

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 12, 2026 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.

Mrs. Scott-Hayden called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

PRESENT AT ROLL CALL:

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

ABSENT AT ROLL CALL:

Mrs. Elsie Conteh-Mackey, Mrs. Guida Faria

ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT:

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

ALSO PRESENT:

Mr. Lester Taylor, Esq.

Mr. McDowell 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 meeting.

Communications:

Communications are part of Personnel and Operations.

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

Mrs. Scott-Hayden - thanked everyone for attending tonight's meeting and that the Board values their input and appreciates their time. She reminded the audience that all comments are to be respectful and constructive, and to refrain from calling out and yelling. The Board is unable to engage in back-and-forth dialogue; however, your comments will be reviewed and considered, and if feasible, the Superintendent or designee will provide a response at a later date.

Susan Lipstein: read a statement to the Board concerning the importance of librarians; teachers cannot be responsible for teaching library skills; and asked the community to send letters

to the three State Legislators, the State Board of Education and the State Commissioner of Education and ask them to save our libraries and librarians. Mrs. Lipstein indicated that she would be sending the testimony of the NJASL to the Board members (statement attached to minutes).

Mary Ellen Patricco: spoke about the unified elementary instructional educational schedule. She indicated that we need to work together as a committee to work on this.

Ann Margaret Shannon: spoke about UTEA and the Superintendent and how it took until April 30th for approval of the MOA; cutting of positions and how teachers are to absorb vacancies. She indicated change is necessary.

Abdullah Muhammed: 5th grade student – spoke about the importance of special area classes (art, chorus, music) and how some students are happier in those classes and they help in social/emotion areas and to communicate. He also spoke about how children need libraries and librarians; they help children grow up to be healthy young adults.

Anisah Haqq: spoke about how the Board should have acknowledged the students who spoke at the last meeting. She also indicated that budgeting should not include teachers and students.

Natercia Lopes: this should be about the kids, not politics and if schools work, everything else works. She indicated that the district paid all that money for HCES and it is still not working. Need to strive for something better

Virginia Jeffries: spoke about the contracts under fiscal should not be open ended and that there should be a cap. She also claimed that the April 30, 2026 meeting violated OPMA because the Board terminated the second opportunity for the community to speak.

Navjot Kair: spoke on the need for conversation on school zoning and elimination of teachers. She indicated all these changes in the district will cause students not to be as successful.

Superintendent's Report:

Superintendent's Report will be presented at next week's meeting.

Education/Student Discipline Committee Resolutions:

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

E-1. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT OF HIB

Superintendent's Report of Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying (HIB) for the period May 1, 2026 to May 12, 2026, 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 15, 2026 to April 30, 2026, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

E-2. APPROVE CONTINUATION OF SUSPENSION AND HOME INSTRUCTION

Approve continuation of suspension and home instruction for students #266543, #285026, #285024 and #316008 from the general education program.

All other resolutions will be presented and voted on at the next Board meeting.

DISCUSSION:

None

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

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. Cohan, seconded by Ms. Santana, 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-44. APPROVE BEATS BY J – SPECIAL SERVICES CBI EVENT

Approve Jalen Bryan Taylor, Beats By J, to donate disc jockey services during the Special Services CBI event (picnic at Rabkin Park) scheduled for May 14, 2026 (rain date May 19, 2026), at no cost to the district.

All other resolutions will be presented and voted on at the next Board meeting.

DISCUSSION:

None

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

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED

Operations/Technology Committee Resolutions:

No resolutions are being approved this evening; resolutions will be presented and voted on at the next Board meeting.

Personnel Committee Resolutions:

No resolutions are being approved this evening; resolutions will be presented and voted on at the next Board meeting.

Residency Committee Resolutions:

Mrs. Minneci presented the following for informational purposes only:

For informational purposes only (no vote required): The following totals are as of the April 30, 2026 Board meeting (2025-2026 school year):

	Total	Elementary	Middle School	High School
Students Removed:	0	0	0	0
Students Transferred	19	8	3	8

Approval of Bills:

The bills will be approved at next week’s meeting.

Unfinished Business:

Ms. Santana – attended the last UHS PTA meeting. It was Cathy Magee’s last PTA meeting at UHS. She has done a lot. In baseball, Union beat Scotch Plains and they will be playing Westfield next. Senior night is Saturday. She also attended and enjoyed the Hall of Fame event.

Mr. McDowell – attended the Hall of Fame event and it was a great and enjoyable event. All should be so proud of Union. He indicated that all who were involved did a great job putting the event together.

Mrs. Scott-Hayden – thanked Mr. McDowell for bringing back the Hall of Fame. Mr. McDowell indicated that he spoke with Dr. Benaquista about it and he brought it back.

Mrs. Minneci – Hall of Fame was an amazing event. All were so proud of being from Union. She indicated she also attended Tomorrow’s Teachers yesterday and today she attended the Climate Literacy Grant event which toured the areas that will be improved from the grant.

New Business:

Mr. Nasta – Senior Awards will be Monday.

Ms. Carbonell – acknowledged and thanked the student who spoke tonight.

MOTION FOR EXECUTIVE SESSION:

Moved by Mr. Cohan, seconded by Mr. Nasta, that the Board go into Executive Session at 7:37 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: legal update; personnel

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

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

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

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED

The Board returned to public session at 8:48 p.m.

MOTION TO RETURN TO PUBLIC SESSION:

There being no further business before the Board, it was moved by Mr. Cohan, seconded by Ms. Santana, that the Board return to public session at 8:48 p.m.

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

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED

MOTION TO ADJOURN:

There being no further business before the Board in public session it was moved by Mr. Cohan, seconded by Mrs. Minneci, that the meeting be adjourned at 8:50 p.m.

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

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,

Yolanda Koon

YOLANDA KOON
BOARD SECRETARY

