

TOWNSHIP OF UNION BOARD OF EDUCATION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES – December 18, 2024

NOTICE OF MEETING:

TO ALL BOARD OF EDUCATION MEMBERS:

The regular meeting of the Board of Education of the Township of Union was held on Wednesday, December 18, 2024 at 6:00 p.m. at the Town Hall, Main Meeting Room, 1976 Morris Avenue, Union, New Jersey pursuant to notice sent to each member.

Ms. Santana called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m.

PRESENT AT ROLL CALL:

Ms. Dixiana Carbonell, Mr. Michael Cohan, Mrs. Elsie Conteh-Mackey, Mrs. Nancy Minneci, Mr. Greg Nasta, Ms. Chastity Santana, Mrs. Kimberly Scott-Hayden

ABSENT AT ROLL CALL:

Mrs. Guida Faria (6:43 p.m.), Mr. Ronnie McDowell

ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT:

Dr. Gerald Benaquista, Dr. Jose Rodriguez, Mrs. Yolanda Koon

ALSO PRESENT:

Mr. Lester Taylor, Esq.

Mrs. Conteh-Mackey led the Board and audience members in the Pledge of Allegiance and read the district's mission statement.

Mrs. Koon read the statement required under the "Open Public Meetings Act" that adequate notice was published in The Union County Local Source, The Star Ledger and/or Tap into Union, posted in the Administration Building and the Clerk's Office of the Township; a copy of which is on file in the office of the Board Secretary.

MOTION FOR EXECUTIVE SESSION:

Moved by Mrs. Scott-Hayden, seconded by Mrs. Minneci, that the Board go into Executive Session at 6:04 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, attorney-client privileged matters

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: Ms. Carbonell, Mr. Cohan, Mrs. Conteh-Mackey, Mrs. Minneci,
Mr. Nasta, Mrs. Scott-Hayden, Ms. Santana

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED

The Board returned to public session at 7:03 p.m.

MOTION TO RETURN TO PUBLIC SESSION:

There being no further business before the Board it was moved by Mrs. Scott-Hayden, seconded by Mr. Cohan, that the Board return to public session at 7:03 p.m.

AYE: Ms. Carbonell, Mr. Cohan, Mrs. Conteh-Mackey, Mrs. Faria,
Mrs. Minneci, Mr. Nasta, Mrs. Scott-Hayden, Ms. Santana

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED

Approval of Minutes:

Moved by Mrs. Minneci, seconded by Mrs. Conteh-Mackey, that the following minutes be adopted:

1. November 12, 2024 – worksession
2. November 12, 2024 – executive sessions #1, #2 and #3
3. November 19, 2024 – regular meeting
4. November 19, 2024 – executive sessions #1 and #2

DISCUSSION:

None

AYE: Ms. Carbonell, Mr. Cohan, Mrs. Conteh-Mackey, Mrs. Faria,
Mrs. Minneci, Mr. Nasta, Mrs. Scott-Hayden, Ms. Santana

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED

G. Communications:

REQUESTS FROM TOWNSHIP OF UNION

Requests from the Township of Union: (1) January 20, 2025 – 7:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. – Jefferson School cafeteria and parking lot – Annual MLK Day of Service, (2) February 1, 2025 – 10:00 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. – Jefferson School gym – Black History Month Expo, (3) February 14-15, 2025 – times TBD - Jefferson School auditorium – Black History Month play, and (4) February 22, 2025 – times TBD - Jefferson School Auditorium – HRC Black History Month.

LETTER OF RETIREMENT – BRENNAN

Letter of resignation, for the purpose of retirement, from Theresa Brennan, special education teacher-Union High School, effective April 1, 2025.

LETTER OF RETIREMENT – PHILLIPS

Letter of resignation, for the purpose of retirement, from Nonie Phillips, special education teacher-Burnet Middle School, effective February 1, 2025.

LETTER OF RESIGNATION - ANDELIZ

Letter of resignation from Jomari Andeliz, behavior technician-Kawameeh Middle School, effective November 27, 2024.

LETTER OF RESIGNATION – CHRISTOPHER

Letter of resignation from Catherine Christopher, cafeteria/playground aide-Franklin Elementary School, effective November 28, 2024.

LETTER OF RESIGNATION – DAVIS

Letter of resignation from Donovan Davis, substitute health and physical education teacher-Franklin Elementary School, effective November 19, 2024.

LETTER OF RESIGNATION – DECKER LEWIS

Letter of resignation from Katherine Decker Lewis, social studies teacher-Kawameeh Middle School, effective January 23, 2025.

REQUEST FOR INTERMITTENT LEAVE – STEEB

Request for paid intermittent FMLA leave from Linda Steeb, teacher-Kawameeh Middle School, November 20, 2024-June 25, 2025.

REQUEST FOR INTERMITTENT LEAVE – NAVARRETE

Request for paid intermittent FMLA leave from Angel Navarrete, teacher-Union High School, November 21, 2024-June 25, 2025.

REQUEST FOR INTERMITTENT LEAVE – KRALY

Request for paid intermittent FMLA leave from John Kraly, teacher-Washington Elementary School, December 3, 2024-June 25, 2025.

REQUEST FOR INTERMITTENT LEAVE – MANCINELLI

Request for paid intermittent FMLA leave from Lynne Mancinelli, media specialist-Washington Elementary School, December 1, 2024-December 1, 2025.

REQUEST FOR LEAVE – McDONALD

Request for paid FMLA from Tiffani McDonald, teacher-Livingston Elementary School, December 6, 2024-January 6, 2025.

REQUEST FOR LEAVE – KOLAS

Request for paid child rearing leave followed by unpaid FMLA/NJFLA from Alyssa Kolas, nurse-Livingston Elementary School, February 7, 2025-June 24, 2025.

REQUEST FOR LEAVE – TAYLOR

Request for paid FMLA from Adrienne Taylor, part-time bus aide-Transportation Department, December 9, 2024-January 31, 2025.

REQUEST FOR LEAVE – PIERRE

Request for paid medical leave from Marc Pierre, bus driver-Transportation Department, November 19, 2024-February 28, 2025.

REQUEST FOR LEAVE – MATTHEWS

Request for paid FMLA from Thomas Matthews, principal-Burnet Middle School, November 20, 2024-June 30, 2025.

REQUEST FOR LEAVE – SANTORO

Request for paid FMLA from Bernadine Santoro, teacher-Franklin Elementary School, November 26, 2024-January 2, 2025.

REQUEST FOR LEAVE – RIBERIO

Request for unpaid sick leave from Maria Riberio, paraprofessional-Battle Hill Elementary School, December 5, 2024-January 17, 2025.

REQUEST FOR LEAVE – MATOS

Request for paid child rearing leave followed by unpaid FMLA/NJFLA from Sara Matos, business teacher-Union High School, January 2, 2025-June 24, 2025.

REQUEST FOR LEAVE – COSENTINO

Request for paid FMLA from Sandra Cosentino, CST-Battle Hill Elementary School, January 8, 2025-March 7, 2025.

REQUEST FOR LEAVE – BURD

Request for paid child rearing leave followed by unpaid FMLA/NJFLA from Diana Burd, teacher-Jefferson School, March 13, 2025-November 10, 2025.

REQUEST FOR LEAVE - WHITEMAN-LAND

Request for paid FMLA from Michaela Whiteman-Land, CST-Union High School, February 6, 2025-February 20, 2025 and April 1, 2025-April 29, 2025.

UPDATE TO REQUEST FOR LEAVE – CHARLES

Update to request for leave from Claire Charles, teacher-Hannah Caldwell Elementary School new return date December 2, 2024.

UPDATE TO REQUEST FOR LEAVE – PLACCA

Update to request for leave from Nicole Placca, teacher-Union High School, new return date September 1, 2025.

REQUEST FOR LEAVE – SOUSA

Request for Air National Guard – Training Allocation paid leave from John Sousa, Chief Information & Technology Officer, January 2, 2025-March 6, 2025.

REQUEST FOR INTERMITTENT LEAVE – SANGHAVI

Request for paid FMLA/Intermittent FMLA from Rachita Sanghavi, Behavior Technician-Hannah Caldwell Elementary School, January 2, 2025-June 25, 2025.

Comments from Public:

None

Superintendent’s Report:

Dr. Benaquista introduced John Sousa, the districts new Chief Information & Technology Officer. He has a Bachelor’s of Science in Information Technology from NJIT and a Master’s in Technology Management from Columbia University. Over 10 years of experience in educational technology combined with over 15 years of relevant military and leadership experience.

Dr. Benaquista informed the Board and community that the district transportation costs are over \$10 million annually. He then introduced representatives of T&M Associates. T&M presented the Bus Routing Optimization (presentation appended to minutes) – an outline of the presentation is below:

Bus Routing Optimization:

- Restructuring to a K-6 configuration
- Optimize bus routing across the district for all school levels
- School catchment area updates
- Minimize or eliminate private transportation contractors and number of routes
- Increase safety for bus riders and walkers

Project Tasks:

- Project kick-off meeting
- School catchment area updates/creation
- Initial bus route creation and analysis
- Bus routing optimization
- Bust route optimization analysis report
- Data delivery, documentation and ArcGIS online
- Project management

Task 2 School Catchment Area Updates/Creation

- Update/create school catchment areas using existing street list
- Create new map layer of catchment areas using GIS software
- Web-based map viewer to review, mark-up and make comments
- Catchment area adjustments
- Catchment area analysis, additional adjustments performed

- Final catchment areas created for each school

Task 3 Initial Bus Route Creation and Analysis

- Assemble existing information – school, vehicle, student info, bus stops, new catchment areas, travel restrictions, sidewalks/crosswalks, known issues/problem areas, etc.
- Removal of walking students (2.0 miles K-8; 2.5 miles-high school)
- Run routing solution for buses, iterative and very collaborative process
- Web-based map viewer for review and comments
- Analysis and routing solution performed until desired outcomes are met

Task 4 Bus Routing Optimization

- Increase routing efficiency using Task 3 output as baseline
- Each route is individually reviewed with staff
- Adjustments and re-running of routing solution
- Finalization and acceptance of bus routes

Task 5 Bus Route Optimization Analysis Report

- Evaluation and comparison of old vs new routes
- Characteristic information about new routes and catchments
- Efficiencies and ROI gained from process
- Maps of catchment areas and new routes
- Report delivered
- T&M will provide support analysis for leadership as needed

Task 6 Data Delivery, Documentation and ArcGIS Online

- Documentation for the project and each task
- Setup and configuration of ArcGIS online
- Delivery of project data in GIS format to be stored in ArcGIS online
- Board of Education owns the platform

Board members had dialogue and questions with T&M representatives.

Dr. Rodriguez presented on the Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment (CIA) Department. The presentation is appended to the minutes and an outline of the presentation is below:

What is the role of the CIA Department?

- Curriculum development and alignment – designing curricula that meet NJ Student Learning Standards (NJSLS), NJ mandates, and reflect student needs
- Instruction support – providing educators with resources, professional development and effective strategies for planning, instruction, assessment and reflection
- Assessment and evaluation of student progress – developing assessments and systems to monitor student progress and inform instructional practices

- Integration of technology and innovation – assisting educators with choosing and incorporating emerging technologies and innovative teaching methods to enhance learning experiences
- Equity and inclusion – ensuring curricula are inclusive and culturally responsive to serve all students effectively

Integration of Technology and Innovation

- Technology tools to support instruction and assessment
- Online publishing of resources
- Embedded technology into curriculum
- Technology-specific professional development opportunities
- Use of tools like iReady, IXL, Linkit, or other platforms
- Use of learning management systems
- Professional development on use of AI in classrooms
- STEAM fair
- Digital tools for online assessments

Equity and Inclusion

- Multilingual Parent Advisory Committee, SEPAG
- Grading for Equity Committee
- Student opportunities (scholar academy, seal of biliteracy)
- Silas
- PBIS
- College and trade school visits
- Guest speakers
- Student recognition programs (National Honor Society)
- Learning sessions for families
- District policies and regulations
- Monthly newsletters
- Town Hall sessions
- Translation and interpretation services
- Increased multilingual communication
- Adult ESL classes
- Reflect the identities and experiences of all students

Curriculum Development

- Purpose – develop curricula that align with NJSLs
- Application – curriculum incorporates core subjects, along with electives and specialized courses
- Role in the Loop – curriculum is the foundation, setting the expectations for instruction and assessment

Curriculum Development and Alignment

- Atlas curriculum platform

- High-quality instructional materials
- Instructional program pilots
- Professional development
- Course audits
- Revise/update curriculum
- Parent workshops

Instruction:

- Purpose – teachers deliver the curriculum
- Application – professional development programs
- Role in the Loop – instruction transforms the curriculum into classroom practice

Instructional Support

- Professional development for administrators
- Supports the implementation of instructional materials
- Instructional coaches
- What I need and RTI intervention program, 504, special education
- I&RS
- Tutoring and support opportunities

Assessment:

- Purpose – utilizes assessments to evaluate student learning and mastery of curriculum
- Application – assessments provide immediate feedback to teachers and administrators
- Role in the Loop – assessment results highlight strengths and gaps in student learning

Review of Data

- Purpose – data from assessments and other performance metrics are analyzed to make informed decisions about educational practices and policies
- Application – conduct regular data review to identify trends, target areas for intervention and develop action plans
- Role in the Loop – reviewing data ensures that decision-making is grounded in evidence

Assessment and Review of Data

- Data meetings
- District assessment data
- School Improvement Panels
- District-wide assessments
- Instructional Coaches
- Walkthrough System

Board members had dialogue and questions with Dr. Rodriguez and Dr. Benaquista.

Dr. Benaquista presented the following:

- the district security vision is a layer approach of – emergency management, staff training, exercises/drills, technology-hardware software and positive school culture
- 13 Things School Board Members Wish People Knew About Them (appended to minutes)
- It's All About U – December issue is out
- Who Do I contact for the Following Concerns (appended to the minutes)
- HIB Reported – December 10-18, 2024 – 5 founded/2 not founded/inconclusive
- HIB Affirmed – November 20, 2024-December 9, 2024 – 11 founded/6 not founded/inconclusive
- What's coming? BOE reorganization meeting – January 7, 2024, thank you Board President/Vice President and Board members, National Honor Society Recognition, 2024 UHS fall sports season student recognition, NJSLA awards night.

Education/Student Discipline Committee Resolutions:

Upon recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the following resolutions were moved by Mr. Cohan, seconded by Mrs. Scott-Hayden, for adoption:

E-1. Reported at December 10, 2024 worksession (Report of HIB-November 20-December 10, 2024)

E-1A. Affirmed at December 10, 2024 worksession (Affirm HIB-November 12-19, 2024)

E-1-1. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT OF HIB

Superintendent's Report of Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying (HIB) for the period December 11, 2024 to December 18, 2024, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes (*no vote required; for reporting purposes only*).

E-1-1A. AFFIRM SUPERINTENDENT'S DETERMINATION OF HIB

Affirm the Superintendent's determination of Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying (HIB) for the periods November 20, 2024 to December 10, 2024, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

E-2. APPROVE CO-OP SPORTS PROGRAM BETWEEN TOWNSHIP OF UNION PUBLIC SCHOOLS AND SPRINGFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS – GYMNASTICS

Approve a Cooperative Sports Program to combine the Dayton High School (Springfield Public Schools) gymnastics team with the Union High School (Union Public Schools) gymnastics team for the 2024-2025 school year.

E-3. APPROVE ACCEPTANCE OF MARK SCHONWETTER HOLOCAUST EDUCATION FOUNDATION GRANT

Approve the acceptance of the Mark Schonwetter Holocaust Education Foundation Grant in the amount of \$1,000.00 for the Township of Union Public Schools to expand the Holocaust Learning Library at Union High School for the 2024-2025 school year.

E-4. APPROVE HMH EDUCATION COMPANY – GO MATH IN PERSON COACHING

Approve HMH Education Company to provide Go Math in-person coaching days for staff at the Hannah Caldwell Elementary School at a cost of \$4,200.00 for the 2024-2025 school year [to be paid for using Title II funds].

E-5. Agenda item approved at December 10, 2024 worksession (Go Guardian Tutor Me/Pear Deck)

E-6. APPROVE ACCEPTANCE OF 2160 COVID KITS – USDOE

Approve acceptance of 2160 COVID test kits from the United States Department of Education Testing Supply Program for LEAs to be sent to all district schools for distribution.

E-7. APPROVE ACCEPTANCE OF HAND2MIND DONATION

Approve the acceptance of the Hand2Mind donation of supplemental resources in Math, Literacy and STEM (approximate cost of \$4,500.00) to Hannah Caldwell Elementary School.

E-8. APPROVE CONTRACT – GO GUARDIAN BEACON

Approve Contract to implement Go Guardian Beacon (student safety platform) to provide 24/7 coverage for students at a cost of \$9,709.00 to be paid for using the School Based Mental Health Grant Award for the 2024-2025 school year.

E-9. APPROVE COORDINATION OF SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGY EXTERNS – KEAN UNIVERSITY

Approve coordination of graduate level School Psychology Externs from Kean University, as part of the requirement of the School Based Mental Health Grant Award, for spring 2025 semester (all salaries to be paid using School Based Mental Health Grant Award and approved by the NJDOE per grant requirements) - Kean University Extern Advisor – Dr. Aaron A. Gubi – SBMH Account not to exceed \$10,800.00; School Based Mental Health Extern Approval for Spring 2024 semester: Theresa Williams, Alyssa Thompson, Kyle Cammilleri, Kenny Cammilleri, Nichole Data *doctoral student no payment, Amanda Nunes *doctoral student no payment (SBMH grant not to exceed \$40,500.00).

E-10. APPROVE STATEMENT OF ASSURANCE – PRESCHOOL PROGRAM

Approve the Statement of Assurance - 2025-2026 three-year preschool program plan and annual updates, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

E-11. APPROVE ARTICULATION AGREEMENT – KEAN UNIVERSITY

Approve Articulation Agreement between Kean University and the district for the Kean Scholar Academy initiative (K-12 educational program) for Union High School students for the

2024-2025 school year; tuition to be paid through Title I and Title IV Dual Admission tuition grants, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

DISCUSSION:

Ms. Santana asked E-10 – do we use the same programs, or have they been updated? Did we ask teachers what they wanted? Dr. Rodriguez indicated that it is a creative curriculum, consistent and modified for some classes. Teachers can speak with their supervisors. Dr. Benaquista indicated that the district can add additional items to the curriculum.

Mr. Cohan indicated E-11 – students who participate in the Kean Scholar Academy can take college courses and have an associates degree by the time they graduate high school. We have 11 students in this program.

AYE: Ms. Carbonell, Mr. Cohan, Mrs. Conteh-Mackey, Mrs. Faria,
Mrs. Minneci, Mr. Nasta, Mrs. Scott-Hayden, Ms. Santana

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED

Fiscal and Planning Committee Resolutions:

Upon recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the following resolutions were moved by Ms. Carbonell, seconded by Mr. Cohan, for adoption:

F-1. TREASURER’S REPORT

That the Treasurer’s Report dated November 30, 2024 be accepted.

F-2. SECRETARY’S REPORT

That the Secretary’s Report dated November 30, 2024 be accepted.

F-3. CERTIFY TREASURER’S AND SECRETARY’S REPORT

Pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:23-2.11(a), I certify that as of November 30, 2024 no budgetary line item account has obligations and payments (contractual orders) which in total exceed the amount appropriated by the district Board of education pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:22-8 and 18:22-8.1.

/s/ Yolanda Koon

Yolanda Koon, Board Secretary

Dated

Pursuant to N.J.A.C.6A:23-2.2(h), we certify that as of November 30, 2024 after review of the secretary’s monthly financial report (appropriations section) and upon consultation with the appropriate district officials that to the best of our knowledge no major account or fund has been over-expended in violation of N.J.A.C. 6A:23-2.2(d)3 and that sufficient funds are available to meet the district’s financial obligations for the remainder of the fiscal year. This certification is solely based on the information provided by the School Business Administrator and Board Secretary and is assumed by the Board to be correct.

F-4. APPROVE APPROPRIATION TRANSFERS

Approve appropriation transfers in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

F-5. APPROVE LIST OF CONTRACTS/PURCHASE ORDERS

Approve the attached list of contracts and/or purchase orders (copyrighted materials and licenses) pursuant to the requirements of N.J.S.A. 18A:18A-5 (bid exceptions to requirement for advertising) and 18A:18A-10(a) (purchase through State agency; procedure), in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

F-6. Approved at December 10, 2024 worksession (Districtwide travel)

F-6A. APPROVE DISTRICT WIDE TRAVEL AND RELATED EXPENSES

Approve district wide travel and related expenses pursuant to the requirements of N.J.S.A. 18A:11-12, N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-7 and Board Policy File Code 6471 and in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

F-7. Approved at December 10, 2024 worksession (student field trips)

F-8. APPROVE LIST OF 2024-2025 STATE CONTRACT APPROVED VENDORS

Approve the amended list of the 2024-2025 State Contract Approved Vendors pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:18A-10(a) (purchase through State agency; procedure) to facilitate schools' purchasing, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

F-9A. APPROVED LIST OF CONTRACTS/PURCHASES (STUDENT ACTIVITY)

Approve the attached list of contracts and/or purchases pursuant to the requirements of N.J.S.A. 18A:18A-5(21) (paid by funds raised by or collected by students), in accordance with the information appended to the minutes:

School	Account/Department	Vendor/Description	Amount
Union High School	2099/Cheerleading	Varsity Spirit Fashion – cheerleading uniforms	\$2,739.95
Union High School	2045/Chorus/band	Champion Tours and Events – travel company for Orlando trip	\$50,000.00 (not to exceed)
Union High School	3330/Athletics	BSN Sports – girls' volleyball backpacks	\$2,187.33 (not to exceed)
Connecticut Farms Elementary School	2012/Grade 2 Field Trip	Legoland Discover Center New Jersey – hands on STEAM for 2 nd grade students	\$1,470.00 (not to exceed)

F-9B. APPROVE FUNDRAISERS

Approve the following fundraisers, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes:

Event Name	Date	Purpose
Blast Fundraiser	December 18, 2024- June 1, 2025	UHSPAC – to raise funds for 2024/2025 production costs

Tape a Teacher/Administrator	December 18, 2024- June 30, 2025	UHS/Cheerleading – to raise funds for cheer clinic, future cheer camps, cheer gear
Musical Production-Ticket Sales	December 18, 2024- January 19, 2025 –	UHSPAC – raise funds for In the Heights production costs
Holiday Movie Night/Winter Wonderland	December 18-20, 2024	UHS/National Honor Society – to raise funds for end of year NHS activity/materials
Snack Sales	December 18, 2024- March 31, 2025	UHS/National French Honor Society – to raise funds for field trip to UN and club induction ceremony
PBSIS Rewards	December 18-20, 2024	Jefferson/PBSIS – to raise funds for PBSIS rewards
Suicide Awareness Tournament Pick and Donate	December 18, 2024- June 30, 2025	UHS/softball – to raise funds for Suicide Awareness
Winter Wonderland (Movies/Crafts)	December 18, 2024	UHS/Class of 2027 – to raise funds for Class of 2027
Chipotle Fundraiser	February 19, 2025	UHS/Class of 2027 – to raise funds for Class of 2027
Dress Down	December 18, 2024- June 30, 2025	UHS/softball – to raise funds for end of year events
Online Blast	December 18, 2024- January 31, 2025	UHS/varsity basketball – to raise funds for varsity basketball program
Coat Donation	December 18, 2024- April 30, 2025	Franklin – donation of coats from Operation Warm
Bake Sale/Snack Sale Birthday Cards	December 18, 2024- June 24, 2025	UHS/Freshmen Class – to raise funds for freshmen class
Hot Chocolate and Cookie Grams	December 18, 2024- March 30, 2025	UHS/Freshmen Class – to raise funds for freshmen class
Cookie Gram (St. Patrick’s Day)	March 1, 2025- March 31, 2025	UHS/Freshmen Class – to raise funds for freshmen class
Bake Sale	January 17, 2025	UHS/Sophomore Class of 2027 – to raise funds for class of 2027

F-9C. ACCEPT DONATIONS

Accept the following donations:

From	For Use By	\$/Item
Reading for Education	Washington Elementary School	\$998.57
Shutterfly, LLC	Burnet Middle School	\$1,277.59
Springfield Knights of Columbus and Angel L. Rodriguez Insurance and Financial Services Inc.	Union High School – Special Education – installation/dishwasher for Room G116	\$150.00 \$75.00
Amazon – Middlesex Fulfillment Center	Hannah Caldwell (1085 Kean U) 24 student chairs - \$1,700. 60 packs-Crayons - \$116.28 4-V seven wired keyboards-\$211.96 3,960 - #2 HB pencils - \$329.89 3 docking stations - \$128.97 10 Hadley design educational posters - \$249.90 108 composition books - \$199.24 5 pk lined paper - \$16.45 336 AA and AAA batteries-\$167.72	\$3,121.00-for items listed

F-10. APPROVE 2024-2025 OUT-OF-DISTRICT STUDENT PLACEMENT LIST

Approval be given to amend the 2024-2025 out-of-district student placement list (month of December), in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

F-11. APPROVE UPDATED AGREEMENT FOR NONPUBLIC ESEA/ESSA TITLE I – UCESC

Approve updated Agreement for Nonpublic School ESEA/ESSA Title I with the Union County Education Services Commission (UCESC) to reflect the additional carryover funds for the 2024-2025 school year, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

F-12. APPROVE NJTIP AT RUTGERS – TRAVEL INSTRUCTION CURRICULUM

Approve NJTIP at Rutgers to provide travel instruction curriculum (6 classroom instruction sessions and execute up to 6 field trips to CBI locations on bus or other transit provider vehicles) per students' IEPs from January 4, 2025-to June 30, 2025, at the rate of \$18,766.00. Other direct costs, which include a NJ Transit bus demonstration at Union High School, student/UHS staff transit fares and staff mileage totaling \$1,450.00 (total cost not to exceed \$20,226.00) for the 2024-2025 school year [Account Fund #11-000-219-320-01-19], in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

F-13. APPROVE AMENDMENT TO TECH ABILITIES CONSULTING – EVALUATIONS

Approve amendment to F-24 approved on 4/24/2024) for Tech Abilities Consulting LLC to provide evaluations and consulting, to add Assistive Technology/AAC general training for district students, staff and families at the rate of \$175.00/hr. for the 2024-2025 school year (not to exceed \$20,000.00) [Account Fund #11-000-219-320-01-19], in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

F-14. APPROVE STUDENT TRANSPORTATION CONTRACT – DCF - STATE OF NEW JERSEY

Approve Student Transportation Contract with the State of New Jersey – Department of Children and Families for the 2024-2025 school year at a rate of \$75.00 per day (start date December 2, 2024), in accordance with the non-public information appended to the minutes.

F-15. Approved at December 10, 2024 worksession (Authorize to Use Additional Funds-Capital and Maintenance Reserves)

F-16. Approved at December 10, 2024 worksession (Use of Emergency Vendors-HCES temporary space)

F-17. APPROVE T&M ENGINEERING SVC – DISTRICTWIDE AND EVALUATION OF TRANSPORTATION/BUS ROUTING OPTIMIZATION

Approve to authorize the engagement of T & M Engineering to analyze, optimize, and implement improved bus routes, ensuring efficiency and safety within budgetary guidelines not to exceed \$85,000.00.

F-ATTY. *For informational purposes only – vote not required.* List of legal services paid as of November 19, 2024 for the 2024-2025 fiscal year, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

DISCUSSION:

Ms. Carbonell thanked all the donors in F-9c.

AYE: Ms. Carbonell, Mr. Cohan, Mrs. Conteh-Mackey, Mrs. Faria,
Mrs. Minneci, Mr. Nasta, Mrs. Scott-Hayden, Ms. Santana

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED

Legal Committee:

Upon recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the following resolution was moved by Mr. Cohan, seconded by Mrs. Minneci, for adoption:

L-1. APPROVE SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT

Approve Settlement Agreement and General Release in the matter of N.G. and E.G. obo C.G. v Township of Union Board of Education, in accordance with the non-public information appended to the minutes.

DISCUSSION:

None

AYE: Ms. Carbonell, Mr. Cohan, Mrs. Conteh-Mackey, Mrs. Faria,
Mrs. Minneci, Mr. Nasta, Mrs. Scott-Hayden, Ms. Santana

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED

Operations Committee Resolutions:

Upon recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the following resolutions were moved by Mrs. Scott-Hayden, seconded by Mrs. Minneci, for adoption:

O-1. APPROVE SECURITY DRILL/BUS EVACUATION REPORTS

Pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:41-1 and P.L. 2009, Chapter 178, approve the following security drill and, if applicable, bus evacuation reports for the 2024-2025 school year, in accordance with the non-public information appended to the minutes.

O-2. APPROVE REQUESTS FROM TOWNSHIP OF UNION

Approve the following requests from the Township of Union: (1) January 20, 2025 – 7:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. – Jefferson School cafeteria and parking lot – Annual MLK Day of Service, (2) February 1, 2025 – 10:00 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. – Jefferson School gym – Black History Month Expo, (3) February 17-20, 2025 – 5:30 p.m.- 10:00 p.m. - Jefferson School auditorium - rehearsal, (4) February 21, 2025 - 7 p.m. (5:30 p.m.-10:00 p.m.) and February 22, 2025 - 2:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. (12:00 noon-10:00 p.m.) - Jefferson School auditorium – Black History Month play..

DISCUSSION:

None

AYE: Ms. Carbonell, Mr. Cohan, Mrs. Conteh-Mackey, Mrs. Faria,
Mrs. Minneci, Mr. Nasta, Mrs. Scott-Hayden, Ms. Santana

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED

Personnel Committee Resolutions:

Upon recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the following resolutions were moved by Mrs. Minneci, seconded by Ms. Carbonell, for adoption:

P-1A. PERSONNEL ACTIONS – NEW HIRES

Personnel Actions-New Hires be approved in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

P-1B PERSONNEL ACTIONS – EXTRA PAY

Personnel Actions-Extra Pay be approved in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

P-1C PERSONNEL ACTIONS – TRANSFERS

Personnel Actions- Transfers be approved in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

P-2. APPROVE SUBSTITUTE LISTS

Approve Substitute Lists for the 2024-2025 school year.

Name	Position	Rate
Sayra J. Aguilar Villalta	Sub-custodian	\$16.00/hr.
Luke Zawacki	Daily sub	\$150.00/day
Anthony Marrero*	Daily sub	\$150.00/day
Bernard Buniak	Daily sub	\$150.00/day

*Pending paperwork approval.

P-3A. ACCEPT LETTERS OF RESIGNATION/RETIREMENT

Accept letters of resignation/retirement from the following staff, with regrets:

Name	Position	Location	Eff. Date	Reason
Theresa Brennan	Special Ed teacher	UHS	April 1, 2025	Retirement
Nonie Phillips	Special Ed teacher	BMS	February 1, 2025	Retirement
Jomari Andeliz	Behavior Technician	KMS	11/27/2024	Resignation
Catherine Christopher	Café/playground aide	Franklin	11/28/2024	Resignation

Donovan Davis	Substitute health and physical ed teacher	Franklin	11/19/2024	Resignation
Katherine Decker Lewis	Social Studies teacher	KMS	1/23/2025	Resignation

P-3B. APPROVE LEAVES

Approve leaves for the following staff:

Name	Position	Location	Leave Dates	Leave Type
Linda Steeb	Teacher	KMS	Intermittent 11/20/2024- 6/25/2025	Paid intermittent FMLA
Angel Navarrete	Teacher	UHS	Intermittent 11/21/2024- 6/25/2025	Paid intermittent FMLA
John Kraly	Teacher	Washington	Intermittent 12/3/2024- 6/25/2025	Paid intermittent FMLA
Lynne Mancinelli	Media specialist	Washington	Intermittent 12/1/2024- 12/1/2025	Paid intermittent FMLA
Tiffani McDonald	Teacher	Livingston	12/6/2024- 1/6/2025	Paid FMLA
Alyssa Kolas	Nurse	Livingston	2/7/2025- 6/24/2025	Paid child rearing leave followed by unpaid FMLA/ NJFLA
Adrienne Taylor	P/T bus aide	Transportation Dept.	12/9/2024- 1/31/2025	Paid FMLA
Marc Pierre	Bus driver	Transportation Dept.	11/19/2024- 2/28/2025	Paid medical leave
Thomas Matthews	Principal	BMS	11/20/2024- 6/30/2025	Paid FMLA
Bernadine Santoro	Teacher	Franklin	11/26/2024- 1/2/2025	Paid FMLA
Maria Riberio	Paraprofessional	Battle Hill	12/5/2024- 1/17/2025	Unpaid sick leave
Sara Matos	Business teacher	UHS	1/2/2025- 6/24/2025	Paid child rearing leave followed by unpaid FMLA/ NJFLA
Sandra Cosentino	CST	Battle Hill	1/8/2025-3/7/2025	Paid FMLA
Diana Burd	Teacher	Jefferson	3/13/2025- 11/10/2025	Paid child rearing leave followed by unpaid FMLA/ NJFLA

Michaela Whiteman-Land	CST	UHS	2/6/2025-2/20/2025 and 4/1/2025-4/29/2025	Paid FMLA
Claire Charles	Teacher	Hannah Caldwell	New return date 12/2/2024	
Nicole Placca	Teacher	UHS	New return date 9/1/2025	
John Sousa	Chief Information & Technology Officer	Districtwide	1/2/2025-3/6/2025	Air National Guard-Training Allocation paid leave
Rachita Sanghavi	Behavior Technician	HCES	Intermittent 1/2/2025-6/25/2025	Paid FMLA/ Intermittent FMLA

P-4. APPROVE STUDENT TEACHERS AND INTERNSHIPS

Approve student teachers and internships for the 2024-2025 school year, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

P-5. APPROVE VOLUNTEERS

Approve volunteers to perform services within the district, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

P-6. APPROVE UPDATED 2024-2025 HOURLY RATES LIST

Approve updated 2024-2025 Hourly Rates List, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

P-7. APPROVE UPDATED JOB DESCRIPTION – BEHAVIOR TECHNICIAN

Approve the updated job description for Behavior Technician, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

P-8. APPROVE TERMINATION OF EMPLOYEE

Approve the termination of Employee #12677, effective January 17, 2025.

DISCUSSION:

None

AYE: Ms. Carbonell, Mr. Cohan, Mrs. Conteh-Mackey, Mrs. Faria, Mrs. Minneci, Mr. Nasta, Mrs. Scott-Hayden, Ms. Santana

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED

Policy Committee:

Upon recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools and the Policy Committee, the following policies were moved by Mrs. Faria, seconded by Mr. Cohan for **FINAL READING/ADOPTION:**

POL-1. POLICY 3216 - DRESS AND GROOMING

Approve Policy 3216 – Dress and Grooming (Teaching Staff Members), in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

POL-2. POLICY 4216 – DRESS AND GROOMING

Approve Policy 4216 – Dress and Grooming (Support Staff), in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

POL-3. POLICY 7230 – GIFTS, GRANTS AND DONATIONS

Approve Policy 7230 – Gifts, Grants and Donations, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

DISCUSSION:

None

AYE: Ms. Carbonell, Mr. Cohan, Mrs. Conteh-Mackey, Mrs. Faria,
Mrs. Minneci, Mr. Nasta, Mrs. Scott-Hayden, Ms. Santana

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED

Residency Committee Resolutions:

Mrs. Minneci stated a residency hearing was held and the committee recommends removing another student from the rolls and it is being added to R-1.

Upon recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the following resolution was moved by Mrs. Minneci, seconded by Mrs. Scott-Hayden, for adoption:

R-1. APPROVE TO REMOVE STUDENTS FROM ROLLS

Approve to remove the following students from the attendance rolls as the students have been determined to be ineligible to attend the Township of Union Public Schools as a resident student:

Student No.	School
#341352	Washington Elementary School – 3 rd grade
#361372	Washington Elementary School – 1 st grade

For informational purposes only (no vote required): The following totals are as of the November 19, 2024 Board meeting (2024-2025 school year):

Students Removed:	5
Students Voluntarily Transferred:	8

DISCUSSION:

Mrs. Scott-Hayden gave a shout out to the residency investigators and asked the community to tell the administration if you know of someone attending our schools and they don't live in town.

AYE: Ms. Carbonell, Mr. Cohan, Mrs. Conteh-Mackey, Mrs. Faria,
Mrs. Minneci, Mr. Nasta, Mrs. Scott-Hayden, Ms. Santana

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED

Technology Committee:

Upon recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the following resolution was moved by Mrs. Conteh-Mackey, seconded by Mrs. Minneci, for adopted:

T-1. APPROVE RECYCLING OF EQUIPMENT

Approve list of equipment for recycling, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

DISCUSSION:

None

AYE: Ms. Carbonell, Mr. Cohan, Mrs. Conteh-Mackey, Mrs. Faria,
Mrs. Minneci, Mr. Nasta, Mrs. Scott-Hayden, Ms. Santana

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED

Approval of Bills:

Upon recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools and moved by Mrs. Scott-Hayden, seconded by Mrs. Minneci, that the Board concur with the bills listed in the permanent bound register appended to these minutes and be ordered for payment.

DISCUSSION:

None

AYE: Ms. Carbonell, Mr. Cohan, Mrs. Conteh-Mackey, Mrs. Faria,
Mrs. Minneci, Mr. Nasta, Mrs. Scott-Hayden, Ms. Santana

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED

Unfinished Business:

None

New Business:

Ms. Santana read the following statement to the Board and Community:

“Good evening, everyone.

As I stand before you today, I am filled with immense gratitude and reflection. This will be my final meeting presiding as your Board of Education President, and as I prepare to pass the torch, I want to take a moment to express just how much this year has meant to me, and how much I have learned and grown in this role.

From the very beginning, this year has been one of many "firsts." We witnessed history with the first Latina-led Board of Education, with both a Latina president and vice president—something I’m proud to say we accomplished together. We also faced challenges that none of us could have anticipated: filling two critical vacancies, orchestrating the move of an entire school, securing our district’s future, and ensuring we had the right people to lead. These were no small feats, but we came together as a board, and with the support of our community, we achieved them.

I have grown tremendously in this role, and I want to emphasize that none of it would have been possible without this incredible board. Each of you has brought unique perspectives, unwavering dedication, and deep care for our students and our community. I will forever be grateful for the teamwork and collaboration that made this year so successful.

But the growth I experienced was not just in the triumphs; it came from the challenges as well—particularly the times when I was challenged by our community. These moments were not easy, but they were invaluable. They pushed me to think differently, to approach problems with a greater sense of empathy and urgency, and to always prioritize the best interests of our children. It is in those moments of discomfort and challenge that we truly grow, and I hope we all carry that lesson forward.

It is all of our responsibility to push limits and demand excellence—not just for our children, but for our entire community and town. The expectations we set today will shape the future of our schools and the generations to come. We owe it to them to continue striving for nothing less than the best.

As I prepare to hand over the reins to the next president, I do so with excitement and optimism. I know that, under new leadership, we will continue to grow, adapt, and improve. And while my role may be changing, my commitment to our students, teachers, and families remains unwavering.

I look forward to the coming year, to the challenges and opportunities it will bring, and to growing consistently together as a board and as a community.

Thank you to each and every one of you for your support and trust this past year. Let’s continue this journey with a shared vision of excellence for all.”

Board Members Minneci, Carbonell, Conteh-Mackey, Scott-Hayden, and Nasta thanked Ms. Santana for her leadership and making them a better Board.

Mr. Cohan mentioned that he attended the National Honor Society induction, and it was an honor to be there. He also thanked Ms. Santana and Ms. Carbonell for their leadership.

Comments from the Public:

Ann Margaret Shannon – she welcomed back the paraprofessionals and indicated that the transportation report indicated that the realignment would be done by September 2025. She mentioned that the UTEA still has not heard from the attorney regarding a copy of the report for HCES.

Sol Atencio – Michelle Zatta gave the Board information about the test. Universal learning is a program that works at a student's level. She finds that it is interesting that Mr. Sousa will be out. She attended the first session of transition with the Union SEPAG. She advised that you can contact your case manager for SEPAG information.

Erika Newland – ESS outsourcing for paraprofessionals - \$1 million; she encourages the district to bring back paraprofessionals in house. T&M report is one report for \$85,000. She indicated that it is an unstable time to change the math program at HCES. She thanked the Board for raising questions regarding the curriculum.

Kathleen Bruns-Meyers – she is honored and blessed to work with PreK teachers, staff and paraprofessionals. Thank you to the IT people.

Zuleika Owes – last month she brought to the Board's attention security issues at Burnet Middle School and she is looking for an answer. Dr. Benaquista advised that they did assess the situation and handled what needed to be done.

Virginia Jeffries – F-15 and F-16 – asked questions regarding disbursement and the current amount in the reserves. Is there a commitment for reimbursement of funds? How were vendors chosen and what is being done so there are no change orders? She indicated to Ms. Santana that it's hard to be a leader, but I appreciate that.

MOTION FOR EXECUTIVE SESSION:

Moved by Mr. Cohan, seconded by Mr. Nasta, that the Board go into Executive Session at 10:09 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, students, attorney-client privileged matters

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: Ms. Carbonell, Mr. Cohan, Mrs. Conteh-Mackey, Mrs. Minneci,
Mr. Nasta, Mrs. Scott-Hayden, Ms. Santana

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED

The Board returned to public session at 10:47 p.m.

MOTION TO RETURN TO PUBLIC SESSION:

There being no further business before the Board it was moved by Mr. Cohan, seconded by Ms. Carbonell, that the Board return to public session at 10:47 p.m.

AYE: Ms. Carbonell, Mr. Cohan, Mrs. Conteh-Mackey, Mrs. Faria,
Mrs. Minneci, Mr. Nasta, Mrs. Scott-Hayden, Ms. Santana

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. Cohan, seconded by Mrs. Minneci, that the meeting be adjourned at 10:49 p.m.

AYE: Ms. Carbonell, Mr. Cohan, Mrs. Conteh-Mackey, Mrs. Faria,
Mrs. Minneci, Mr. Nasta, Mrs. Scott-Hayden, Ms. Santana

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,

Yolanda Koon

YOLANDA KOON
BOARD SECRETARY

