

TOWNSHIP OF UNION BOARD OF EDUCATION  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES – September 16, 2025

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 16, 2025 at 6:00 p.m. at the DMK, Black Box Theater, 1980 Morris Avenue, Union, New Jersey pursuant to notice sent to each member.

Ms. Carbonell called the meeting to order at 6:02 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 (arrived 6:23 p.m.)

ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT:

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

ALSO PRESENT:

Mr. Christopher Buggy, Esq.

Mr. Cohan led the Board and audience members 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.

MOTION FOR EXECUTIVE SESSION:

Moved by Mrs. Scott-Hayden, seconded by Ms. Santana, 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, legal issues

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 7:02 p.m.

**MOTION TO RETURN TO PUBLIC SESSION:**

There being no further business before the Board it was moved by Mrs. Scott-Hayden, seconded by Mrs. Faria, that the Board return to public session at 7:02 p.m.

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

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED

**Approval of Minutes:**

Moved by Mrs. Minneci, seconded by Mrs. Santana, that the following resolutions be adopted:

1. August 12, 2025 – special meeting
2. August 12, 2025 – executive session
3. August 26, 2025 – regular meeting
4. August 26, 2025 – executive session

**DISCUSSION:**

None

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

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: Mrs. Faria (#1, #2), Mrs. Scott-Hayden

MOTION CARRIED

**Communications:**

**LETTER OF RESIGNATION UPDATE – BRAVETTE**

Letter of resignation update from Vittoria Bravette, math teacher-Burnet Middle School, effective August 31, 2025.

**LETTER OF RESIGNATION – CINO**

Letter of resignation from Jessica Cino, music teacher-Kawameeh Middle School, effective September 29, 2025.

LETTER OF RESIGNATION – ELLIOTT

Letter of resignation from Kenneth Elliott, long-term substitute security officer-Burnet Middle School, effective August 18, 2025.

LETTER OF RESIGNATION – ESPOSITO

Letter of resignation from Desiree Esposito, preschool teacher assistant-Hannah Caldwell Elementary School, effective August 31, 2025.

LETTER OF RESIGNATION – TILLMAN

Letter of resignation from Kamuela Tillman, special education teacher-Kawameeh Middle School, effective October 8, 2025.

LETTER OF RESIGNATION – VENEZIO

Letter of resignation from Ketly Venezia, bus aide-Transportation Department, effective September 4, 2025.

REQUEST FOR LEAVE UPDATE – SELBY

Request for leave update from Alysse Selby, English teacher-Union High School, new return date November 25, 2025.

REQUEST FOR LEAVE – DINO

Request for paid FMLA from James Dino, career education teacher-Union High School, September 2, 2025-October 10, 2025.

REQUEST FOR LEAVE GEORGE

Request for paid sick leave from Sheren George, paraprofessional-Burnet Middle School, September 2, 2025-September 25, 2025.

REQUEST FOR LEAVE – STANDAL

Request for paid sick leave from Laura Standal, teacher-Franklin Elementary School, September 2, 2025-September 15, 2025.

REQUEST FOR LEAVE – CHERIAN

Request for paid child rearing leave followed by unpaid FMLA/NJFLA from Jasmine Cherian, second grade teacher-Hannah Caldwell Elementary School, October 9, 2025-November 17, 2025.

REQUEST FOR LEAVE – MAZUR

Request for paid FMLA from Rebecca Mazur, social studies teacher-Union High School, September 2, 2025-December 1, 2025.

REQUEST FOR LEAVE – CAMPBELL

Request for unpaid FMLA from Paul Campbell, music teacher-various schools, October 27, 2025-December 22, 2025.

REQUEST FOR INTERMITTENT LEAVE – ASHRAF

Request for paid intermittent FMLA from Lisa Ashraf, counselor-Kawameeh Middle School, September 2, 2025-June 15, 2026.

REQUEST FOR INTERMITTENT LEAVE – WEBER

Request for paid intermittent FMLA from Patricia Weber, fourth grade teacher-Battle Hill Elementary School, September 2, 2025-June 15, 2026.

REQUEST FOR INTERMITTENT LEAVE – TENNEN

Request for paid intermittent FMLA from Lindsey Tennen, teacher-Kawameeh Middle School, October 1, 2025-June 15, 2026.

REQUEST FOR INTERMITTENT LEAVE – CORTES

Request for paid intermittent FMLA leave from Tatiana Cortes, special education teacher-Connecticut Farms Elementary School, September 4, 2025-June 15, 2026.

REQUEST FOR INTERMITTENT LEAVE – SINOCCHI

Request for paid intermittent FMLA from Jennifer Sinocchi, speech teacher-Connecticut Farms Elementary School, September 4, 2025-June 15, 2026.

REQUEST FOR INTERMITTENT LEAVE – LAMA

Request for paid intermittent FMLA from Salomon Lama, teacher-Burnet Middle School, September 4, 2025-June 15, 2026.

REQUEST FOR INTERMITTENT LEAVE – PATRICCO

Request for paid intermittent FMLA from Mary Ellen Patricco, fourth grade teacher-Connecticut Farms Elementary School, September 15, 2025-June 15, 2026.

REQUEST FOR INTERMITTENT LEAVE – KORZEN

Request for paid intermittent FMLA from Olga Korzen, fourth grade teacher-Connecticut Farms Elementary School, September 2, 2025-June 30, 2026.

REQUEST FOR LEAVE – PEREZ

Request for paid FMLA followed by intermittent FMLA from Marixa Perez-IT specialist-Union High School, September 15, 2025-January 30, 2026

REQUEST FOR LEAVE UPDATE – D’ANDREA

Updated request for unpaid FMLA from Christopher D’Andrea, physical education teacher-Union High School, December 15, 2025-December 23, 2025.

REQUEST FOR LEAVE – ALVAREZ

Request for paid FMLA followed by intermittent FMLA from Theresa Alvarez, teacher assistant-Battle Hill Elementary School, September 24, 2025-June 15, 2026.

**REQUEST FOR LEAVE – SEKIYA**

Request for paid intermittent FMLA from Christopher Sekiya, physical education teacher-Franklin Elementary School, September 11, 2025-June 15, 2026.

**REQUEST FOR LEAVE – RECALDE**

Request for paid FMLA followed by intermittent FMLA from Martha Recalde, ESL teacher-Livingston Elementary School, September 11, 2025-June 15, 2026.

**REQUEST FOR USE OF JEFFERSON SCHOOL – TOWNSHIP OF UNION RECREATION DEPARTMENT**

Request from the Township of Union Recreation Department to use a classroom and the gym at Jefferson School for the B-Wise Alliance for the 2025-2026 school year (starting October 1, 2025) from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. (M-F)

**REQUEST FOR USE OF UNION HIGH SCHOOL GYM – UNION COUNTY COLLEGE**

Request from Union County College volleyball team to use the Union High School gym on Saturday, October 11, 2025 from 10 a.m.-3 p.m. for a volleyball game and October 2-3, 6-10, 14, 16, 17, 21-22, 24, 27-31 from 6 p.m.- 8 p.m. for volleyball practice.

[Comments from Public \(on resolution\):](#)

Ms. Carbonell read a statement to the audience thanking them for attending, the Board values their input and asked that comments be respectful and constructive.

Ann Margaret Shannon – asked the Board not to use UTEA members for district problems. The district has created new positions, but they are not in the contract. She asked that stipends be negotiated. She indicated that teachers should not oversee discipline; let the vice principals do their job. She asked that the district fix the personnel vacancies by hiring replacement personnel.

Virginia Jeffries – August 26<sup>th</sup> agenda – she had concerns about the bills list and Taylor Law Group. September 9<sup>th</sup> agenda - she indicated that the policy/regulation 8371.1 was pulled from the agenda without an explanation. She indicated that on tonight's agenda, policy/regulation 8371.1 was not available and asked why the Taylor Law firm invoice is being voted on again tonight.

Board members welcomed back the staff and students, wished them a successful new year and thanked the teachers that go above and beyond.

[Superintendent's Report:](#)

Duetech Aine, Manager of Clinical Services, Patricia Bridges, Mental Health Clinician, Dr. Yemisi Abiona, PHD, LCSW and Caroline Arreaga, LCSW gave a presentation to the Board and community on TUPS Mental Health Programs. The presentation is appended to the minutes and a summary is below:

Overview: S.T.A.R.T. – Student Therapeutic Assistance Resource Team – dedicated team of mental health professionals with years of experience assisting children and families with their needs.

Mission Statement – To provide comprehensive and impactful mental health services that support the social and emotional well-being of our diverse student population.

Program Objectives – (a) foster emotional resilience among students, (b) provide access to mental health services/resources, (c) encourage a supportive school environment.

Key Goals – (a) improve student mental health outcomes, (b) increase awareness and reduce stigma, (c) collaborate with families and community partners.

Services Provided – (a) short-term individual counseling for students dealing with problems impacting their daily functioning, (b) small group counseling sessions for students, (c) social skills training for students.

How to Access Services – (a) self-referral, (b) teacher/staff/parent referral, (c) school counselor/Child Study Team.

2024-2025 Highlights – (a) served over 240 students, (b) collaborated with external agencies, (c) connected students with apprenticeship opportunities, (d) liaison between parents, teachers and school, (e) support in decreasing school avoidant behavior.

What's Next? – (a) meditation group for students and staff, (b) parent group, (c) social skills group, (d) mental health fair, (e) classroom interventions.

Board members congratulated the team and thanked them for supporting the students, teachers and parents.

Carla Vicari and Aracely DiGirolamo gave a presentation to the Board and community on Union Special Education Parent Advisory Group (SEPAG). The presentation is appended to the minutes, and an outline is below:

#### Year at a Glance – 2024- 2025

- Main goal – Transition Planning
- Tasks to achieve goal – (a) provided district administration with multiple resources about Transition Planning, Student-Directed IEP, Self-Advocacy, Guardianship and its alternatives, (b) participated in lunchtime Town Hall and Learning Event, (c) maintained close communication with Special Services Director, (d) developed a Google Classroom with different and important resources about Transition Planning
- SEPAG parent leaders attended professional training
- Union SEPAG Recognition – co-chairs received the “Debbie Esposito Parent Leadership Award and the co-chairs were invited to participate as panelists during the New Jersey Special Education Annual Summit

- Back to School Night Presentations and PTA meeting participation
- Meeting with school administration
- Collaboration with other districts SEPAG
- Monthly Meetings with members

Board members thanked Mrs. Vicari and Mrs. DiGirolamo for their presentation, the collaboration with Union and providing support to our parents and students.

Dr. Benaquista shared the dates for all the school's Open House. He advised that this and additional information is shared by the schools through ParentSquare.

Update from HR: Vincent Rettino:

Special Services:

- BMS – ICR/OCR
- KMS – ICR/OCR
- UHS – ICR/OCR

Other:

- HCES – Kindergarten
- FES – RTI and 1<sup>st</sup> grade teacher
- BMS leadership – interviewed at building level
- Pre-K – relief teacher

Dr. Benaquista reported that there were no HIB incidents to report for the period August 27-September 9<sup>th</sup>.

TUPS Talking Points:

- Branding – setting standards across all touchpoints – Mission Statement, Vision Statement, Strategic Plan
- Enrollment – 2024-2025 – 7791; 2025-2026 – 7473
- Lunch applications: <http://www.tups.org/tupsfoodnutrition>
- Staff Excellence: Professional Development: Adhering to Policy

TUPS Attendance Initiative – We care about U! Show up all day, everyday Attendance Matters:

- Being in school every day helps students succeed
- Stay in the loop with ParentSquare
- How parents and students can help

Events around the U:

- Hispanic Heritage Month
- 21<sup>st</sup> Century After-School Program
- Health and Wellness Fair
- UHS Football Alumni Day

## 2025-2026 – New Staff Members

## Education/Student Discipline Committee Resolutions:

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

E-1. *Agenda item reported at September 9, 2025 worksession (Superintendent Report of HIB – August 27-September 9, 2025)*

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

Superintendent’s Report of Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying (HIB) for the period September 10, 2025 to September 16, 2025 (*no incidents to report*) (*no vote required; for reporting purposes only*).

## E-2. APPROVE STUDENT ASSEMBLIES – WASHINGTON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Approve Prismatic Magic to provide two bullying prevention assemblies at Washington Elementary School for students on October 10, 2025, at the cost of \$1,298.00.

## E-3. APPROVE ACCEPTANCE OF ADDITIONAL FUNDS – SCHOOL BASED MENTAL HEALTH GRANT

Approve acceptance of additional funds in the amount of \$261,000.00 for the grant award of School Based Mental Health Grant for September 1, 2025-December 31, 2026.

## E-4. APPROVE APPLICATION – MENTAL HEALTH SCREENING IN SCHOOLS

Approve application for the Mental Health Screening in Schools (MHSS) continuation application for the 2025-2026 school year.

## E-5. APPROVE SUSPENSION – STUDENT

Approve continuation of long-term suspension for student #266593 from the general education program.

## DISCUSSION:

None

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

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED

## Fiscal and Planning Committee Resolutions:

Mr. Cohan explained to the Board and community that the \$4.2 million state aid will be appropriated to pay bills for the remediation of Hannah Caldwell School.

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



**F-1. TREASURER'S REPORT**

That the Treasurer's Report dated August 31, 2025 be accepted.

**F-2. SECRETARY'S REPORT**

That the Secretary's Report dated August 31, 2025 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, 2025 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, 2025 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 DISTRICTWIDE TRAVEL AND RELATED EXPENSES**

Approve districtwide 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. 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 2025-2026 STATE CONTRACT APPROVED VENDORS**

Approve the amended list of the 2025-2026 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 | 3290/Field Hockey  | UHS/Kastle Fundraising – estimate for chocolate fundraiser   | \$2,500.00 (not to exceed) |
| Union High School | 3240/Football      | UHS/Nesbit Digital – UHS/football team and individual photos | \$3,000.00 (not to exceed) |

**F-9B. APPROVE FUNDRAISERS**

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

| Event Name                               | Date                              | Purpose  |
|--|-----------------------------------|--|
| Snack Sales                              | September 17, 2025- June 30, 2026 | UHS/Athletics – Student Trainer Club – to raise funds to purchase clothing and end of year celebration |
| Chocolate Fundraiser                     | September 17- November 5, 2025    | UHS/Athletics – UHS Field Hockey – to raise funds for team   |
| BSN Clothing Fundraiser                  | January 1-June 15, 2026           | UHS/Softball – to raise funds for end of year events   |
| Dress Down                               | September 17, 2025- June 15, 2026 | UHS/Softball – to raise funds for end of year events   |
| Launch Fundraiser                        | March 1-June 15, 2026             | UHS/Softball – to raise funds for end of year events   |
| Chipotle Fundraiser                      | March 1-June 15, 2026             | UHS/Softball – to raise funds for end of year events   |
| Chocolate Sales                          | March 1-June 15, 2026             | UHS/Softball – to raise funds for end of year events   |
| Dinner Theatre                           | September 17- November 16, 2025   | UHSPAC – to raise funds for spring musical   |
| Snack Sale                               | September 17, 2025- June 30, 2026 | UHS/Key Club – to raise funds for annual DECON convention  |
| T-Shirt Sale                             | September 18-30, 2025             | Franklin Elementary School – to raise fund for student activities                                      |
| Snack Sales/Field Day Event; Shirt Sales | September 17, 2025                | Burnet Middle School/Student Council – to raise funds for service projects                             |

**F-10. APPROVE 2025-2026 OUT-OF-DISTRICT STUDENT PLACEMENT LIST**

Approval be given to amend the 2025-2026 out-of-district student placement list (month of September 2025), in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

**F-11. APPROVE JOINT TRANSPORTATION AGREEMENT – GATEWAY REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT**

Approve State of New Jersey – Department of Education Student Transportation Unit, Joint Transportation Agreement with Gateway Regional High School District (host district), for school

year 2025-2026, in the amount not to exceed \$20,682.00, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

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

Accept the Nonpublic School Nursing Aid from the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) for the 2025-2026 school year as follows: (a) St. Michael's School - \$44,990.00 and (b) United Academy of Union - \$19,074.00 [for a total of \$64,064.00], in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

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

Accept the Nonpublic Security Aid from the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) for the 2025-2026 school year as follows: (a) St. Michael's School - \$63,345.00 and (b) United Academy of Union - \$26,855.00 [for a total of \$90,200.00], in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

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

Accept the Nonpublic Technology Aid from the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) for the 2025-2026 school year as follows: (a) St. Michael's School - \$12,264.00 and (b) United Academy of Union - \$5,199.00 [for a total of \$17,463.00], in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

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

Accept Nonpublic Textbook Aid from the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) for the 2025-2026 school year as follows: (a) St. Michael's School - \$17,187.00 and (b) United Academy of Union - \$7,286.00 [for a total of \$24,473.00], in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

**F-16. APPROVE ACCEPTANCE OF GRANTS – SPECIAL OLYMPICS – UNIFIED CHAMPION SCHOOLS**

Approve acceptance of the grants awarded from Special Olympics New Jersey-Unified Champion Schools 2025-2026 as follows: (a) Union High School - \$3,500.00, (b) Burnet Middle School - \$1,500.00, (c) Kawameeh Middle School - \$1,000.00 and (d) Washington Elementary School - \$700.00, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

**F-ATTY.** *For informational purposes only – vote not required.* List of legal services paid as of August 26, 2025 for the 2025-2026 fiscal year, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

**DISCUSSION:**

None

**AYE:** Mr. Cohan, Mrs. Conteh-Mackey, Mrs. Faria, 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 resolutions were moved by Mr. Nasta, seconded by Mrs. Conteh-Mackey, for adoption:

#### O-1. APPROVE REQUEST FOR USE OF JEFFERSON SCHOOL – TOWNSHIP OF UNION RECREATION DEPARTMENT

Approve request from the Township of Union Recreation Department to use a classroom and the gym at Jefferson School for the B-Wise Alliance for the 2025-2026 school year (starting October 1, 2025) from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. (M-F), in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

#### O-2. APPROVE RESOLUTION TO PARTICIPATE IN SUSTAINABLE JERSEY FOR SCHOOLS

Approve resolution for the Township of Union Board of Education to participate in sustainable Jersey for Schools, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

#### O-3. APPROVE REQUEST FOR USE OF UNION HIGH SCHOOL GYM – UNION COUNTY COLLEGE

Approve request from Union County College volleyball team to use the Union High School gym on Saturday, October 11, 2025 from 10 a.m.-3 p.m. for a volleyball game and October 2-3, 6-10, 14, 16-17, 21-22, 24, 27-31 from 6 p.m.- 8 p.m. for volleyball practice.

#### T-1. APPROVE RECYCLING OF EQUIPMENT

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

#### DISCUSSION:

None

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

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED

#### Personnel Committee Resolutions:

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

P-1A. *Agenda item approved at September 9, 2025 worksession (new hires)*

P-1B *Agenda item approved at September 9, 2025 worksession (extra pay)*

P-1C *Agenda item approved at September 9, 2025 worksession (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. *Agenda item approved at September 9, 2025 worksession (substitute lists)*

**P-2A. APPROVE SUBSTITUTE LISTS**

Approve Substitute Lists for the 2025-2026 school year.

| Name                | Position   | Rate                                 |
|---------------------|--|--------------------------------------|
| Henry Jensen        | Daily sub  | \$140.00/per day (pending paperwork) |
| Amber Fernandes     | Daily sub  | \$140.00/per day (pending paperwork) |
| Matthew Hoyt        | Daily sub  | \$140.00/per day (pending paperwork) |
| Arianna Rodrigues   | Daily sub  | \$140.00/per day (pending paperwork) |
| Valentina Schiavane | Daily sub  | \$140.00/per day (pending paperwork) |
| Reginald Johnson    | Daily sub/coach  | \$140.00/per day                     |
| Gregg Channon       | Daily sub  | \$140.00/per day                     |
| Kimberly Rowland    | Daily sub  | \$140.00/per day                     |
| Carmie Boxley       | Daily sub  | \$140.00/per day                     |
| Habib Habibullah    | Sub-custodian  | \$16.00/hr.                          |
| Robert Tavares      | Maintenance Substitute -<br>Operations and Maintenance<br>Department | \$42.00/hr.                          |

**P-3A. ACCEPT LETTERS OF RESIGNATION/RETIREMENT**

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

| Name              | Position                       | Location        | Eff. Date | Reason      | Years of Service |
|-------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------|-----------|-------------|------------------|
| Vittoria Bravette | Math teacher                   | BMS             | 8/30/2025 | Resignation |                  |
| Jessica Cino      | Music teacher                  | KMS             | 9/29/2025 | Resignation |                  |
| Kenneth Elliott   | Long-term sub security officer | BMS             | 8/18/2025 | Resignation |                  |
| Desiree Esposito  | Preschool teacher assistant    | Hannah Caldwell | 8/31/2025 | Resignation |                  |
| Kamuella Tillman  | Special Ed teacher             | KMS             | 10/8/2025 | Resignation |                  |

|               |          |                      |          |             |  |
|---------------|----------|----------------------|----------|-------------|--|
| Ketly Venezio | Bus aide | Transportation Dept. | 9/4/2025 | Resignation |  |
|---------------|----------|----------------------|----------|-------------|--|

## P-3B. APPROVE LEAVES

Approve leaves for the following staff:

| Name                | Position                      | Location          | Leave Dates                         | Leave Type   |
|---------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------------------------|--|
| Alysse Selby        | English teacher               | UHS               | New return date<br>11/25/25         | New return date  |
| James Dino          | Career Education teacher      | UHS               | 9/2/2025-10/10/2025                 | Paid FMLA  |
| Sheren George       | Paraprofessional              | BMS               | 9/2/2025-9/25/2025                  | Paid sick leave  |
| Laura Standal       | Teacher                       | Franklin          | 9/2/2025-9/15/2025                  | Paid sick leave  |
| Jasmine Cherian     | 2 <sup>nd</sup> grade teacher | Hannah Caldwell   | 10/9/2025-11/17/2025                | Paid child rearing leave followed by unpaid FMLA/NJFLA |
| Rebecca Mazur       | Social Studies teacher        | UHS               | 9/2/2025-12/1/2025                  | Paid FMLA  |
| Paul Campbell       | Music teacher                 | Various schools   | 10/27/2025-12/22/2025               | Unpaid FMLA  |
| Lisa Ashraf         | Counselor                     | KMS               | Intermittent<br>9/2/2025-6/15/2026  | Paid intermittent FMLA                                 |
| Patricia Weber      | 4 <sup>th</sup> grade teacher | Battle Hill       | Intermittent<br>9/2/2025-6/15/2026  | Paid intermittent FMLA                                 |
| Lindsey Tennen      | Teacher                       | KMS               | Intermittent<br>10/1/2025-6/15/2026 | Paid intermittent FMLA                                 |
| Tatiana Cortes      | Special Ed teacher            | Connecticut Farms | Intermittent<br>9/4/2025-6/15/2026  | Paid intermittent FMLA                                 |
| Jennifer Sinocchi   | Speech teacher                | Connecticut Farms | Intermittent<br>9/4/2025-6/15/2026  | Paid intermittent FMLA                                 |
| Salomon Lama        | Teacher                       | BMS               | Intermittent<br>9/4/2025-6/15/2026  | Paid intermittent FMLA                                 |
| Mary Ellen Patricco | 4 <sup>th</sup> grade teacher | Connecticut Farms | Intermittent<br>9/15/2025-6/15/2026 | Paid intermittent FMLA                                 |
| Olga Korzen         | 4 <sup>th</sup> grade teacher | Connecticut Farms | Intermittent<br>9/2/2025-6/30/2026  | Paid intermittent FMLA                                 |
| Marixa Perez        | IT specialist                 | UHS               | 9/15/2025-1/30/2026                 | Paid FMLA followed by intermittent FMLA                |

|                      |                   |             |                                  |   |
|----------------------|-------------------|-------------|----------------------------------|---|
| Christopher D'Andrea | PE teacher        | UHS         | 12/15/2025-12/23/2025            | Unpaid FMLA                             |
| Theresa Alvarez      | Teacher Assistant | Battle Hill | 9/24/2025-6/15/2026              | Paid FMLA followed by intermittent FMLA |
| Christopher Sekiya   | PE teacher        | Franklin    | Intermittent 9/11/2025-6/15/2026 | Paid intermittent FMLA                  |
| Martha Recalde       | ESL teacher       | Livingston  | 9/11/2025-6/15/2026              | Paid FMLA followed by intermittent FMLA |

**P-4. APPROVE STUDENT TEACHERS AND INTERNSHIPS**

Approve student teachers and internships for the 2025-2026 school year, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

**P-5. APPROVE DESIGNEES – STUDENT ACTIVITIES ACCOUNT**

Approve designees for the Student Activities Accounts for the 2025-2026 school year for Union High School, Kawameeh and Burnet Middle School, Jefferson School, Battle Hill, Connecticut Farms, Franklin Hannah Caldwell, Livingston and Washington Elementary Schools, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

**P-6. APPROVE ATTENDANCE AT VARIOUS MEETINGS – TRANSITION PROGRAMS**

Approve Sarah McCulloh and/or Natalie Mauriello, district School Social Workers, Lauren Kohn, John Trzeszkowski, Dana Meixner and/or Janine Pascucci, district teachers, Christina Shpunder, district Learning Disabilities Teacher Consultant, and/or Daniel Seugling, district School Psychologist to attend/visit the various meetings/locations as part of our transition program, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

**P-7. APPROVE CHANGE OF SALARY CLASS #2 – EFFECTIVE SEPTEMBER 2025**

Approve Change of Salary Class #2 (effective September 2025), in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

**P-8. APPROVE NONPUBLIC SCHOOLS GRANT AWARD TO SCHOOL DISTRICT TEACHERS**

Approve the FY2026 Teach STEM Classes in Nonpublic Schools Grant Award to School District Teacher, Michael Spekhardt, to teach STEM classes at the Joseph Kushner Hebrew Academy for the 2025-2026 school year, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

**P-9. APPROVE ATTENDANCE AT NJSBA WORKSHOP**

Approve Jeremy Cohen, Director of Curriculum and Instruction and John Sousa, Chief Information and Technology Officer, to attend the NJSBA Workshop Convention in Atlantic City, New Jersey (October 21-23, 2025).

**P-10. APPROVE ATTENDANCE – MUJC MEETINGS**

Approve Alina Loguidice and Latoya Nelson-Piccott to attend the Instructional Coach Subcommittee meetings at Morris Union Jointure Commission (MUJC), at no cost to the district for the 2025-2026 school year.

P-11. *Agenda item approved at September 9, 2025 worksession (attendance-PD)*

P-12. APPROVE JOB DESCRIPTION – STUDENT SUPPORT TEACHER

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

P-13. APPROVE INCREASE IN SUBSTITUTE RATE

Approve the following increases to the substitute rate, effective November 1, 2025: (a) substitute certificate -\$160.00 per day and (b) teaching certificate - \$170.00 per day.

DISCUSSION:

None

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

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED

Policy Committee:

Mr. Buggy read language that will be inserted into Policy 7510 concerning naming the Township of Union Board of Education as an additional insured to the Certificate of Insurance that needs to be provided when using district facilities.

Upon recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools and the Policy Committee, the following policies were moved by Mrs. Minneci, seconded by Mrs. Faria for **SECOND READING/ADOPTION**):

POL-1. POLICY 7510 – USE OF SCHOOL FACILITIES

Approve Policy 7510 – Use of School Facilities (M), in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

REG-1. REGULATION 7510 – USE OF SCHOOL FACILITIES

Approve Regulation 7510 – Use of School Facilities (M), in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

DISCUSSION:

None

AYE: Mr. Cohan, Mrs. Conteh-Mackey, Mrs. Faria, 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 and the Policy Committee, the following policies were considered for ***FIRST READING***:

**POL-2. POLICY 8467.1 - WEAPON SCREENING**

Approve Policy 8467.1 - Weapon Screening, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

**REG-2. REGULATION 8467.1 – WEAPON DETECTION SYSTEM**

Approve Regulation 8467.1 – Weapon Detection System, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

**DISCUSSION:**

The second reading/adoption for Policy/Regulation 8467.1 will be at the Board's October worksession.

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

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: Mr. Cohan

**MOTION CARRIED**

**Residency Committee Resolutions:**

Upon recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the following was reported by Mrs. Minneci:

**R-1. REPORT OF STUDENT VOLUNTARILY TRANSFERRED TO DISTRICT OF RESIDENCE**

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

| Student No. | School                     | Grade                 |
|-------------|----------------------------|-----------------------|
| #348175     | Franklin Elementary School | 4 <sup>th</sup> grade |

**Approval of Bills:**

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

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

**MOTION CARRIED**

## Unfinished Business:

None

## New Business:

Mrs. Scott-Hayden – highlighting news – UTEA wanted to share that on social media that they are targeting individuals and they were false accusations. There needs to be guidance. UTEA will be sending out an email.

Mrs. Minneci – attended the Memorial Day committee meeting and our seniors at the senior center enjoy our students when they visit. She suggested technology and art students go over to the senior center. She thanked the district for allowing students to go there.

Unions Got Talent – send your video auditions. It is open to all students in Union County.

Ms. Santana – she attended the UHS PTA meeting, and she is looking forward to supporting our PTAs. She told the community that anyone can join the PTA.

Ms. Carbonell asked Dr. Rodriguez to speak about the new State test. Dr. Rodriguez indicated that it is the Adaptive Test (NJSLA/NJGPA) for grades 3 to high school. The test adapts to the student level. All students will have different tests. They will be field testing grades 4-10 in October. The results will be used for NJDOE internal controls.

## Comments from the Public:

Virginia Jeffries - August 26<sup>th</sup> agenda – approval of bills – attorney invoices were posted twice. Policy/Regulation 8467.1 – the attachment was not included. Safety of students is not always easy. She indicated that the district should also include the elementary and middle schools. Northeast contract – money can be better spent hiring district paraprofessionals.

Ann Margaret Shannon – UTEA president. She was happy to hear about the START program. UTEA was championing bringing mental health in house. She indicated she gave the UTEA membership off tonight. They will all be there on September 22<sup>nd</sup> to cheer us on.

Anita Lowery – employed at UHS. She indicated she has concerns at UHS. She asked if the police could be present at North Street and the cafeteria door to give out tickets. She has witnessed staff members being disrespected by parents and students. She indicated there is speeding, electric bikes on sidewalks. Twelve security guards are not enough; please hire more. She indicated that students are still coming in with non-clear backpacks. She told the Board that she is grateful for her job and loves her job. She works with new students, and 100 new students entered this year.

Dr. Benaquista - he would advocate for the Union Police.

Mrs. Faria - maybe signs need to be installed for drop-off points.

Ms. Carbonell – safety/security is key, and we will do everything possible to keep our students and staff safe. Ms. McKenzie and her team will look into this.

Lyn Cornacchia – paraprofessional, Livingston Elementary School – she read the definition of a teacher. She indicated that every profession was taught by others – teachers, nurses, parents. Your parents were your first teachers. How can students respect us if you don't.

Ms. Carbonell – this does not mean we do not respect you. We have been screamed at. We need to be on the same page and hopefully this will be resolved sooner than later.

John Zurka – a leave replacement in the district. He was approved on May 20<sup>th</sup>, he archived his fingerprints in June and was contracted in July. He received a live check because payroll could not find the approval, and it was too late to have direct deposit.

Christine Zurka – there is a paraprofessional shortage, and it worsens by the day. A non-reporter showed up and another paraprofessional was pulled from an assigned student. When will administration solve this problem. She indicated she is working harder without a contract.

Michelle Zatta – she is a parent for students at Livingston and Hannah Caldwell Elementary Schools. She told the Board she sent an email indicating that the air conditioning is not working in the pre-k wing. She is a taxpayer, and she would like answers in a timely manner and would like an update.

She also indicated that she requested iReady scores from Dr. Rodriguez and has not received anything. She also submitted an OPRA request. Her concern is K-3 literacy screening.

Mrs. Faria – advised that the information from iReady is for educational purposes and is for educators not parents. NJSLA/NJGPA was reported last month. The information is irrelevant to you; it is only relevant to the district. Not everything can be shared with everyone.

Ms. Carbonell – Dr. Rodriguez will do a presentation in October.

Mr. Buggy – you will receive a response to your OPRA.

#### MOTION FOR EXECUTIVE SESSION:

Moved by Mr. Cohan, seconded by Mr. Nasta, that the Board go into Executive Session at 9:29 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

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, Mrs. Faria, 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 9:58 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 9:58 p.m.

All present voting YES:

MOTION CARRIED

**MOTION TO ADJOURN:**

There being no further business before the Board in public session it was moved by Mr. Cohan, seconded by Ms. Santana, that the meeting be adjourned at 9:58 p.m.

All present voting YES

MOTION CARRIED

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,

*Yolanda Koon*

YOLANDA KOON  
BOARD SECRETARY

