

UNION TOWNSHIP BOARD OF EDUCATION
WORKSESSION MINUTES – OCTOBER 8, 2013

Meeting held at James M. Caulfield Administration Building, 2369 Morris Avenue, Union, New Jersey.

PRESENT AT ROLL CALL: Mr. David Arminio, Mrs. Susana Cooley, Dr. Guy Francis, Mrs. Linda Gaglione, Mr. Richard Galante, Mr. Thomas Layden, Mr. Vito Nufrio and Mr. Francis R. Perkins, President

ABSENT AT ROLL CALL: Mrs. Versie McNeil

The meeting was called to order by Mr. Perkins at 7:00 p.m.

Mrs. Ditri led the board members and audience in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. Damato read the statement required under the "Open Public Meetings Act" a copy of which is on file in the office of the Secretary.

COMMUNICATIONS:

All communication has been referred to the appropriate committees for consideration.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Dr. Martin handed out information to the board which dealt with the Violence and Vandalism report. He said that each year Superintendents throughout the State are asked to report to the public about the Violence and Vandalism statistics in their school districts and that is what he will do next Tuesday at the televised business meeting. Dr. Martin said that as he has done in the past, he thought that he would run through the numbers quickly for the Board so that if there are any questions or additional information that the board would like for next Tuesday then he can prepare that. He referred to information which compares the statistics from last year compared to previous years so that he could get an idea on how the numbers from last year compared to the numbers from previous years. Dr. Martin felt that the trend was good and there were fewer incidents that were reported. He said that until all of the numbers are zero, the district should not be satisfied but there is improvement shown on this report. Dr. Martin read through the report, a copy of which is attached to these minutes.

Dr. Martin said that he gave credit to the administration, faculty, students and parents of the schools because their hard work is making a difference. He said that the district was moving in a positive direction. Dr. Martin said that he would make a report to the public next week. He asked if any board members had questions.

Dr. Francis said with regard to weapons being brought to school, what type of "weapons" were being found. Dr. Martin said that there was an incident where a student brought in an "air soft" gun and he put it in the bookshelf of the classroom at Union High School and there was a bb-gun that was brought into the afterschool program at Union High School.

Mr. Nufrio said that he was pleased to see the dramatic reduction of out-of-school suspensions. He said that this tells him that the school administrators and the individuals who deal with discipline problems are either doing more "at risk" counseling and possibly conflict resolution counseling which is sometimes time consuming but if it can keep a student in school and it is a problem that can be resolved by resolution than it is well worth the time. Mr. Nufrio asked if there was any way to identify the areas that still show some concern and have the administrators come up with some recommendations on how to continue to improve in that area.

Mr. Tatum said that one of the things that he has seen a decline in over the last few years is appeals to overturn suspensions. He said that there have been a lot fewer appeals to his office from parents regarding suspensions and one thing he recognized was that in previous years he would have two or three appeals, sometimes in one week, and now it is only occasionally that he sees them. Mr. Tatum thought that the individual buildings were doing a good job in terms of taking care of the suspensions at their level. Mr. Nufrio said that this means that the suspensions that were issued were without question, necessary.

Dr. Martin said that to the credit of the schools, he did not think that they lightened up on the students and suspending students less because they want better scores. He said that if students fight in the school, they are automatically suspended. Dr. Martin said that this has been maintained. He said that when he sees out-of-school suspensions dropping, he felt good about that because he truly believed, especially at the middle schools and the high school where you see the lion's share of out-of-school suspensions, if a student exhibits behavior that has been exhibited all along, the student(s) will be suspended. Dr. Martin felt that there was a positive impact on the climate in the schools.

Ms. Conti said that there have been a lot of programs established in the district to support positive behavior like PBSIS (Positive Behavior Support In Schools) and that initiative is being spread throughout all of the schools in the district. She said that when Trinitas came in as an independent counseling program and they do work with a

lot of conflict resolution and them also training many of the counseling staff on how to work on conflict resolution. Ms. Conti said that the principals have seen a big drop in discipline and behavior problems. Mr. Tatum said that this program is in full implementation at Jefferson School as well as at the two middle schools and the high school. Mr. Nufrio said that the way to continue with that is to insure all of those individuals and in some cases, even some teachers, should be given an opportunity to have a workshop on conflict resolution because sometimes this may help alleviate problems in the classroom.

Dr. Martin said that he was informed today by Mr. Wiggins that the Franklin School Cupola has been completed. Mr. Wiggins said that the scaffolding should be down by the end of the week. Dr. Martin invited board members to visit Franklin School to see the cupola. He said that the cupola at Connecticut Farms is still a work in progress. Dr. Martin thanked Mr. Wiggins and the Operations Committee for their work on this project.

Dr. Martin said that next Tuesday, before the Board of Education meeting, the third annual NJASK Perfect Score Award ceremony will take place at 5:30 p.m. He asked if Mr. Tatum had anything to say on this ceremony. Mr. Tatum said that Mr. Arminio was going to speak about it during the Education Committee report. Mr. Arminio said that everyone should have received an invitation by e-mail for this ceremony. He said that this ceremony will recognize elementary and middle school students who had perfect scores on the NJASK. Mr. Arminio said that this ceremony will be held in the Union High School Auditorium before next week's board meeting. Dr. Martin said that this is a great way to congratulate some outstanding faculty and students. He said that the faculty will be present to "hand out" the certificates to the students. Mr. Tatum said that there will be seat on the stage for board members and Mr. Perkins and Dr. Martin have been invited to say a few words and he would be serving as the emcee. Mr. Tatum gave credit to Mrs. Moutis who started this a few years ago.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Perkins stated that the minutes of the Regular Meeting of August 20, 2013; the Special Meeting of September 20, 2013 and the Executive Session of September 20, 2013 will be adopted next week.

Mr. Perkins said that he has been getting e-mail messages from a particular citizen who asked where the minutes were on the webpage. Ms. Hart said that all of the minutes have been posted and they are up-to-date.

EDUCATION/STUDENT DISCIPLINE COMMITTEE:

Mr. Arminio said that the committee met earlier in the evening and all of the agenda items were reviewed. He said that the resolutions are the typical items that are on each monthly agenda and there was nothing out of the ordinary in any of the resolutions.

FISCAL AND PLANNING COMMITTEE:

Mrs. Gaglione said that the Fiscal Committee met and she presented the agenda items. She said that the resolutions were the typical fiscal resolutions.

Mr. Arminio asked Mr. Vieira to review resolutions F-9 and F-10. Mr. Vieira said that resolution F-9 covers three years; what has been spent, what will be spent in the current year and an estimate of what will be spent next year. Mrs. Gaglione asked where this report must be submitted. Mr. Vieira said that it must be sent to the County Office. Mrs. Gaglione asked if it also had to be sent to Trenton. Mr. Vieira said that he was sure that the County reported the results to Trenton. Mrs. Gaglione asked if this was something that the district had to submit on an annual basis. Mr. Vieira said that was correct.

Mrs. Gaglione asked if resolution F-10, the maintenance budget, was also discussed. Mr. Vieira said that the maintenance budget worksheet takes the square footage of all the buildings in the district, which is a little over one million square feet and the district is required, by statute based on a square footage of \$138 per square foot cost, to maintain 2/10ths of one percent annually. He said in Union's case would be a minimum of \$300,000 which is required to be put into maintenance of buildings. Mr. Vieira said that last year the district spent \$1 million and \$1 million has been budgeted for that purpose this year.

OPERATIONS COMMITTEE:

Mr. Layden presented the Operations Committee agenda. He said that there was nothing out of the ordinary on the agenda.

Mr. Nufrio asked if all of the increases listed in resolution O-5 were carefully scrutinized and checked. Mr. Vieira said that there will be a 10 cent increase in meal prices to keep up with the cost of labor and food costs and ARAMARK's Administrative and Management Fees increased 1/2 of one percent. He said that this is tied to the current inflation index which is determined by the government. Mr. Nufrio asked if the 10 cent increase for meals was an approved number and it is not out of the ordinary compared to other districts. Mr. Vieira said that it was a reasonable increase.

Mr. Arminio said that he spoke to the English Supervisor about the donation of the novels and she has indicated that these are novels that have been sitting in a store room at the high school in some cases for years. He said that there are about six or seven reasons why they are being donated but mostly it is because they are not being used anymore in the school. Mr. Arminio said that they are being donated to where ever they can be donated. He asked Mr. Damato where they could be donated. Mr. Damato said that since the novels have such a small value that it is permissible to donate books to parochial schools or to schools that have experienced damage due to storms, etc.

Mr. Nufrio said that if someone wanted to donate an instrument to the district, is the procedure to contact Mr. Damato. Mr. Damato said that usually if someone wants to donate something, they send a letter to him, it is added to the agenda to accept the donation and once the board accepts the donation, a home is found for the donated items. He said that the district gets a lot of things donated such as furniture because donating to a school district is just like donating to a charitable organization and a tax write off can be taken for any donations to the district. Mr. Nufrio asked if the district would be willing to pick up the item. Mr. Damato said that has been done on occasion.

DISCUSSION ITEMS:

Use of district gymnasiums by Holy Spirit School; Use of Battle Hill School gymnasium by Crossroads Christian Fellowship and Use of Jefferson School gymnasium for open gym by Union Recreation Department - Mr. Galante said that the first two requests have been made in years past. Mr. Damato said that the Union Recreation Department runs open gyms at every one of the district's schools. He said that he had asked that they not run open gyms during the month of September at Jefferson School so that the school can get up and running; the district could see if there were any problems or concerns and now the Recreation Department wants to start having open gyms at Jefferson School next week. Mr. Arminio said that if the Recreation Department runs open gyms at all of the schools, will that impact the first two requests. Mr. Damato said that the Recreation Department does not hold open gym every night. He said that they are requesting three nights per week – Monday, Wednesday and Thursday. Mr. Damato said that there are nights available for other uses. He said that Jefferson School has not been put on the School Dude system and that is why this is being approved at a board meeting. Mr. Damato said that there has been a huge demand for Jefferson School and before the district gets into allowing it to be used by outside organizations, it is best that the district take it easy. He said that the district will be accommodating the Recreation Department and as uses come up, the board will be considering them as well. Mr. Damato said that there are two requests that he knows of that have not been put in writing but were made to him verbally; one was from the school nurse at Jefferson School who wants to run a Zumba class afterschool. He said that it was done at Hamilton and also when the building was Central-Five. Mr. Damato said that the second request was that Mrs. Steiner wanted to hold a Body Sculpting

class and she would like to do that again. He said that both of these activities would be very small groups of employees in cooperation with the district's wellness program and that has been done in the past. Mr. Damato said that these are very soft uses of the building because there are so few individuals attending these activities. He said that these uses will be right after school when no one is actually using the gym. Mr. Damato said that those are the types of things that will be coming up for the board's consideration in the near future.

Mrs. Gaglione said that when the Recreation Department utilizes the building for those three days, they will have the property people watching and not allow students to "run through the school". Mr. Damato said that he has requested that the Recreation Department supply four chaperones on each night and to station one chaperone in the hall outside the gymnasium where the bathrooms are located. He said that this is because there is a stairwell there that is open and cannot be locked because it is used for fire egress. Mr. Damato said that someone sitting in the hall will allow students to use the bathroom and then return to the gym. He said that there will be three chaperones in the gym and one person in the outside area. Mrs. Gaglione asked if the district would check that every now and again to make sure that the Recreation Department is following what the district's requests. Mr. Damato said that there are custodians in the building in the evening will be checking on this activity. He said that if there are any problems, he will know about it the next day.

Mr. Perkins said that the district has been allowing the Recreation Department to have open gyms in the schools for many years. Mrs. Gaglione said that she knew this has been going on for years and she said that she remembered that there was a time there were no adults monitoring who was coming into the buildings and whether or not the individuals were actually from Union. She said that there were children coming in from other towns to play basketball. Mrs. Gaglione said that she wanted to make sure that everyone was following the proper procedure.

Mr. Perkins said that the Recreation Department has been utilizing the facilities for many years and the district has not had much bad luck. Mr. Damato said that the program is pretty well managed. He said that there was a problem last year at Washington School where some older students were driving around the playground in their cars. Mr. Damato said that was the only thing that he heard in recent memory. Mr. Arminio said that had nothing to do with what was going on inside the building. Mr. Perkins said that there is always a concern when individuals are given access to the building. He asked if there was a good reason why the board should not approve any of the above requests. There were not concerns expressed by any board members.

Old Vauxhall Library Property – Mr. Damato said that this property came up as an aside. He said that he received a call from Mr. Manzella who said that a developer gave the Township an offer to purchase this property to build two, two-family houses on the site. Mr. Damato said that Mr. Manzella asked if the district would take the old stone

monument that was in front of the building and move it to the school. He said that this is a monument in recognition of World War I veterans from Union that were killed in action. Mr. Damato told Mr. Manzella that the Board of Education would take the monument but he told Mr. Manzella that this would pose a problem for the Union Board of Education because the board was promised the ten spots for parking and if the property is sold to a developer, the board of education would lose ten parking spaces. He said that Mr. Manzella asked if the board wanted the property. Mr. Damato said that the board is in desperate need of parking space for pick up and drop off at Jefferson School and it would alleviate a lot of the parking issues around the school. He thought that forty or fifty cars could probably park in the area and it would be a huge help for the district. Mr. Damato asked the board to consider this; there would be no cost associated with obtaining the property because the board conveyed the property for the new library to the Township for \$1 and he would request that the Township convey the old library property back to the Board of Education. Mrs. Gaglione asked what the Board had to do to obtain the property. Mr. Damato said that if there was a consensus, he would send Mr. Manzella a letter indicating that the Board of Education was interested in the property. Mrs. Gaglione said that the district would be responsible for knocking down the old building.

Mr. Damato said that there would be some responsibility to the Board because he was sure there were some environmental issues on the property such as lead removal. He said that there has been no due diligence on the building over the years. Mr. Damato said that Mr. Wiggins, who is certified in lead paint, go in, take a look and see what is there. He said that the building would need to be demolished and the site would have to be leveled before a parking lot could be installed. Mr. Damato thought that it would probably cost about \$200,000 to \$250,000 proposition for the district. Mr. Nufrio asked how big the property was. Mr. Damato said he was not positive but he thought it was about 10,000 square feet. Mrs. Gaglione said that the decision had to be made soon so that Mr. Vieira could put the cost of the project in the budget for next year. Mr. Damato said that the district can take control of the property and that should be done sooner than later if the board wishes to go ahead with this. He said that budgeting for the actual construction work would go into next year's budget. Mr. Arminio asked if the project could be stretched over two years. Mr. Damato said that if the board decided to create a parking lot, it should probably be done all at once because it would be cheaper to do it that way. He said that if the project is put out to bid in the winter, the district will get better prices because contractors are trying to line up jobs for the summer.

Mr. Nufrio asked if the \$250,000 would include the demolishing of the old building. Mr. Damato asked Mr. Wiggins how much the parking lot at Battle Hill was costing. Mr. Wiggins thought it was approximately \$55,000 and this property is about the same size. Mr. Damato said that he would not know an actual number until it went out to bid. Mr. Nufrio asked if there were any oil tanks on the property. Mr. Damato said he did not know. Mr. Nufrio said that removal of an oil tank would bring up the

cost of the project. Mr. Wiggins said that it would not be subchapter 8 and the asbestos removal should be a lot cheaper because it will not be an occupied building. Mr. Layden asked if the board could look at the property first before it makes a decision. Mr. Damato said that he thought he could get the Township to put the brakes on selling the property if the Board of Education expresses an interest in the property and ask that the board be permitted to do a Phase I environmental inspection which basically is an engineering company doing an assessment of the building and doing tests for basic things like lead and asbestos and give the board a report on underground tanks. He said that this report will give the board a lot of basic information on the building. Mrs. Gaglione asked if this could be done quickly. Mr. Damato said it would probably take about one month to get a proposal from an engineering firm and once the proposals come in the board would have to approve the proposal. Mrs. Gaglione asked if this could be done to be voted on at the November meeting. Mr. Damato thought that would be a good time frame. Mr. Nufrio asked if a regular contractor would be able to give the district the answers instead of going through engineering costs. He said that the district is going to demolish the structure. Mr. Damato said that a contractor would be able to do that but that would not be something that could be relied on. Mr. Nufrio said just so that board can get an idea because if the project becomes cost prohibitive, than the board shouldn't even think about it. Mr. Perkins said that if the project becomes cost prohibitive, is there any restriction of the Board of Education disposing of the property in the same way after it does preliminary testing on the property. Mr. Damato said that would be possible.

Mr. Damato said that he would tell Mr. Manzella that the board is interested in the property and the district will be having some people go over to look at the property. Mrs. Gaglione asked if Mr. Damato would also have an engineering firm to look at the property. Mr. Damato said that the board had an engineering firm which was approved for the 2013-2014 school year and he would contact them to see if they can give us a proposal.

Mr. Perkins asked Mr. Damato to thank Mr. Manzella for thinking of the board.

Mr. Arminio asked if the first three items would be put on the agenda for November. Mrs. Ditri said that the items would be added to the regular meeting agenda next week.

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE:

Mr. Galante said that the committee met and reviewed all of the resolutions on the agenda. He said that all of the resolutions pretty standard. Mr. Perkins said resolution P-3 refers to DYFS; he said he thought that agency had changed its name. Mr. Damato said that DYFS was changed to Division of Child Protection and Permanency (DCPP).

Mr. Damato said that the district received bids today for Nursing Services for the 2013-2014 school year for a special education student that is dire need of nursing services. He said that he would like to be able to place the award on next week's agenda, if it was okay with the board. Mr. Damato asked Mrs. Conti to comment on this. Mrs. Conti said that the district had a student who has moved into the district at the beginning of the school year who has severe medical needs. She said that the service required will exceed the bid threshold. She had to start the year with the existing nursing agency that was servicing the student in the previous district. Mrs. Conti said that her first concern was to make sure that the child was safe and then she had to scramble quickly to get the bid advertised and to make sure that she did not go over the bid threshold with the existing service. She said that she is afraid if she waits until November to award this bid that will happen. Mr. Perkins asked if Mrs. Conti could get the information to the board members so that it can be reviewed prior to the meeting. Mrs. Conti said that she spoke to the Director of the agency that submitted the lowest proposal earlier today and as soon as she finishes getting the references she would put a memo together. Mr. Perkins asked if there were any questions or objections from board members to going ahead on that basis. There were no questions or objections from any board member.

APPROVAL OF BILLS

Mr. Perkins said that the bills would be recommended for payment next week.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Ms. Cooley said that Mr. Perkins and Dr. Martin were present at the PTA President's meeting at Ms. Lamera's house and they saw the enthusiasm in the room to make this year a special one and to make it a new PTA; to try to get everyone more involved, etc. She said that the presidents just had another meeting last week and now there is a lot of resistance from the PTA presidents. Ms. Cooley said that the PTA presidents no longer want to have monthly meetings because they think it is too much and Ms. Lamera was going to alternate months and hold the meetings at a different school. She said that there are several schools in the district that she has never been in and she felt that this was a good way to give all of the presidents a chance to see each of the schools. Ms. Cooley said that Ms. Lamera was also talking about having all executive board members get security background checks. She said that the PTA's would put an item on their budget to pay for this because apparently there is a member who is presently on an executive board who has a criminal background and Ms. Lamera and Ms. Cooley thought it would be better to have this checked, as any other volunteer positions have to be. She said that she thought that this is something that the PTA could start doing from now on. Ms. Cooley said that the County Office of the PTA came down on Ms. Lamera saying that criminal background checks should absolutely not be done and it was Ms. Lamera's position only to forward e-mails and to stop doing the things that she is doing. She said that Ms. Lamera was advised that the County Office would not be changing the way that they do things. Ms. Cooley said that there is

resistance coming from the County Office. She said that Ms. Lamera was really enthusiastic about making a change and a difference this year. Ms. Cooley said that Ms. Lamera was going to attend the PTA meetings at each school to see if more parent involvement could be made and put a different face on the PTA besides just a "classroom party". Ms. Cooley said that Ms. Lamera was hoping to make a difference but she got very discouraged when she received the phone call from the County Office and she almost wanted to back out of the position. She said that Ms. Lamera feels that the PTA is all for the students' benefit and fortunately many of the individuals who are presently PTA Presidents are not in it for those reasons, they are in it to make a name for themselves. Ms. Cooley said that Ms. Lamera is being pushed into a corner. She said that Ms. Lamera did not want to feel that she was a failure to Mr. Perkins or Dr. Martin because she had met with them and put a lot of new ideas out there and she said that she will continue to do and give 110% to everyone at Burnet, which is her school, and to the Board of Education whenever called upon.

Ms. Cooley said that unfortunately Ms. Lamera has to back off of the other schools because they are all complaining about her. She said that Ms. Lamera had taken on the project of entering all PTA activities in the district into SchoolDude herself and making sure that everyone had their permits in order. Ms. Cooley said that Ms. Lamera has subsequently given each PTA president individual access to SchoolDude and they will be required to make application for their own permits. She said that Ms. Lamera made sure that each PTA had a certificate of insurance in place. Ms. Cooley said that Ms. Lamera has been working extremely hard but Ms. Lamera feels that she is being "pushed down". She said that at the initial PTA Presidents' meeting which Dr. Martin and Mr. Perkins attended, all those present were okay with everything and all of a sudden, everything changed.

Mr. Perkins said when Ms. Cooley was talking about the "county" was she referring to the County PTA Organization. Ms. Cooley said she was. She said that the people who are on the County PTA are individuals who have been involved in PTA for many, many years and are used to going by past practice. Ms. Cooley said that many of these individuals are resistant to any change. She said that the Union PTA's were trying to give the organization a different face. Ms. Cooley said that PTA is not just about people paying dues and the PTA treating the students to an ice cream party; it is about bringing workshops and/or speakers into the meetings; providing assemblies to the students in the schools, etc. She said that Ms. Lamera was very disheartened and disappointed. Mr. Perkins asked what the relationship was between the school district and the PTA; he wanted to know by what authority the County PTA can come to a school and say that they must follow the rules of the organization. He said that it seemed to him that parent involvement was the most important thing. Mr. Perkins asked if the district had the right to say they did not recognize the PTA but would recognize a parent organization of some sort throughout the district. Mr. Damato said that as far as he knew the PTA was an organization similar to Little League and PTO is an organization that does not pay dues to a parent organization. Ms. Cooley said that

the PTA is incorporated. Mr. Damato said that the PTA's have bylaws that relate to the parent organization. Ms. Cooley said that was correct. Mr. Damato said that the PTA is governed by those bylaws and they are separate and apart from the Union Board of Education's policies. He said that where it comes together is when the PTA's are providing for activities on the board's property and act as volunteers. Mr. Damato said that when they do that, he thought that the board could say anyone who is volunteering, whether you are PTA or not, is required to have a criminal background check. Ms. Cooley said that as a parent, she wants to feel comfortable if she was leaving her child for an activity. She wanted to make sure that the PTA or PTA Board Members that are chairing that activity don't have a criminal background and that the students are safe. Mr. Arminio said that the volunteer policy does not say that every volunteer must have a background check; it says that as long as there is a certified teacher or administrator in attendance at a function, the volunteers do not need to have background checks. He said that if a volunteer is alone with a child, then a background check is required. Mr. Damato said that this could be changed in the policy if the board wanted to. Ms. Cooley said that Ms. Lamera tried to explain that the district or the board of education was behind the PTA one hundred percent and that the two groups would be working together. She said that the county representative said she did not care about that and this is the way it has always been done. Ms. Cooley said that she even asked Mr. Damato about getting ID tags for at least the PTA Executive Board Members to wear when they were in the buildings. Mr. Damato said that he explained to Ms. Cooley that this is a change from what is currently being done; he said that identification tags are only given to employees of the district. He said that he did not even think that the people that come in for the before and aftercare programs from the Y.M.C.A. have ID badges. Mr. Nufrio said that as a former administrator, he knew that the district was mandated to have a PTA or a PTO and these organizations are guided by their own charters. He said that he did not think that the board would find anywhere in their bylaws that would mandate members to have background checks. Mr. Nufrio said that the issuance of an I.D. could be something at a local level that the board could decide; perhaps a different looking I.D. tag could be produced to insure more safety and better vigilance as to who enters the buildings. He said that this would be something that the PTA could say "no" to but in order for the district to impose a criminal background check, he thought there would be a lot of resistance to that and the resistance would be justified because the PTA members are not employees.

Mr. Perkins asked if it was statutory requirement for a board of education to have a PTA. Mr. Nufrio said that there must be a parent-teacher organization. Mr. Perkins asked if the district is required to deal with the PTA that Ms. Cooley is talking about or is the district required to have parental involvement through some sort of organization. Mr. Nufrio said that technically the board is simply a bystander. He said that the principal of a building can say "no" to a PTA organization to use the building for a function. Mr. Nufrio said that as long as the principal of the school says yes to the PTA holding fundraising or other activities in the school, it can be done.

Mrs. Gaglione said that in the past there was an individual that some parents got wind of that had "done something wrong". She said that just because people assume something doesn't mean that an individual can be accused of something and not be allowed to come into the school for a function. Mrs. Gaglione said that the PTA is going to pin-point parents and say that everyone has to have a criminal background check and whatever the PTA is looking for, they might necessarily find. She said that even if someone is caught doing something illegal, doesn't necessarily mean that they cannot be around children.

Mr. Perkins asked if a PTO was incorporated similarly to the PTA or is it a loosely confederated group of parents who are involved. Ms. Cooley said that it was the PTA versus the PTO. Mrs. Gaglione said that choosing one of these organizations would be up to the parents in the schools and it is not up to the board of education to decide. Ms. Cooley said that all the schools in the district would have to decide if they wanted to change to a PTO. Mr. Perkins said that all of the board members had to go through criminal background checks and how many children do the board members come in contact with on a daily basis as a board member; virtually none. He said that the closeness between the board's activities and the students is not as close as the PTA people and the students in the buildings; they are there all of the time. Mr. Perkins asked how hard it would be for him to draft some legislation or talk to someone in the legislature about this. Mrs. Gaglione asked who would be paying for every single parent to get a background check. Mr. Damato said that at all athletic events, everyone is allowed to come and the district cannot stop people at the door because they have a record. Ms. Cooley said that she was just talking about PTA Executive Board members, not every parent that would volunteer to come in for an event. She said that a PTA Executive Board member is always the "chair" of the event. Ms. Cooley said that she felt this was something that needed to be looked into and the PTA's have said that they would put a line item on their budget to pay for that but the County has said this absolutely could not be done.

Mr. Perkins said that he wanted to take a look at the facts and the law before a decision is made. He said that this was extraordinarily upsetting to him because there were individuals who were enthusiastic and wanted to participate and to have someone that has no legal connection with the board say it cannot be done that way to him is wrong. Mr. Perkins said that he agreed with the issue of who will pay for the background checks. Mrs. Gaglione said that you also have to take into consideration is if you are accusing someone of doing something wrong. She said that she saw this happen and the children got upset because people were accusing a parent of doing something and nothing happened. Mrs. Gaglione said that it depends of what you are looking for because unless a parent has done something that is so terribly wrong, the PTA will have to decide what the classification of the offense would be that a parent would not be allowed to participate at a school function. Mr. Damato said that he is asked this question all of the time by building principals and the answer is that unless

there is a valid restraining order, the parent is allowed into the school. He said that if you are the parent of a child attending a particular school, you have the right to talk to the school administrators, to go to school activities, etc. Mrs. Gaglione said that if someone is a convicted pedophile, they should not be allowed to be on school property. Mr. Nufrio said that the law supports that. Mrs. Gaglione said that there are different classifications. Mr. Nufrio said that he agreed with Mr. Damato that if an individual was the parent of a child and was a part of the organization and the parent cannot be prohibited from entering the school for a visitation as long as they obey the security measures that have been put into place. He said that the other thought that came to his mind was that the board members were not employees and they had to undergo a background check, maybe the board needs to see if this has changed other categories. Mr. Arminio said that was a state mandate. Mr. Nufrio said that the board needed to see if within that mandate were there other categories that were also added. Mrs. Gaglione said that this would cause there to be less people becoming involved in the PTA. Mr. Damato said that if the legislature decided tomorrow to change that. Mr. Arminio said that would have to happen first. Mr. Nufrio said that the board should check to see if it has been changed. Mr. Perkins said that the legislature usually makes laws based upon the interests of the people that they represent. Mr. Nufrio said that he would be interested to know if there were changes for others just as they did for board of education members. Mr. Perkins said that he could see the money being an objection. Mrs. Gaglione said that if a background check is mandated all members, then the organization would be responsible for payment. She said that this has nothing to do with the board of education. Mr. Perkins said that it has to do with the board's mission to keep students safe and the board is responsible to do that. He said that the board has the responsibility, it seemed to him, to the extent allowed by state and federal law to govern who comes into schools. Mr. Perkins said that the board should take a look at what the legal requirement is and what the structure of these organizations are. Mr. Nufrio said that it is part of the building principal's responsibility to ensure that there is a parent organization in place. Mrs. Gaglione said that if the entire district wants to change from PTA to PTO that is their decision; every school in the district must be in agreement.

NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Arminio said that he has been attending Union County Ed. Services Commission meetings. He said that there is a new Superintendent at Union County Ed. Services who is wonderful and very enthusiastic. Mr. Arminio said that enrollment has increased in every single one of the Union County Ed. Services' schools and more programs have been started. Ms. Conti said that the district does use a lot of their programs.

Mr. Arminio said that on October 11th, Washington School will be holding a "Heavenly Hats" parade. He said that Heavenly Hats is an organization which was started by a ten year old who was disturbed by students who had cancer and lost their

hair. Mr. Arminio said that this child started an organization to collect money to provide hats to children suffering with cancer. He said that the students at Washington School will be donating \$1 in order to have the opportunity to wear their favorite hat to school on that day.

Mr. Arminio said that all board members should have received an invitation to the Inaugural Induction Ceremony of the Union High School Athletic Hall of Fame which will be held on November 25th. He said that there will be twenty inductees; seventeen athletes, three coaches and three teams. Mr. Arminio asked board members to consider attending this event. He spoke about several of the inductees and what they have accomplished during their lives. Mr. Arminio said that almost all of the inductees will be in attendance.

Mr. Arminio said that he and Mr. Perkins have a difference on this issue but he wanted to put on the record that Mr. Perkins was not establishing school liaisons. Mr. Perkins said that was true. Mr. Arminio said that the school PTA's like to see a board member at their meetings to show support. Ms. Cooley said that the PTA Presidents did request that as well and she did mention that board members were no longer appointed individual schools but some board members were trying to go to meetings. She said that she did ask the PTA presidents to come to the board of education meetings but they do not seem to be interested in doing that; they want a board member to come to their meeting. Mr. Perkins said that any board member should feel free to speak to representatives of whatever school and any PTA member or parent can feel free to ask any board member to attend their meeting. He said that he decided not to assign board members a particular school because he wanted to keep a particular board member out of the "chain of command" because the board members should not be in the chain of command. Mr. Perkins said that any person, at any school can contact any board member with any question or problem that they may have with respect to a particular school without the necessity of imposing upon a board member who may or may not have time to deal with a particular school.

Mr. Arminio said that it is now October 8th and the board has still not established goals for the year. He thought that something needed to be done.

Mr. Arminio said that he has gone to every home girls' soccer game and a few of the boys' soccer games as well. He said that he has to trek over to Volunteer Park which is a wonderful facility however, it is not a Union High School field. Mr. Arminio said that the district spent a lot of money on a field near the high school, Jeskey Field, and when Mr. Jeskey found out that the games were no longer being played on the field, he was quite hurt and wanted to know what was wrong with that field. He wanted to know why the home soccer games were not being played on Jeskey Field. Mr. Arminio thought that an athletic team is there for the students of the school, not for themselves and when they play on a field which is away from the school, students in the school cannot get easily to the field to watch a soccer game. Mr. Perkins asked if

Mr. Arminio had spoken to Ms. Ionta. Mr. Arminio said that Ms. Ionta stated that the coaches found that Volunteer Park was a much better field and that would mean that Jeskey Field is no longer good. He said that when he was the head soccer coach Jeskey Field was wonderful and playing on natural grass is much better than playing on artificial turf. Mrs. Gaglione asked where Jeskey Field was. Mr. Arminio said that it is the field right next to the high school on the Gruber Avenue side of the school. Mrs. Gaglione asked where Volunteer Field was. Mr. Arminio said that it was on Burnet Avenue off Stanley Terrace. Dr. Martin said that he watched a girls' field hockey game near the high school, was that on Jeskey Field. Mr. Arminio said that field hockey is played on the baseball outfield near the field house. Mr. Perkins said that he appreciated Mr. Arminio's concern about this but he felt this was one of those things that a board, unless there is some policy or safety problem with the field, the athletic director and the people who schedule the games are in charge of where the teams play. Mr. Arminio wanted to know what was wrong with Jeskey Field. Mr. Perkins said that there may be nothing wrong with Jeskey Field. Mr. Arminio said that when he was coaching soccer, Jeskey Field was a beautiful field and he wanted to know what happened to it over the course of the last several years. Dr. Francis asked what the reason was that the teams were using Volunteer Field. Mr. Arminio said that the soccer coaches don't want to play on Jeskey Field because the field is in poor shape.

Mrs. Gaglione asked Mr. Wiggins if there was anything wrong with Jeskey Field. Mr. Wiggins said that he has not heard any complaints. He said that he would speak to Ms. Ionta tomorrow to see if what the problem is. Mrs. Gaglione said that if there is something wrong with the field, it needs to be corrected because the softball team uses that field for their home games. Dr. Francis said that if the football coach did not want to play on the high school field, could he take the team to play on another field? Mr. Perkins said that if there was another facility available, he absolutely could do that. He said he felt that the decision of what field to use is with administration and not with the policy making board. Mr. Perkins said that School Boards Association makes a big point of saying that boards of education and the members thereof do not run the schools; the board only establishes policy. Mrs. Gaglione said that the safety of the players that are still using Jeskey Field for softball is a concern of the board. Mr. Perkins agreed with that but if a coach or the athletic department decides that another facility is a better place to play games and the reasons are not frivolous, they ought to as a matter of running the school district, be able to do that. Mr. Nufrio said that on a wet day an artificial turf field becomes treacherous. Mr. Galante said if that was the case on a wet day the football team should not play on Cooke Field. Dr. Francis said that using a field for home games that is not close to the school makes it seem that all games are away games. Mr. Arminio said that was his biggest objection to the use of Volunteer Field. Mrs. Gaglione said that her concern with Jeskey Field is that the softball team still uses that field and if the outfield is not safe, the district needs to find out what the problem is and have it fixed before softball season starts. Mr. Arminio said that no one used the term "unsafe". Mrs. Gaglione asked Mr. Wiggins to meet with Ms. Ionta to find out if there is a specific problem with Jeskey Field.

Mr. Arminio asked for an update on the investigation regarding the social security number breach. Dr. Martin said that the only thing that changed since the board meeting was the discovery that there were 46 people from Kawameeh whose name was on the list but whose social security numbers did not appear on the list. Mr. Perkins asked if this should be discussed in Executive Session. Mr. Damato said that if specific names were being discussed, it should take place in Executive Session.

Mr. Perkins said that resolution P-21 will be withdrawn from next week's meeting. Ms. Conti said that she received information late this afternoon that the student referred to in this resolution will not be attending the facility therefore she wanted to withdraw the resolution.

Mr. Perkins said that the board would be going into Executive Session to discuss a legal matter and the board will come back to public session. He asked if there were any comments from the public.

COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

Ms. Hall said that if Jeskey Field is the property of the Board of Education, it should be properly maintained and she asked that real consideration be given to that.

Ms. Hall said that the Week of Respect is going on in all of the schools in the district and she was sure that was why "Heavenly Hats" was taking place at Washington School this week. She urged the board to check in to any of the schools to see all of the activities that are taking place this week. Ms. Hall said that Ms. Ahern has a master list of all of the things that are going on in the schools. She said that everything from a food drive to collecting gloves and mittens is taking place at Kawameeh. Ms. Hall said that the food will be donated to the Hillside Food Bank and the gloves and mittens will go to Sister Jacinta at the soup kitchen in Elizabeth. She said that there will be different color days and origami cranes are being made because there is a legend in Japan that cranes bring peace. Ms. Hall said that the cranes will be strung and hung from the ceiling. She said that she was also supposed to do a balloon launch on Friday but she found out that Kawameeh is too close to the airport so you are not allowed to do that so close to the airport. Ms. Hall said that she had planned to put all the "hateful" words in the balloons and then let the balloons go off the field but now all the "hateful" words will be put through the paper shredder. She said that every school has a million activities going on. Ms. Hall said that the students have been involved.

Ms. Hall said that there was a committee of faculty members that were working on a grading policy. She said that some information was put forth from the committee but they found out that contract language contradicted some of the things that the committee was looking to do in terms of giving zeros as grades; she wanted an update of this. Dr. Martin said that the last he heard was that there was a committee formed.

He said that he was meeting with Mr. Capodice tomorrow and he said he would ask him what the recommendations were. Ms. Hall said that the controversy had to do with minimum numbers of assignments and giving "zeros" for homework but not for larger assessments. She said that she recused herself from that part of the committee because she did not agree with it. Ms. Hall said that the group did have that as consensus but she was not a part of it. She was very anxious to see that some decisions are made because moving forward there is still a great discrepancy in grades; she said that the best "A" and the worst "A" is still only ten (10) points apart and the worst "F" and the best "F" has a 59 point spread. Ms. Hall said that she felt the district was punishing the students and although she was not about grade inflation, but a decision has to be made and the district has to make sure that the changes are implemented by staff. She said that there was a draft document prepared but she did not know what happened to it.

Mr. Nufrio wanted to know if it was in the language that the Association can scrutinize a recommendation that came from a committee comprised of administrators and teachers. He said that he thought the second proposal was already reviewed last year. Dr. Martin said that he was not sure where it was right now. Mr. Nufrio said that the first proposal was rejected by the Education Committee because it seemed too extreme, it was too diluted. He said that it was sent back to the committee for them to take other elements into consideration. Mr. Nufrio said that a revised document was then reviewed by the Education Committee and the committee felt it was fine. Mr. Damato said that there is language in the Collective Bargaining Agreement about grading and it says something to the effect that the teachers are the ultimate deciders of what grade to give a particular student for what work. He said that he felt that teachers operate within the framework that the board provides by policy and he thought that if the board wanted to develop a policy with a new grading framework the board would be within its right to do that. Mr. Nufrio said that he thought it was agreed that the second proposal was fine because it did address the concerns that everyone saw with the first proposal. Dr. Martin said he did not recall that. He said that it must have taken place in asking the U.T.E.A. what their recommendation was. Mr. Nufrio said that there were teachers involved in preparing the proposal and he felt it was duplicating a process. Dr. Martin said that he would speak to Mr. Capodice and get the results of that from him. Ms. Hall said that she did remember the conversations about the contract language and she felt that the intent of the language was to allow the teachers discretion for the student who was between a "B" and a "C" but of course it can be interpreted in other ways.

Mr. Perkins said that Ms. Hall's comment about the balloon launch underscored the wisdom of doing research before you jump into something. Ms. Hall said that she was very glad she did. She said that she is going to try to get clearance for next year. Ms. Hall said that they will clear you but she did not have enough time for that process this year.

MOTION FOR EXECUTIVE SESSION

Moved by Mr. Galante, seconded by Mr. Nufrio that the Board go into Executive Session to discuss personnel and litigation matters without the presence of the public in accordance with the provisions of *N.J.S.A. 10:4- 2b*. The Board will disclose the discussion conducted during the executive session, with notice to the public, 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:	Mr. Arminio, Ms. Cooley, Dr. Francis, Mrs. Gaglione, Mr. Galante, Mr. Layden, Mr. Nufrio and Mr. Perkins
NAY:	None
ABSTAIN:	None

MOTION WAS CARRIED

BOARD RETURNED TO PUBLIC SESSION

Mr. Galante said that last Friday an e-mail went out to all staff with an attachment regarding the teacher evaluation process that the district would be using for this school year, however, it was the wrong evaluation system. He said to make matters worse, the board adopted this evaluation system at the last board meeting under the policy committee. Mr. Galante said that he brought this to Dr. Martin's attention and he and Mr. Damato discussed it.

Mr. Damato said that the policy was adopted when the board adopted Section 4000 of the updated policy manual in June, 2013 before all of the new evaluation stuff came into play. He said that Dr. Lishak noticed that the dates in the policy were wrong and the only thing that was changed at the last meeting were the dates that were bolded in the policy. Mr. Damato said that the dates were corrected and it was submitted for approval by the board last month. He said that the policy for the new evaluation has not been developed by NJ School Boards. Mr. Damato said that he has requested it and upon lots of coaxing, NJ School Boards sent him a "draft" policy which had not yet been reviewed by their legal department and they would not recommend that this policy be adopted as it is. He said that he could work on the policy and "get it in shape" but it would take a fair amount of work to do that. Mr. Damato said that the old policy refers to the code section and says "as amended and supplemented" and the reason that was put in the old policy was because the new policy was not yet available and he wanted to make sure that all of the changes that were made to the Code having to do with the evaluation procedure were picked up in the new policy. He said that this is not the perfect situation but School Boards' draft policy is approximately 18 pages long. Mr. Arminio said that he read the draft policy and he did not understand it. Mr. Damato said that it is very hard to understand. He said that administrators had to sit

for approximately 20 hours of training and then had to take a four hour examination. Mr. Damato said that the policy which School Boards sent to him says exactly what it says in the Code. He said that it would have been great if School Boards was ahead of the curve on this one but the district is governed by the Code. Mr. Damato said that he can work on the policy and make into a document that the administrators can use. Mr. Arminio asked if the policy that is presently in place is okay for now. Mr. Damato said that the district has to realize that the supervisors and the principals need to use the new framework and implement the new sections of the Codes. He said that there are things that need to be done such as committees formed, rubrics that need to be used, etc. Dr. Francis asked if anyone ever brings challenges to what the State puts together. Mr. Perkins said that NJ School Boards does attempt to do that.

MOTION TO ADJOURN

There being no further business before the board, it was moved by Mr. Galante seconded by Mr. Layden that the meeting be adjourned.

AYE:	Mr. Arminio, Ms. Cooley, Dr. Francis, Mrs. Gaglione, Mr. Galante, Mr. Layden, Mr. Nufrio and Mr. Perkins
NAY:	None
ABSTAIN:	None

MOTION WAS CARRIED

Respectfully submitted

JAMES J. DAMATO
BOARD SECRETARY