

UNION TOWNSHIP BOARD OF EDUCATION
WORKSESSION MINUTES – JUNE 10, 2014

Meeting held at James M. Caulfield Administration Building, 2369 Morris Avenue, Union, New Jersey.

PRESENT AT ROLL CALL: Mr. David Arminio, Mr. Richard Galante; Vice President; Ms. Lois Jackson, and Mr. Vito Nufrio

ABSENT AT ROLL CALL: Dr. Guy Francis, Mr. Thomas Layden, Mrs. Susana Vitale, Mr. Angel Salcedo and Mr. Francis R. Perkins, President

Mr. Damato said that since there was not a quorum of the board present at the roll call, the meeting cannot be started at this time. He said that the meeting could be adjourned for another time tonight or on another date and time within the next seven (7) days. In the absence of Mr. Perkins, Board President, Mr. Galante asked for thoughts from the board members who were present. Mr. Arminio asked if issues could be discussed by the board without there being a quorum as a general committee meeting. Mr. Damato said that the board could have a committee meeting. Mr. Vieira asked if ARAMARK could give their presentation so that they would not have to attend another meeting. Mr. Damato said that he did not see why not. He said that this would not be an official meeting of the board because there is no quorum. Mr. Galante asked if the meeting could just be rescheduled. Mr. Damato said that he thought it would be best if there were one more member present so that the meeting could proceed. He said that if five members were present, it would be an officially constituted board of education and the meeting would be official and proper under those circumstances.

Mr. Damato said that Dr. Francis was present earlier at a committee meeting and did have a personal commitment that required him to leave for a little while. He said that Dr. Francis did say that he would return at 8 p.m. Mr. Damato suggested that the meeting be adjourned until 8 p.m. Mr. Nufrio asked if the possibility of starting the meeting at 8 p.m. comply with regulations. Mr. Damato said that it did. Mr. Galante asked if starting the meeting at 8 p.m. was the consensus of the board. Ms. Jackson left Dr. Francis a message to be sure that he was planning to return to the meeting.

Mr. Galante stated that since it was the consensus of the board to adjourn and reconvene at 8 p.m. Mr. Damato said that the meeting was adjourned.

PRESENT AT ROLL CALL: Mr. David Arminio, Dr. Guy Francis, Mr. Richard Galante, Vice President; Ms. Lois Jackson, Mr. Vito Nufrio

ABSENT AT ROLL CALL: Mr. Thomas Layden, Mr. Francis Perkins, President; Mr. Angel Salcedo and Mrs. Susana Vitale

Mr. Arminio led the board members and audience in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. Damato read the statement required under the "Open Public Meetings Act" a copy of which is on file in the office of the Secretary.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Mr. Galante said that the minutes would be approved at next week's meeting.

COMMUNICATION:

Mr. Galante said that all communication has been referred to the appropriate committees for consideration.

Presentation by Sarah Bridges from Aramark to discuss breakfast program and new child nutrition requirements for 2014-2015 school year – Mrs. Bridges thanked the board for their time. She distributed some materials to the board for their review and information. Mrs. Bridges stated that she wanted to review regulatory changes that Aramark is going through at the moment and some changes that will happen in the next school year. She said that she would also be discussing the Breakfast Program progress.

Mrs. Bridges said that Aramark and the district have been partners for 64 years and a lot of things have changed in the food service program during that period of time; not only the regulations that Aramark needs to abide by but also a shift of how food items are marketed to students. She said that Aramark is now looking to more of a "retail" feel, trying to give students what they like to see in a retail environment within the district. Mrs. Bridges said that in years gone by the "lunch lady" was someone from the community and service of food was done like it was done at home. She

said that the "lunch lady" now was still someone from the community but the food service is much more regulated and the servers have to abide by much stricter, tougher regulations not only to keep food looking good but also and most important, being safe.

Mrs. Bridges gave a little background information on some of the regulatory changes that Aramark has been going through. She said that the dietary guidelines of Americans was changed in 2010; since then the changes in the School Lunch Program have changed as well. Mrs. Bridges said that the purpose of the changes for the lunch program was to mimic the current dietary guidelines. She said that in 2012-2013 the Final Rule was put into effect and the changes will be phased in over a ten (10) year period. Mrs. Bridges said that at the end of the ten year period in 2022, the School Lunch sodium content restriction will be similar to a diet served in a health care facility. She said that these are very serious restrictions. Mrs. Bridges said that the Food Pyramid has evolved into My Plate and this transforms into My Plate at school. She said that currently what Aramark is serving is that half the grain items are whole grain rich at the high school and middle school levels and 100% are whole grain rich in the elementary school. Mrs. Bridges said that this has been going on for a little while and this will help Aramark in terms of the restriction that will apply in the upcoming school year; 100% whole grain rich foods will be served at all levels. She said that current menus are less than 10% total calories of saturated fat and zero trans fat per serving. Mrs. Bridges said that Aramark will only offer flavored milk in fat free or skim varieties while unflavored or white milk will be offered as skim or 1%.

Mrs. Bridges said that Aramark must abide by a minimum and maximum caloric guideline for each grade level. She said that there has been an increase in the amount of fruits and vegetables being offered and students must take at least ½ cup of fruit or vegetable for a meal to be claimed for reimbursement. Mrs. Bridges said that prior to 2012-2013, Aramark was able to offer the five components of the meal and the student could take any three of the five. She said that a big impact on the program is requiring the student to take a serving of fruit or vegetable.

Mrs. Bridges said that for 2014-2015 Target 1 Sodium Levels will be in effect and this requires that Aramark abide by the nutritional evaluation of all menus and all menus must meet the target goal. She said that 100% of the whole grains offered must be whole grain next year. Mrs. Bridges said that there are a lot of creative ways that vendors are coming out with to meet the requirements of 50% whole grain. She said that at breakfast, Aramark must also offer a cup of fruit and ½ cup of fruit must be taken by

the student in order for the meal to be a reimbursable meal. Mrs. Bridges said that this is a new change. She said that Smart Snack rules will also be in effect which will affect all competitive food rules and the goal of the Healthy Hunger Free Kids Act has been to improve overall child nutrition; to advance the nutrition quality of all foods and beverages sold and served in the school. Mrs. Bridges said that the Smart Snacks in School Rule focuses specifically on providing kids healthier foods the entire school day, not just served at breakfast and lunch. She said that the Rules oversight will extend to vending machines, a la carte foods sold in the cafeteria, snack bars in school stores and through fundraisers.

Mrs. Bridges said that these are national changes but the good thing is that New Jersey is ahead of the curve with these changes and they have their regulations in effect and many of them are already being practices in the State. She said that the district already meets the guidelines with regard to fat and sugar content. Mrs. Bridges said that all foods must meet these standards and anything that is served outside out of the normal breakfast and lunch has to be whole grain rich; less than 35% of calories from total fat; less than 10% calories from saturated fat; zero trans fat; less than 35% weight from total sugar; less than 230 mg of sodium for sides and less than 480 mg sodium for entrees; less than 200 calories for sides and less than 350 calories for entrees. She said that what Aramark has not been doing in New Jersey is having to restrict the sodium and the calories for snacks. Mrs. Bridges said that this is something that the district needs to adjust to moving forward. She said that French fries and chicken tender boats will have to be adjusted on how these types of items are sold; sizes, types and different products to meet the calorie.

Mrs. Bridges said that beverages will also be affected. She said that water and milk are "no limit" beverages; all juice must be 100% juice. Mrs. Bridges said that flavored and/or carbonated waters that are less than 10 calories for 8 ozs or up to 20 ozs that are less than 10 calories can be sold. She said that flavored and/or carbonated beverages must be less than 40 calories for 8 ozs or less than 40 calories for 20 ozs. Mrs. Bridges said that this will not be that big of a change from what Aramark is currently doing.

Mrs. Bridges said that to counteract some of the negative things that they have been hearing from students in terms of changing the food that they are used to; she said that whole grains are being offered at all levels and Aramark needs to get creative in terms of how foods are served, the type of promotions that are provided to students and looking at the opportunities that are available within the district to help promote the lunch program. Mrs. Bridges said that some of the things that have been done

are a Washington School BBQ and this is the third year that Union High School will have a BBQ lunch. She said that getting students out of the cafeteria, being outside and providing some new and different foods is always fun.

Mrs. Bridges said that Aramark runs student contests. She said that one of the things that was done this past school year to promote the Breakfast Program was that during the month of March, if a student came in for breakfast they received a ticket and at the end of March, there was a drawing held, the prize being a Nook Tablet.

Mrs. Bridges said that Aramark tries to make mealtime fun to promote participation. She said that there are great marketing themes for growth such as Cinco de Mayo; Mediterranean themes and the cafeteria tries to offer a different variety of food every month to get students excited and to beat menu fatigue.

Mrs. Bridges said that there is also a lot of food sampling done in the cafeterias during the school year. She said that this past year there was a Thanksgiving meal served at Jefferson School.

Mrs. Bridges said that Aramark tries to promote breakfast and some of the things that are being done to promote breakfast are introducing the reimbursable Smoothie Meal; the smoothies are able to count as the fruit and the milk component of the breakfast meal; along with a cheese stick or a muffin. She said that there are "Grab and Go" carts at Union High School and at both of the middle schools. Mrs. Bridges said that Aramark has seen some nice participation growth; she said that one of the programs focuses to have students eat breakfast and start their day off right; she said that this is heavily correlated with better test scores and better disciplinary behaviors.

Mrs. Bridges said that since the 2012-2013 school year when the Final Rule was initiated, there is about 58% of the student population participating in the National School Lunch Program. She said that this represents a 1% drop and she felt this was pretty good considering all of the regulations and changes to the meals that are served. Mrs. Bridges said that with the addition of the carts and all of the promotions there has been an increase of 4% in breakfast program participation. She said that 4% is equal to 300 meals per day. Mrs. Bridges said that those students who are eligible for free and reduced lunch are also eligible for that benefit for breakfast. She said that about 63% of the 300 students have free lunch benefits. Mrs. Bridges said that Aramark has been able to capture those

students and they are getting the message out that free and reduced lunch students are able to get a free or reduced cost breakfast. She said that since 2010 the number of students participating has risen from 6% to 10% of the population having breakfast at school.

Mrs. Bridges said that this upcoming school year some of the concerns and things to keep in mind when student feedback regarding accompaniments such as salad dressing and ketchup must now be part of the nutrient profile. She said that where Aramark is now able to have pumps of ketchup and barbeque sauce, it must now be regulated and it has to be part of the nutrient profile of the meal. Mrs. Bridges said that she has not quite figured out how this will be accomplished yet.

Mrs. Bridges said that with all of the changes such as having to have fruit at breakfast and the whole grain requirements, will naturally increase the cost of the operation and the cost of the operation are without additional funding from the State or the Federal government. She said that meal acceptability with whole grain requirements and sodium restrictions will continue to be an opportunity for Aramark and Aramark will have to be creative in order to accomplish this. Mrs. Bridges said that there will be an impact on Ala Carte items due to the new calorie, fat and sodium restrictions and she did not know what this would look like but Aramark has done well with the new restrictions in 2012 with only a 1% drop in lunch sales and Aramark will have to find innovative ways to prevent any further drop to the program. Mrs. Bridges said that Aramark's Approach Goals are to proactively address regulatory changes; build meal participation; continue to develop the breakfast program; optimize commodity utilization within the operations and standardize menus, recipes and ingredients. She said that New Jersey has not provided additional guidance on how to address some of the new Smart Snack regulations. Mrs. Bridges assumed that she would be getting that information during the summer before school starts in September.

Mrs. Bridges distributed additional information regarding Smart Snacks to the board members. She asked if any board members had questions regarding this presentation. Mr. Nufrio said that he realizing the district's obligation to address the needs of children with food allergies, is Aramark in anyway contemplating having a separate menu for children with food allergies in the event that a child forgets their lunch, the parent is not around and will be forced to sit in the cafeteria without eating lunch. Mrs. Bridges said that Aramark has been doing is not to exclude the student from the rest of the population. Mr. Nufrio said that mandates call for separation. Mrs. Bridges said that Aramark has Sun Butter based menus

and she tries to work 1:1 with students and the school nurse in terms of specific allergies. She said that it is a process and Aramark really has to look at the whole student population. Mrs. Bridges said that what is nice about the standardized menu and the training that is provided for Aramark employees is that nothing comes out without a recipe, with standardized ingredients or without direct portion control. She said that she is very confident in assuring parents and students about the content of each dish. Mrs. Bridges said that the food distributors that Aramark works with are regulated as well. She said that the regulated menus help the district in that situation.

Mr. Nufrio said that it was the obligation of the district to disseminate that information so that parents can be confident and understand that in the event a situation occurs, a nurse could in fact contact Mrs. Bridges or her assigned individuals to arrange for a special lunch for the student. Mrs. Bridges said that Aramark also has a POS system that can make special alerts if needed.

Mr. Arminio asked what a typical lunch would be in total calories. Mrs. Bridges said that lunch on average for the week has between 550 and 650 calories. She said as for a competitive food such as an ala carte entrée, that could be higher.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Mr. Tatum distributed a copy of the Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying Report that was prepared. He said that there were five incidents of bullying reported; four were founded under the "yes" column; one was under the "no" column and the total of non founded bullying was one. Mr. Tatum said that there will be a resolution on the agenda next week that the anti-bullying has been affirmed by the board.

Mr. Tatum said that he wanted to announce that next week, during the Superintendent's Report there will be a great deal of recognition of student programs and other activities that have occurred in the district throughout the course of the school year. He said that there is currently a list being compiled and he expects to celebrate the successes next week.

Mr. Tatum said that there will also be recognition of those individuals in the district who are retiring this year.

COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC ON *RESOLUTIONS ON THE AGENDA

None

EDUCATION/STUDENT DISCIPLINE COMMITTEE

Dr. Francis said that the committee met and he presented the agenda items.

DISCUSSION ITEM:

Seventh grade Honors Pilot Program – Mr. Tatum said that it was his understanding that there were some issues regarding a proposed middle school honors program that was being developed earlier in the school year. He said that Dr. Martin had determined that the program was going to move forward for the next school year but then re-thought the fact that there had not been enough input by the community and by administrative staff; so it fell by the way side. Mr. Tatum said that last week he did meet with the education committee and Dr. Lishak at which time a proposal was put on the table to try to keep the program alive for the next school year and try to get the curriculum together over the summer and develop a pilot program. Mr. Arminio said that there is already an Honors Math class in seventh grade and the new program will include Honors Science, Honors Social Studies and Honors Language Arts. He said that there will be one class of each subject at each middle school as a pilot program. Mr. Arminio said that the curriculum will be written over the summer and after the first quarter, there will be a call for community and administrative input on the success of the program.

Mr. Tatum said that it was also his understanding that the Gifted and Talented Program will not be affected in any way by the implementation of this Honors Program. He said that there are some districts that have both programs and some have phased out the Gifted and Talented Program and just gone with the accelerated program. Mr. Tatum said that this is one of the issues that down the road will have to be considered as to what programs are the most viable. He said that the district will have to revisit the whole idea of what gifted and talented actually means and how the district places students in those programs.

Mr. Arminio said that he heard that the paper work with the students has already been done and applications have already been filled out.

Mr. Nufrio said with any Honors Programs one of the crucial aspects of it is the teacher who is selected to teach the class. He asked if that will be by recommendation of the principal or by recommendation of the Superintendent or the Assistant Superintendent. Mr. Nufrio asked if it would be open to the faculty to apply to teach the Honors courses or will it simply be an assignment. Mr. Tatum said that he did not know if that piece has been totally ironed out at this time but in most cases the principal

would have a very strong input on the person that would teacher a course like that because they are the person who knows the teachers best. He said that teachers do have the opportunity to volunteer for any course work that they would like to do, however, the final discretion becomes that of the building principal and if there is any conflict, then central office gets involved.

Dr. Francis asked if the pilot program would be at both middle schools. Mr. Tatum said it would be. Dr. Francis asked if the Honors program would be at different grade levels. Mr. Arminio said that there have always been Honors classes in eighth and ninth grade. He said that next year will be the first time there will be Honors in seventh grade.

FISCAL AND PLANNING COMMITTEE

Ms. Jackson said that the committee had met and she presented the agenda items for consideration by the board next week.

OPERATIONS COMMITTEE

Mr. Arminio presented the operations committee agenda items.

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

O-12. The committee recommends and I so move that the board approve Annual Temporary Facility Approvals for the 2014-2015 school year in accordance with the information in the hands of each board member.

DISCUSSION:

None

AYE: Mr. Arminio, Dr. Francis, Ms. Jackson, Mr. Nufrio and Mr. Galante

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION WAS CARRIED

DISCUSSION ITEMS:

1. Request from Union Recreation Department for use of 54 passenger bus and one bus driver for the period June 30 through August 8, 2014 for summer camp program - Mr. Galante said that we have granted this request in the past in cooperation with the Union Recreation Department. Mr. Arminio said that he saw no reason why the board not continue this practice.

2. Request from Union Township Historical Society for use of parking lot and lavatories at Connecticut Farms School as well as request to supply school buses to transport re-enactors in connection with the re-enactment of Battle of Connecticut Farms – Mr. Arminio said that on October 18th there will be 200 re-enactors in front of Connecticut Farms School and Connecticut Farms Church re-enacting the Battle of Connecticut Farms where the battle took place on June 7, 1780. He said that the Chamber of Commerce was getting involved and the Township Committee has already given permission to close the road as well as supplying the police that will be needed. Mr. Arminio said that the Historical Society has already paid \$1200 for the re-enactors and is now asking that the Board of Education supply the buses on that day to transport the re-enactors from Springfield to Connecticut Farms because they will be doing on battle in the morning and at 1 p.m. the re-enactment of the Battle of Connecticut Farms will take place. He said that after this is completed, the buses will transport the re-enactors to Liberty Hall where the re-enactors will be camping for the night because they are doing another re-enactment on the next day in Elizabeth. Mr. Arminio said that the Historical Society will hopefully get money from the Chamber of Commerce to pay for the bus drivers and for the custodians to open up the bathrooms at Connecticut Farms School.

Mr. Galante asked if there would be resolutions on next week's agenda to reflect these two discussion items. Mr. Damato said that item number one is one of the things that is contemplated under the Interlocal Services Agreement and there really doesn't need to be a separate resolution for that item. He said that it was put on the agenda tonight because it is a large scale service that the board does with the Township and he wanted the board to be aware of it.

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

Mr. Nufrio said that the committee had met and he presented the agenda items to be considered for next week's agenda.

Mr. Arminio said that usually in the June meeting the board votes on the professional services contracts. Mr. Damato said that there would be a personnel committee meeting because he did not have time to review all of the information. Mr. Arminio asked if there was a certain date that this had to be done by; could it be done in July? Mr. Damato said that some of the professional services will be acted on at June meeting. He said that there were others that he did not know if they could be acted on in the June meeting. Mr. Damato said that in certain categories there were only a couple of proposals received but in other categories there were several

proposals; he said that the board needed to review all of the proposals. Mr. Arminio asked if the approvals had to be done in June. Mr. Damato said no unless that particular service was needed prior to the meeting in July. He said that the attorneys that submitted proposals are the same firms that have been appointed for the last several years and he was anticipating that those same firms will be appointed again.

Mr. Nufrio said that typically the selection of outside counsel whether it is labor attorneys or consultant status are done usually at the organization meeting. He asked if Union has ever done it that way. Mr. Damato said that it could be done that way except the district is so conditioned to being on a fiscal year, everything the district does pretty much renews on July 1st. He said that the January organization meeting has only been for the past few years. Mr. Damato said that when the organization meeting was held in April, only those resolutions that had to be voted on at that meeting were voted on but the consultants were never appointed until the June meeting.

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

P-34. ADOPT JOB DESCRIPTION – DIRECTOR OF HUMAN RESOURCES

That the board adopt Director of Human Resources Job Description in accordance with the information appended to these minutes.

DISCUSSION

None

AYE: Mr. Arminio, Dr. Francis, Ms. Jackson, Mr. Nufrio and Mr. Galante

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION WAS CARRIED

APPROVAL OF BILLS

The Bills will be approved at the regular meeting next week.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Mr. Nufrio asked about the progress in the collection of contributions for the school in Edison, New Jersey and whether there was an update of the amount. Mr. Tatum said that he thought there was an additional fundraiser that was being done in one of the elementary schools and as soon as he received the amount of the proceeds from that fundraiser he

would update the board. He said that he had a meeting with the elementary principals tomorrow and he would bring up that subject with them.

Mr. Arminio said that every year he tries to make sure that all of the retirees receive a note from the board thanking them for their service. Mr. Tatum said that he was taking care of that.

NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Arminio said that if the board was going to honor students and staff for achievements from the 2013-2014 school year, who was compiling the list. Mr. Tatum said that Ms. Ponce was working on that list. Mr. Arminio asked if he had additional names that he wanted to be put on the list should he send the names to her. Mr. Tatum said that he should. He said that there are certificates being prepared.

COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

Mr. Capodice distributed a memo which was prepared by Mr. Gallo, teacher from Union High School which he read into the minutes (copy of memo is attached hereto and made a part of these minutes).

Mr. Capodice said that Mr. Gallo could not be present at the meeting this evening and he asked that Mr. Capodice read the memo on his behalf. He said that Mr. Gallo has been employed in the district for a number of years and he guessed that Mr. Gallo was one of the most veteran teachers that Union has; he said that Mr. Gallo is very passionate about his program. Mr. Capodice encouraged the administration and the board to reach out to Mr. Gallo to have a conversation about this issue. He said that Mr. Gallo is very disheartened by the current chain of events. Mr. Capodice said that Mr. Gallo does have the supporting documents that he refers to in the memo and he would be happy to speak to the board and the administration concerning this matter.

Mr. Nufrio said that this was the first that he was hearing about the reduction of that type of instruction and from what he was hearing it began with the numbers of students who wanted to enroll in the class. He said that this was unfortunate because having been a former administrator of both an academic and a vocational school, he never understood why even the state took the direction it did several years ago about vocational education because a school district is supposed to meet the needs of all of its students and not every student will be a "college" success in the academic world and there is certainly a need for electronics more than ever. Mr. Nufrio said that Mr. Gallo indicated in his memo that there are

thousands of jobs waiting to be filled in this field. He urged Mr. Tatum to do whatever it takes to review and assess this matter because Union should not be reducing, if at all possible, any vocational education but looking to enhance it. Mr. Nufrio said that it would be sad for him to see, that the district focuses primarily on academics but any student who has the skills to succeed in that field, that is a success story.

Mr. Tatum said that tonight was the first time that he was hearing about this change also. He said that he does not remember any discussion about reduction in this part of the curriculum not even for budgetary concerns.

Mr. Capodice said that he was kind of disappointed that Mr. Gallo could not be present in person but he is very passionate about what he does. He said that from Mr. Gallo it is obvious that there have been many success stories about students who came out of his program. Mr. Capodice said that Mr. Gallo was upset because his program is taking a "considerable hit" but also about how he found out about the change. He felt that anyone could understand the position that Mr. Gallo is in.

Mr. Tatum suggested that a meeting be set up with Mr. Gallo and Mr. Capodice to discuss this issue.

Mr. Arminio said that this was the first time that he was hearing about this reduction but he would hope when Mr. Gallo used the word "oversight" as part of the listing of classes for eighth graders going into ninth grade; he said that oversights can be rectified. He did not know how much time remained to make schedules for the next school year but students could be given an opportunity. Mr. Arminio said that at the high school when courses are not listed in the program, students would not know that the course is available. He hoped that Mr. Tatum could find this out during his investigation.

Mr. Nufrio asked Mr. Vieira since this may have been a budgetary reason, was he aware of these reductions. Mr. Vieira said that he was not. Mr. Nufrio asked if it would be safe to say that the reductions were not due to budgetary reasons. Mr. Vieira said that he would say the reductions are not due to budgetary reasons. He said that these reductions were never discussed. Ms. Hart said that she did believe that the reductions were due to budgetary reasons because Mr. Gallo is taking over Mr. Cannavo's "woods" classes because Mr. Cannavo is retiring. She said that this would eliminate the necessity of hiring a replacement for Mr. Cannavo. Mr. Capodice said that Ms. Hart was not Mr. Gallo's Supervisor and he does not

understand how that conclusion could be drawn and did Mr. Gallo even know that was the plan right now. Ms. Hart said that she did not know that for sure. Mr. Capodice said that he did not know if Mr. Gallo was aware that he was going to be teaching wood shop next year. Mr. Galante said that Mr. Tatum has said that he will be sitting down to get to the bottom of this.

Mrs. Everett said that she was the parent of one of the students listed in Mr. Gallo's memo. She said that her son just completed his Eagle Scout project at Connecticut Farms Church where he renovated Westminster Hall. Mrs. Everett said that as a result of the classes her son took with Mr. Gallo, her son was able to replace a speaker system under the supervision of a certified electrician himself. She said that she can honestly say that her son did learn something in these classes. Mrs. Everett said that a member of the staff at Union High School told her that Dr. Lishak made the decision to eliminate the electronics classes due to low enrollment and that Mr. Gallo was being reassigned to another class. She said that she asked if Mr. Gallo was going to be dismissed. Mrs. Everett said that her son was the one who told her, one month ago, that the electronics classes had been cancelled. She said that she asked her son if Mr. Gallo lost his job and her son replied that he did not but that Mr. Gallo was being sent to teach another class. Mrs. Everett said that if the students are aware of this fact, she was pretty sure that Mr. Gallo was also aware of this. She said that it was her son who went to Mr. Gallo to report things and asked what was going on. Mrs. Everett said that she did not say that there wasn't a problem with low enrollment in electronics; she said that her daughter was in the eighth grade and she was very interested in taking house wiring in the ninth grade and chose it as one of her electives. She said that her son, who plans to become an engineer at the Honors College at NJIT (she has worked very hard to see that her son will be accepted there) needed College Electronics II for his enrollment. Mrs. Everett said to take away her son's opportunity to get into an honors college by taking a class that will benefit him, is an atrocity. She said that for a decision to have been made and everyone who is sitting around the table tonight not know about it but she is a parent and she had known for over a month. Mrs. Everett said that if Dr. Lishak did or did not make this decision, this is a decision that should have been brought to the board and parents should have been notified. Mr. Galante said that unfortunately Dr. Lishak is not present at the meeting tonight. He said that he appreciated the concern but Mr. Tatum will get to the bottom of it and that is all that can be said on the matter right now.

Mrs. Everett said that if this is a mistake will the board put the electronics classes on the students' schedules. She said that if the courses were not able to be offered for the next school year and students were told that would have been okay. Mrs. Everett said that perhaps several of the courses could be combined into one class period with the students working on separate projects depending on which course they are taking. She said that her son was one of the students that went to the Panasonic Competition and he would never have gotten that opportunity had he not been in Mr. Gallo's class. Mrs. Everett said that her son is also taking AP Physics and it is because of the lab writing in Mr. Gallo's class that he is able to write labs for the AP Physics class. She said that this is not only about "trade" school, it is about education as a whole. Mr. Galante said that he can understand Mrs. Everett's concern, the board would be looking into it and come up with a reasonable answer. He said that parents would hear, reasonably soon, what the results will be.

Mrs. Monge said that she had written something based upon information which she got at Kawameeh Middle School last week and it is not edited to what Mr. Arminio said about the Honor's classes being started in September.

I am at this meeting to express my disappointment and her son's disappointment with the decision that was made to cancel honor's classes at the middle school. About two months ago my son came home with applications for language arts, math, science and social studies honor's classes. His teachers personally gave him the applications and strongly encouraged him to apply for the honors classes because they felt he excelled in the subjects. My son came home very excited that he was given this opportunity. My husband and I were exstic and proud. He filled out his applications right away and returned them to his teachers. About a week ago I called the school to inquire about the status of the applications my son had filled out for the honors classes in addition to the Pre-Algebra test that he had recently taken that would qualify him for Pre-Algebra or advanced math. I was told that the honors classes were no longer being offered. When I asked why, I was told that I should refer my questions to the board of education. It is inconceivable to me that our children were made to falsely believe that they were being given the opportunity to enroll in honors classes. It is yet another responsible disappointing decision and frankly it sets a very bad example for our

children about the people who are responsible for making decisions about their education.

Mrs. Monge said that she was elated to hear that the honors classes have been restored. She said that parents want classes to promote a challenging educational environment for their children and to remove these classes punishes her son and other students and hurts their ability to strive for excellence and her ability to compete against their peers in other school districts. Mrs. Monge said that this piggybacks with what Mrs. Everett said; she said that the board had no idea how wonderful it was that the district was going ahead with the honors classes next year.

Mrs. Monge said that Mr. Tatum had commented on the possibility of eliminating the Gifted and Talented classes. Mr. Tatum said that would be down the road. Mrs. Monge said that she had a son who was in Gifted and Talented and one who was not. She said that the idea of possibly eliminating the program is not good. Mrs. Monge said that there may be students that qualify for honors classes and not for Gifted and Talented classes and the reality that the students who do not get into Gifted and Talented due to their NJASK score or they were not able to get a teacher recommendation, does not mean that they cannot excel in an honors class.

Mrs. Monge asked if Mr. Arminio knew what the criteria was for the honors classes. Mr. Arminio said that the students already filled out the applications. Mrs. Monge said that the criteria was not on the application forms. Mr. Arminio said he did not know. Mrs. Galante, the Supervisor of Social Studies and Business, said that when the applications were sent out, it was basically just an application stating asking for parental permission to allow staff to look at their children to put them into the program. She said that the honors criteria was not actually listed on the approval. Mrs. Galante said that without the permission slip, the district does not go any further. She said that the criteria, basically, is the honors criteria that is stated on the website. Mrs. Galante said that now with the board approving the pilot program, what the supervisors will do is review all of the permission slips and return the slips to the sixth grade teachers. She said that the teachers will give her recommendations, test scores, current student grades and make recommendations in an expeditious manner since it is so late in the year so that schedules can be made. Mrs. Galante said that because this is a pilot program, if there will only be one section or class in each middle school and there too many students for one class, the students will be chosen by lottery to fill the case because it is a pilot program. She said that it was discussed to possibly run two sections if enough students qualify but she was not sure of that at this time. Mrs.

Galante said that sixth graders are very young and sometimes maturity and emotions come into the picture and there is a very broad picture that the supervisors have to look at to see if students can handle the extra work of an honors class; that is where teacher recommendations come in. Mrs. Monge asked where she could find the criteria or was that something that was still being developed. Mrs. Galante said that there is an honors criteria that has been established for honors classes and it is the same for every grade level. Mr. Tatum thought that the criteria was listed in the student handbook. Mrs. Galante said that if Mrs. Monge could not find it in the handbook, she could call her office tomorrow and she would e-mail it to her. She said that the NJASK scores as well as student grades (usually students must be straight "A" students in a regular class) together with teacher recommendation.

Mr. Arminio said that there has always been eighth grade honors classes; there have never been seventh grade honors classes. Mrs. Monge said that the students were given the applications and they got excited; then she was told that the classes were not going to be offered.

Ms. DeRosa said that she was also ecstatic that the honors program is going to be run in the seventh grade next year. She said that since the students already received their courses for next year, when will the decision be made as to what children will be placed in the honors classes. Mr. Tatum said that throughout the month of July there will be scheduling done. He said he expected a reasonable time line would be that sometime in August, schedule changes would be made for full implementation in September. Mr. Tatum said that the number of students that this will impact will not be a huge number.

Mr. Nufrio said that the comment that he has often conveyed is that the board is not involved in the everyday machinations that go on with the district's staff. It is the job of the supervisors, the administrators and ultimately the Superintendent. Mr. Nufrio said that the board can only respond when they find out. He said that the issue of eliminating the electronics classes was not discussed in the Education Committee nor was it ever discussed with the board as a whole. Mr. Nufrio said that the board would be micro-managing if they tried to be involved in every decision, every day. He said that it would be a violation as a board member to actually do that. Mr. Nufrio said that the board responds to what is recommended, proposed or possibly submitted and then the board says "yes" or "no".

Mrs. Everett said that she did not believe that any persons in this room sat together and made that decision. She said that when in February students are given choices of courses and they are told to make a schedule and then after the schedule is made and they are excited about what they are going to be doing, the district turns around and says "no you can't have that class but you can have this class." Mrs. Everett said that she did not want her son to be in a "filler" elective course and she wanted him to take something substantial that will benefit him. She said that if the only choice her son has is a "filler" course, she will opt to have him have a free period. Mrs. Everett said that whatever took place was a poor decision, it was not carefully thought out and for the board members to not have been aware; everyone in the appropriate chain of command should have gone to the appropriate next level to do whatever needed to be done and then let come back to the board to discuss. She said that fact that was not done to her was a violation of the students' rights in the classroom because they are the ones that are hurt. Mrs. Everett said that she was an ardent fan of Mr. Gallo and an ardent fan of Union Township Public Schools. She said that her children have been in Union Schools since kindergarten. Mrs. Everett said that she feels that her son has been "screwed over" by the board of education. She said that she has spent the last month trying to figure out how to make it better. Mrs. Everett said that the only thing that she can suggest as the parent of child that has benefited from the education in Mr. Gallo's class is that the board speak to Mr. Gallo, find out what happened and give the students back their schedules.

Mrs. Lipstein asked how many students would be in each honors class in seventh grade. She asked how many students attended Kawameeh and how many students attended Burnet. Mr. Tatum said that there were approximately 700 students at Kawameeh and approximately 1100 at Burnet. Mrs. Lipstein said that she wanted to point out the discrepancy in the enrollment in the schools and to say that there will be one class at each middle school does put the Burnet students at a bit of a disadvantage because it is a larger population. She suggested that the district take a look at the numbers and think about possibly doing two classes at Burnet. Mr. Tatum said that was a fair statement to make and he said that he would take it under advisement as the district is looking at the program. He said that it was not the goal of the district to slight any student.

Mr. Tatum said that he wanted to address one concern that Mrs. Monge brought regarding the Gifted and Talented program. He said that just for the record, there are absolutely no plans to get rid of the Gifted and Talented program. Mr. Tatum said that his statement earlier was that in some districts the accelerated program has replaced the Gifted and

Talented program, but Union is nowhere near doing that. He said that the criteria for Gifted and Talented has changed drastically over the years. Mr. Tatum said the district may be bypassing many gifted and talented students but unfortunately they do not meet the criteria. Mr. Tatum said that there may be an accelerated program and a Gifted and Talented program running simultaneously. He said that this pilot program will act as a foundation and depending on the number of students that meet the criteria, the district may have to rethink how many classes will be established.

Mr. Nufrio said that staffing is not a problem because the district will utilize existing staff members. He said that there are many teachers that can teach both the honors and regular sections of a subject.

Ms. Ciampi asked if vendors that are used in the district have to be approved. Mr. Vieira said that in order for the district to do business with a vendor they must have a BRC (Business Registration Certificate) and they must provide a W-9 which is their tax information. Ms. Ciampi asked if they have to be approved by the board and is there a list of vendors that are approved to do business with the board. Mr. Vieira said that if the district is purchasing from a State Contract vendor, those must be approved by the board and the board also approves any purchases for copyrighted material. Ms. Ciampi asked if local businesses have been approved as vendors or can the board just do business with anybody. Mr. Vieira said as long as the vendor is qualified they can do business with the district. Mr. Damato said that vendors either bid on material or submit quotes and based upon the lowest quote or bid, the vendor is chosen. Mr. Vieira said that the vendors have to comply with the purchasing laws of the State. He said that a vendor must be willing to accept a purchase order from the district.

Ms. Ciampi commended Mr. Gallo for his many years of service to the district and for going to bat for his students.

Ms. Ciampi said that she was disheartened that there have been so many changes in such a short period of time; that cuts are being made and people are unaware of them. She said that it concerns her because the business that the board of education is in is to teach children. Ms. Ciampi said that it seems to be getting worse instead of better as far as these issues are going. She said that years ago, issues were discussed at the table by the board before something occurred and parents were aware of changes. Ms. Ciampi said she felt that things were being done behind people's backs.

MOTION FOR EXECUTIVE SESSION

I move that the Board go into Executive Session to discuss personnel and litigation matters without the presence of the public in accordance with the provisions of *N.J.S.A. 10:4-2b*. The Board will disclose the discussion conducted during the executive session, with notice to the public, when the disclosure will not result in unwarranted invasion of individual privacy or prejudice to the best interests of the Board of Education and provided that such disclosure does not violate federal, state or local statutes and does not fall within the attorney/client privilege.

AYE: Mr. Arminio, Dr. Francis, Ms. Jackson, Mr. Nufrio and
Mr. Galante
NAY: None
ABSTAIN: None

The board returned to public session.

There being no further business before the board, it was moved by Mr. Arminio, seconded by Mr. Nufrio that the meeting be adjourned.

Respectfully submitted

**JAMES J. DAMATO
BOARD SECRETARY**