

TOWNSHIP OF UNION BOARD OF EDUCATION  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES – May 18, 2021

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 Tuesday, May 18, 2021 at 7:00 p.m. at the Union High School Library, 2350 North Third Street, Union, New Jersey pursuant to notice sent to each member. The public also attended via ZOOM.

Mr. McDowell called the meeting to order at 7:06 p.m.

PRESENT AT ROLL CALL:

Mrs. Yocasta Brens-Watson, Dr. Guy Francis, Mr. Ronnie McDowell, Mrs. Nancy Minneci, Dr. Kalisha Morgan, Mr. John O’Shea, Mrs. Nellis Regis-Darby, Mrs. Kim Ruiz, Mrs. Mary Lynn Williams

ABSENT AT ROLL CALL:

None

ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT:

Mr. Gerald Benaquista, Mrs. Yolanda Koon, Mr. Barry Loessel, Mrs. Sandra Paul, Mrs. Maureen Guilfoyle, Mrs. Kim Conti, Mr. Craig Wojcik

ALSO PRESENT:

Afshan Ajmiri Giner, Esq.

Mr. McDowell led the Board and audience members in the Pledge of Allegiance.

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

Mrs. Regis-Darby read the district’s mission statement.

COMMENTS FROM PUBLIC ON RESOLUTIONS:

Stephen Le stated P-14 – I had put forth an OPRA request for the results of the responses for the superintendent search (inaudible). I think it is not transparent and you are blocking information regarding the input of the community and the thoughts and opinions of the community of what they want to see in their superintendent. I don’t think it is transparent because information was not released. Inaudible.

Approval of Minutes:

Moved by Mrs. Regis-Darby, seconded by Dr. Morgan, that the following minutes be adopted:

1. March 4, 2021 – special meeting
2. March 8, 2021 – special meeting
3. March 8, 2021 - executive session
4. March 9, 2021 – worksession
5. March 9, 2021 – executive session
6. March 16, 2021 – regular meeting
7. March 16, 2021 – executive session
8. March 22, 2021 – special meeting/executive session
9. March 23, 2021 – special meeting/executive session
10. March 24, 2021 – special meeting/executive session
11. March 30, 2021 – special meeting/executive session

**DISCUSSION:**

None

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

**NAY:** None

**ABSTAIN:** Mrs. Minneci (#2-3, 8- 9, 10-11), Mr. O’Shea (#6-7), Mrs. Ruiz (#1)  
Mrs. Williams (#11)

**MOTION CARRIED**

**Communications:**

**REQUEST FOR LEAVE UPDATE – MINNOIA**

Request for update to current leave to paid medical leave from Francesca Minnoia, teacher-Battle Hill Elementary School, effective June 1, 2021-June 24, 2021.

**REQUEST FOR LEAVE – ROBINSON**

Request for paid child rearing leave and unpaid FMLA/NJFLA (concurrently) followed by unpaid/non-FMLA/non-NJFLA child rearing leave from Kelly Robinson, teacher-Livingston Elementary School, May 20, 2021-June 30, 2022.

**LETTER OF RETIREMENT – BELLANTONI**

Letter of resignation, for the purpose of retirement, from Frances Bellantoni, media center secretary-Union High School, effective July 1, 2021.

**LETTER OF RESIGNATION – MERCADO**

Letter of resignation from Susanne Mercado, kindergarten teacher-Franklin Elementary School, effective June 30, 2021.

**LETTER OF RESIGNATION – CHARLESCEUS**

Letter of resignation from Fred Charlesceus, part-time bus driver-Transportation Department, effective May 14, 2021.

**LETTER OF RETIREMENT – KALKUS**

Letter of resignation, for the purpose of retirement, from Robert Kalkus, custodian-Union High School, effective July 31, 2021.

**LETTER OF RESIGNATION – FILIPPONE**

Letter of resignation from Thomas Filippone, physical education/health teacher-Hannah Caldwell Elementary School, effective May 5, 2021.

**REQUEST FOR LEAVE – NEMEZIO**

Request for paid medical leave from Elaine Nemezio, 10-month secretary-Hannah Caldwell Elementary School, April 7, 2021-June 7, 2021.

**REQUEST FOR LEAVE – GOODMAN**

Request for paid child rearing leave followed by unpaid FMLA/NJFLA (concurrently) from Brittany Goodman, teacher of LA-Union High School, March 5, 2021-November 24, 2021.

**REQUEST FOR LEAVE – KALKUS**

Request for unpaid FMLA followed by unpaid non-FMLA leave from Robert Kalkus, custodian-Union High School, April 12, 2021-July 31, 2021.

**REQUEST FOR EXTENSION OF LEAVE – MACK-RAMOS**

Request for extension of unpaid child rearing leave non-FMLA/non-NJFLA from Ebony Mack-Ramos, teacher-Livingston Elementary School, through May 1, 2022.

**H. Superintendent's Report**

Mr. Benaquista stated we will start with the student liaisons. Always excited to hear from our students.

Gabriella Guido (freshman) stated hybrid students feel that they are on their Chromebooks too much.

Mr. Benaquista stated when the kids transitioned to hybrid the teachers are facilitating lessons with students at home and in person and there is not enough interaction; that is one of things with being in person. We are still following the guidelines of distancing. I will reach out to the building principal and speaking about finding other ways with technology and have more collaboration and breakout rooms.

Joshua Tidwell (sophomore) stated looking forward to end of the year and going back to school.

Faith Olayinka (senior) stated not much going on – enjoying the time and look forward to prom and waiting for graduation and more senior events.

Mr. Benaquista stated we are looking forward to getting those senior events happening. Last year we missed a lot and we are hoping to end this year in a way the students are looking forward to. We are working on making your senior ending an excellent one.

- [Superintendent's Report of Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying](#)
  - No new incidents to report as of the work session on 5/11/21
  
- Attendance for the Month of April
  - Students - 96.10%
  - Staff - 94.66%
  
- Phase 2 Update
  - I am working with building administrators to finalize details about Phase 2. The goal is to combine cohorts so that in-person students can attend class M, T, Th, F. There are a few concerns about large class sizes in a few buildings that we are just trying to work out before we implement Phase 2.
  - More information including finalized cohort information and start date will be sent to families in the next week.
  - Face masks will still be required for all in-person staff and students. Unless we get updated guidance from Local Health Department and Department of Education
  - I also have to collaborate with UTEA Leadership and Administration Leadership as well as Transportation, and food service.
  - Should have a notification go out to the community by the end of the week.
  
- [Governor's Educators of the Year](#)
  - The 2021 Governor Educator of the Year program highlights educators who embrace educational innovation, student achievement, the rewards of teaching, and the importance of service outside of the classroom. Educators are nominated and a panel overseen at the building level selects recipients.
  - **Kelly Kitzman, Livingston Elementary School**
  - **Olga Korzen, Connecticut Farms Elementary School**
  - **Ian Penny, Washington Elementary School**
  - **Tiffany Reid-Anglin, Franklin Elementary School**
  - **Zakiyah Cobb-Roseberry, Franklin Elementary School**
  
- Honors/AP Update
  - Enrollment in Honors and AP courses has increased as a result of the
  - more inclusive and less cumbersome criteria established by the Honors/AP Committee.
  - The process that the committee used was grounded in research about the history of tracking and placement as well as trends in the US and NJ related to placement in advanced courses. The process and work of the committee was documented by Mrs. Ahern, Dr. Cohen, and Mrs. Moran in an article published in a peer-reviewed educational journal titled *Educational Viewpoints*. [The article is called "- and How? One District's Journey of Student Access"](#). To read the article, visit the NJPSA website.
  
- [Class of 2020 Yearbook Signing](#)

- Parents of the Class of 2020 are hosting a free yearbook signing for the class of 2020 at Rabkin Park on May 22 from 2-6PM.
- There is a Google form to RSVP. Email SeniorClassUHS20@gmail.com with questions.
- [Frantz Charles of the Class of 2015](#)
  - Frantz graduated in 2015 and recently published his first novel titled *The GCP: The First Resurrection*. He transferred to Union in his Junior year from various other school districts but attributes the creative courses he took at UHS with having a large impact on his writing. In a recent interview with *Union News Daily*, Frantz said **“Union helped me become a better writer because I attended a class called Young-Adult Fiction... Union was the only city that had a class like that that helped build one of my talents.”**
  - I want to congratulate Frantz on this great accomplishment and thank all of our teachers for going above and beyond to provide educational opportunities that tap into students’ interests and help them embrace what makes them unique. I would especially like to thank Ms. Sandy Mangarella for not only creating the Young Adult Literature course but also for her ongoing connections she makes with students through teaching it.
- Athletic Department Update June BOE (Slide Show)
- Township of Union Education Foundation
  - The Township of Union Education Foundation announced that they are awarding three mini-grants and two macro-grants will be awarded to teachers in the Union school district for the 2021-2022 school year.
  - Micro grants are being awarded to
    - Cindy Valia, Kindergarten teacher at Livingston School to set up a culturally relevant classroom library with flexible seating
    - Patricia Frazier, Spanish teacher at Burnet to allow all Spanish I students to participate in painting a flag of any of the 21 Spanish speaking countries
    - Mary Ellen Patricco, 4th grade teacher at Connecticut Farms Elementary School to provide SuperScience magazine to help children develop problem solving, creativity, critical thinking and communication skills.
  - Macro grants were awarded to
    - Lisa Krauze, librarian at Union High School for a digital subscription to the New York Times for ALL 2,300 students and 250 teachers.
    - Marianne Deczynski, instrumental and general music at Kawameeh Middle School to provide wooden xylophones and mallets for use in the Kawameeh World Band and Orchestra.
- [KMS Named Jostens 2021 National Yearbook of Excellence Award](#)
  - Jostens has announced that Kawameeh Middle School’s yearbook program has achieved the Jostens 2021 National Yearbook Program of Excellence award at the Silver Level. The National Yearbook Program of Excellence recognizes engaging

yearbooks that reflect a broad representation of the student body while helping students develop 21st century skills such as communication, collaboration, and information and communication technologies (ICT) literacy. The award was presented to the Kawameeh Middle School yearbook program for achieving defined criteria in any of the following categories: creating an inclusive yearbook, generating school engagement, and successfully managing the yearbook creation process.

- o A special thank you to KMS yearbook advisors Amanda Maxwell and Michele Nick for all their hard work.

#### Education/Student Discipline Committee Resolutions:

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

E-1. *Agenda item approved at worksession meeting of May 11, 2021 (affirm Superintendent's Determination of HIB – March 17, 2021 to April 27, 2021).*

E-1A. *Report of Superintendent's Report of HIB – for period April 28-May 11, 2021 (no incidences) – reported at worksession meeting of May 11, 2021.*

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

Superintendent's Report of Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying (HIB) for the period May 12, 2021 to May 18, 2021 (no incidences to report) (*no vote required; for reporting purposes only*).

#### E-2. APPROVE NJDOE MANDATED TUITION CONTRACT

Approve the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) mandated Tuition Contract for the 2020-2021 school year, in accordance with the non-public information appended to the minutes.

#### E-3. APPROVE TUITION CONTRACT

Approve Tuition Contract for the 2020-2021 school year with Roselle Public School for D.M., in accordance with the non-public information appended to the minutes.

#### E-4. APPROVE TUITION CONTRACT

Approve Tuition Contract for the 2020-2021 school year with Rockaway Public School for R.E.D., in accordance with the non-public information appended to the minutes.

#### E-5. APPROVE TUITION CONTRACT

Approve Tuition Contract for the 2020-2021 school year with Rockaway Public School for A.F.D., in accordance with the non-public information appended to the minutes.

#### E-6. APPROVE STUDENT CLUB – UHS – ASIAN STUDENT ALLIANCE CLUB

Approve the establishment of the following student club: UHS – Asian Student Alliance Club - Casey Kerkhof- advisor (no stipend requested), in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

**E-7. APPROVE SPECIAL EDUCATION TUITION CONTRACT – UCESC**

Approve Special Education Tuition Contract with the Union County Educational Services Commission for the 2021-2022 school year, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

**E-8. APPROVE LOCATIONS FOR TITLE I SUMMER PROGRAMS**

Approve Connecticut Farms Elementary School, Franklin Elementary School, Jefferson School, Burnet Middle School and Union High School as locations for Title I Summer Programs (July 1-August 13, 2021).

**E-9. APPROVE LOCATIONS FOR SUMMER BRIDGE TO ACCELERATE LEARNING PROGRAMS**

Approve Battle Hill Elementary School, Hannah Caldwell Elementary School, Livingston Elementary School, Washington Elementary School and Kawameeh Middle School for the Summer Bridge to Accelerated Learning Programs (July 6-August 4, 2021).

**E-10. APPROVE DESCRIPTIONS TO SUMMER PROGRAMS**

Approve the Summer Title I and Bridge to Accelerated Learning Program descriptions, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

**E-11. APPROVE VAPE AWAY RESOURCE GUIDES**

Approve Vape Away Resource Guides for Grade 8 and High School, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

**E-12. APPROVE LOCATIONS FOR EXTENDED SCHOOL YEAR**

Approve Hannah Caldwell Elementary School (July 2021) and Hamilton Building (July 1, 2021-August 31, 2021) for Extended School Year Program (ESY), ESY services, CST testing and/or home instruction.

E-13. *For informational purposes only – vote not required.* State and District Assessment Plan Calendar for the 2021-2022 school year, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

E-14. *For informational purposes only – vote not required.* Curriculum Program Adoption Procedures, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

E-15. *For informational purposes only – vote not required.* Curriculum Council and Course Adoption Reconfiguration Procedures, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

**DISCUSSION:**

Mrs. Regis-Darby stated E-10 – summer program – as a district if we could do our due diligence to make sure at the summer enrichment programs that we bring back as many students as possible into our building rather than giving options for the hybrid. I think we need to look at bringing students back into our building. We heard our parents at last meeting and urge as many

students back to our building. The summer program is a good start to bring them back. We need to do a more collaborative conversation around how we can bring more of our students back into our district for the summer programs.

Dr. Morgan asked did we do a survey to find out how many parents will be interested in either hybrid or returning in person? Mr. Benaquista stated we did send out a survey. Right now the guidance I received at my meetings is that you still have to offer a virtual component. I think the hardest part is getting enough teachers to manage all the programs. Right now we have so many different programs and if we need to adjust the programs we will. Once we see how many have registered but we will not deny students from attending in person.

Mrs. Ruiz stated in light of the most recent Executive Order of the Governor which came down yesterday, which lifted the remote school order at the end of this school year, do we still need to give a remote option for the summer? Mr. Benaquista stated the information I received so far isn't for the 2021-2022 school year, however at the next superintendent's meeting, I'm sure this will be a discussion item. Anything that comes our way we will make sure we adapt. I think we will have a smaller percentage choosing virtual. We are going to adhere our programs to both sets of students to make sure we are maximizing the learning, the social emotional side of it; we are doing a lot more hands on creative standards. We are individualizing and hitting on what we need to. I don't want to say learning loss because we don't know yet. A lot of our programs this summer we will be dealing with that to make sure the students have the learning standards that they need to be successful next year. We are opening up our schools to identify earlier on that certain students are falling behind; the money is also for programs next year. If we can have afterschool programs start in the beginning of the year with the grant money; get the support that the children need on things that they are falling behind on. This is not going to end now. It is the start and we will need to continue throughout next year. I believe the grant money we have until 2023.

We will get a committee together to address how we are going to spend the ESSER III money that we are receiving.

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

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED

#### Fiscal and Planning Committee Resolutions:

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

F-1. TREASURER'S REPORT

That the Treasurer's Report dated April 30, 2021 be accepted.

F-2. SECRETARY'S REPORT

That the Secretary's Report dated April 30, 2021 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 April 30, 2021 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 April 30, 2021 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 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. 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. PRE-APPROVE DISTRICTWIDE STUDENT FIELD TRIPS**

Pre-approve districtwide student field trip destinations and purposes pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-5.8 in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

**F-8. APPROVE LIST OF 2020-2021 STATE CONTRACT VENDORS**

Approve the amended list of the 2020-2021 State Contract 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-9. 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	2077/UHSPAC	11 <sup>th</sup> Hour Design – scenic detailing and materials for “Once on this Island” production	\$1,600.00
Union High School	2077/Music/Theatre	11 <sup>th</sup> Hour Design – creative design and marketing	\$5,000.00
Union High School	2077/Music/Theatre	11 <sup>th</sup> Hour Design – lighting design	\$3,500.00
Union High School	Union Athletics	Lou Rettino Scholarship – Student: TBA	\$1,000.00
Union High School	Union Athletics/Wrestling	Kutztown University-wrestling camp	\$2,500.00 (approx.)
Union High School	2049/National Honor Society	National Honor Society – NHS stoles for class of 2021 members	\$1,229.15
Union High School	2053/Student Council	FunFlicks Outdoor Movies and Home Depot – student council outdoor movie	\$1,500.00 (not to exceed)

**F-10. APPROVE 2020-2021 OUT-OF-DISTRICT STUDENT PLACEMENT LIST**

Approval be given to amend the 2020-2021 out-of-district student placement list, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

F-11. *Agenda item approved at worksession meeting of May 11, 2021 (approve fundraisers).*

**F-12. ACCEPT DONATIONS**

Accept the following donations, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes:

From	For Use By	\$/Item
ICF International	Union High School	\$250.00
Requested to be Anonymous	Union High School Performing Arts Company	\$5,000.00

**F-13. APPROVE SCHOOLBOARDNET SERVICES – PAPERLESS AGENDA**

Approve the renewal of Schoolboardnet Services for the paperless agenda at the annual rate of \$1,888 (no increase from last year) for the 2021-2022 school year, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

**F-14. APPROVE TUITION RATES FOR THE 2021-2022 SCHOOL YEAR**

Approve the following tuition rates for the 2021-2022 school year:

Preschool (full day)	\$12,854.00
Kindergarten	\$12,854.00
Grades 1 through 5	\$14,852.00
Grades 6 through 8	\$14,158.00
Grades 9 through 12	\$14,896.00
LLD	\$16,393.00
M.D.	\$17,019.00

B.D.	\$26,729.00
Autism	\$27,291.00
Part-time Preschool Handicapped	\$11,311.00
Full-time Preschool Handicapped	\$40,926.00

**F-15. APPROVE CHIEF MEDICAL INSPECTOR – MULLICK**

Approve Bharati Mullick, M.D., as Chief Medical Inspector pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:40-1 for the 2021-2022 school year at an annual fee of \$27,000.

**F-16. APPROVE ACCEPTANCE OF GRANT – NJ AMERICAN WATER**

Approve acceptance of 2021 Environmental Grant Award from New Jersey American Water Environmental Grant Program in the amount of \$9,332.00, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

**F-17. APPROVE ACCEPTANCE OF GRANT – SCHOOL SECURITY GRANT**

Approve acceptance of the FY20 School Security Grant Award in the amount of \$389,964, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

**F-18. APPROVE ACCEPTANCE OF GRANT – PERKINS SECONDARY GRANT**

Approve acceptance of the preliminary FY2022 Perkins Secondary Grant Allocations in the amount of \$46,630.00, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

**F-19. APPROVE PLATT PSYCHIATRIC ASSOCIATES – PSYCHIATRIC CONSULTATIONS**

Approve Platt Psychiatric Associate to provide basic student in-office psychiatric consultation at the rate of \$875.00 per evaluation; fee for complex student psychiatric consultation at the rate of \$1,600.00 per evaluation and attorney or forensic conferences at the rate of \$600.00 per hour for the 2021-2022 school year (not to exceed \$13,250.00) [Account #11-000-219-320-01-19], in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

**F-20. APPROVE STARLIGHT HOMECARE AGENCY – NURSING SERVICES**

Approve Starlight Homecare Agency, Inc., to provide nursing services at the rate of \$60.00 per hour for RN and \$48.00 per hour for LPN (not to exceed \$25,000.00) for the 2021-2022 school year [Account #11-000-216-30-01-19], in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

**F-21. APPROVE ASSISTIVE TEK – ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY**

Approve Assistive Tek to provide assistive technology as follow: (a) evaluations - \$1,500; (b) consulting - \$225 per hour (2-hour minimum); (c) training - \$3,000 full day and \$1,500 for half day (not to exceed \$5,400.00) for the 2021-2022 school year [Account # 11-000-219-320-01-19 and 11-000-219-320-02-19], in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

**F-22. APPROVE INLINGUA – TRANSLATION/INTERPRETATION SERVICES**

Approve Inlingua to provide translation and interpretation services for the 2021-2022 school year (not to exceed \$3,000.00) [Account #11-000-216-320-01-19], in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

**F-23. APPROVE SUMMIT SPEECH –AUDIOMETRY**

Approve Summit Speech to provide pure tone audiometry: air conduction (CPT code 92552) at the rate of \$175.00 and speech audiometry with speech recognition (CPT code 92566) at the rate of \$75.00 (not to exceed \$250.00) for the 2020-2021 school year [Account #11-000-219-320-01-19], in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

**F-24. APPROVE ACES – EVALUATIONS FOR DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING**

Approve Assessments Counseling and Education Services (ACES) to provide evaluations on deaf and hard of hearing students at the rate of \$900.00 per evaluation (not to exceed \$3,600.00) for the 2021-2022 school year [Account #11-000-219-320-01-19], in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

**F-25. APPROVE MORRIS UNION JOINTURE COMMISSION – THERAPY AND AIDES**

Approve Morris Union Jointure Commission (MUJC) to provide the following services in accordance with the students' IEPs: (a) physical therapy - \$215.00/hr., (b) occupational therapy - \$195.00/hr., (c) speech therapy - \$230.00/hr, (d) personal aides for ESY - \$7,236.67 each, (e) personal aides-10 mos. - \$71,300.00 each (not to exceed \$645,000.00) for the 2021-2022 school year [Account #11-000-216-320-01-19], in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

**F-26. APPROVE CROSS COUNTY CLINICAL AND EDUCATIONAL SERVICES – BILINGUAL EVALUATIONS**

Approve Cross County Clinical and Educational Services to provide bilingual evaluations at the rate of \$915.00 (not to exceed \$6,800.00) for the 2021-2022 school year [Account #11-000-219-320-01-19], in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

**F-27. APPROVE THE FAMILY CENTER AT MONTCLAIR – MENTAL HEALTH SCREENINGS**

Approve The Family Center at Montclair for mental health screenings at the rate of \$100.00 per screening and \$600 for a psychiatric evaluation (not to exceed \$5,000.00) for the 2021-2022 school year [Account #11-000-219-320-01-19/7074], in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

**F-28. APPROVE MARILY KUBICHEK MD, FAAP – EVALUATIONS**

Approve Marilyn Kubichek MD, FAAP to provide neurological evaluations and neurodevelopmental evaluations at the rate of \$650.00 per evaluation (not to exceed \$17,000.00) for the 2021-2022 school year [Account #11-000-219-320-01-19], in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

**F-29. APPROVE ROMANA KULIKOVA MD – EVALUATIONS**

Approve Romana Kulikova MD to provide neurological evaluations and neurodevelopmental evaluations at the rate of \$480.00 per evaluation in the office and \$600.00 for evaluations in the school (not to exceed \$5,400.00) for the 2021-2022 school year [Account #11-000-219-320-01-19], in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

**F-30. APPROVE NANCY MOONEY TO PROVIDE VIRTUAL PRESENTATION**

Approve Nancy Mooney, from the Traumatic Loss Coalition and Crisis Clinician at Trinitas Regional Medical Center, to provide the following presentation to district families: *“Having the Right Conversation Now: a Presentation to Assist District Families on How to Discuss Mental Health Needs with Students, Including Youth Suicide and Other Challenges that Young People Face Today”*. This presentation will be at no cost to the district and will be conducted virtually, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

**F-31. APPROVE EFFECTIVE SCHOOL SOLUTIONS**

Approve Effective School Solutions, LLC (ESS) to provide therapeutic mental health services through licensed professionals to students in our district for the 2021-2022 school year (not to exceed \$617,700), in accordance with the information appended to the minutes [Acct #11-000-216-320-01-19/7043].

**F-32. APPROVE FIRST CHILDREN – BCBA CONSULTATION**

Approve First Children for BCBA consultation to include functional behavior assessment, behavior intervention plans, IEP meetings and parent training at the rate of \$115.00 per hour, registered behavior technician at the rate of \$62.00 per hour and behavior technician at the rate of \$51.00 per hour (not to exceed \$425,000.00) for the 2021-2022 school year [Account #11-000-216-320-01-19], in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

F-33. *For informational purposes only – vote not required.* List of legal services for the 2020-2021 fiscal year, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

**DISCUSSION:**

None

AYE: Mrs. Brens-Watson, Dr. Francis, Mrs. Minneci, Dr. Morgan, Mr. O’Shea,

Mrs. Regis-Darby, Mrs. Ruiz, Mrs. Williams, Mr. McDowell

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

**MOTION CARRIED**

**Operations Committee Resolutions:**

Dr. Francis asked that O-6 be amended before starting.

Moved by Dr. Francis, seconded by Mrs. Darby, that O-6 be amended to read as follows: “Approve Afshan Giner of Florio, Perrucci, Steinhardt, Cappelli, Tipton & Taylor as our Board Attorney for the period of July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2022”.

Mr. McDowell stated O-6 has been modified. Any questions on O-6? Mrs. Minneci stated if she has a conflict, any other attorney would be o.k.? Dr. Francis stated yes. Mrs. Williams asked if there was a specific reasons? Dr. Francis stated we can talk about it in executive session. Mrs. Regis-Darby asked is there executive session? Mr. McDowell stated yes. Mrs. Regis-Darby asked that this be tabled so if anyone has questions they can ask them. Mr. McDowell stated I agree and is that o.k. with you Dr. Francis? Dr. Francis stated yes. Mr. McDowell stated O-6 will be discussed in executive session.

Upon recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the following resolutions were moved by Dr. Francis, seconded by Mrs. Brens-Watson, 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 bus evacuation reports for the 2020-2021 school year, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

**O-2. APPROVE RENEWAL OF FOOD SERVICE COMPANY - POMPTONIAN**

Approve renewal of Pomptonian Food Service as company for district food services for the 2021-2022 school year, in connection with the information appended to the minutes.

**O-3. APPROVE ARCHITECTS OF RECORD**

Approve Architects of Record for the period July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2022: (a) Parette Somjen Architects LLC, (b) EI Associates and (c) The Musial Group.

**O-4. APPROVE ENGINEERS OF RECORD**

Approve Engineers of Record for the period of July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2022: (a) Consulting & Municipal Engineers, (b) T&M Associates and (c) EI Associates.

**O-5. APPROVE AUDITOR– SUPLEE CLOONEY & CO.**

Approve the auditing firm of Suplee Clooney & Co. for the period of July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2022.

**O-6. *Agenda item tabled to after executive session (legal services – Florio et al)***

**O-7. APPROVE PROPERTY/CASUALTY/WORKERS COMPENSATION BROKERAGE SERVICE - ACRISURE/FAIRVIEW**

Approve Acrisure/Fairview Insurance Agency as the property/casualty/workers' compensation brokerage service for the district for the period July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2022.

**O-8. *Agenda item approved at worksession meeting of May 11, 2021 (approve rejecting bid and awarding contract-roofing).***

**O-9. APPROVE NOTIFICATION OF ASSET CHANGE OF STATUS**

Approve the Notification of Asset Change of Status for disposal of four (4) snowblowers in the Operations & Maintenance Department, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

O-10. *Agenda item approved at worksession meeting of May 11, 2021 (approve request from Township for use of BMS for bike rodeo).*

**DISCUSSION:**

None

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

**NAY:** None

**ABSTAIN:** None

**MOTION CARRIED**

**Personnel Committee Resolutions:**

Upon recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the following resolutions were moved by Dr. Francis, seconded by Dr. Morgan, 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 VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION IN EQUIP**

Approve voluntary participation in a study sponsored by the University of South Carolina entitled EQIP – Educational Quality through Instructional Partnerships for the following staff, at no cost to the district: (a) Lisa Krauze - Librarian, (b) Doreen Sahr – Teacher A, (c) Sandra Mangarella – Teacher B, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

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

Accept letters of resignation/retirement from the following staff:

Name	Position	Location	Eff. Date	Reason	Notes
Frances Bellantoni	Media center secretary	UHS	7/1/2021	Retirement	
Susanne Mercado	Kindergarten teacher	Franklin	6/30/2021	Resignation	
Fred Charlesceus	P/T bus driver	Transportation	5/14/2021	Resignation	
Robert Kalkus	Custodian	UHS	7/31/2021	Retirement	

Thomas Filippone	Physical education/health teacher	Hannah Caldwell	5/5/2021	Resignation	
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**P-4. APPROVE LEAVES**

Approve leaves for the following staff:

Name	Position	Location	Leave Dates	Leave Type	Notes
Francesca Minnoia	Teacher	Battle Hill	6/1/2021-6/24/2021	Paid medical leave	Update to current leave; effective 6/1/2021 paid medical leave; original leave began 3/1/2021
Kelly Robinson	Teacher	Livingston	5/20/2021 – 6/30/2022	Paid child rearing leave and unpaid FMLA/NJFLA (concurrently) followed by unpaid/non-FMLA/non-NJFLA child rearing leave	FMLA/NJFLA (concurrently) entitlement not to exceed 12 weeks
Elaine Nemezio	10-month secretary	Hannah Caldwell	4/7/2021-6/7/2021	Paid medical leave	
Brittany Goodman	Teacher of LA	UHS	3/5/2021-11/24/2021	Paid child rearing leave followed by unpaid FMLA/NJFLA (concurrently)	FMLA/NJFLA (concurrently) entitlement not to exceed 12 weeks
Robert Kalkus	Custodian	UHS	4/12/2021-7/31/2021	Unpaid FMLA followed by unpaid non-FMLA leave	FMLA entitlement not to exceed 12 weeks Also retiring 7/31/2021 on 5/18/21 agenda
Ebony Mack-Ramos	Elementary teacher	Livingston	Extension through 5/1/2022	Unpaid child rearing leave non-FMLA/non-NJFLA	Original leave began 4/24/2020; FMLA/NJFLA entitlement time exhausted

**P-5. APPROVE ATTENDANCE – NJASBO CONFERENCE**

Approve Yolanda Koon, School Business Administrator/Board Secretary, to attend the NJASBO virtual conference on June 9-11, 2021 (at no cost to the district).



- P-6. **APPROVE TREASURER OF MONEYS – JENNIFER SEMLER**  
Approve the reappointment of Jennifer Semler as Treasurer of School Moneys for the 2021-2022 school year at an annual salary of \$4,900.
- P-7. **APPROVE AFFIRMATIVE ACTION OFFICER – AWARDING CONTRACTS**  
Approve Yolanda Koon as Affirmative Action Officer for awarding contracts for the 2021-2022 school year under P.L. 1975, c. 127, at no cost to the district.
- P-8. **APPROVE CUSTODIAN OF RECORDS – KOON**  
Approve the appointment of Yolanda Koon as Custodian of School Records for the 2021-2022 school year, at no cost to the district.
- P-9. **APPROVE QUALIFIED PURCHASING AGENT – KOON**  
Approve Yolanda Koon as Qualified Purchasing Agent (QPA) for the 2021-2022 school year, at no cost to the district.
- P-10. **APPROVE EMPLOYMENT CONTRACT – BENAQUISTA**  
Approve the Employment Contract of Gerald Benaquista, Assistant Superintendent for the 2021-2022 school year, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes (approved by County Superintendent).
- P-11. **APPROVE EMPLOYMENT CONTRACT – KOON**  
Approve the Employment Contract of Yolanda Koon, School Business Administrator/Board Secretary for the 2021-2022 school year, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes (approved by County Superintendent).
- P-12. **APPROVE RESIDENCY INVESTIGATORS – SUMMER 2021**  
Approve residency investigators to work during summer 2021 as follows: (a) Maria Schmidtberg – 50 hours not to exceed 70 hours for July and August (\$25/hr.); (b) Thomas Sheridan – 25 hours not to exceed 50 hours for July and August (\$20/hr.); (c) John Matos – 25 hours not to exceed 50 hours for July and August (\$22/hr.), (d) Dan Hodge – 25 hours not to exceed 50 hours for July and August (\$20/hr.).
- P-13. **APPROVE MEMBERSHIP - PEPPM CONSORTIUM**  
Approve resolution for membership to PEPPM Consortium, a national contract program for district purchasing agent, at no cost to the district, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.
- P-14. **APPROVE APPOINTMENT AND EMPLOYMENT CONTRACT - TAYLOR**  
Approve the appointment and employment contract of Dr. Scott Taylor, Superintendent, for the term July 1, 2021 thru June 30, 2026, subject to the approval of the Executive County Superintendent, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes (approved by County Superintendent).

**DISCUSSION:**

Mr. Benaquista stated P-4 – there are additional person on leave until the end of the school year and they have been added.

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

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: Mrs. Minneci (P-10; P-14)

**MOTION CARRIED**

Mr. McDowell stated welcome Dr. Scott Taylor – you and Mr. Benaquista will make an ideal team for our district.

**Approval of Bills:**

Upon recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools and moved by Mrs. Minneci, seconded by Mr. O’Shea, 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: Mrs. Brens-Watson, Dr. Francis, Mrs. Minneci, Dr. Morgan, Mr. O’Shea,  
Mrs. Regis-Darby, Mrs. Ruiz, Mrs. Williams, Mr. McDowell

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

**MOTION CARRIED**

Mr. McDowell stated Dr. Taylor will be giving a presentation.

**Unfinished Business:**

None

**New Business:**

Mrs. Williams stated if you haven’t done already, please purchase tickets to the Union High School Performing Arts Company performance of “On this Island” – May 20 through May 23 and they are also offering online streaming.

Dr. Scott Taylor stated I want to thank the Board for supporting me in this process and I’m very honored to be here. I speak for everyone when I say we can all use a refreshing summer. I will take some RR and come in July 1 and it actually will happen sooner.

Mr. Benaquista has been so welcoming. He and I will make a good team and I will be leaning on him for all his knowledge in this district. I have a lot to learn.

The first meeting with the Board, I called my wife and I said “Babe, I love these people, we had great conversation and I really hope this works out” and obviously when it worked out I was extremely excited.

I want to spend a few minutes introducing myself personally and professionally then I want to tell the community what they getting with me – what my skill set is and talking about what my first three months will look like. I put together an entry plan and let everybody in on what is going to happen and not happen.

I'm a father. I have two kids. Julia is going to be a freshman at Pace. If you haven't checked me out yet, I'm actually a superintendent where I live. Julia loved bumping into me in the hallway so I think she will be happy that she is moving on and being independent at Pace. My other one, Sarah, she will be a senior at Manhattan School of Music – studying musical theatre – she wants to be on Broadway. My wife of 26 years on June 18<sup>th</sup> is a special ed teacher. She has been teaching me a lot about students that need a lot of help and support. We are dog lovers – we actually raise seeing eye pups – this is our second and she is not going to make it because she is not disciplined and the other two just go along for the ride.

I'll tell you what you get with me. My grad students, I have been teaching at Montclair and Rutgers for a long time. I work with budding leaders. I taught a lot about relationships. You can't do anything unless you have mutually trusting, respectful, nurturing relationships. Building relationships with kids – I work with a few students at each grade level, high schools, middle schools – meet with them on occasion and check in to see what is happening. We have pizza lunches and that is my way of getting in there and understanding what is going on in the students' heads.

It's also about working with my leadership team. It is about making sure that I know that I can trust my team and they can trust me and I share that decision making process. This is a picture of a retreat every summer I take my leaders to a university and its teams building and its an opportunity to establish traditions for the following year and make sure we are on top of things – our evaluations, thinkings. It is about establishing really strong relationships with my staff and faculty. What people are going to have to get use to is seeing a lot of me because not because I'm here to check on people and hold people accountable necessarily but more so because I really want to live and learn what is going on in the classroom. It gives me more credibility when I have concerns or want to support.

I saw something in a classroom - a picture of a professional development experience that I'm sure some people have done called "Ed Camp" – an organic way of developing professional development. It is a ground up experience. It is a great way for people to feel vested.

Also equally important is relationships that I can bridge or strengthen – leadership and the multiple associations that we have to work together collaboratively.

Here's a picture of me, the Board President, the high school principal and three members of our teacher's union leadership, including the president – at Rutgers that they sponsored called the "Labor Management Collaborative". It is a wonderful way to keep talking – speaking frequently, hitting our problems, addressing challenges together – that will be part of my relationships.

What can I possibly do for Union – I’ll share my expertise in my real house. First, I’m very focused on fostering equity among all of our students and give every child the opportunity, he, she, they needs. I administered the Harvard project and we had some heavy duty conversations about what are hidden biases and subconscious biases are. I believe doing some of that; I can add more value to that and engaging in book studies.

My other expertise is social/emotional wellness. I strongly believe that nothing is going to happen in a child’s world unless he, she, they has a real strong self-esteem and knows how to relate to other people; can regulate ones behavior and emotions; can work constructively with other people. Until that happens that the performance happens – success, post-secondary. I’m passionate about that. We co-built a program “International Academy” that Rutgers sponsors and it certifies people to be leaders in this area – so I will be encouraging people to sign up for that.

I was a curriculum supervisor – my expertise is particularly articulating curriculum and making sure there is common language and K-12 way of thinking around assessment instruction and curriculum. I might be able to contribute some of that – team teachers, board members – I hope this is something we can foster as well in light of all the decision making that is going on.

Also another area in my world that I’m passionate about is experiential learning. I’m a big fan of John Dooey – he worked on this idea – when they build their knowledge – it is like hands on learning, not project based learning. I had a group of kids in Highland Park that sold their wears around a service learning project that they did – this was done at a street fair.

I’ll winddown my presentation down with what my 90 days will look like – it is something that I did in Highland Park almost six years ago when I first started. I did it because I was required to do it to get the gig. When I got the gig I actually used the entry plan.

This is what my first 90 days will look like – it is a multi-page document that I will share with the Board. My first goal is to build those relationships I talked about and I will have to be out and about a lot. There are 10 schools in this district compared to four in my current district. I’m already plotting out ways that I can schedule to be at every school at least once a week. It is all going to be about connecting with people and getting to know the council, the Mayor, the Police Chief.

The second goal – I have a lot to learn – this is a bigger district and this is the biggest district I will be part of and that is extremely exciting and it is making me a little anxious for good reason because I have to learn how to overcome things like – how not to be quite as hands on as I usually am and how to trust, learn, delegate to people around me. Also learn about what Union is. Proud to be a Farmer and would like to know the origins of the mascot and that will probably be the first thing I do. Then deep dive those first 90 days about what is going on and Mr. Benaquista will be a very important part of that process. He has a lot of institutional knowledge so I will be leaning on him to do that.

My final goal of the first 90 days is to start slowly but surely working on helping the community – the entire community, not just personnel and the Board, I’m talking residents,

important leaders in the Union Township community. It is all in the strategic plan unless one is already in place in which case I would build on that.

What that will look like is people as you see here – about 60 of us, all kinds of people, broken out into different areas and tackling four core needs. For us it was focusing on equity, experiential learning, strategic planning and if you want to learn about what I envision what we will be doing, just visit the Highland Park website where I am still superintendent. I would love to see our 2021-2022 school year culminate how to produce, by all of us, a series of goals and action steps and timelines to align everything from the budget, professional development, evaluations of teachers, to hiring practices. Sixty-six action steps – we are down to 11 – we may not be able to finish that. I would like to get that here as well.

Bottomline is – it is about relationships – it is about me getting to know people like the Mayor, the Police Captain, local residents – you will see me on main street saying hello – to get to know me.

Every year, I follow a student's schedule and pretend to be a student and I really take in what it is like to be a student and that is an experience in itself and that is what I'm about.

I want to thank Mr. Benaquista who is actually going to help me visit the schools this Friday – I'm not a jacket person and if you see me say hello. I like to think I'm approachable. Thank you again.

Mr. McDowell stated thank you very much.

Mrs. Ruiz stated thank you Dr. Taylor – great presentation. I also want to thank my fellow Board members. We put in a lot of hours, long days on hard chairs and we did a lot of work and time to make this decision. I want to thank this Board. I'm almost done with my term and this is the most important decision we can make as a Board and I'm proud of the decision we made and proud of the work that we put in. I'm really proud that we came together as a team to make this decision as one cohesive team.

Mrs. Regis-Darby stated I echo what Mrs. Ruiz just said. For the first time, and I have been on this Board for a while, I have seen the Board do some really collaborative work to hiring Dr. Taylor. Thank you to every Board member who participated in this. We did the process together and late nights. Thank you for the collaboration and this was the best I have seen our Board work together to find the right person for our district.

Dr. Morgan stated I would like to thank our Board leadership – Mr. McDowell, for speaking with our consultant and keeping us informed and not to reply all. Thank you Nellis, that last night I was exhausted, and you pulled us back in and made us sit down and think about what we were doing and what we were doing for our children.

Mr. McDowell stated if you never worked with Nellis Regis-Darby, you don't know what you are missing and I say that in a positive light. You asked important questions, takes copious notes and kept us all focused on why we were here and it made the conclusion obvious and we

were all of the same consensus. We all did a great job. Mrs. Koon and Mrs. Cappiello – they were with us every night, not taking part of the interviews, they were here bringing the candidates in, making sure we had a bite to eat and I want to publicly thank both you ladies for the sacrifices you made. I think it was well worth it and it has paid off. The public has seen for the first time what we are getting in Dr. Taylor. We did an outstanding job and I think it will be a tremendous thing for our district and I hope that everybody gets on the train and we have a destination.

Mrs. Hall stated I can tell Dr. Taylor about the mascot. Mr. McDowell stated o.k.; I think Mrs. Hall will be another person you will be working closely with and taking a lot of information from her.

One of the comments made this evening – I think we tried to make this process as transparent as possible. We did seek input from staff and the community and from that input at least 90 staff responded and the community responded and asking questions that were created by our NJSBA representative, Mrs. Thornton – she did an outstanding job getting us where we had to be. The process was transparent. All the comments and questions from the public and staff were read by all of us, including Mrs. Thornton and she formulated questions that we asked our candidates. The public and staff were involved. If you did not answer the questions or take part of that survey that was online, you can't blame us for that. The survey was there for a few weeks. We got a lot of input. That input was taken, questions were formulated from that input and the candidates were asked those questions. We did an outstanding job – I believe and being as transparent as possible. Some of things we had to be confidential about because the candidates were putting their career on the line coming here and being interviewed and being seen. We had to keep that as confidential as possible. I think we did a good job with that but the process was transparent and the staff and community were involved to the extent that they wanted to be. In the end, it was the Board that had to decide which the next superintendent would be; that is all I'm going to say about that.

#### Comments from the Public:

William Eckert stated teacher at UHS and summer school coordinator for UHS. I want to comment on the Education Committee resolutions and conversation concerning summer school in person learning. The Executive Order does not give guidance for in-person learning for the summer.

Paul Casey stated thank you to the Board for their leadership and welcome to Dr. Taylor. As a parent leader, I look forward to working with you. I want to thank Mr. Benaquista for his leadership over the last several months and working with the district to do what we needed to do during the pandemic and making it a little easy and communicating with parents on a much more and on a high level and that was appreciated. I really appreciate the Board coming together. It was a long-time coming seeing the Board come together.

Susan Lipstein stated as a resident of 38 years in the district and active parent-education advocate, I want to welcome Dr. Taylor. I want to congratulate the Board in this decision. You followed the NJSBA and followed what you were supposed to do, did what you were supposed

to do and I think you have done an excellent job and the fact that it was a unanimous vote is very reassuring and makes me happy.

As President of the Township of Union Education Foundation which I hope to meet Dr. Taylor and I have met with every superintendent since Dr. Jakobowski which is when we were founded 20 years ago and I look forward to working and meeting you.

Livingston School is getting a culturally relevant classroom library. The second grade is going to Burnet Middle School for students to take pride in the cultural diversity of the country that they are studying about. Connecticut Farms School is getting a grant. Kawameeh is getting a grant. Union High School Library is getting a digital subscription to the New York Times for the entire year. Our fundraiser is Thursday night.

Sonya Brown stated I'm speaking as a grandmother and a mom – I have one son in UHS and two granddaughters in Franklin. I have a concern because teachers have been let go and one of the teachers was named as one of the Governor's Educators of the Year. You do help our children succeed now it can't be a good time to let teachers go during this pandemic and increasing class sizes and I ask that you reconsider that.

Elsie Mackie stated welcome aboard Dr. Taylor, good luck to you as you take on this challenge. Dr. Taylor there are a lot of things in this district that you are walking into. One of the things that I am passionate about is the disability population. At the worksession last week they were talking about different issues but then again there doesn't seem to be enough passion for students with disabilities.

As a Board, it doesn't resonate the population. There are times because of personal feelings or whatever, some of us parents are disregarded. I implore the community to speak up. I am a parent with two children with disabilities. There needs to be another voice where it is not personal.

Are we going to get any updates on what is going on with the lawyer? We need to know and as a community we should know. He not only works for the Board but works for the community (inaudible).

What happens to children like Jules with severe disabilities? What these laws that have been created? Where are the educators' feedback? (inaudible) became a type one diabetic and my son is so afraid to go to school because of the stigma associated with disabilities. To Mrs. Regis-Darby, if there could be some clarity to the comment regarding summer services.

Vikki Morr stated I wanted to speak on behalf of the elementary level teachers that were told that they weren't being rehired for the 2021-2022 school year. I speak on their behalf because many of them are my co-workers at Franklin and also friends in neighboring schools. They are awesome teachers. I know they have given so much in the last two years to ensure our students would be o.k. These educators have reinvented themselves in order to do what they could to prevent learning loss. We all know that the learning loss is real. My concern (inaudible) and the next few years that follow. I think about my co-workers and the impact of

the loss of their job. I ask that you put yourselves in any one of those elementary education teachers in their shoes so you will know what that feels like. Please reconsider, please do whatever you can and help bring them all back for the upcoming school year. Thank you so much for your time.

Chasity Santana stated Mr. Benaquista made me eat my words. He took over as superintendent and he showed us what could be communication, openness and working together. Thank you and I look forward to seeing you and working with you these next few years. I have five kids in the district and I'm not going anywhere. Dr. Taylor welcome. I welcome everything you just said. I hope that your presentation is what you are because I will hold you to it for my children. They deserve everything that is great within you. I also want to introduce myself as the co-director for Union Township's CPAC which is special education parent advisory group. My co-director is also on and I hope she speaks up. One of my passions is special education – one has an IEP and two others have 504's and I have a Type 2 diabetic as well. I'm looking forward to working with the Township, the Board, the district, everybody when it comes to special education in Union – collaboratively. Everybody talks about working together, let's really do it. I didn't know what was going on with the teachers – I don't know if it is specifically Franklin or across the district. That's what I miss not being able to actually pick up my kids, be that ear to the ground and know what is going on. I know we get cut sometimes but we always manage to bring our teachers back. We are nothing without our teachers. I learned that when I had all five of mine home and I was trying to teach them myself. I thank the teachers, the district, the Board for working together and thinking about our children and I hope we can not talk it only but practice it. Thank you.

Eboni Dockery stated I'm a 4<sup>th</sup> grade teacher at Franklin Elementary School. I spent the majority of my life and career in education and this what I always wanted to do. In the last two years of the district, I have achieved teacher of the year and I take pride in that. I continue to give my all, even though I am not being renewed next year. I had hopes for next year (inaudible). Welcome Dr. Taylor.

Bella stated she has a student at Franklin who has Ms. Dockery (inaudible). I hope you can reconsider the non-renewals for next year.

Ms. Jackson stated I'm a third-grade teacher at Franklin Elementary School. As an educator (inaudible) educationally. I hope that the teachers that received their riff letters will be shown some grace; the same grace we have shown our families – especially our students in our community. By letting these educators go, we are doing our students and community a major disservice.

Stephen Le stated congratulation to Dr. Taylor and wish him success in his new role as his success is the district's success and the children's success. Thanks to Mr. Benaquista who has done the job of three people for quite some time. Who does exhume work ethic that is exemplary (inaudible) to put in the time to do more than what is expected for the benefit of the faculty and staff and most importantly the children. I do want to close the loop on the discussion in response to my comments. If we espouse the principles of transparency, I would just order the release of the survey results. The survey itself were inputs from community members, the



public, from teachers, from faculty, from parents – they are public input. The fact that there is significant public input and that data being attained through the survey which the Board possesses, I don't know how that constitutes as private information. I will challenge you Mr. President, if you want to be an epitome of show casing transparency and action, that you release the full survey results to show the community what they would like to see.

Latoya Singleton stated welcome to the district Dr. Taylor. I don't know if you know what you are getting into with this district. It is upsetting to learn that so many teachers were getting laid off in the Franklin Elementary School where my daughter attends 3<sup>rd</sup> grade. I had no knowledge of this. There are so many great teachers. I hope her teachers are not on this list. I raised this question at the last meeting about the interim principal position. There is no full-time principal at Franklin and it is so concerning that so many other personnel positions are leaving and we still don't know if Dr. Baskerville will be the principal. She is doing a fantastic job. Not a lot of resources are being put into Franklin and I'm wondering why. I saw your goals Dr. Taylor for your first 90 days but this personnel issue has to be part of this list and I'm sure it is in other schools as well. We have to make sure that we are keeping the best teachers. It is concerning that these decisions are being made now without a kind of transparency and parental involvement in decision making. I know there is much involved in what is transparent versus what is not transparent. We need to be more involved in the process and there needs to be more communication from the Board and administration of the school district in what is going on in the district. I just wanted my voice heard on that and I'm still waiting to learn about what is going on with the principal search for Franklin. It is concerning that all these teachers are being laid off. We don't want larger class sizes. Also I want to thank Mr. Benaquista for all he has done, he is working with limited resources and doing the job of three people. I was hoping that he would become the superintendent here but another decision was made. Time will tell if that was the correct plan. Thank you. Mr. Benaquista stated I will reach out to you tomorrow to give you some insight on the situation at Franklin.

Stephanie stated I'm a first grade teacher at Franklin Middle School. When I first came to Union I was a paraprofessional and I became a classroom teacher a few years ago. I'm a highly effective educator and I was the Governor's Educator of the Year. I have three children at home and one with special needs. (inaudible) I am disappointed my contract was not renewed.

Ms. Cobb stated teacher at Franklin Elementary School. The teachers at Franklin are amazing educators. They managed to do the impossible during the past year in spite of the ongoing pandemic. I want to express my disappointment in UTEA leadership for being silent.

Jinny stated my son goes to Franklin Elementary School and I was extremely disappointed when I heard about the teachers. My son's teacher goes above and beyond for all of her students. She loves her students and accommodates our schedules. You can call her for help. Can you revisit that situation?

Marilyn stated welcome Dr. Taylor. I'm a second-grade teacher at Franklin Elementary School. I have been in this district since 2005 and a proud educator and in Franklin since 2008. I didn't really know what was going on and found out that my colleagues were being let go. I'm speaking for the staff that I work with – they are amazing teachers. I have been out for six weeks

and they have been phenomenal. As a teacher, I had the pleasure of working with them and I just hopeful that you can revisit this. I want to put on record that I support my colleagues.

Carna DiCari stated welcome Dr. Taylor and to Mr. Benaquista I really appreciate the job you have done. I'm also co-chair of CPAC. Dr. Taylor I'm happy to hear your plans of collaboration. CPAC – working in close collaboration with Mr. Benaquista, administration and looking forward to continuing that relationship and building relationships with other community organizations. I'm a mom of two children with disabilities out of district and hopeful on hearing your plans not only the inclusion, bringing our kids from other districts back and (inaudible). I want to welcome you and offer our collaboration. We invite parents of kids with disabilities to tell their story of what is going on and lead with that collaboration and testimony. We are looking forward to working with you as a parent and organization.

Jeff Monge stated thank you Mr. Benaquista for bridging during this period of time through this search for the new superintendent. Dr. Taylor, extremely excited and impressed by your resume, your presentation and a feeling of hope looking forward to your leadership. I wanted to make a comment about the riffs. Historically, Mr. Tatum was able to bring back as many teachers as possible. What I'm hearing is that wasn't done this time around. It seems like there was a concentration of elementary school teachers, specifically Franklin. The budget, looking at the budget, it couldn't be that many teachers that were riffed due to budget issues and do to contractual and the like. You do have an opportunity to bring back some of those teachers. It wasn't clear why they were told they weren't coming back versus what Mr. Tatum used to say was we would work as hard as we can to be able to adjust the budget as much as possible. It leaves a big gap in the budget that was filled by Mrs. Koon due to insurance costs and that is not a fault of our teachers. I hope that we can do as much as possible to find a way to bring our teachers back especially during the time it was so difficult for them to do essential work for our kids.

Ann Casey stated I'm a teacher in the district. I would like to commend their decision bringing in Dr. Taylor as our superintendent. I believe they did their due diligence and I believe the process was done with parent input as well as teacher input in what we would like to see in a superintendent. I'm speaking because I am one of the teachers that received a riff letter but I'm also speaking as a parent in a time that we are in a pandemic we are talking about taking teachers out of the classroom who have worked diligently throughout the year to make sure that students received the best education they could. I being one of them and many others as well. I commend the Franklin community for coming together to support their teachers – both the parents and their colleagues. I usually don't come forward to speak but I do feel the need to speak because I don't feel there is any representation for me. Please keep in mind that while we are very diligently working taking into account children's social emotional learning and aspects of growth and developing academically. It is important to keep in mind that these things cannot happen without the teachers and staff to support them and keep them in place. It is very frustrating myself as being laid off and as a parent to hear that there is any consideration to cut back as we need more teachers and support staff in this district for our general population, special need students, for everyone as well as most of the colleagues and staff in the school. We need as much support and encouragement. I hope the priority right now is to focus on keeping the staff in place.

Grancino stated I'm at Franklin School. I want to say welcome Dr. Taylor we are happy to have you on board and I want to thank Gerry – he has been doing the job of so many people and a great job for our community. There are layoffs across the board and it is unfortunate. I have had the pleasure of working next to some lovely teachers and care about their students. I would hope that we can find a way to bring these teachers back. One thing I do have to step in and say is – someone earlier brought up the fact that they feel it is bias – I have to publicly say it was anybody non-tenure. We do hope we can bring back all those non-tenure teachers because they are all wonderful teachers for our district. It is not right to place blame on the current superintendent who has been doing such a great job and have been handed what was left to him and I don't think it fair to place blame on anybody. I don't think he wants to cut jobs. I really hope that everybody can come back (inaudible). Welcome Dr. Taylor.

Arycellis DiGirolamo stated Dr. Taylor welcome aboard. I'm a parent of three children in the district and a member of the American Disability Committee in Town. I am also a teacher myself in another district. Please do not take this personally what I'm going to say next. There are two issues and I will start with Union Board of Education members, I hope you realized that a lot of parents of Union know that there was zero transparency in the process of hiring the new superintendent. To be truthful, the process was already tainted before it started. When you didn't even pick Mr. Benaquista for the position of interim superintendent. You dare to tell us there was transparency. How come you didn't have a community meeting like the school district Westfield. You did not do anything special. You only sent a generic survey, like any other school district does. We can't even see the results of the survey. Are you really still talking about transparency? You knew you weren't going to get your way if you had the concerned parents of Union involved. We are watching and our children are watching as well. It is disturbing behavior I see on social media. Friends of Board members start bashing and destroying teachers (inaudible) and Board members themselves joining in as well supporting such bashing. I understand you can do whatever you please with your lives and social media, what you obviously don't realize is that when you post names of people and personnel issues in a negative manner (inaudible) teachers and administrators you are speaking so badly about. Your toxic behavior is affecting our schools, our community and at the end our precious children.

Mrs. Giner stated there were some question or comments made that certainly contain legal issues in terms of the OPRA request as well as transparency. I can explain to the public what the concern was. Just so the public is clear, Board documents as well as any kind of public entity, government documents are dictated by the Open Public Records Act. It is not for the Board to decide which document are released and which are not. It is dictated by law. Therefore, when survey results are not released because the Board was still in a deliberated process that is acceptable under the law and that is not subject to disclosure as a result of OPRA. Therefore, when the OPRA requests for the survey were made at that time, the Board had not made an appointment of the superintendent. Therefore, the Board was still in a deliberative process. Once the superintendent is appointed, the deliberative process no longer exists. The status of the documents may change. If there are individuals that want to review the survey results, you can go through the proper procedures of requesting it. But I wanted to clarify on behalf of the Board that the survey results were not unlawfully or unduly withheld from the public because at the time the request was made, this process was still in place.

Also there were a lot of comments today relating to personnel; as a reminder the Board or the administration cannot respond to personnel matters or speak on personnel matters but your comments are certainly noted.

=MOTION FOR EXECUTIVE SESSION:

Moved by Mrs. Ruiz, seconded by Mrs. Minneci, that the Board go into Executive Session at 9:05 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.

- Matters which would constitute an unwarranted invasion of individual privacy.
- Pending or anticipated litigation, contract negotiation and matters falling under the attorney-client privilege.

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

Action may be taken when the Board reconvenes in public session.

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

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED

The Board returned to public session at 10:05 p.m.

Afshan read the resolution approving indemnification of Board member.

Moved by Mrs. Brens-Watson, seconded by Mrs. Regis-Darby, that the following resolution be adopted:

**APPROVE RESOLUTION APPROVING INDEMNIFICATION OF BOARD MEMBER:**

**WHEREAS**, N.J.S.A. 18A:12-20 authorizes a board of education to defray all costs, including reasonable counsel fees and expenses, for defense of any civil actions commenced against a board member arising out of and in the course of the performance of his or her duties as a member of a board of education; and

**WHEREAS**, an ethic complaint has been filed with the School Ethics Commission (“SEC”) against board member Kalisha Morgan; and

**WHEREAS**, board member Kalisha Morgan has selected David Rubin, Esq. to defend against SEC Docket No. C10-21; and

**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the Board, approves the indemnification of board member Kalisha Morgan to be defended by David Rubin, Esq., at an hourly rate of \$300.00.

**DISCUSSION:**

Dr. Francis asked can you state who the plaintiff is on this matter? Mrs. Giner stated this was an ethics complaint filed by Ann Margaret Shannon against Dr. Kalisha Morgan.

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

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: Dr. Morgan, Mrs. Williams

**MOTION CARRIED**

Moved by Dr. Francis, seconded by Mr. O’Shea, to amend O-6 to read as “Approve Afshan Ajmiri Giner of Florio, Perucci, Steinhardt, Cappelli, Tipton & Taylor as our Board Attorney for the period of July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2022.”

**DISCUSSION:**

None

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

NAY: Mr. McDowell

ABSTAIN: None

**MOTION CARRIED**

Mr. McDowell stated just for clarifications, that vote was to amend O-6. I know we had to amend the motion. I will need to refer to our attorney.

Mrs. Giner stated the vote has already taken place; however, if you voted in the affirmative, you can certainly make a motion to reconsider that last amendment and you can vote to rescind that.

Mrs. Regis-Darby asked are we clear on what we are voting on? Mr. McDowell stated it is a little more confusing. We have to vote to rescind it.

Moved by Mr. McDowell, seconded by Mrs. Regis-Darby, that the legal services resolution be rescinded:

**DISCUSSION:**

None

AYE: Mrs. Brens-Watson, Mrs. Minneci, Dr. Morgan, Mr. O’Shea,  
Mrs. Regis-Darby, Mrs. Williams, Mr. McDowell

NAY: Mrs. Ruiz

ABSTAIN: Dr. Francis

**MOTION CARRIED**

Dr. Francis stated I read exactly what I wanted to amend. I don't see how it wasn't clear. We spoke about it in executive session. Mr. O'Shea stated you were supposed to read what was on the agenda. Dr. Francis stated no it was what I read the first time in regular session. Mr. McDowell stated it was rescinded by vote and now we are moving on. This will be done in two parts, the amendment to the motion and then the motion. Mrs. Giner stated that is correct.

Moved by Dr. Francis, seconded by Dr. Morgan, that the legal services resolution O-6 be amended to read "Approve Afshan Ajmmiri Giner, Esq. of the law firm of Florio, Perrucci, Steinhardt, Cappelli, Tipton & Taylor, as our Board Attorney of Record for the period July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2022."

**DISCUSSION:**

Mrs. Minneci stated we vote on this and then it goes back to the original resolution? Mr. McDowell stated no, we are amending the resolution title. Mrs. Ruiz stated and then we vote to accept it.

AYE: Mrs. Brens-Watson, Dr. Francis, Dr. Morgan, Mrs. Regis-Darby, Mrs. Ruiz

NAY: Mrs. Minneci, Mr. O'Shea, Mrs. Williams, Mr. McDowell

ABSTAIN: None

**MOTION CARRIED**

Moved by Dr. Francis, seconded by Dr. Morgan, that the following resolution be adopted:

**O-6. APPROVAL OF LEGAL SERVICES – BOARD ATTORNEY**

Approve Afshan Ajmiri Giner, Esq. of the law firm of Florio, Perrucci, Steinhardt, Cappelli, Tipton & Taylor as Board Attorney of Record, for the period of July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2022.

**DISCUSSION:**

None

AYE: Mrs. Brens-Watson, Dr. Francis, Mrs. Minneci, Dr. Morgan,  
Mrs. Regis-Darby, Mrs. Ruiz

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: Mr. O'Shea, Mrs. Williams, Mr. McDowell

**MOTION CARRIED**

MOTION TO ADJOURN:

There being no further business before the Board in public session it was moved by Mrs. Regis-Darby, seconded by Mrs. Ruiz, that the meeting be adjourned at 10:18 p.m.

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

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,

YOLANDA KOON  
BOARD SECRETARY

