Mr. Arminio, that the Board go into Executive Session to discuss the following subject matters without the presence of the public in accordance with the provisions of N.J.S.A. 10:4-2b:

- Pending or anticipated litigation, contract negotiation and matters falling under the attorney-client privilege.
- Matters involving employees and terms of their employment and contract.

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

Mr. Nufrio stated just to let the public know, we will be returning to public session.

All present voting Yes. **MOTION CARRIED**

The Board returned to public session.

Moved by Mrs. Regis-Darby, seconded by Mr. McDowell, that the following resolutions be adopted:

O-16. APPROVE REJECTION OF PROPOSALS

That the Board reject the proposals submitted by Atlantic Associates, Business and Government Insurance Agency, A.J. Gallagher and Company, and Brown and Brown Metro because the Board of Education wants to substantially revise the specifications for the services.

O-17. APPROVE TERMINATION AND RESCISSION OF CONTRACT – WILLIS OF NEW JERSEY, INC.

That the Board approve the termination and rescission of the contract with Willis of New Jersey, Inc., effective December 31, 2016.

DISCUSSION:

None.

AYE: Mr. Arminio, Dr. Francis, Mr. Le, Mr. McDowell, Mr. Monge, Mrs. Regis-Darby, Mrs. Zuena, Mr. Nufrio

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED

MOTION TO ADJOURN:

There being no further business before the Board in public session it was moved by Mr. Le, seconded by Mr. Monge, that the meeting be adjourned at 11:55 p.m.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,

GREGORY E. BRENNAN
BOARD SECRETARY