

TOWNSHIP OF UNION BOARD OF EDUCATION
WORKSESSION MINUTES – MAY 13, 2025

NOTICE OF MEETING:

TO ALL BOARD OF EDUCATION MEMBERS:

The worksession meeting of the Board of Education of the Township of Union was held on Tuesday, May 13, 2025 at 7:00 p.m. at the Administration Building, 2369 Morris Avenue, Union, New Jersey pursuant to the notice sent to each member. Action was taken.

Ms. Carbonell called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

PRESENT AT ROLL CALL:

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

ABSENT AT ROLL CALL:

Mrs. Guida Faria

ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT:

Dr. Gerald Benaquista, Ms. Marissa McKenzie, Dr. Jose Rodriguez, Mrs. Yolanda Koon

ALSO PRESENT:

Mr. Christopher Buggy, Esq.

Mr. Nasta led the Board in the Pledge of Allegiance and read the district's mission statement.

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

Approval of Minutes:

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

Communications:

Communications are part of personnel and operations.

Comments from Public (on resolutions in **BOLD** and ALL MATTERS):

Board President Carbonell read the following statement:

Good evening, everyone. I'd like to take a moment to thank you all for being here today. As we begin the public comment portion of this meeting, I want to remind

everyone that we value your input and appreciate your time and effort in sharing your thoughts and concerns.

As Mrs. Koon stated previously, I ask that all comments be respectful and constructive, and that we refrain from calling out, yelling, and disrespectful language.

Each speaker will be given three minutes to address the board. Please remember that while we are eager to hear your perspectives, we may be unable to engage in back-and-forth dialogue during this portion of the meeting. However, your comments will be carefully reviewed and taken into consideration by the board, and if feasible, the Superintendent or designee, will respond to questions in real time or provide a response at a later time.

With that said, I invite our first speaker to approach. Please state your name and address.

Christine Zurka informed the Board that she was disappointed that the district did not reach an agreement with the UTEA. She has been a paraprofessional for 20 years and she is assigned to a student that is not potty trained and she needs to change her diaper 6-7 times. The \$800 stipend does not make up for the stress. She asked the Board to spend a day in her classroom so they can appreciate what she does.

Ann Margaret Shannon – teacher appreciation week, nurses’ day, ESP and Administrative Assistant Days – she is grateful for all employees. She went through a list of achievements of students and accomplishments of paraprofessionals and teachers. She indicated that UTEA is a group of above average people who deserve above average wage increases.

Virgina Jeffries – she has concerns regarding the following agenda items: F-15, 25, 26, 27, 28, 30, 31a/b, 33, 35, 37, 38 and 56. She indicated that if you break down the dollar amount per students, each agenda item only accommodates 1 to 7 students. Mrs. Carbonella advised Mrs. Jeffries that these agenda items are specific to certain students.

Superintendent’s Report:

Superintendent Report and presentations will be next week.

Education/Student Discipline Committee Resolutions:

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

E-1. SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT OF HIB

Superintendent’s Report of Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying (HIB) for the period April 30, 2025 to May 13, 2025, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes (*no vote required; for reporting purposes only*).

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

Affirm the Superintendent’s determination of Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying (HIB) for the periods April 8, 2025 to April 29, 2025, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

Ms. Santana stepped out of the meeting prior to vote.

DISCUSSION:

None

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

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED

Fiscal and Planning Committee Resolutions:

Mr. McDowell indicated that F-59 needs to be discussed in executive session prior to the Board voting on it.

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

F-7. APPROVE DISTRICTWIDE STUDENT FIELD TRIPS

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-58. APPROVE PROPOSAL FOR DEMOGRAPHIC SERVICES – STATISTICAL FORECASTING

Approve proposal from Statistical Forecasting LLC to perform demographic services for the Township of Union Public Schools at a cost of \$14,300.00, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

F-59. *Agenda item to be discussed in executive session – Spiezle Architectural Group.***DISCUSSION:**

Dr. Benaquista advised the Board that the district will be preparing a 5-year facility plan and the demographic study will be used for that purpose.

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

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED

Operations/Technology Committee Resolutions:

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

O-4. APPROVE SHARED SERVICES AGREEMENT – TOWNSHIP OF UNION

Approve Shared Services Agreement between the Township of Union and the district for collection, haulage and solid waste disposal through Regional Industry Services through February 2031, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

DISCUSSION:

None

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

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED

Personnel Committee Resolutions:

Personnel items will be voted on next week.

Policy Committee:

Mrs. Minneci presented the policies and regulations to the Board.

Board members had discussion concerning the policies and regulations. Policy 2365 – should be sent to parents and stakeholders once approved. Policy 5111 to be tabled until next week's meeting to review if either "guardian" should be added back into policy or if the definition of "parent" be added to the policy. Policy 9163 – required by NJIAA. Regulation 5516 – certain children need to have their devices due to their 504 or IEP. Ms. Carbonell asked the policy committee to look into this. Mr. Buggy indicated that Policy 5516 reflects exemption for IEPs.

Upon recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools and the Policy Committee, the following policies were moved by Mrs. Minneci, seconded by Mrs. Scott-Hayden, for **FIRST READING**:

POL-1. POLICY 2365 – ACCEPTABLE USE OF GENERATIVE ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (NEW)

Approve Policy 2365-Acceptable Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

POL-2. *Agenda item tabled until next board meeting – Policy 5111-Eligibility of Resident/Nonresident Students.*

POL-3. POLICY 5533 – STUDENT SMOKING (M)

Approve Policy 5533 – Student Smoking, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

POL-4. POLICY 5701 – ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Approve Policy 5701-Academic Integrity, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

POL-5. POLICY 9163 – SPECTATOR CODE OF CONDUCT FOR INTERSCHOLASTIC EVENTS (M) (NEW)

Approve Policy 9163-Spectator Code of Conduct for Interscholastic Events, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

REG-1. REGULATION 5516 – USE OF ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION DEVICES (NEW)

Approve Regulation 5516-Use of Electronic Communication Devices, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

REG-2. REGULATION 7441 – ELECTRONIC SURVEILLANCE IN SCHOOL BUILDINGS AND ON SCHOOL GROUNDS (M)

Approve Regulation 7441-Electronic Surveillance in School Buildings and on School Grounds, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

REG-3. REGULATION 9320 – COOPERATION WITH LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES (M)

Approve Regulation 9320-Cooperation With Law Enforcement Agencies, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

DISCUSSION:

None

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

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED

Residency Committee Resolutions:

Mrs. Minneci advised the Board that she will discuss residency in executive session.

Approval of Bills:

Bills will be approved a next week's meeting.

Unfinished Business:

None

New Business:

None

MOTION FOR EXECUTIVE SESSION:

Moved by Ms. Santana, seconded by Mrs. Minneci, that the Board go into Executive Session at 7:42 p.m. to discuss the following subject matters without the presence of the public in accordance with the provisions of N.J.S.A. 10:4-12b: personnel, legal update, student matters.

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

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

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

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED

The Board returned to public session at 10:13 p.m.

MOTION TO RETURN TO PUBLIC SESSION:

There being no further business before the Board it was moved by Ms. Santana, seconded by Mr. Nasta, that the Board return to public session at 10:13 p.m.

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

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED

RETURN TO PUBLIC:

Upon recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the following resolution was moved by Mr. McDowell, seconded by Ms. Santana, for adoption:

F-59. APPROVE PROPOSAL FOR PROFESSIONAL SERVICES – SPIEZLE ARCHITECTURAL GROUP

Approve proposal for professional services from Spiezle Architectural Group, Inc. to support the design and the implementation of services for various projects, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

DISCUSSION:

None

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

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED

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

E-11. APPROVE LONG-TERM SUSPENSION AND HOME INSTRUCTION

Approve to continue long-term suspension and home instruction for the following students: (a) #291068, (b) #266593, and (c) #266641.

DISCUSSION:

None

AYE: Mr. Cohan, Mr. McDowell, Mrs. Minneci, Mr. Nasta
Mrs. Scott-Hayden, Ms. Santana, Ms. Carbonell

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: Mrs. Conteh-Mackey

MOTION CARRIED

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

E-12. APPROVE REINSTATEMENT OF STUDENTS

Approve reinstatement of the following students: (a) #311079, (b) #250542, (c) #286048, (d) #280579, (e) #278202 (f) #290275, effective May 21, 2025.

DISCUSSION:

None

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

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: Mrs. Conteh-Mackey, Mr. McDowell

MOTION CARRIED

MOTION TO ADJOURN:

There being no further business before the Board in public session it was moved by Mr. Cohan, seconded by Mr. Nasta, that the meeting be adjourned at 10:19 p.m.

AYE: Mr. Cohan, Mrs. Conteh-Mackey, Mr. McDowell,

Mrs. Minneci, Mr. Nasta, Mrs. Scott-Hayden, Ms. Santana, Ms. Carbonell

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,

Yolanda Koon

YOLANDA KOON
BOARD SECRETARY

