

TOWNSHIP OF UNION BOARD OF EDUCATION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES – September 17, 2024

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 17, 2024 at 6:00 p.m. at the Union High School Library, 2350 North Third Street, Union, New Jersey pursuant to notice sent to each member.

Ms. Santana called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m.

PRESENT AT ROLL CALL:

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

ABSENT AT ROLL CALL:

Mrs. Nancy Minneci, Mrs. Mary Lynn Williams (arrived 6:17 p.m.)

ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT:

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

ALSO PRESENT:

Mr. Lester Taylor, Esq.

Mrs. Scott-Hayden led the Board and audience members in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mrs. Scott-Hayden 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.

MOTION FOR EXECUTIVE SESSION:

Moved by Mr. Cohan, seconded by Mrs. Scott-Hayden, that the Board go into Executive Session at 6:05 p.m. to discuss the following subject matters without the presence of the public in accordance with the provisions of N.J.S.A. 10:4-12b: personnel, students, legal update

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, Mrs. Conteh-Mackey, Mr. McDowell,
Mr. Nasta, Mrs. Scott-Hayden, Ms. Santana

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED

The Board returned to public session at 7:01 p.m.

Ms. Carbonell stepped out prior to vote.

MOTION TO RETURN TO PUBLIC SESSION:

There being no further business before the Board, it was moved by Mrs. Williams, seconded by Mrs. Conteh-Makey, that the Board return to public session at 7:01 p.m.

AYE: Mr. Cohan, Mrs. Mackey, Mr. McDowell, Mr. Nasta, Ms. Scott-Hayden,
Mrs. Williams, Ms. Santana

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED

Approval of Minutes:

Moved by Mr. McDowell, seconded by Mrs. Conteh-Mackey, that the following minutes be adopted:

1. August 27, 2024 – regular meeting
2. August 27, 2024 – executive session No. 1
3. August 27, 2024 – executive session No. 2

DISCUSSION:

None

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

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED

Communications:

LETTER OF RESINGATION – AGUAYSA

Letter of resignation from Maria Aguaysa, cafeteria/playground aide-Washington Elementary School, effective August 20, 2024.

LETTER OF RESIGNATION – PARDUCCI

Letter of resignation from James Parducci, cafeteria/playground aide-Hannah Caldwell Elementary School, effective August 28, 2024.

LETTER OF RESIGNATION – RIESGO

Letter of resignation from Javier Riesgo, cafeteria/playground aide-Franklin Elementary School, effective August 29, 2024.

LETTER OF RESIGNATION – FASOLINO

Letter of resignation from Christina Fasolino, paraprofessional-Livingston Elementary School, effective August 23, 2024.

REQUEST FOR LEAVE – DECKER

Request for paid FMLA from Sonia Decker, ESL teacher-Burnet Middle School, September 3, 2024-January 24, 2025.

REQUEST FOR LEAVE UPDATE – BARBIERI

Request for leave update from Jessica Barbieri, teacher-Jefferson School, new return date September 3, 2024.

REQUEST FOR LEAVE – LEMBRYK

Request for paid leave and unpaid leave from Lester Lembryk, physical education teacher-Union High School, September 3, 2024-TBD.

REQUEST FOR LEAVE – VIGIL

Request for unpaid FMLA from Alexis Vigil, first grade teacher-Washington Elementary School, September 3, 2024-October 13, 2024.

REQUEST FOR LEAVE – GREEN

Request for unpaid FMLA from Ruth Green, PreK teacher assistant-Hannah Caldwell Elementary School, September 3, 2024-October 1, 2024.

REQUEST FOR INTERMITTENT LEAVE – CAMERON

Request for paid FMLA intermittent leave from Siddiquah Cameron, PreK specialist-districtwide, September 3, 2024-June 20, 2025.

REQUEST FOR INTERMITTENT LEAVE – BUCHANAN

Request for paid FMLA intermittent leave from Deana Buchanan, ELA teacher-Kawameeh Middle School, September 3, 2024-June 20, 2025.

REQUEST FOR INTERMITTENT LEAVE – FILIPPONE

Request for paid FMLA intermittent leave from Marcia Filippone, secretary-Kawameeh Middle School, September 3, 2024-June 30, 2024.

REQUEST FOR LEAVE – VENEZIO

Request for paid medical leave from Ketly Venezia, bus aide-Transportation Department, September 5, 2024-October 16, 2024.

REQUEST FOR LEAVE – PRATA

Request for paid child rearing leave followed by unpaid FMLA/NJFLA from Ashley Prata, special education teacher-Jefferson School, November 4, 2024-April 22, 2024.

REQUEST FOR LEAVE – KLEIN

Request for unpaid leave from Peter Klein, CST-Union High School, September 3, 2024-September 30, 2024.

REQUEST FOR INTERMITTENT LEAVE – ROYAL

Request for paid FMLA intermittent leave from Marcel Royal, CST-districtwide, September 16, 2024-June 30, 2025

Comments from Public (on resolutions):

Mrs. Lipstein stated F-12, 13, 14 and 15 – United Academy of Union receiving money. She asked where is that school, how many students do they have and asked that the items be tabled.

Erika Newland stated E-7 – calendar – she is concerned about the additional day off and instead of staff development on October 14th – use October 4th. She asked regarding P-12-job description – which Assistant Superintendent is that for and asked that a salary range be included in the job description.

Ms. Santana stated with regard to Mrs. Lipstein’s questions, she stated, at this time, we can not answer due to legal confidentiality.

Superintendent’s Report:

Dr. Benaquista presented the Superintendent Report and a summary is below and the presentation is appended to the minutes.

Staff Focus Groups – staff in the district were asked three questions:

1. How can we foster a sense of belonging and community to increase engagement and investment?
 - Addressing language barriers
 - Creating more open communication with families
 - Making physical buildings more welcoming
 - Create incentive programs
 - Creating more family and community involvement opportunities
 - Providing social opportunities for staff to build community

2. What systematic changes can be made to improve student academic performance?
 - Increase interdisciplinary teaching
 - Ensure curriculum is relevant and reflects life skills and real-world concerns
 - Making physical buildings more welcoming

- Provide more opportunities for collaboration
 - Expand mental health and counseling opportunities
 - Reallocate funding for staff and academic programs
3. What contributes to absenteeism?
- Family responsibilities and perception on the importance of education
 - Parents are unaware of the chronic absences
 - There is a lack of engagement, bullying, mental health challenges
 - Lack of consequences for chronic absenteeism
 - Frequent teacher absenteeism may contribute to student absenteeism
4. How can we positively impact attendance?
- Regularly check in with families
 - Help families overcome attendance barriers
 - Increase extracurriculars and incentives/positive reinforcement
 - Structured consequences
 - Make connections with non-English speaking families

Celebrations Across the District: Hispanic Heritage Month and German Heritage Month.

Dr. Jose Rodriguez informed the Board and community that announcements are made in the buildings highlighting people of Hispanic and German descent who have made an impact. There are opportunities for students to listen to Hispanic music and wear cultural attire. There are instruction lessons on Hispanic figures in society.

Dr. Benaquista stated the district had a successful school opening and he received a lot of positive feedback.

Mayor Figueiredo, Board President Santana, Mrs. Koon, School Business Administrator and Petal Robertson, Secretary-Treasurer of the New Jersey Education Association also spoke at the Opening of School Convocation.

Journey Dedicated to Learning and Excellence – 2024-2025 School Year: It's All About U - literacy, culture, 2025 school referendum, safety, attendance/chronic absenteeism, student proficiency, classroom time management, curriculum updates school schedules and intervention program, reading specialists and academic coaches, TUPS realignment, labor management collaborative, I&RS.

New Teacher Orientation – around 80 new teachers and on the second day there was a bus tour of Union.

Re-Registration Update:

- PreK 4 entering kindergarten (374 students) – 332 re-registered, 32 did not register, 10 transferred out, 131 new students to TUPS

- Aid-in-lieu – transportation reimbursement – 480 students notified, 225 re-registered and verified, 255 did not re-register (payment will be withheld until re-registration complete)
- Out-of-District Students – 176 students notified, 17 re-registered and verified

HIB – for the period September 11-17, 2024 – no HIB incidents to report

Education/Student Discipline Committee Resolutions:

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

E-1. *Agenda item reported at September 10, 2024 worksession (Report of HIB)*

E-1A. SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT OF HIB

Superintendent’s Report of Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying (HIB) for the period September 11 to September 17, 2024 (*no incidents to report*), in accordance with the information appended to the minutes (*no vote required; for reporting purposes only*).

E-2. ACCEPT INCREASED FUNDING – HIGH IMPACT TUTORING GRANT

Accept the increased funding of an additional eight percent (8%) of the original award for the High Impact Tutoring Grant, with the entirety of the grant to be spent by June 30, 2025.

E-3. APPROVE SUBMISSION OF SCHOOL BASED MENTAL HEALTH GRANT

Approve submission of the School Based Mental Health Grant Year 3 for the 2024-2025 school year in the amount of \$375,000.00.

E-4. APPROVE TITLE I SCHOOL PARENT AND FAMILY ENGAGEMENT POLICIES

Approve Title I School Parent and Family Engagement Policy for the following schools (no changes): (a) Union High School, (b) Burnet Middle School, (c) Jefferson School, (d) Franklin Elementary School for the 2024-2025 school year, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

E-5. APPROVE ACCEPTANCE OF WHOLE KIDS GARDEN GRANT – LIVINGSTON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Approve acceptance of the Whole Kids Garden Grant for Livingston Elementary School in the amount of \$3,000.00 for the 2024-2025 school year, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

E-6. APPROVE ACCEPTANCE OF GRANT – UNION COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Approve acceptance of the Union County Board of County Commissioners 2024-2025 Gender and Sexuality Alliances (GSAs) grant for both Burnet Middle School and Kawameeh Middle School. The grant will partner with Lighthouse Collaborative LLC to receiving ongoing support and consultation for the GSA, school mural creations, family nights, staff professional development and resources for the upcoming school year (additionally, \$1,000.00 per school will

be awarded to appoint a GSA advisor), in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

E-7. APPROVE UPDATED SCHOOL CALENDAR – 2024-2025

Approve the updated school calendar for the 2024-2025 school year, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

DISCUSSION:

Mr. Cohan asked Dr. Benaquista to speak about the school calendar. Dr. Benaquista stated the committee met regarding the concern of the parent and other concerns. He stated that the calendar now reflects October 3rd for Rosh Hashanah, mid-terms have been moved, the district will follow the federal holiday for Juneteenth.

Mrs. Conteh-Mackey asked who was on the committee? Dr. Benaquista stated the UTEA, Ms. Lorenzo, Mr. Kloc, Ms. McKenzie, Dr. Rodriguez and myself.

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

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED

Fiscal and Planning Committee Resolutions:

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

F-1. TREASURER'S REPORT

That the Treasurer's Report dated August 31, 2024 be accepted.

F-2. SECRETARY'S REPORT

That the Secretary's Report dated August 31, 2024 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, 2024 no budgetary line item account has obligations and payments (contractual orders) which in total exceed the amount appropriated by the district Board of education pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:22-8 and 18:22-8.1.

/s/ Yolanda Koon

Yolanda Koon, Board Secretary

_____ Dated

Pursuant to N.J.A.C.6A:23-2.2(h), we certify that as of August 31, 2024 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 (copyrighted materials and licenses) pursuant to the requirements of N.J.S.A. 18A:18A-5 (bid exceptions to requirement for advertising) and 18A:18A-10(a) (purchase through State agency; procedure), in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

F-6. APPROVE DISTRICT WIDE TRAVEL AND RELATED EXPENSES

Approve district wide travel and related expenses pursuant to the requirements of N.J.S.A. 18A:11-12, N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-7 and Board Policy File Code 6471 and in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

F-7. Agenda item approved at September 10, 2024 worksession (Student Field Trips)

F-7A. 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-8. APPROVE LIST OF 2024-2025 STATE CONTRACT APPROVED VENDORS

Approve the amended list of the 2024-2025 State Contract Approved 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-9A. APPROVED LIST OF CONTRACTS/PURCHASES (STUDENT ACTIVITY)

Approve the attached list of contracts and/or purchases pursuant to the requirements of N.J.S.A. 18A:18A-5(21) (paid by funds raised by or collected by students), in accordance with the information appended to the minutes:

School	Account/Department	Vendor/Description	Amount
Union High School	3240/Athletics	BSN Sports – estimate for purchase of football backpacks and sweatshirts for team	\$4,000.00 (not to exceed)

F-9B. APPROVE FUNDRAISERS

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

Event Name	Date	Purpose
Spirit Wear Fundraiser Bake Sale Fundraiser Holiday Themed Fundraiser	September 23- December 20, 2024	Franklin Elementary School – to raise funds for schoolwide field trip
New York Knicks Game – Ticket Sales	October 1, 2024- February 28, 2025	UHS/Athletics – to raise funds for senior scholarships given by Athletic Department

F-9C APPROVE ACCEPTANCE OF DONATIONS

Accept the following donations:

From	For Use By	\$/Item
Union County Savings	UHS/Athletics	\$1,000.00

F-10. APPROVE 2024-2025 OUT-OF-DISTRICT STUDENT PLACEMENT LIST

Approval be given to amend the 2024-2025 out-of-district student placement list (month of September), in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

F-11. APPROVE ACCEPTANCE OF GRANTS – SPECIAL OLYMPICS NEW JERSEY

Approve acceptance of the grants awarded as listed below from Special Olympics New Jersey – Unified Champion Schools 2024-2025: (a) Burnet Middle School - \$2,500.00, (b) Kawameeh Middle School - \$1,700.00, (c) Jefferson School - \$600.00, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

F-12. ACCEPT NONPUBLIC SCHOOL NURSING AID FROM NJDOE - UPDATED

Accept updated Nonpublic School Nursing Aid from the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) for the 2024-2025 school year as follows: (a) St. Michael’s School - \$42,640.00 and (b) United Academy of Union - \$27,040.00 (the Patrick School Inc. was removed per NJDOE) [for a total of \$69,680.00], in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

F-13. ACCEPT NONPUBLIC SECURITY AID FROM NJDOE - UPDATED

Accept updated Nonpublic Security Aid from the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) for the 2024-2025 school year as follows: (a) St. Michael’s School - \$67,240.00 and (b) United Academy of Union - \$42,640.00 (the Patrick School Inc. was removed per NJDOE) [for a total of \$109,880.00], in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

F-14. ACCEPT NONPUBLIC TECHNOLOGY AID FROM NJDOE - UPDATED

Accept updated Nonpublic Technology Aid from the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) for the 2024-2025 school year as follows: (a) St. Michael’s School - \$16,072.00 and (b) United Academy of Union - \$10,192.00 (the Patrick School Inc. was removed per NJDOE) [for a total of \$26,264.00], in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

F-15. ACCEPT NONPUBLIC TEXTBOOK AID FROM NJDOE - UPDATED

Accept updated Nonpublic Textbook Aid from the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) for the 2024-2025 school year as follows: (a) St. Michael’s School - \$16,774.00 and (b) United Academy of Union - \$10,637.00 (the Patrick School Inc. was removed per NJDOE) [for a total of \$27,411.00], in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

F-16. *For informational purposes only – vote not required.* List of legal services paid as of August 31, 2024 for the 2024-2025 fiscal year, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

F-17. APPROVE SUBSTITUTION OF COUNSEL– FLANAGAN, BARONE & O’BIEN
Approve Robert M. Tosti, Esq. of the law firm of Flanagan, Barone & O’Brien, LLC to provide legal services, in accordance with the non-public information appended to the minutes.

DISCUSSION:

Mrs. Conteh-Mackey asked for clarification regarding United Academy. Mr. Taylor stated this matter is pending negotiations of a lease. An OPRA request was received and will be denied and subject to attorney/client privileges.

Dr. Benaquista stated United Academy is a State approved and recognized non-public school and recognized by the State of New Jersey. The funding comes through the State and there are no local funds just State funding.

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

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: Mrs. Williams (F-17)

MOTION CARRIED

Legal Committee:

Upon recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the following resolution was moved by Ms. Carbonell, seconded by Mrs. Scott-Hayden, for adoption:

L-1. APPROVE SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT

Approve Settlement Agreement between Employee #9000/former Employee #8897 and the Township of Union Board of Education, in accordance with the non-public information appended to the minutes.

DISCUSSION:

None

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

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED

Operations Committee Resolutions:

Upon recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the following resolutions were moved by Mrs. Scott-Hayden, seconded by Mr. Nasta, for adoption:

O-1. APPROVE ANNUAL INTEGRATED PEST MANAGEMENT NOTICE

Approve Annual Integrated Pest Management Notice for the 2024-2025 school year, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

O-2. APPROVE REVISED ORGANIZATION CHART

Approve Revised Township of Union Public Schools Organizational Chart 2024-2025, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

DISCUSSION:

None

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

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED

Personnel Committee Resolutions:

Upon recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the following resolutions were moved by Mrs. Conteh-Mackey, seconded by Mrs. Scott-Hayden, for adoption:

P-1A. Agenda item approved at September 10, 2024 worksession (New Hires)

P-1A-1. PERSONNEL ACTIONS – NEW HIRES

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

P-1B PERSONNEL ACTIONS – EXTRA PAY

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

P-1C PERSONNEL ACTIONS – TRANSFERS – none as of this date

P-2. APPROVE SUBSTITUTE LISTS – none at this time

P-3A. ACCEPT LETTERS OF RESIGNATION/RETIREMENT

Accept letters of resignation/retirement from the following staff, with regrets:

Name	Position	Location	Eff. Date	Reason
Maria Aguaysa	Cafeteria/playground aide	Washington	8/20/2024	Resignation
James Parducci	Cafeteria/playground aide	Hannah Caldwell	8/28/2024	Resignation
Javier Riesgo	Cafeteria/playground aide	Franklin	8/29/2024	Resignation
Christina Fasolino	Paraprofessional	Livingston	8/23/2024	Resignation

P-3B. APPROVE LEAVES

Approve leaves for the following staff:

Name	Position	Location	Leave Dates	Leave Type
Sonia Decker	ESL teacher	BMS	9/3/2024-1/24/2025	Paid FMLA

Jessica Barbieri	Teacher	Jefferson	New return date 9/3/2024	New return date
Lester Lembryk	PE teacher	UHS	9/3/2024- TBD	Paid leave; unpaid leave
Alexis Vigil	1 st grade teacher	Washington	10/14/2024- 1/13/2025	Unpaid FMLA
Ruth Green	PreK teacher assistant	Hannah Caldwell	9/3/2024- 10/1/2024	Unpaid FMLA
Siddiquah Cameron	PreK specialist	Districtwide	9/3/2024- 6/20/2025	Paid FMLA intermittent leave
Deana Buchanan	ELA teacher	KMS	9/3/2024- 6/20/2025	Paid FMLA intermittent leave
Marcia Filippone	Secretary	KMS	9/3/2024- 6/30/2024	Paid FMLA intermittent leave
Ketly Venezia	Bus aide	Transp. Dept	9/5/2024- 10/16/2024	Paid medical leave
Ashley Prata	Special education teacher	Jefferson	11/4/2024- 4/22/2024	Paid child rearing leave followed by unpaid FMLA/NJFLA
Peter Klein	CST	UHS	9/3/2024- 9/30/2024	Unpaid leave
Marcel Royal	CST	Districtwide	9/16/2024- 6/30/2025	Paid FMLA intermittent leave

P-4. APPROVE CHANGE OF SALARY CLASS NO. 3

Approve Change of Salary Class No. 3, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

P-5. APPROVE AFFIRMATIVE ACTION OFFICERS – 2024-2025

Approve updated Affirmative Action Officers for the 2024-2025 school year, at no cost to the district, as follows: Isabella Scocoza, as Affirmative Action Officer; Lauren Walker, as Assistant Affirmative Action Officer and Ben Kloc, as Affirmative Action Officer for classroom practices.

P-6. APPROVE RESOLUTION APPROVING ROTH 403(b) AND 457(b) ACCOUNTS

Whereas, the governing Board of the Township of Union Board of Education (the “Organization”) has established 403(b) and 457(b) retirement programs that are funded through voluntary employee’s salary reduction contributions for the purpose of enhancing retirement income;

Whereas, the IRS allows this retirement program to be funded with after-tax dollars and therefore be considered a ROTH 403(b) or ROTH 457(b) retirement plan;

Whereas, the Secure Act 2.0 creates an income limit of \$145,000 for the deductibility/pre-tax contributions for anyone over age 50; and

Whereas, those earning in excess of the income limit must make the catch-up contribution to a ROTH account using after tax dollars;

Be It RESOLVED that the Organization hereby agrees to approve that the tax-shelter companies offer ROTH accounts to the employees of Township of Union Board of Education (at no cost to the district).

P-7. APPROVE JOB DESCRIPTION – BUS AIDE

Approve Job Description – Bus Aide, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

P-8. APPROVE JOB DESCRIPTION – FACILITY MANAGER

Approve Job Description – Facility Manager, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

P-9. APPROVE JOB DESCRIPTION – RESIDENCY INVESTIGATOR

Approve Job Description – Residency Investigator, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

P-10. APPROVE JOB DESCRIPTION – SUBSTITUTE TEACHER

Approve Job Description – Substitute Teacher, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

P-11. APPROVE JOB DESCRIPTION – ATHLETIC TRAINER

Approve Job Description – Athletic Trainer, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

P-12. APPROVE JOB DESCRIPTION – CONFIDENTIAL ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT TO ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT

Approve Job Description – Confidential Administrative Assistant to the Assistant Superintendent, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

P-13. APPROVE JOB DESCRIPTION – EXECUTIVE ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT TO SCHOOL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATOR/BOARD SECRETARY

Approve Job Description – Executive Administrative Assistant to the School Business Administrator/Board Secretary, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

P-14. APPROVE JOB DESCRIPTION – EXECUTIVE ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT TO SUPERINTENDENT

Approve Job Description – Executive Administrative Assistant to the Superintendent, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

DISCUSSION:

None

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

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED

Policy Committee:

POL-1. *Agenda item approved at September 10, 2024 worksession (Regulation 2464-Gifted and Talented Students)*

Residency Committee Resolutions:

Upon recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, Mrs. Scott-Hayden reported on the following resolutions:

R-1. REPORT OF STUDENTS VOLUNTARILY TRANSFERRED TO DISTRICT OF RESIDENCE

For informational purposes only (no vote required): The following residency investigations were completed and the listed student voluntarily transferred to the district of residence:

Student No.	School
#348182	Hannah Caldwell Elementary School – 2 nd grade

For informational purposes only (no vote required): The following totals are as of the August 30, 2024 Board meeting (2024-2025 school year):

Students Removed:	0
Students Voluntarily Transferred:	0

Q. Technology Committee:

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

T-1. APPROVE RECYCLING OF EQUIPMENT

Approve recycling of equipment, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

DISCUSSION:

None

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

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED

Approval of Bills:

Upon recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, and moved by Mr. Cohan, seconded by Mrs. Conteh-Mackey, 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: Ms. Carbonell, Mr. Cohan, Mrs. Mackey, Mr. McDowell, Mr. Nasta, Ms. Scott-Hayden, Mrs. Williams, Ms. Santana

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED

Ms. Santana stated she received a letter from Mrs. Williams stating she is stepping down from the Board as of September 20, 2024.

Mrs. Scott-Hayden stated thank you for your selfless time and teaching her things and she appreciates her.

Mrs. Conteh-Mackey stated she was very vocal at meetings, and it was us against them and she and Mrs. Williams connected. Thank you for your years of service.

Mr. Cohan stated thank you for your mentorship, leadership and your service.

Mr. McDowell stated thank you for your time on this Board and thank you for what you have done for our children.

Dr. Benaquista stated thank you for your many years of service. You have supported this district and wish you the best and appreciate what you have done.

Mr. Nasta stated you will be missed. You are a good mentor and wish you the best.

Ms. Carbonell read a statement from Mrs. Minneci that stated thank you for your hard work, being my running mate and friend. I will miss you and wish you the best.

Ms. Carbonell stated you were my teacher/colleague and grateful for you. Our friendship will continue.

Ms. Santana stated she was a parent and on opposite ends but we taught each other. She thanked Mrs. Williams for helping her and we worked well together. You will be missed.

Mrs. Williams stated the last eight years have been amazing for both me and the district. The first few years were not easy but this is the best Board we have had. Will miss you all and thank you for your kind words.

Unfinished Business:

Mr. Cohan stated thank you Dr. Benaquista for arranging the curriculum team to meet with the Education Committee. They understand collaboration and the potential challenges. Thank you for the focus groups at the opening day professional development. It is important to listen, respond, act on and provide support. He continued by stating he had concerns with the district but we have new leadership with us and we are on the right path.

Ms. Carbonell stated thank you to the team responding to the calendar change. There were 81 new teachers and hope they have an amazing year. Thank you to you and the staff for the opening of school.

Mrs. Conteh-Mackey stated we are moving forward with the realignment. We have assigned subcommittees and thank you to the community. Emails will be going out on Friday. She also stated that they have opened it up for more input. They welcome more community members to join.

Mr. McDowell stated there are 9-10 committees and 80-90 volunteers. We want to get as many people involved as possible.

Mr. Cohan stated the more voices the better before we come to final decisions. Realignment of the district will require logistical moves and make some people unhappy but we will try to justify. Community engagement is very important.

Ms. Santana stated welcome back and thank you to the leadership. She is very confident with this leadership. She stated she has office hours and please email her if the request is outside those hours. She also stated there are 10 open houses and she will be attending all of them.

Thank you to Livingston Garden Club – they have done great things, and she learned a lot. She also stated to please join a PTA and support them.

New Business:

Ms. Carbonell stated that Sunday is the first day of Hispanic History month. A shout out to the Hope Foundation and Frazier family and many others for the special event. She is glad to see that the schools are doing Hispanic month and would love for the students to learn about all facets – science, math, etc. She also mentioned that German History month starts in October.

Comments from the Public:

Susan Lipstein stated that she sent the Board a list of questions and to please look at it because she has concerns. Now that there is a vacancy in the Board, she hopes it is advertised and hopes that the public will be able to attend the interviews. She also stated she spent a half hour with Ms. Santana regarding the librarians. She also asked that a list of people who are in the Lehigh location be shared.

Erica Newland recognized the parents involved in the Livingston Garden Club. She stated that librarians are important and urged the district to reinstate the library specialists in all schools. She also urged Dr. Benaquista to set up the open meetings with parents and the

curriculum team. She also believes that Zoom should be brought back so all community members can participate. She also asked that parents be involved in putting together the school calendar.

Ms. Santana stated that if you are unable to attend, you can email Mrs. Koon, the Board Secretary, and she can read your email at the meeting.

Michelle Zetta stated thank you for coming to Livingston School. We received four grants, and we do continue to try to apply for more grants. She also stated the State of New Jersey passed a law – S588 – K-12 information on literacy-learning standards – it is important to have librarians. We need to support teachers and families; they need more resources. She also asked that if money can be budgeted for books for the library.

Sol Atencio stated it is important that families receive information concerning special services. Students can continue to receive services from freshmen through senior years and vocational schools.

Natercia Lopes stated we are looking for transparency and to make it better for our students. Her sons feel that high school start time should be later.

Yasha Love stated her daughter is in pre-kindergarten. On June 18th it was a very hot day. She picked up her daughter and she fell asleep. When they got home her daughter had a convulsion and she called 911. They stated it was a heat induced convulsion. This year in kindergarten at Hannah Caldwell it is not air conditioned and it is very upsetting.

Elsa DiSilva stated there are five continents and asked are they Hispanic or European.

Ann Margaret Shannon (UTEA President) stated thank you to everyone for a smooth school opening. Mrs. Williams, you will be missed. We appreciate the Board and good luck in the future.

Kathleen Bruns-Meyers stated the beginning of the school year has been great and exhausting. She was glad that the questions we presented to you were part of your presentation. Regarding the realignment committee – kudos to Jill Hall for sharing her information. Mrs. Williams, it was great to see you at Livingston, you have always maintained a respective behavior, thank you for speaking about mental health and you are always welcomed at Livingston.

MOTION TO ADJOURN:

There being no further business before the Board in public session it was moved by Mr. Cohan, seconded by Mrs. Williams, that the meeting be adjourned at 8:43 p.m.

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

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,

Yolanda Koon

YOLANDA KOON
BOARD SECRETARY

