

TOWNSHIP OF UNION BOARD OF EDUCATION
WORKSESSION MINUTES – September 9, 2025

NOTICE OF MEETING:

TO ALL BOARD OF EDUCATION MEMBERS:

The worksession meeting of the Board of Education of the Township of Union was held on Tuesday, September 9, 2025 at 7:00 p.m. at the Administration Building, 2369 Morris Avenue, Union, New Jersey pursuant to the notice sent to each member. Action was taken.

Mrs. Scott-Hayden called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.

PRESENT AT ROLL CALL:

Mrs. Elsie Conteh-Mackey, Mrs. Guida Faria, Mr. Ronnie McDowell, Mr. Greg Nasta, Ms. Chastity Santana, Mrs. Kimberly Scott-Hayden

ABSENT AT ROLL CALL:

Ms. Dixiana Carbonell, Mr. Michael Cohan, Mrs. Nancy Minneci

ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT:

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

ALSO PRESENT:

Mr. Christopher Buggy, Esq.

Mrs. Faria led the Board in the Pledge of Allegiance and read the district's mission statement.

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

Approval of Minutes:

Minutes will be approved at next week's meeting.

Communications:

Communications are part of personnel.

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

David Arminio informed the Board and audience on the following: (a) Friday, September 12th – home football game against St. Joseph. Please support our football team. (b) September 28th - Mayor's 5K Race – will raise funds to support a family in Union. (c) Julian Dantas won the Township of Union 250th Celebration logo contest (\$250.00). (d) Summer reading – 1,185 participants which included students and adults. (e) Friends of Union Library will provide a free leaf on the donor tree for the district. (f) September 24th – there is a fundraiser at Cold Stone and

there will donate 50% to the Friends of Union Library (g) September 13th – shred day at Connect One Bank – you have to register.

Christina Zurka – spoke about the lack of paraprofessionals and that her class is short 4 paraprofessionals. Three ESS employees wanted to come back but the district never reached out to them. She indicated that we are out of compliance, and it needs to be corrected.

Virginia Jeffries – had questions about the August 26th agenda - the list of bills and claim and the attorney list of invoices; Northeast Contract and because of this there is a shortage of hiring; the elementary and middle schools should not be left out of POL-2/REG-2 – weapon screening on tonight's agenda.

Ann Margaret Shannon – thanked Mr. Shaw for giving her a tour of Hannah Caldwell. She indicated that there are three places where there are water-stained titles. She also thanked Ms. McKenzie.

P-1A, P-1B – she questioned 7th period stipends. Why are we finding out about stipends for new positions? For extended detention, why is administration getting stipends, the stipends should be going to other employees, not administrators.

P-2 – she asked why the district is hiring a retired person when there are other people in the district that can get this done. This is a bigger management problem.

She hopes in 25-26 that the district can genuinely work with the UTEA

Superintendent's Report:

Presentations will be made at next week's meeting.

Education/Student Discipline Committee Resolutions:

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

E-1. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT OF HIB

Superintendent's Report of Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying (HIB) for the period August 27, 2025 to September 9, 2025 (no incidents to report) (*no vote required; for reporting purposes only*).

All other agenda items will be presented at next week's regular meeting of the Board.

Fiscal and Planning Committee Resolutions:

Agenda items will be presented at next week's regular meeting of the Board.

Operations/Technology Committee Resolutions:

Agenda items will be presented at next week's regular meeting of the Board.

Personnel Committee Resolutions:

Upon recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the following resolutions were moved by Ms. Santana, seconded by Mr. Nasta for adoption:

P-1A. PERSONNEL ACTIONS – NEW HIRES

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

P-1B PERSONNEL ACTIONS – EXTRA PAY

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

P-1C PERSONNEL ACTIONS – TRANSFERS

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

P-2. APPROVE SUBSTITUTE LISTS

Approve Substitute Lists for the 2025-2026 school year.

Name	Position	Rate
Chemora-Lynn E. Jones	Substitute custodian	\$16.00/hr.
Isabela Moutela	Daily sub	\$150.00/per day
Casey Walker	Daily sub	\$140.00/per day
William Bellinger	Daily sub	\$140.00/per day (pending paperwork)
Tokunboh Olusoga	Daily sub	\$140.00/per day
Sandra Walker	Daily sub	\$140.00/per day (pending paperwork)
Ronald Zieser Sr.	Substitute Assistant Manager in Operations and Maintenance Department (effective 8/6/2025)	\$42.00/hr.

P-11. APPROVE ATTENDANCE AT PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Approve attendance at Extreme Networks professional development regarding integrating networks and security to improve efficiency, scalability and innovation, including Cloud-Based Network Management, Wired-Access, Network Fabric, Wireless Access, Network Security and SD-WAN for Dr. Gerry Benaquista, Marissa McKenzie and John Sousa in Salem, New Hampshire on September 17-18, 2025, at a cost not to exceed \$1,200.00.

DISCUSSION:

None

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

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED

All other agenda items will be presented at next week's regular meeting of the Board.

Policy Committee:

Policy 8467.1 – Weapon Screening and Regulation 8467.1 – Weapon Detection System are under review by Board counsel and therefore were tabled until the Board’s regular meeting.

Upon recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools and the Policy Committee, the following policies were moved by Mrs. Faria, seconded by Mr. Nasta for **FIRST READING**:

POL-1. POLICY 7510 – USE OF SCHOOL FACILITIES

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

REG-1. REGULATION 7510 – USE OF SCHOOL FACILITIES

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

DISCUSSION:

None

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

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED

Residency Committee Resolutions:

The following was reported by Ms. Faria:

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 th grade

Approval of Bills:

Bills will be approved at next week’s regular meeting of the Board.

Unfinished Business:

Mrs. Conteh-Mackey indicated that she had concerns regarding the paraprofessionals and there are inconsistencies within all the schools. She asked if ESS employees need to have the same qualifications. Dr. Benaquista indicated we asked administration who were the best and special education broke it down. We asked 50 ESS employees and 9 out of the 50 did not accept. Personnel has a posting currently for paraprofessionals. We have 100 paraprofessionals employed by us in the district. He also indicated that the district is also trying to fill the substitute pool.

Mrs. Conteh-Mackey indicated that the IEP changes and there is always a need. Dr. Benaquista indicated that Dr. Rodriguez is going through the data to see if some of our students are exiting. We want to see students grow and exit.

Mrs. Conteh-Mackey spoke about issues with communication and who would communicate to the parents about non-compliance. Dr. Benaquista indicated that the CST should be checking in on the students and communicating with the parent.

Dr. Rodriguez indicated that the CST should be checking in on students and making sure the student has what he/she needs.

Mrs. Conteh-Mackey indicated that there is a disconnect and asked for clarification by next week's meeting. Dr. Rodriguez advised that the teachers read the IEP and the teacher/CST should contact the parent.

Board Vice President Scott-Hayden asked that at next week's meeting, that a response to what is and what is not happening.

Ms. Santana – documentation and memorialization is the key; a paper trail is important; everything must be documented. Her CST would let her know.

Dr. Benaquista indicated that everyone needs to follow the chain of command.

New Business:

None

Board Vice President Scott-Hayden – wished everyone a good year and indicated she wants them to have a fair contract and we are working on it.

MOTION TO ADJOURN:

There being no further business before the Board in public session it was moved by Ms. Santana, seconded by Mr. Nasta, that the meeting be adjourned at 7:37 p.m.

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

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,

Yolanda Koon

YOLANDA KOON
BOARD SECRETARY

