

TOWNSHIP OF UNION BOARD OF EDUCATION  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES – September 21, 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, September 21, 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.

Mr. McDowell called the meeting to order at 7:07 p.m.

PRESENT AT ROLL CALL:

Mrs. Yocasta Brens-Watson, Dr. Guy Francis, Mr. Ronnie McDowell, Dr. Kalisha Morgan, Mrs. Kim Ruiz, Mrs. Mary Lynn Williams

ABSENT AT ROLL CALL:

Mrs. Nancy Minneci, Mrs. Regis-Darby, Mr. John O’Shea

ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT:

Dr. Scott Taylor, Mrs. Yolanda Koon, Mrs. Sandra Paul, Mr. Craig Wojcik

ALSO PRESENT:

Mr. Lester Taylor, 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. Ruiz read the district’s mission statement.

MOTION FOR EXECUTIVE SESSION:

Moved by Mrs. Ruiz, seconded by Mrs. Brens-Watson, that the Board go into Executive Session at 7:10 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 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.

AYE: Mrs. Brens-Watson, Dr. Francis, Dr. Morgan, Mrs. Ruiz, Mrs. Williams, Mr. McDowell

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED

The Board returned to public session at 8:09 p.m.

COMMENTS FROM PUBLIC ON RESOLUTIONS:

None

Approval of Minutes:

Moved by Mrs. Ruiz, seconded by Dr. Morgan, that the following minutes be adopted:  
(a) July 20, 2021 – regular meeting; (b) July 20, 2021 – executive session

DISCUSSION:

None

AYE: Mrs. Brens-Watson, Dr. Francis, Dr. Morgan, Mrs. Ruiz, Mrs. Williams, Mr. McDowell

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: Mrs. Williams (#2)

MOTION CARRIED

Communications:

LETTER FROM TOWNSHIP OF UNION – RECREATION DEPARTMENT

Letter from Township of Union Recreation Department requesting the use of the Jefferson School parking lot on Saturday October 23, 2021 from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. (rain dated Sunday, October 24, 2021) for the Township’s Trunk or Treat event.

LETTER OF RETIREMENT – BERARDINELLI

Letter of resignation, for the purpose of retirement, from Silvano Berardinelli, custodian-Battle Hill Elementary School, effective January 1, 2022.

LETTER OF RESIGNATION – DiPAOLO

Letter of resignation from Michael DiPaolo, science teacher-Union High School, effective June 30, 2022.

LETTER OF RESIGNATION – DuBOSE

Letter of resignation from Michael D. DuBose, school counselor-Battle Hill Elementary School, effective October 18, 2021.

LETTER OF RESIGNATION – DELLANNO

Letter of resignation from Stephanie Dellanno, special services paraprofessional-Kawameeh Middle School, effective September 24, 2021.

LETTER OF RESIGNATION – KRATZ

Letter of resignation from Robyn Kratz, teacher-Hannah Caldwell Elementary School, effective September 1, 2021.

LETTER OF RESIGNATION – SAFRANEK

Letter of resignation from Kimberlee J. Safranek, French teacher-Union High School, effective October 22, 2021.

**LETTER OF RETIREMENT - ROTUNDA**

Letter of resignation, for purposes of retirement, from Carol Rotunda, math teacher-Kawameeh Middle School, effective January 1, 2022.

**REQUEST FOR LEAVE – BAJWA**

Request for FMLA/NJFLA leave (concurrently) from Misbah Bajwa, English teacher-Union High School, September 1, 2021-December 8, 2021.

**REQUEST FOR LEAVE – CORSENTINO**

Request for paid medical leave from MaryAnne Corsentino, math teacher-Burnet Middle School, September 1, 2021-October 15, 2021.

**REQUEST FOR LEAVE – DiGIORGIO**

Request for unpaid FMLA leave from Ann Marie DiGiorgio, special services paraprofessional-Hannah Caldwell Elementary School, September 1, 2021-October 25, 2021.

**REQUEST FOR EXTENSION OF LEAVE – WOJCIK**

Request for extension of paid medical leave from Karen Wojcik, 10-month secretary-Department of Special Services, through October 15, 2021.

**REQUEST FOR INTERMITTENT LEAVE – LAU-GARCIA**

Request for intermittent FMLA/NJFLA leave from Jenny Lau-Garcia, art/music teacher-Livingston Elementary School, September 1, 2021-June 30, 2022.

**REQUEST FOR LEAVE – MAZUR**

Request for paid medical leave from Rebecca Mazur, social studies teacher-Union High School, September 1, 2021-October 15, 2021.

**REQUEST FOR LEAVE – DAMIANO**

Request for paid child rearing leave followed by unpaid FMLA/NJFLA (concurrently) from Courtney Damiano, health and physical education teacher-Jefferson School, October 1, 2021-February 25, 2022.

**REQUEST FOR LEAVE – HUTCHINS**

Request for paid medical leave from Mark Hutchins, custodian-Union High School, July 6, 2021-September 22, 2021.

**REQUEST FOR LEAVE – McCARTNEY**

Request for paid medical leave and unpaid FMLA followed by non-FMLA leave from Jennifer McCartney, English teacher-Kawameeh Middle School, September 1, 2021-June 30, 2022.

**REQUEST FOR LEAVE- REGAL**

Request for intermittent FMLA from Linda Regal, special education teacher-Hannah Caldwell Elementary School, September 1, 2021-June 30, 2022.

**REQUEST FOR LEAVE – PEDICINI**

Request for paid medical leave from Alexander Pedicini, technical education teacher-Union High School, September 1, 2021-November 3, 2021.

**REQUEST FOR EXTENSION OF LEAVE – VICIDOMINI**

Request for an extension of paid medical leave from Julia Vicidomini, Confidential Administrative Assistant, tentative return date October 1, 2021.

**LETTER OF RETIREMENT – TIMIRAOS**

Letter of resignation, for the purpose of retirement, from Cathy Timiraos, educational clerk-Battle Hill Elementary School, effective September 10, 2021.

**LETTER OF RETIREMENT – RICKEL**

Letter of resignation, for the purpose of retirement, from John Rickel, chemistry teacher-Union High School, effective June 30, 2022.

**LETTER OF RESIGNATION – HAYES**

Letter of resignation from Susan Smith Hayes, part-time transportation assistant-Transportation Department, effective August 25, 2021.

**REQUEST FOR LEAVE – OSBORNE**

Request for paid child rearing leave followed by unpaid FMLA/NJFLA (concurrently) from Melissa Osborne, special education teacher-Burnet Middle School, October 25, 2021-December 24, 2021.

**REQUEST FOR LEAVE – WATSON**

Request for paid medical leave and unpaid non-FMLA leave from Danielle Watson, pre-k paraprofessional-Hannah Caldwell Elementary School, September 1, 2021-June 24, 2022.

**LETTER OF RESIGNATION – SANTOS**

Letter of resignation from Shakira Santos, special services paraprofessional-Burnet Middle School, effective September 1, 2021.

**Superintendent's Report:**

Dr. Taylor gave a presentation on the State of the Schools and New Jersey Graduation Results. A summary is below and the presentation is attached:

The Star Ledger reporter spent a day at Livingston Elementary School. It was a very positive piece on what it is like as a child to return from a pandemic to a classroom. It was a nice way to put us on the map.

The last week of August, thanks to Ms. Ahern and her rockstar counseling crew, we had 350 incoming 9<sup>th</sup> graders show up for orientation. It is a tough thing coming from Burnet or Kawameeh to a large high school.

Walking throughout the halls every week – the students are wearing masks and occasionally we ask them to adjust their masks. I have also seen many teachers taking their students outside when the weather is nice. A student from the high school reached out to me asking if we could create outdoor learning at the high school. I have invited a couple of peers to join me for lunch tomorrow.

In my message to you tomorrow night at 7 p.m. – there are fantastic things around the district to celebrate those Hispanics who have enabled others to be amazing contributors to our society. At the kindergarten level at Hannah, the kids read a book about tortillas.

Throughout the weeks I have received messages from parents, guardians and faculty and I have always responded and I will continue to do that. I think the transparency is vital to keeping the trust alive. You are entrusting your children to us during a once in a 100-year pandemic. I will give you as much information as I can but with HPPA regulations, we will give you what we can. In maintaining transparency, we have a daily updated active dashboard. This dashboard populates automatically with school level data that shows you how many students and personnel are COVID-19 positive. Some districts are getting hit hard but I don't think we are.

On our district website there are two documents – Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) – which is constantly updated and it shows when it is updated. I received a question on why we don't have shields on the student desks. There are three research studies that show that not only are they ineffective but one study showed that it hampered ventilating the air. That is on the FAQ document on our website. The other document is the Ventilation Report on the equipment in all of our rooms and the ventilation that we have.

I had a parent ask at a meeting about homeschooling – so we put a resource on the district website. Go to the website, that is your first line of communication.

As of this morning, since September 8<sup>th</sup> – COVID total 34; 27 students and 7 employees; the 7-day average as of September 17, 2021 is 3. At the County level the 7-day average is 21. You can get all this information at the NJ Department of Health website. At the Town level the 7-day average is 13 (yellow) – moderate transmission zone. We are doing really well and I think a lot of this has to do with our community. I was told in Union, the rate of vaccination for ages 18 and over is 82%.

I have gotten emails from concerned parents and guardians about mask wearing all day and it does appear, and the survey data, is the vast majority of the people in this community understand how important masks are to mitigate the transmission of this virus. I think the combination of things and what we are doing in the school district, contribute to the relatively low rate right now. Also, the only way a school can switch to virtual learning is if it is approved by the Governor's office if you have an extraordinary number of cases. Thank God so far the cases that have been aware concerning our district have been serious.

I have been getting a lot of emails but sometimes I can't help people concerning the pandemic for scheduling or whatever as efficiently and effectively as our principals, supervisors and directors. There are certain things that I have to dictate. I hope it will be helpful and I put

together a chain of command for communicating with the district. You can go to the district website tomorrow for the “Communication Chair of Command” and also on [bit.ly/unionchain2021-2022](https://bit.ly/unionchain2021-2022).

Graduation Data – the total class of 2021 – 552 – total graduates 525 (minus 27 – 14 due to IEP; 13 due to lack of credit). We are responsible for special needs students until the age of 21.

In Highland Park – I acquired “no students to fail” last year – those students who received “Fs” – at the end of the year they were converted to “I” – incompletes which doesn’t hurt the GPA, instead they had to make up those credits. There are creative ways.

How a student graduates in New Jersey – it is called “Pathways to Graduation”. The requirements were waived for Class of 2021 due to COVID; requirements apply to Class of 2022. It may seem unfair because this senior class lost as much as the last senior class – this is the wisdom of the State Board of Education – we don’t have control over that.

I believe at least until the Class of 2025, there will be a single assessment. The current senior class must pass one of these assessments: NJSLA (PARC); SAT, PSAT, ACT or Accuplacer; completed portfolio; or met requirements specified in IEP.

How did our kids do, even though they didn’t have to pass the NJSLA, we did test them. Educational leaders were frustrated last year when the Department of Education switched gears. This is how our students did: passed NJSLA – 314; passed SAT, PSAT, ACT or Accuplacer - 64; completed portfolio – 129 and met requirements specified in IEP - 18.

Dr. Morgan stated thank you for providing data. I have been asking for this to see where our kids are. Thank you for starting with graduation and I look forward to your other presentations on our students.

Mr. McDowell stated thank you for your presentation.

#### Education/Student Discipline Committee Resolutions:

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

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

Superintendent’s Report of Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying (HIB) for the period August 18, 2021 to September 14, 2021 (no incidences to report) (*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 July 21, 2021 to August 17, 2021, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

E-1-1. SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT OF HIB

Superintendent’s Report of Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying (HIB) for the period September 15, 2021 to September 21, 2021 (no incidences to report) (*no vote required; for reporting purposes only*).

E-2 APPROVE HOME SCHOOLED STUDENTS TO PARTICIPATE IN ATHLETIC PROGRAM

Approve A.S. and H.S., students who are home schooled, to participate in the athletic program for high school girls’ soccer and middle school baseball, respectively.

DISCUSSION:

None

AYE: Mrs. Brens-Watson, Dr. Francis, Dr. Morgan, 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 Dr. Francis, seconded by Dr. Morgan for adoption:

F-1. TREASURER’S REPORT

That the Treasurer’s Report dated August 31, 2021 be accepted.

F-2. SECRETARY’S REPORT

That the Secretary’s Report dated August 31, 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 August 31, 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

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Dated

Pursuant to N.J.A.C.6A:23-2.2(h), we certify that as of August 31, 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 EXTENDED SCHOOL YEAR TRANSPORTATION CONTRACT – MUJC**

Approve extended school year transportation contract (\$29,776.40) with the Morris-Union Jointure Commission Board of Education for the 2021-2022 school year, 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 2021-2022 STATE CONTRACT VENDORS**

Approve the amended list of the 2021-2022 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. APPROVE JEWISH VOCATIONAL SERVICES – VOCATIONAL EVALUATIONS**

Approve Jewish Vocational Services to provide vocational evaluations (2-3 days) at the rate of \$925.00 per evaluation and vocational assessments with TEACCH Transition Assessment Profile (TTA) at the rate of \$1,000.00 per evaluation for the 2021-2022 school year (not to exceed \$7,400.00) [Account #11-000-219-320-01-19], in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

**F-10. APPROVE 2021-2022 OUT-OF-DISTRICT STUDENT PLACEMENT LIST**

Approval be given to amend the 2021-2022 out-of-district student placement list, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

**F-11. APPROVE FUNDRAISERS**

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

Event Name	Date	Purpose
Fall Production Concessions	November 12-14, 2021	UHSPAC – to raise funds at the fall production to cover production costs
Program Advertisements/Patron Packages	October 1- November 1, 2021	UHSPAC – to raise funds for the UHSPAC fall production.
Winter Showcase	November 1, 2021- January 7, 2022	Advanced Musical Theatre – to raise funds for student-directed production
Fruit Snack Sale	October 1, 2021- June 1, 2022	UHS/PAC/Swing Choir – to raise funds for UHSPAC and Swing Choir productions and projects



**F-12. ACCEPT DONATIONS**

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

From	For Use By	\$/Item
Perette & Emmanuel Duvelson	Burnet Middle School-Drama Club Account	\$805.00
Bottling Group LLC-FSV	Union High School	\$51.00

**F-13. APPROVE NJDOE UNIFORM MINIMUM CHART OF ACCOUNTS**

Approve the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) Uniform Minimum Chart Accounts (revised August 1, 2021) for New Jersey public schools as per N.J.A.C. 6A:23A for the 2021-2022 school year.

**F-14. APPROVE CONTRACT – COMMISSION FOR THE BLIND AND VISUALLY IMPAIRED**

Approve additional Service Contract with the State of New Jersey, Department of Human Services, Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired, for educational services for students in the district for the 2021-2022 school year, in accordance with the non-public information appended to the minutes.

*F-15. Agenda item approved at worksession of September 14, 2021 (Arc Kohler School-Meals at No Cost)*

**F-16. APPROVE PARENT/PUPIL TRANSPORTATION CONTRACT – 2021-2022**

Approve parent/pupil transportation contract for special education student attending NJEDDA High School at the rate of \$45.68 per day (not to exceed \$9,593.00) for the 2021-2022 school year, in accordance with the non-public information appended to the minutes.

*F-17. For informational purposes only – vote not required. List of legal services for the 2021-2022 fiscal year, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.*

**F-18. APPROVE WELLNESS MANAGEMENT SERVICES OF TRINITAS REGIONAL MEDICAL CENTER - STUDENT SUPPORT**

Approve contract with Wellness Management Services of Trinitas Regional Medical Center, to provide Student Support Services at a cost of \$97,000.00 for the 2021-2022 school year, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

**DISCUSSION:**

None

AYE: Mrs. Brens-Watson, Dr. Francis, Dr. Morgan, Mrs. Ruiz, Mrs. Williams, Mr. McDowell

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

**MOTION CARRIED**

Operations Committee Resolutions:

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 2021-2022 school year, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

O-2. APPROVE ANNUAL INTEGRATED PEST MANAGEMENT NOTICE

Approve Annual Integrated Pest Management Notice for the 2021-2022 school year, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

O-3. *Agenda item approved at worksession of September 14, 2021 (Policy Manual-Strauss Esmay).*

O-4. APPROVE LETTER FROM TOWNSHIP OF UNION – RECREATION DEPARTMENT

Approve letter from Township of Union Recreation Department requesting the use of the Jefferson School parking lot on Saturday October 23, 2021 from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. (rain dated Sunday, October 24, 2021) for the Township’s Trunk or Treat event, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

DISCUSSION:

None

AYE: Mrs. Brens-Watson, Dr. Francis, Dr. Morgan, 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 Mrs. Williams for adoption:

P-1A. *Agenda item approved at September 14, 2021 worksession (Personnel Actions-New Hires)*

P-1B *Agenda item approved at September 14, 2021 worksession (Personnel Actions-New Extra Pay)*

P-1C *Agenda item approved at September 14, 2021 worksession (Personnel Actions-Transfers)*

P-1A-1. PERSONNEL ACTIONS – NEW HIRES

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

**P-1B-1. PERSONNEL ACTIONS – EXTRA PAY**

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

**P-1C-1. PERSONNEL ACTIONS – TRANSFERS**

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

**P-2. APPROVE JOB DESCRIPTION – SCHOOL DISTRICT MEDIA PUBLIC RELATION MANAGER**

Approve the Job Description for School District Media Public Relation Manager, 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
Silvano Berardinelli	Custodian	Battle Hill	1/1/2022	Retirement	
Michael DiPaolo	Science teacher	UHS	6/30/2022	Resignation	
Michael D. DuBose	School Counselor	Battle Hill	10/18/2021	Resignation	
Stephanie Dellanno	Special services paraprofessional	KMS	9/24/2021	Resignation	
Robyn Kratz	Teacher	Hannah Caldwell	9/1/2021	Resignation	
Kimberlee J. Safranek	French teacher	UHS	10/22/2021	Resignation	
Carol Rotunda	Math teacher	KMS	1/1/2022	Retirement	
Cathy Timiraos	Educational Clerk	Battle Hill	9/10/2021	Retirement	
John Rickel	Chemistry teacher	UHS	9/30/2022	Retirement	
Susan Smith Hayes	Part-time transportation aide	Transportation Department	8/25/2021	Resignation	
Shakira Santos	Special services-paraprofessional	BMS	9/1/2021	Resignation	

**P-4. APPROVE LEAVES**

Approve leaves for the following staff:

Name	Position	Location	Leave Dates	Leave Type	Notes
Misbah Bajwa	English teacher	UHS	9/1/2021-12/8/2021	FMLA/NJFLA leave (concurrently)	FMLA/NJFLA (concurrently) entitlement not to exceed 12 weeks

MaryAnne Corsentio	Math teacher	BMS	9/1/2021-10/15/2021	Paid medical leave	
Ann Marie DiGiorgio	Special services paraprofessional	Hannah Caldwell	9/1/2021-10/25/2021	Unpaid FMLA leave	FMLA entitlement not to exceed 12 weeks
Karen Wojcik	10-month secretary	Department of Special Services	Through 10/15/2021	Extension of paid medical leave	
Jenny Lau-Garcia	Art/Music teacher	Livingston	9/1/2021-6/30/2022	Intermittent FMLA/NJFLA	FMLA/NJFLA (concurrently) entitlement not to exceed 12 months
Rebecca Mazur	Social Studies teacher	UHS	9/1/2021-10/15/2021	Paid medical leave	
Courtney Damiano	Health and physical education teacher	Jefferson	10/1/2021-2/25/2022	Paid child rearing leave followed by unpaid FMLA/NJFLA (concurrently)	
Mark Hutchins	Custodian	UHS	7/6/2021-9/22/2021	Paid medical leave	
Jennifer McCartney	English teacher	KMS	9/1/2021-6/30/2022	Paid medical leave and unpaid FMLA followed by non-FMLA leave	
Linda Regal	Special education teacher	Hannah Caldwell	9/1/2021-6/30/2022	Intermittent FMLA	
Alexander Pedicini	Technical education teacher	UHS	9/1/2021-11/3/2021	Paid medical leave	
Julia Vicidomini	Confidential Administrative Assistant	IT Department	Tentative return date: 10/1/2021	Extension of paid medical leave	
Melissa Osborne	Special education teacher	BMS	10/25/2021-12/24/2021	Paid child rearing leave followed by unpaid FMLA/NJFLA (concurrently)	
Danielle Watson	Pre-k paraprofessional	Hannah Caldwell	9/1/2021-6/24/2022	Paid medical leave and unpaid non-FMLA leave	

P-5. APPROVE I&RS MEMBERS – 2021-2022

Approve I&RS members for the 2021-2022 school year, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

**P-6. APPROVE SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLANNING COMMITTEE – 2021-2022**

Approve School Improvement Planning Committee for the 2021-2022 school year, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

**P-7. APPROVE CRISIS RESPONSE TEAM – 2021-2022**

Approve Crisis Response Teams for the 2021-2022 school year, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

**P-8. APPROVE CHANGE OF SALARY CLASS #2 – EFFECTIVE SEPTEMBER 2021**

Approve Change of Salary Class #2 (effective September 2021), in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

**P-9. APPROVE 2021-2022 HOURLY RATES LIST**

Approve 2021-2022 Hourly Rates List, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

**P-10. APPROVE DISTRICT ORGANIZATIONAL CHART**

Approve District Organizational Chart, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

**P-11. APPROVE UPDATED DESIGNEE LIST – STUDENT ACTIVITIES ACCOUNT**

Approve updated designee list for the Student Activities Accounts for Union High School, Kawameeh Middle School, Jefferson School, Battle Hill Elementary School, Connecticut Farms Elementary School, Franklin Elementary School, Hannah Caldwell Elementary School, Livingston Elementary School, Washington Elementary School, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

**P-12. APPROVE STUDENT TEACHERS AND INTERNSHIPS**

Approve student teachers and internships for the 2021-2022 school year, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

**DISCUSSION:**

None

**AYE:** Mrs. Brens-Watson, Dr. Francis, Dr. Morgan, Mrs. Ruiz, Mrs. Williams, Mr. McDowell

**NAY:** None

**ABSTAIN:** None

**MOTION CARRIED**

**Approval of Bills:**

Upon recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools and moved by Mrs. Brens-Watson, seconded by Mrs. Ruiz, 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, Dr. Morgan, Mrs. Ruiz, Mrs. Williams, Mr. McDowell

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED

#### Unfinished Business:

Dr. Taylor stated at the last meeting there were some questions from parents regarding transportation. The members of the Board policy committee, me, Gail Calderone from Transportation and Yolanda Koon met and affirmed the Board policy regarding transportation which has students who are granted transportation – 2 miles from schools or 2.5 miles from school – depending on the school they attend. I will follow-up with the parents via email and indicate that the Board policy will stand for now.

One of the Board members a few meetings ago asked about the number of students who left for parochial schools – it is hard for us to tell exactly how many students went to parochial schools. What we sense from September 1, 2020 to yesterday, we lost 42 students who we believe left for parochial schools. There may be some more, depending on how the information is implemented into Genesis.

#### New Business:

Dr. Taylor stated there was a question asked by the leadership team regarding whether we excuse or don't excuse student absences – the Board policy is silent as to whether a student is marked excused because of having a doctor's note but there has been a protocol internally that requires a doctor's note to excuse an absence. Questions have arisen on what we do when students are symptomatic to COVID and calls out, but doesn't necessarily go to the doctors. We rather not discourage that approach so we are leaning towards excusing absences even if we don't have a doctor's note – as long as we are contacted by a parent to verify a student's absence. If the leadership team moves in that direction, I will update the Board about. As mentioned, the Board policy is silent on this so there doesn't appear to be a need for the Board Policy Committee to be involved. If there are any disagreements from the Board, let me know in the next couple of days. I don't think if it moves in that direction that it would be enacted right away. We had an attendance review board at the upper grade schools that would look at certain cases. I don't believe kids will slip through the cracks.

#### Comments from the Public:

Jill Hall stated regarding the reopening of school – I want to take this opportunity to commend the kids – they came in, they took instruction, they asked the questions they needed to ask, it was uncomfortable for a lot of us and we were figuring it out as we went along. The kids did a great job.

September is also suicide awareness month, in addition to Hispanic Heritage month. The counseling department has been working hard to create safe spaces for our students. Anxiety has arisen because of COVID. Transition is very hard. Even coming back to school has been tricky for everyone, including staff. We have been working on a campaign to normalize those conversations and to make sure our kids are safe and that they are supported.

We had the first of a series of five presentations which have been created in coordination with coordinators from the County, Elizabeth, Hillside, Westfield, Springfield, Scotch Plains, Linden and Union. A presenter tonight talked about anxiety and depression after COVID and how parents can recognize some of those symptoms. The presenter was fabulous. I want to thank Dr. Taylor for helping us get the flyers out. Our next one is going to be on October 5<sup>th</sup> and that is a live presentation at Union High School. The presentation during the day for the students and in the evening for the parents. A former Union High School who has had a difficult journey through addiction and recovery and he is a published author and motivational speaker/coach and coming back to Union High School for the first time.

Cathy Jakositz read the following statement:

“I have been teaching here since 1987. I am also a former Board member that served for almost 10 years in my district. I am here to ask our Board to band together to help us stop the Governor on his overreach of mandates. I am not talking about whether to mask or not or to vaccinate or not; I am talking about his overreach and overstepping of power. Our Governor is working hard to take away our parental rights to choose. Crossing the line has become commonplace for our Governor, and it is our time to say, “Enough is Enough”.

Our civil liberties are being stripped away. This is bigger than whether or not we need to mask or vaccinate. He is taking away our choice to do what we feel is best for our bodies and that of our children. That is not o.k. Our government works for us. We need to Stand up and say No.

Prior to the mask mandate, there were 52 school districts standing up for prochoice. We are not alone as parents and you are not alone as Board members. Our State needs your voices to help us fight for our freedom.

By not taking action, simply because we have the opportunity to be tested weekly, is not enough. Did you know that the swab that is inserted into the nose is soaked in Ethylene Oxide which is a carcinogenic that according to the American Medical Association when repeatedly inserted deep into the nasal cavity causes such negative effects as spontaneous abortions, neurological disorders such as seizures, reproductive abnormalities and a number of types of cancers such as prostate, breast, ect. Know that you know some of the negative side effects, can you stand by asking your employees to be tested this way; I couldn't as a board member.

Saliva tests are hard to come by and the Board could use its resources to help our district have the saliva tests made available. I must thank Dr. Taylor, Linda Ionta and Ann Margaret Shannon on how supportive they have been with the saliva testing awareness.

Take a look at Australia, this is tyranny. Their government has mandated that their citizens are locked down in their homes and only the vaccinated can go

outside for two hours each day. If you are caught speaking to anyone the fine is \$1,000. They also have isolation camps that their citizens are forced to live in until they are COVID free. Don't you think that the Australians wish that they would have fought back when it was just a mask mandate?

How about New Zealand, they are forcing 48,000 children to be taken to their stadium, removed from their parents, surrounded by armed police officers and taken, by a nurse, not a parent, and forced to be vaccinated. Again, don't you think that the New Zealanders wished that they would have fought back when it was just a mask mandate?

There is a judge in Chicago that stripped a mother of her parental rights just for not being vaccinated. Her child has been removed from her custody upon the judge's personal beliefs and his ability to overreach with his authority. Don't you think Chicago wished that they would have fought back when it was just a mask mandate?

Governor Murphy told the superintendent and board in a school in Jackson, where the parents and school administration were for mask choice, that if the schools and parents do not comply with his Executive Order, the penalties would be fines of up to \$1,000 per person and face imprisonment for up to six months for each violation. Again, enough is enough.

Today you may be in favor of these particular mandates, but I guarantee, a governor going unchecked and unstopped, the next mandates will come at a bigger price. What are you going to say then?

Are you aware that 70% of our states are mask and vaccine choice? Only 30% like ours have mandates. Enough is enough.

I am speaking for one simple reason. To implore you for help. No mandates. The choice needs to be ours. Again, this is not whether you are for/or against the mask and/or vaccine mandates, but to stand up against any mandate that infringes on our "we the people" freedom of choice as our constitution affords us.

Our kids are going to grow up in the world that we leave for them and if we don't stand up now, no action does not leave a promising picture of civil liberties and freedom of tyranny for our children.

I have a sample letter form a board of education that was sent to Governor Murphy to provide you with as reference."



Ann Margaret Shannon stated UTEA participated in the Hispanic Heritage Festival this weekend. We had a good time and it was wonderful and we will do it again. We handed out free UTEA towels and we will hand them out again at the 5K this Sunday.

Paraprofessionals – I spoke with Dr. Taylor, Mr. Benaquista, many of the principals – thank you for your support. We are really in a crisis. I'm asking the Board of Ed, only you can solve this problem for us – private people got 25% more than our paras. Now are part-time paras are working more than 30 hours and they are not getting benefits and we have to stop it. It is hard for the principals to stop it because you have a one-on-one aide and the student is coming in on the bus 8:30 and leaving on the bus at 3:30 – that is more than six hours. We have to pay them. We have so many vacancies that some of the teachers don't get a break, they can't leave, they have to have lunch with the students. You need a break. I ask that we consider changing the situation we have with the part-time paras. We need them full-time with benefits. It is way to get people to come to our district and attract paras.

Chasity Santana stated I thought we did have a policy in place for when the children wake up with two or more COVID-like symptoms but they are not COVID positive. I just got a emails from three different schools on what I have to do for my children to come to school.

On paras, I was here with many of you people when we outsourced to save money so now we are paying the outsourced paras more money than we pay our regular paras. I don't know what to do other than keep hammering the fact that we are going against IEPs – that's against the law to not adequately staff a room when it is written into an IEP. We are not allowed in the building so what can we do but trust that everybody is doing what they are supposed to be doing.

These children that are eating lunch, do we have any space in between them? Parents are not allowed in school. I asked my kids and they say they are on top of each other without masks and that is in all grades so I'm concerned. It is a serious issue.

Susan Lipstein stated welcome back to school everybody. I'm speaking on behalf of the Township of Union Education Foundation. I'm glad to see students are back in person. Nobody can be more happy about this then those of us who worked so hard to fund programs for the children. We will keep you posted about the progress of these programs. Everything is available on our website [www.tuef.org](http://www.tuef.org). Walkway of Honor – 4 p.m. – we are honoring the community who have received bricks that were dedicated to them – teachers, Board of Ed workers, Board of Ed members, members of our staff – who have passed away. We also have a raffle tickets for \$5.00, you can find out about that on our website. I look forward to the new school year and hopefully we will manage to implement everything – the programs that the Ed Foundation has funded and implemented this year.

Paul Casey stated thank you Dr. Taylor for the presentation. At the open house at the high school, we were told there is only one nurse for the high school. I'm just curious on what we are doing to recruit people? I hope you will fill it.

Dr. Taylor stated that is a temporary situation. We have two nurses at the high school. We had to temporarily move one nurse to one of our elementary schools because a new hire for that elementary school can't start for another couple of weeks.

Elsie Mackie stated I sent an email in terms of a senior that is out of district – it has been said to me because I have twins, both kids get the same mail. My son that is out of district because of his therapy didn't receive an invitation to take senior pictures. Every year it is the same thing. I don't know what can be done to reiterate that children out of district don't make these decisions. We need to do better – special education students should be included. They should be afforded the same benefits of the regular students in the district get. Also, where can I find the policy on solicitation of minors at school events. As educators you have a responsibility and Board members, your responsibility to really know that you are influential with the students and you need to act accordingly. It happened. What is the policy in terms of where can I find it. (inaudible) depending who is the person, friendship or relationship – it gets slipped under the rug.

**MOTION TO ADJOURN:**

There being no further business before the Board in public session it was moved by Dr. Morgan, seconded by Mrs. Williams, that the meeting be adjourned at 9:14 p.m.

AYE: Mrs. Brens-Watson, Dr. Francis, Dr. Morgan, Mrs. Ruiz, Mrs. Williams, Mr. McDowell

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

**MOTION CARRIED**

**RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,**

**YOLANDA KOON  
BOARD SECRETARY**



