

TOWNSHIP OF UNION BOARD OF EDUCATION
WORKSESSION MINUTES – MARCH 12, 2019

NOTICE OF MEETING:

The worksession meeting of the Board of Education of the Township of Union was held on Tuesday, March 12, 2019 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. Minneci called the meeting to order at 7:14 p.m.

PRESENT AT ROLL CALL:

Mrs. Sherry Higgins, Mr. Ronnie McDowell, Mrs. Nancy Minneci, Dr. Kalisha Morgan, Mr. Vito Nufrio, Mrs. Nellis Regis-Darby, Mrs. Linda Richardson, Mrs. Kim Ruiz, Mrs. Mary Lynn Williams

ABSENT AT ROLL CALL:

None

ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT:

Mr. Gregory Tatum, Mr. Gerry Benaquista, Mrs. Annie Moses, Mr. Gregory Brennan, Mrs. Kim Conti, Mrs. Ann Hart, Mr. Craig Wojcik, Mrs. Maureen Guilfoyle, Mrs. Sandra Paul

ALSO PRESENT:

Mr. Lester Taylor, Esq.

Mrs. Regis-Darby led the Board in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. Brennan read the statement required under the “Open Public Meetings Act”, a copy of which is on file in the office of the Board Secretary.

Mr. McDowell read the District’s mission statement.

COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC ON RESOLUTIONS IN BOLD:

None

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Minutes will be approved at the regular meeting next week.

COMMUNICATIONS:

Communications are part of personnel

SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT

Mr. Tatum stated some of the presenters that were to be on for next week are here tonight. Next week I will have all the highlights of the District.

Mr. Benaquista stated our first presentation is a Millionaire Mindset Mansion for Teens and I will introduce one of our former employees – she was with us approximately 10 years in our guidance department and I had the pleasure of working with her and her name is Alexis Romano. We have Carolyn Murray, she is also a guidance counselor for Jersey City and then one of our own Nick Ferroni – one of our most innovative, creative teachers. I am very excited for them to present and hopefully be a resolution next week. It is a really innovative and exciting opportunity for our kids.

Nick Ferroni stated thank you. I have known Alexis for a long time as well. She talks about how much she misses school. She went on to pretty great things and we have talked for a few years about how she can give back. We have been in discussion for a while and I do think like you – legality, permission and everything along those lines. She came up with this concept of a millionaire mindset mansion for teens – it is everything it sounds like and more. I love my job and we have amazing kids. My one concern for the kids and everybody says they dream too big – I say we have kids that don't dream big enough. I think most of us know that you can't be what you don't see on a regular basis. Alexis and Carolyn came with this opportunity that they put together. The concept is basically going to give kids opportunity, exposure and interaction into an experience that I never had and going to connect them with people not only for financial literacy, mental/emotional health but give them a once in a lifetime experience to open their mindset to opportunities and resources that they would never have. As far as that my involvement is bringing Alexis and Carolyn in and at the same time they could have went to any school and Alexis chose our school because she does have fond memories of our District and she knows how amazing our kids are and I brag about how much you guys care about this District and it is nice to work with people that care deeply about the students in this District. When they came with this I went to Gerry and here we are.

Alexis Romano stated thank you for letting us present tonight. It is nice to be back here. I left Union High School for another district for financial reasons and it was never home for me. This was always my real home. I have always kept in touch with Nick and he has done some amazing things.

I wanted to give back to Union because it was one of the places where I had the best experiences. I love the kids, working with so many people and I miss the kids and working with the kids. Carolyn and I met ten years ago in Jersey City and I brought to her attention that maybe we can start a charter school and I came up with these concepts that I wanted the kids to have because there are certain things that you can't provide in an educational setting. Some of these elements we put together are really important for our students to dream bigger. The charter school never came to fruition but I was able to move on and create this which I am so excited about. Carolyn and I were at the location last year.

Our mission is to inspire, empower, enrich the lives of at risk young people through a unique immersion experience. Participants will be introduced to techniques and methodologies designed to address topics surrounding physical health, mindset, relationships, wealth creation and entrepreneurship.

We decided to target sophomores so we can have a follow-up program. The dates would be July 14-17 in the Hamptons. The experience we want students to have is a red carpet experience.

The five key elements that we want to expose the students to – spiritual health (not religious) – meditation, yoga, self-esteem, self-worth, physical health, social/community relations – understanding about giving back and working within the community. We wanted to start with sophomores so that we can continue this program and have the students bring it back. Financial responsibility – not just balancing your checkbook – about thinking about living in abundance – visualizing about what the possibilities are. Career and that is different for everyone – not every student is going to go to college. We want to expose them to vocational opportunities but also entrepreneurship and have them understand what that looks like.

Nick stated it is not just sitting by the pool – it is to engulf them in an experience. They are going to be exposed to people that are top in their fields and give them the experience of what this life is like. It is providing them the resources. The difference between a successful and unsuccessful person is usually lack of resources. This will give them the boost and opportunities.

Alexis stated there is structure and we have a whole curriculum that we wrote for this program. Each element has its own curriculum. All of us our certified teachers working with the students.

Carolyn stated there is a lot of structure to the days. There will be a wake-up time and breakfast and then their first activity. They will have time to swim and scheduled exercise and then another activity; an evening activity after dinner time. All of it is really structured from day-to-day but the magic is really in the maintenance. We don't want to whisk your kids away and have them have this life time changing red carpet event and leave them back to their lifestyle with no support.

The entire time that we are there we will be providing them with tools that they can implement into their regular life. Meditation and journaling and reading and reflexing and affirmation – these are all things that improve your chances of success no matter where you are in life and those are the tools that we are going to help them monitor as they move on. If we chose sophomores from your district and they learn all of these tools and then when they get back to school as juniors we will have quarterly zooms, we will plug into social media support, a google classroom for book clubs and real life events. The first one being a black tie gala at the Jersey City waterfront and then take that same group back for their junior summer before their senior year to build on everything they did the year before and then that group as our first class alumni can help us support growing this in your entire district. We would like to task them with creating a project that they can grow in your district and in your school.

Nick stated it is an amazing opportunity and so many students would utilize it. We have so many kids that are on the fence that need that affirmation, support and vision to help them.

Millionaire Mindset Mansion for Teens presentation appended to minutes.

Mrs. Regis-Darby asked how is this all funded. Alexis stated it is funded through me. This is a charity that I started and I want to give back to the district I truly loved. Carolyn stated after Alexis left teaching she built a multi-million dollar marketing company.

Mr. Benaquista stated Alexis when she was with us she was helping kids, reaching out to kids – she was ahead of what we are doing today. She has a heart to help kids.

Mrs. Ruiz stated because of the concept – to create this millionaire mindset and I like the idea – I'm from the school of thought – you dress for the job you want not the job you have. I like the concept but is there a mentoring component to it? Do you link them with mentors that are going to guide them, groom them? The most successful people we see is they have took huge risks or have a linkage which probably most of our students don't have. With me I was the first one to graduate high school. When I got to college I had no idea what I was walking into and applying for jobs so when you link them with a mentor that student who never had that type of guidance or connections isn't coming from generations of doctors and lawyers. Will this program have a mentoring linkage? Alexis stated we are not complete – the specifics of what we are doing for each follow-up. Once we get to know the kids and each of our instructors are teachers and have different resources and connections. We have a network of people that we would love to be able to connect our students with. Absolutely, it will be a component of it.

Mrs. Ruiz asked how do you select the students? Alexis stated with the help of Nick and we have questions for the interview and they are not based on GPA. Carolyn stated first kids will show interest and sign up and then nominated by a couple of teachers. Nick will help us and then there is an application process. The questions are lengthy and it is not all related to grades and GPA – it is whether or not they are going to be open minded and make themselves available emotionally.

Nick stated we are going to ensure that the kids there not only benefit most of this opportunity and there has to be some responsibility on their end. Mr. Benaquista stated and that they are willing to buy in the progressiveness of it. It is not ending, it is continual. You want this to be a two-year process and then bringing in another class. Carolyn stated the interview process will come after the application process. We will have a parent meeting before the selection is done because the parents have to buy-in and need to understand what is involved and they will need to give their permission before we give that spot away.

Nick stated we have 500 sophomores and it will be a tough process. The goal is to pick 10 of the best candidates that may be on the cusp and that haven't found their passion but have every quality need to succeed.

Mrs. Ruiz asked in your mission – what are you using to define at risk young people? Alexis stated that is where Nick will help us identifying students. At risk doesn't necessarily mean poverty level – it is kids that will never be exposed to something that we are exposing them to and that is where the interview questions come in. There are questions about family, dynamics and economic statute.

Mrs. Regis-Darby stated I think we should just be clear at this whole mission in terms of your at risk young people. Looking at the definition of what that word means – you need to be careful with that one.

Mrs. Ruiz stated my concern with the at risk terminology is you have an honor student that is first generation college bound student – isn't considered at risk because she has good grades, stable home – but they may benefit from this program – would that student be considered? In every school district at risk will mean something different. Alexis stated we don't want to exclude anyone. We can give our definition of what "at risk" is because it is not just based on the educational system of what "at risk" is. We can elaborate on that and we don't want to exclude anyone. Carolyn stated when you look at the interview questions some of this will come through when they are writing their own personal answers. At risk is very individual to the child not their circumstances.

Mrs. Regis-Darby stated earlier in our planning meeting we talked about moving the district in terms of research based district. Do you have any evidence that your plan works? Alexis stated this is a new program. Nick stated I found plenty of studies that focus on success of individual aspects. We do meditation Monday's in my class because every study shows that meditation has a benefit of the emotional/social impact on kids.

Mr. Benaquista stated it is continual so it is staying with us. The success and the data can come through years of having this program. After these kids leave they will still have those mentors to reach out to. We will have data as the program develops and tweak things as we go along. Carolyn stated it will grow and how great once they are in college and it continues and those college kids can come back and mentor your high school kids. How fantastic would that partnership be. Nick stated this is creating role models for underclassmen. Mrs. Minneci stated it is paying it forward.

Mrs. Williams stated you started as a teacher, then doing nutrition and now you are a millionaire – does the program talk about reinventing yourself, reevaluating your career choices and not being afraid to take those chances and do something different if you are not where you want to be? Alexis stated absolutely that is one of the key elements of the career, social and community come into place. It all works together. It really is about mindset, belief and self-esteem and self-worth and having a vision as opposed to seeing the reality of what is right now.

Alexis stated we all have mentors. It is always a journey. We work with Less Brown. I want to bring him to this experience. He is one of my favorite motivational speakers. I use him for my team trainings. These are the types of people that we want to expose our students to. We will be mentors to them as well.

Mr. Benaquista stated Cheryl Fiske and others raised money for St. Jude. They are going to share on what St. Jude came back to our district – to say thank you for what our students did to help that organization.

Cheryl Fiske stated I'm a math teacher at the high school. Four years ago, us along with Kevin Feely the high school basketball coach, decided we want to do something bigger than our

self and get our students involved so we started the first annual St. Jude Classic. At the high school we hosted three varsity basketball games and then everyone voted graciously to allow us to donate all of the proceeds at the door to St. Jude's. We got a lot of business to donate food and with their permission to sell and donate money. We raised \$5,000 the first year. This past year was our 4th annual St. Jude Classic and we donated over \$13,000 to St. Jude's Children Hospital. Our total for the four years is a little over \$35,000. One of the contacts at St. Jude's contacted us and asked for us to bring one advisor and three students (they are paying) to go to St. Jude's Hospital in Memphis, Tennessee to see where our money is going and to also be recognized for our efforts as well as other schools. We are being recognized as one of the top high school fundraisers nationwide. We were asked to go to a two-day intensive leadership experience where we are serving food to the families, we are going to St. Jude's itself, we are meeting other school districts and discussing our fundraising efforts along with their efforts to compare notes. There is an awards ceremony. They are paying for everything for one advisor and three students to go. We chose two seniors that helped us a lot and one is a junior who helped this year and we are hoping she will push us forward and be the lead student next year. I don't want to go with them by myself. I think it is more sensible to take two of us because we co-planned the event. They are paying for everything but the district's cost would be for one adult roundtrip airfare and to approve the trip. I spoke to the parents of the three students because we did have to send paperwork that needed to be filled out. They couldn't be more honored that their children were asked to go. They are on board. It is something that we are already planning for next year.

Mr. Benaquista stated it will be on next week as a field trip. Mrs. Minneci stated so the only thing you are asking for is an airfare for one. Mr. Benaquista stated can you ask the students to come next week so we can share with everyone on TV.

Mr. Brennan stated our last presentation is a presentation on the energy savings improvement program (ESIP).

ESIP Presentation by Dan Riggle of Schneider Electric appended to minutes.

Mrs. Regis-Darby asked what other districts are you working with? Mr. Riggle stated North Brunswick, Delran, West Deptford, West Windsor/Plainsboro.

Mr. Brennan asked what about the financing? Mr. Riggle stated there is a process and it is regulated. You have the results of the local energy audit – there would be an RFP process. After that a detailed project development phase where the district and a company would develop the project. Once that is done there would be a finalized project report that would get approved by the State, by a third-party engineer and once ready we would assist the district in getting financing. Third-party financing which is usually a 15 or 20-year lease purchase - similar to a mortgage with a bank and working with the district financial advisor – another option would be refunding bonds similar to any other bond issuance or referendum; however, it does not require voter approval because these are existing dollars that the district is already spending – it is not new money.

Mrs. Regis-Darby stated so we can get financing, use the financing upfront for capital projects. Mr. Brennan stated we would get our energy savings, rebates and all of that makes room in your general fund that we are not expanding the general fund, we are using what we have, just reallocating that towards a lease purchase payment and over time it pays for itself. Mr. Riggle stated usually once the project is approved, you have the third-party lender with money in the bank – they pay for the construction and usually after a 12-18 month period, once the project has been installed, it is saving and the district is accruing money in the budget, that is when the payments would begin to cover the cost of it.

Mr. Benaquista stated once your initial amount you borrowed is paid off, everything else is for the District. How many years on average would you say a District this size would get to that point. Mr. Riggle stated average 15-20 years. Mr. Benaquista asked what is the lifespan of the updating? Mr. Riggle stated it depends on the equipment. Some equipment will have a 10-year warranty. New mechanical equipment is usually 25-30 years; some of the solar is 20-25 years. It is a mixed bag of items.

There is an RFP process under competitive contracting so it is not per say a bid it is for professional services – similar to how you hire an architect or an engineer. There is a State template so it is regulated process. If you want to move forward you would have to put out an RFP, hire a company and get into the actual project. As far as timing, solar is a big savings opportunities. The solar market is volatile and it changes a lot. We are looking at the end of this year – a lot of federal tax incentives are starting to step down. The 30% tax credit on solar will go down to 26% next year and then 22% the year after. For that reason we are encouraging districts to try to get projects under way and finalized by the end of the year.

EDUCATION/STUDENT DISCIPLINE COMMITTEE RESOLUTIONS:

Mrs. Regis-Darby presented the Education/Student Discipline Committee agenda.

DISCUSSION:

Mrs. Regis-Darby stated I remember last year as a Board we spoke about before we approve the calendar that it must be shared with the UTEA and the building principals. Was that already done? Mr. Benaquista stated I would have to ask Mr. Tatum's office.

Mrs. Regis-Darby stated we have to approve the Response Intervention Handbook. There was no back-up. Mr. Benaquista stated there are some layout things we need to correct – it will be up on Friday. Mrs. Regis-Darby asked is it possible to send it out a little earlier. Mr. Benaquista stated we will have it up tomorrow.

Mrs. Regis-Darby stated E-6 – curriculum framework and it looks more like a template than a framework. Mrs. Moses stated it is a template. Mrs. Regis-Darby stated we should call it a template and not a framework. Mrs. Moses stated we already adopted the framework. We are doing this for the County and it is across the District.

Mr. Taylor stated to make it clear we are going to revise E-6 to say “template” and strike “framework”.

Mr. Tatum stated the school calendar – there's a couple of more things that we have to work out. We have been corresponding with the UTEA and hopefully have something presented to the Board by the next week. If they are not worked out than we will probably approve it the following month.

FISCAL AND PLANNING COMMITTEE RESOLUTIONS:

Mrs. Richardson presented the Fiscal and Planning Committee agenda.

DISCUSSION:

Mrs. Richardson stated in reviewing the transfers – there is a transfer for tuition for Kean University for \$5,500 – I'm just wondering what that is? Mrs. Moses stated we started a teaching program course – we are offering students' credits for those wanting to be teachers; so they are learning about the education process and the career they want to obtain. We met with the committee – it is a credit if they go to Kean – 3 credits. There is a few and since we started in January not September. Mr. Tatum stated it is also the clinical faculty. Mrs. Moses stated and they come in and work with all the teachers.

Mrs. Regis-Darby stated I remember in our Education Committee we spoke about this and we talked about the process of selecting the students of this particular program and we also suggested to the powers to be that they should have an essay process so the kids can get into the programs to provide equity for everyone – so it is not just random selection. Was that completed? Mrs. Moses stated that was said to the professor at the college and everything is in place. Mrs. Minneci asked how many are participating? Mrs. Moses stated no more than 20.

Mr. Nufrio stated can you clarify F-17. My recollection from the auditors is that is what our excess fund is down to. Mr. Brennan stated yes as of June 30, 2018. Mr. Nufrio stated so placing that back into the general fund. Mr. Brennan stated it flows as revenue for this budget. Mr. Nufrio stated so that means it is totally depleted? Mr. Brennan stated no it is an annual. This is what is leftover – unexpended funds as of June 30, 2018 and by statute that goes into revenue for the 19/20 budget. It is always an annual number. Hopefully this year we will have surplus too. Mr. Nufrio stated by placing this in there, suppose we don't have any excess surplus? Mr. Brennan stated by statute it goes in as revenue. It would create a hole in our budget. The previous budget we had \$1.4 million and now we have \$800,000 so it is a \$600,000 hole in revenue for this year. Mr. Nufrio asked what is your opinion for this year? Mr. Brennan stated I don't have the numbers in front of me.

Mrs. Richardson asked how does that affect F-14? Mr. Brennan stated it doesn't – that is Fund 30.

Mrs. Regis-Darby stated F-14 – I'm assuming the administration building is included in this. Mr. Brennan stated that is not correct. Mr. Tatum stated I thought it would have been budgeted for this year because that issue was brought to us last year. Mr. Brennan stated I will confer with Barry and I will get you an answer.

Mrs. Regis-Darby stated #6 on the item – the scoreboard for \$130,000. Mr. Brennan stated I was noticing that myself. Mrs. Regis-Darby asked can you take a look at that because

that is a lot of money. Mr. Benaquista stated maybe find a company that is willing to advertise. Mr. Brennan stated I will get with Barry and discuss it – that is the most expensive item and with our fiscal situation I don't want to be spending that. Mrs. Regis-Darby stated I don't think we should be spending that. Mr. Brennan stated that is irresponsible.

Mrs. Ruiz asked who inputs these numbers into the agenda? You expressed shock right now. Mr. Brennan stated it came from buildings and grounds and he is at a conference right now. Mrs. Ruiz asked but who put it on the agenda? Mr. Brennan stated my assistant but I will sit down with Barry when he gets back. I haven't seen him since Thursday and this went up on Friday. Mrs. Ruiz stated you were as shocked as we were. Mr. Brennan stated the scoreboard yes but the other items are normal maintenance items. Mr. Nufrio stated the question though is Mrs. Cappiello didn't originate this. Mr. Brennan stated right it came from buildings and grounds but this is why this is a worksession and why we talk about it at the worksession. Mr. Nufrio stated to be fair we didn't have a committee meeting so none of these numbers were even hashed out in committee. Mr. Tatum, the wall issue, I do remember the wall issue was being questioned as to the cost because it was high and I don't know if it was resolved. We went back to buildings and grounds to determine what would be the best way and best course of action. Mr. Tatum stated we will have to look at that. Mr. Brennan stated plans have come in on those two walls and there are two options and we are sending it to the SDA – School Development Authority to see if they would approve the actual way the architect wants to do it and then we have to go out for bid on that. It is on the agenda – O-5.

Mrs. Richardson asked can the Fiscal Committee meet next week prior to the regular meeting. Mr. Brennan stated I wanted to do that anyway because we have to submit the budget on the 20th. You will approve the tax levy – the proposed budget not the final budget. I will send out an email to Finance Committee and copy the President.

Mrs. Regis-Darby stated I asked for a briefing. Mr. Brennan stated when we come out of committee we will share that.

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

F-7. PRE-APPROVE DISTRICTWIDE STUDENT FIELD TRIPS

Pre-approve districtwide student field trip destinations and purposes pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-5.8 in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

DISCUSSION:

None

AYE: Mrs. Higgins, Mr. McDowell, Dr. Morgan, Mr. Nufrio, Mrs. Regis-Darby,
Mrs. Richardson, Mrs. Ruiz, Mrs. Williams, Mrs. Minneci

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED

OPERATIONS COMMITTEE RESOLUTIONS:

Mrs. Richardson presented the Operations Committee agenda.

DISCUSSION:

Mrs. Ruiz stated O-2 – organizational chart – when I was looking at it I see that there are several positions that report directly to Mr. Tatum and one of those is the Director of Athletics. So that means that individual is at the high school. My question is for purposes of a reporting structure – why don't you have that individual report to the building principal so that two things can be avoided – one there is no fracture in the leadership of the building because there is one leader – the principal. This is coming from a management perspective – if you have one leader in the building. Mr. Taylor stated I'm sorry to cut you off – the question in itself is o.k.; however, as you may recall there is some pending litigation. Mrs. Ruiz stated I'm not discussing that at all. Mr. Taylor stated on the abundance of caution I would suggest that we fold this into closed executive session as it may have some impact on pending litigation with two separate lawsuits involving both those positions in the District. I suggest that we hold this conversation about those positions given the pendency of the litigation for closed session so as not to interfere in any way, shape or form with that litigation. I'm being very cautious because that is pending litigation. As a general proposition, organizationally in school districts across the State of New Jersey – the Athletic Directors are technically a higher title than a principal – typically they are. They typically report to central office administration because they have districtwide responsibilities. Mrs. Ruiz stated I hear you. Mr. Tatum stated can I make a suggestion here. The organizational chart does need to be revised and I'm not 100% sure that we are ready to vote on this anyway and I'll tell you why because the agenda is about an advance of it but there are things on there that have to do with the pre-school program that may need revision after meeting with the State. That is a document that is a work-in-progress. We want to really make sure for July 1 that is up to date and tidy. Some of the questions that you may have may very well be answered within that time period. Especially for the new board members – you need to understand that most of the time when these agendas come out – they are boiler plate from the previous year so when items are put on there they are a repeat and a revision of something that we have done in previous years. There are some proposals on that agenda that are different from what they were a year ago but I'm not sure if we have everything included or ready to be voted on.

Mrs. Ruiz stated one I respectfully disagree with saying that the Director of Athletics is on the same level as the building principal – there cannot be two masters, only one and that is my issue with the organizational structure. It is conflicting. Mr. Taylor stated all I'm saying is that the general proposition and I was a guest speaker today at the New Jersey Division of Athletic Directors Association. Some districts have athletic directors and pursuant to your organizational chart typically fall either as a peer with your principal and/or superior to principals albeit they don't have direct supervisory authority over your principals so they are in a different column. Other districts may have a supervisor of athletics so that would be subordinate to a director level position and it might be parallel to a principal but typically in this District physically your AD is situated in a building not in Central Office and that could be where the question goes. Just because a person is in a building physically doesn't mean they have to report to the chief of that building. That is all I'm saying. Mrs. Ruiz stated in light of that and the fact that I still don't have any clarification as to that individuals role and Mr. Tatum's confession now that this needs

to be tweaked can I ask Madame President can this be pulled off the agenda so that we don't have to vote on it at all – so that we can talk about it in executive session and figure out if and how this should be revised. Mr. Taylor stated that would be the Superintendent's prerogative to pull it off the agenda. If he wants to present it to the Board you can vote aye, nay or motion to table it but I will defer to the Superintendent if he wants to pull it off the agenda. If he doesn't want to pull it off then it is subject to the wishes of you all. Mr. Tatum stated this is something that we do annually and it is not at a point right now that I want to so I am going to say that we will take it off because more work needs to be done on it. This has to be voted on by the start of the next fiscal year which is July 1. Mr. Taylor stated if it is being pulled let's hold the questions until it comes back to you and you can talk about it in committee. There is nothing to talk about now.

Mrs. Regis-Darby stated a year ago we had a meeting with recommendations from the State – he came in and went over the organization with us and he gave us recommendations in terms of what should be done. I feel like my time is being wasted again because I sat in a meeting for an hour and a half with recommendations and now we have an organizational chart that doesn't make sense. What happened between January of last year and now? Mr. Tatum stated positions have changed, we have a new program that needs to be included in the organizational chart and that is a work in progress. We now have a director of instruction and as the District grows the organizational chart changes. Mrs. Regis-Darby stated with all due respect that just goes to poor planning.

Mr. Nufrio stated it is my understanding of what you talked about before – in years past it used to be athletic directors – they were not required to have principal certifications. Once that title gets reversed, Director of Athletics, it changes the whole thing and that was my understanding.

Dr. Morgan stated I just want to point out that if Ms. Ruiz asked a question whether or not the athletic director is based at the high school and the answer was yes – as a high school principal, everything that falls in that building is under my prevue with whatever job title you have. I personally would have a problem with someone who has either a higher job title than me or sharing my job title for I am the one who is ultimately responsible when that parent calls me to ask about that student. I think that this needs to be tabled because this needs to be addressed because that is why they're conflict and we need to get it right because the building principal is ultimately the one who ends up on the lawsuit in the event that something happens.

Mrs. Richardson read the discussion items:

1. REQUEST FROM SCHOOL AND COLLEGE OFFICIALS ASSOCIATION - Request from School and College Officials Association to use the Union High School cafeteria on October 23, 2019 from 7:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. to present NJSIAA state soccer tournament rules to membership, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

2. REQUEST FROM KAWAMEEH MIDDLE SCHOOL - Request from Principal Malanda of Kawameeh Middle School requesting a plaque be placed at the entrance to the gym memorializing the services of Jack DeBarbieri and for the gymnasium be known as the Jack DeBarbieri Gymnasium, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

3. REQUEST FROM TOWNSHIP OF UNION EDUCATION FOUNDATION - Request from Township of Union Education Foundation requesting the use of the gym and cafeteria at Jefferson School on Friday, September 27, 2019 from 3:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. for the third annual Township-wide pizza tasting contest and requesting a waiver of fees, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

4. REQUEST FROM UNION TOWNSHIP CHAMBER OF COMMERCE - Request from Union Township Chamber of Commerce requesting the use of the Union High School facility site for the Chamber's 8th Annual Mayor's Day 5K Run on September 22, 2019, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

5. REQUEST FROM PATRICIA WIGGINS - Request from Patricia Wiggins to leave the Little Library as a farewell gift to Washington School, at no cost to the District. There are three (3) options for the Little Library – (1) lawn of Washington School, (2) affix to building or (3) installed indoors, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

DISCUSSION:

Mrs. Regis-Darby stated I'm still unclear to discussion item #1. It seems like they are asking us to approve some research question in order for them to continue to get their master's degree – is that correct? I apologize I'm in the wrong one.

Mrs. Minneci stated we did have discussion at the agenda review on #5 – the little library and the issue is location – inside/outside school, who is going to be responsible so I think we need to get more information. Mrs. Ruiz stated I thought there were options. Mr. Benaquista stated I think we wanted to limit the options. Mrs. Minneci stated outside who is responsible for the books going in. Mr. Benaquista stated if it gets broken. It can't be monitored outside as in inside. Mrs. Ruiz stated I thought an option was inside. Mr. Benaquista stated our concerns were should we give options and say if it is going to work it has to be in this location. If it breaks who is responsible to replace it. In the past there have been issues where people donated stuff, things happen and that person comes back and says what happened to the stuff I donated? We just want to make sure that we are not going to be fiscally responsible.

Mr. Nufrio stated this is a follow-up to the original request. Mrs. Minneci stated it isn't any cost to us. Mr. Tatum stated it is whether or not it is community based – anybody could drop things off and then the question is if it is in the inside there is a possibility of a disturbance to the school during the day and those are the things we were debating back and forth. We were concerned if it was outside what is going in there. Mrs. Minneci stated if it is in the school we can't just let the community in to donate books whenever. Those are some of the concerns. We will think about it. Numbers 1-4 will go on the agenda next week and 5 we will remove and discuss it in operations at our next worksession.

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE RESOLUTIONS:

Mrs. Williams presented the Personnel Committee agenda.

DISCUSSION:

Mrs. Regis-Darby stated P-5 and P-6 – the backup says it is to pay for the masters but to pay for the research question. I'm a little confused. What are we paying for? Mr. Tatum stated we will be approving the person doing research in the District. Mrs. Ruiz stated it says it requires Board approval for her to move forward with this research. Mr. Benaquista stated it is not part of tuition reimbursement – it is just to document they are doing research.

RESIDENCY COMMITTEE RESOLUTIONS:

Mrs. Williams presented the Residency Committee agenda.

DISCUSSION:

None

TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE:

Due to the planning meeting the Technology Committee did not meet.

APPROVAL OF BILLS:

Approval of bills will be next week.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

Mrs. Minneci stated there have been a lot of questions about the RFP for food service and Mr. Brennan sent out the information. I would like to ask several of you to be ad hoc committee – Mr. McDowell and I discussed it and hopefully you will agree with us. I asked Mrs. Regis-Darby, Mrs. Ruiz, Mrs. Higgins and Mr. McDowell since you all have children that are in the District and we ask that you be the ad hoc committee.

Mrs. Regis-Darby stated a while back the stakeholders in the community did a survey for Aramark and I wanted to know what was the result of that survey and can that be shared with the Board and the community? Do we have the results? Mr. Brennan stated we decided not to share those right now but if you want to we can. Mrs. Regis-Darby stated the Aramark survey. Mr. Brennan stated I will send you that. Mrs. Regis-Darby stated we are not sharing it – we asked the parents and the children to do the survey and we are not sharing it with the parents? I know you shared the District survey. Mr. Tatum stated I will make the decision. The purpose of the survey was to get feedback to the Board and the community as to where we are and it has to be shared. You have an RFP process and we need to know. I thought it was already out and shared. Mr. Brennan stated there was some reservation from some administrators not to send it out. Mr. Tatum stated not this administrator. Mr. Brennan stated I know, it goes out tomorrow.

Mrs. Regis-Darby stated we spoke about removing our past attorney from all of our legal bills and activities. Has that been completed? Mr. Taylor stated I sent a draft letter to the administration which was in turn put on Mr. Brennan's letterhead and sent over. I did receive one file regarding a student matter and I know Mr. Griggs was traveling last week so I will follow-up for him to complete that transfer. The letter did say that he should cease all billing on any and all files absent any emergent matters. Did he send any other files? Mr. Brennan stated no. Mr. Taylor stated I suggest that you follow-up with him.

Mrs. Regis-Darby stated we noticed from New Jersey State Education that PARCC has been changed. There is a new acronym – a new name – the New Jersey Student Learning Assessment. Did the District tell the community about the changes – the small but significant changes? Mr. Tatum stated we were at a round table last week. There are some concerns about how it is going to be administered and when. They are talking about a fall administration and people were concerned about that and the timing. Some of the information is not clear to us. When I walked out of the meeting and the Commissioner of Education was at that meeting and he is the person who presented the proposal and I seemed to see a little bit of conflict. Mr. Benaquista stated I believe seniors and juniors – he doesn't want to – he is getting data from stakeholders and I think it is going to be in the fall. Mrs. Regis-Darby stated I just want us to be in front of it because it was a big issue for us and I think as a District we need to be in front of it to get the information out to the parents so it is an easier blow than anything else. Mr. Tatum stated I don't want to send out because what happens is people hold on to what pieces they want to take out of it so when the Commissioner of Education and the State Department has everything and they have something definite that they send us, then I would agree to send that out as fast as we possibly can.

Dr. Morgan stated I was just getting my letters out today and I was on the State website today so I'm a little confused as to what you heard and what I read so I think we all need to get clarification. I drafted my letter today to the parents to say that the NJLA will go on as planned. Everybody has been trained. As far as I know I'm testing April 9, 10 and 11th. I would present that you do alert parents. Mr. Tatum stated I thought you were talking about next year. Mr. Benaquista stated this year the name changed but it is still the same. Mr. Tatum stated I thought you were talking about the new test. Mr. Benaquista stated there will be a new test next year and the Commissioner wants to do it early on so we can get data and give kids the services that they need.

Mrs. Regis-Darby stated summer school – I know they had it last year and some parents were asking again. Has the District made a decision? Mr. Tatum stated the decision was made last year in the budget that there will be no summer school this year. Mrs. Regis-Darby stated so the parents need to know if their kids need to go to summer school – it is about a \$400 cost to the parent. Mr. Benaquista stated the guidance counselors of the high school are reaching out.

Mrs. Regis-Darby stated in terms of the RFP for the food services – there is also a part in the RFP process that talks about the criteria that needs to be selected first. Mr. Brennan stated by the ad hoc committee. Mrs. Regis-Darby stated but I think the first one is mandatory by the State so we are just going to implement five more criteria. Mr. Brennan stated yes.

Mrs. Higgins stated on the days that it snows or really bad weather and there is not a delayed opening, is there any way to lift that late assessment for the kids. Mr. Tatum stated we normally do that. Mrs. Higgins stated I still get the calls. My daughter is a new driver and I tell her to take her time.

Mr. McDowell stated does any of that involve the Chromebook checking in? I got a call the same way and when I called the school they said my son didn't take his Chromebook so he

was marked absent. Mr. Tatum stated I don't know but there is a possibility of if we put that on the APP on the website and we can get that up immediately.

Mr. Nufrio stated I'm sure the same courtesy given to students arriving late is given to staff as well. Mr. Tatum stated absolutely.

Mrs. Minneci stated I saw that there is a dual language program and legislation was fostered by Senator Chapin to establish a grant program for school districts and charter schools to develop dual languages – the Bill is S1630 and it will require the Commissioner and the State Board to establish and administer dual language immersion program that would begin in kindergarten and first grade. I already talked to Mrs. Guilfoyle. Mrs. Regis-Darby stated thank you very much. I'm excited about that.

NEW BUSINESS:

Mrs. Regis-Darby stated the high school principal will be hosting a parent meeting on April 11th and childcare will be provided so all the parents in the community should go to that meeting.

How much money has the District paid for drug testing for the year for students? Mr. Benaquista stated we will get you that information. Mr. Tatum stated it seems it is less than last year.

Mrs. Regis-Darby stated it was mentioned at the PTA meeting by some parents and the principal that vaping is a big concern at the high school and what is the District's plan? Mr. Benaquista stated I have had conversations with the administration – administration brought it to my attention that they are seeing more incidences of it. We are looking at devices for the bathroom. We are also talking about a parent meeting in reference to vaping and make them aware of what it is and what it also can entail. I also think we need to educate our kids on a greater level. A lot of kids may not realize the extent of vaping. It is growing throughout every school. I think it is more education and more community involvement and making sure we are letting our kids know that it is not healthy, it is not safe and it is not a smart thing to do. The high school is already on top of a parent night and we are looking at other options as far as security safety measures to help.

Mrs. Regis-Darby stated I noticed at the high school there are eight security guards but one female. Is there anything we can do about that because in terms of having a female security guard being able to stand near a bathroom or go into the female bathrooms – I think that is definitely something we should look into. Mr. Benaquista stated we have five districtwide. We try to have one in every school that has security. It is a budgetary thing but if we are adding more security that would then be an easy fix if we have the fiscal money we would just hire a female. If the need was that if not it is a matter through attrition bringing someone in that meets the needs of the District. In any position we always talk about what our needs are and try to find people that match those needs in our school system. It is something we can talk about as things progress.

Mrs. Regis-Darby stated I think it should be a priority. Mr. Benaquista stated we can reallocate as well. Mr. Tatum stated prior to the reorganization of security in 2011 there were two females in the high school. But under the previous administration and at that time the new director of security there was a transfer of staff and that is when it went to one. Mr. Benaquista stated we can look at restructuring and our high school is our largest building. Mr. Taylor stated just as a general proposition, I trust that prior decisions and recommendations and prospective recommendations we make is based on the best qualified individual for that position and in full compliance with the New Jersey law against discrimination which prohibits gender discrimination etc. so while there may be certain preferences – cultural, etc. – absent legal requirement for a female to go into a bathroom that may not be the determining factor in the hiring recommendations.

Mrs. Higgins asked how many incidences in the past couple of years that needed to be more than one female security guard? Mr. Tatum stated that is a very difficult question to answer because it is about everyone being cognizant of people on duty, stationed near bathrooms – sometimes they are female and sometimes they are male but that is part of what goes on in the high school level. I feel comfortable of always having and when we did Jefferson there was a mistake made and we went with three security officers there but our goal was to have a female and a male there because of what I know about 10-year olds and they find it as a meeting place. It is nice for someone to check the bathrooms on a consistent basis.

Mr. Nufrio stated one has anything come up with the possible scheduling of an opioid training which was going to be presented by Officer Smith and if so please share with us. And to go back to vaping and everyone here should have seen the bulletins about that – the medical research is coming out with a lot of information - lung problems, respiratory problems, etc. I believe they are also increasing the age if not done already to require purchasing of the vaping. They may look into putting the cautions and other warning signs and labels. We have to treat that in the same manner that we do smoking and eventually with the marijuana if recreational goes through. Mr. Tatum stated we are handling it as with smoking.

Mr. Nufrio stated with regards to opioid training. Mr. Tatum stated Jill was coordinating it. Mrs. Hall stated the person that will be doing the presenting will be back on March 28 and we will schedule then.

Mrs. Regis-Darby stated has the Board had an update on the Superintendent's contract? Mr. Taylor stated that is personnel matter and we will talk in closed session.

Mrs. Minneci stated I am on the ADA committee in Town and April is Autism Awareness Month and we are sponsoring Jazz it Up for Autism. They extended the poster contest and those submitted will be on display – April 24.

COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC:

Suehay Monge stated I wanted to thank Mrs. Minneci and Mr. McDowell for choosing the ad hoc committee. Thank you Mr. Tatum that he will be sharing the results of the survey that was given.

When will the ad hoc committee meet because we are three months until June and that is when the contract expires and I don't want to be in a situation and I find that we are constantly in where we are rushing things and not making an educated decision. It took a long time to get the RFP out. I want to make sure that we use these three months wisely.

I saw scoreboard on there and I was shocked like everyone else at the table and I didn't understand. First of all is the scoreboard broken? If it is not why are we spending that money when windows at Franklin are falling apart. It was pointed out that Barry put these numbers on but he is not working in a vacuum. He doesn't decide that.

As far as the high school I also attended a PTA meeting recently and the issue of vaping came up and they are not just vaping essential oils they are vaping marijuana. I have an issue with that and I understand it will probably be legal. I don't want my son inhaling it when he goes into the bathroom where people are smoking it. They are like usb's and they can plug into the computer to charge. Check their bookbags, closets – every chance I get and I think we need to educate the parents because they need to know it could be your kid. We have to do something there has to be a plan of action. I think security is an issue with having only one woman there. I don't know what the laws are about security entering the bathrooms but if you have a man security guard and you smell something from the bathroom, he can't just walk in – he has to announce it and the girls will put it in their shirt or down their pants and you can't catch them. The rate is higher for boys getting caught because we have more male security. We need at least two more female security.

Being sent out for drug testing but I think they are constantly sending out as per Ms. Bossard and it is actually happening a lot more frequently and that is concerning. An action plan needs to be put in place.

Lastly about the high school – is a decision going to be made as to when there is going to be a permanent principal or is that coming down the pipe.

As far as PARCC or NJSLA – I hate it anyway – they were signing on today and the computers were crashing so we need to get ahead of that because every year is the same thing. Mr. Wojcik stated those failures are what we are trying to get before the test so we can address them ahead of time.

Jill Hall stated I have to jump in on the vaping thing. I don't want anybody to leave this room and think there is no plan. There is a plan and it has been in place. Meetings with the students have already taken place. Shawn Folly that works for Prevention Links will be coming in to do a parent presentation as soon as I can schedule him. I was at a County meeting yesterday and this is a problem. We are way ahead of the game. Some districts don't even send out kids. They are scrambling to get policies in place. We have a policy in place. I agree we need another female security monitor but we are sending out girls at the same rate of boys right now. Our numbers are lower than last year at this time. This is crunch time – February/March – when things start to escalate. The policy does provide follow-up counseling for these students. When I go to these County meetings people are shocked that we provide follow-up counseling

and a full assessment. It is not just about the punishment piece. It is about recognizing it and helping them.

With regards to education, these meetings right now are preliminary meetings. I spoke with Mrs. Bossard about doing an additional advisory plan where we would have an extended homeroom and Mrs. Williams and I could create a lesson plan that all teachers would deliver to their homeroom. I have asked that all teachers if you are not assigned to homeroom still push into a homeroom so that everyone across the Board would get that same lesson with regards to the vaping. We really do have a plan. It is extensive and it is ongoing.

I was at a conference last week and one of the presenters said with the new THC oil that we are seeing, we are seeing levels as high as 20,000 ng per deciliter and that is when kids have side effects and consequences so we are taking this very seriously. We are also pushing this down to the middle schools.

Mrs. Fiske and Mrs. Bobbert have a tendency to be a little more humble than they should be when they talk about what they were doing. The magnitude of the work that was done by that committee in preparation for that event is astounding of what they do. They never want to take any credit because that is not who they are and that is why they are so successful at what they do. That recognition is well deserved.

Millionaire mindset – I think it is a great idea but I want a little clarity on what an “at risk student” is because it started looking like one thing and ended up looking like something else. I think the idea is amazing but I think that part needs clarification.

Kawameeh gym also has a discussion item. I hope that you don't hiccup on that one either. Jack DeBarbieri was there for 40 plus years and there is nobody else that deserves that recognition.

Mr. Arminio would never forgive me if I didn't mention that tomorrow night is the Unsung Hero event at the high school and we are hosting and I'm hoping that you will be able to be there.

Mr. Tatum and I seldom disagree on anything but we disagree on this one – I see that once again we are approving employee students to come to school in Town and we talk about space and we talk about money and we are still permitting our employees to send their kids to school here. I think it is a wonderful thing while we were able to do it and we had the space and the money and I thought it was great but we don't have the space and we don't have the money any more. These are my tax dollars and when I chose not to send my kids to school here even though I lived in Town for my own personal reasons that was on me. If you think enough of our district and you want to send your kids to school here, I couldn't afford to buy a house in Union and I scraped and I scrambled and I got in over my head and I took an extra job and I did what I had to do because I wanted my kids to be here. I love my colleagues to death but they have to learn to figure it out with the town that they live in.

Ann Margaret Shannon stated Jack DeBarbieri was my teacher at school and he was my peer when I worked at Kawameeh. His son Danny worked at the high school with me. Please take care of it.

Organizational chart – I’m looking around this room and there are at least four directors in here right now. They are districtwide directors – the athletic director is a districtwide position. It doesn’t matter where the office is. Building principals are responsible for one building. Directors are responsible for the district so I hope when you are looking at the organizational chart you will remember that the athletic director is a districtwide position – not a building position.

The high school – acting principal - the UTEA has been having an awesome year with the acting administrator at the high school. Mrs. Fiske is one of our head reps. It is an open door policy there. It is working great. I would say that because they are acting, it does cause a little bit of an issue and they can’t really make all the decisions they want to make so whatever you can do to speed the process up so they can say I’m in charge, I’m going to do this. I would appreciate that but other than that it is working great now. I appreciate that partnership.

Happy St. Patrick’s week – you are all invited to march with the UTEA on Saturday at the parade.

The ESIP was a very broad overview and take a 20-year mortgage and hope it all works out in the end, I don’t know it is like robbing Peter to pay Paul – I hope I’m wrong but I hope you do your due diligence. I hope it is not going to be a big mortgage that we won’t recoup.

Susan Lipstein stated the planning session was way too short for all the items on the agenda. I think you did 20% and they are all important. To have an hour and half planning session after six months is not the best plan. It needs to be longer than that.

The millionaire mindset mansion – I’m sure you are going to investigate a little bit more about this. If we allow them to take our kids are we then advocating this program and we in any way responsible if anything is to happen with the kids. I think that needs to be discussed. I like the concept – dream anything and you can do it but I have a problem with it being “millionaire mindset and mansion” – it rubs me the wrong way. I think we need to raise socially responsible students and I do not see accumulation of wealth as part of our mission statement. I would like them to coordinate some of their ideas with our mission statement. Also the social responsibility is more important than being a millionaire. Do we really want to advocate red carpet and limousines as what we want to aspire to – that is a concern of mine.

With respect to St. Jude’s it sets precedence and you may want to think about that.

Tiran Singletary stated I teach music at Burnet Middle School. When Jordan’s mother told me she was coming to the Board meeting I thought it would be appropriate for me to be here as well so I can give you a take on some things that I noticed. The past month I’m starting to realize that we have to look at how we deal with students that are violent. Mr. Taylor stated I’m sorry to interrupt you but as a staff member of the District I would suggest that you not speak

about any student matters; they are protected by confidentiality. As a member of the public you have the first amendment right to say what you want; however, as a staff member you have certain terms and conditions of employment that you should be mindful of particularly as it relates to student confidentiality. If a parent wants to speak on behalf of their child, that is their prerogative. The parent will be informed if and when they decide to speak about their own child private issues as it relates to their educational environment that the Board cannot and will not respond in public. There is a chain of command process and I will reiterate as a member of the professional teaching staff in this District you are prohibited by law from disclosing confidential student information.

Mr. Singletary stated I will not disclose any confidential information. I'm just here to notice the things I have noticed and here to support her. I'm the first one to help anyone out. I have seen things and I will agree with her and we need to start rethinking consequences for violent students. I think that is important and I will plant that seed. It is not one person's issue it is all of us. We have to work together. Today I passed out things to the students – 100 Ways to Prevent Violence – I think it is important. I want this to be made a priority. I think we can reach out and help people with this and unfortunately I was first on the scene on the last two incidences. I told her I would be here and I will be here to support you.

Lucy stated I have been in Union since my daughter has been in kindergarten. Education here is wonderful. The teachers are great. I have been amazed on how caring the teachers and the administrators are. It has been great. The education we get here is wonderful. We left Newark, we moved to Union – great system. I was shocked on what went on in the school and it is now on snap chat. The violent behavior that was happening. I have come to other Board of Education meetings and I know you guys are trying. I go to PTA meetings and I hear the principals, teachers, staff and parents – they are working hard. But I noticed once the transition from middle school and years ago a parent near my house said your child gets to high school, don't send him. I said you must be kidding. They told me their child went to the high school and they were shocked with what they saw. I'm just saying we need to look at certain things that are going on in the schools when it comes to students that act towards other students. I'm not saying they need to be pushed out but maybe there are other programs or curriculum that students that act out toward another student – we can bring them towards the curriculum – this is the way – conflict resolution. These violent behaviors in school there is just so much you can do and you are working with us as the parents and I appreciate everything you do. I never feel hesitant to pick up the phone and call. I never feel I can't go into the school. I always feel welcome but I was shocked yesterday with the events that happened. I can't believe what happened and it is now on snap chat so any parent, student, administrator can go on and look at it.

Katherine Lewis stated I come here frequently. I don't know how else to ask you to come visit our school. I tried to say it calmly and nicely. You have not been picking up what I have been putting down. I now have friends here too. A parent and a child – we have issues. You need to come and see and figure it out. The violence is out of control. I physically watched a student punch another student in the arm outside my door. I wrote it up. They got two OD's. That is not o.k.

Two months ago I brought up issues about field trips because they were on the list on here and now you approve districtwide field trips but the field trips are no longer listed. I felt that was shady because I made a comment about somebody's field trip two months ago and now we don't see what field trips have been approved. We need to do something and we need help. Please come to Burnet and help us.

Steve stated phys ed teacher Burnet Middle School – 13 years - it's the only place I ever taught. Like she said we need help. The students have lost faith in our ability to do our jobs. Not teaching, they are worried about safety, security – we had an incident where the students felt obligated to call 911 because they didn't have faith in the teachers and administrators to stop it. The office detention – that is my duty – we have tons of cards, disciplinary cases. This week was 12. The week before was 3 and before that 1. The kids that show up are the ones that are late for school and that is one of our biggest disciplinary cause. I am not an administrator, I don't have my certification, I don't know what we can or can't do but I can say please come see for yourself. There was an incident involving a student in my class – where she grabbed another student by the throat and slammed her head into the door so hard that the door flew open and tumbled into the hallway. When I wrote it up as a fight, it was returned to me as horseplay. Mr. Taylor stated you haven't mentioned any students' names etc. which I'm not saying it hasn't happened but in a professional setting there are certain orders of protocol and chains of command that could and should be followed. If it hasn't been done, and I'm not saying it hasn't, but simply saying that is what would normally occur so that the information can be brought to the Superintendent's attention with respect to day-to-day operations of your particular school and the District as a whole. I trust the Board appreciates you bringing these issues to their attention. I am sure the administration will investigate whether these are recent incidents or more dated incidents and can take the appropriate, not just disciplinary measures, but policy review etc. to create a safe and welcoming learning environment. That is the comment I will leave on behalf of the Board as it pertains to this.

Mr. Tatum stated with all due respect to the teachers that are here, they absolutely have interacted with me. I have been in consultation with the Board President on some of these matters. Due to the fact that this is a personnel issue, I am not going to discuss this here tonight. When the appropriate time comes I will update the entire Board on exactly where we are with things. I have been over to the school a couple of times. There were some plans to do some relocation of some of us and deployment there and that is still on the table. There are things happening that you are not visibly able to see now but you will very shortly.

Mrs. Lopes stated my son goes there and he has been complaining about a lot of bullying and disrespect. The kids talk too loud in classrooms and he can't concentrate. The kids don't respect if it is not the teacher – if it's the substitute they simply don't care for the substitute. They even tell them in their face that they aren't their teacher we don't care and we don't have to listen to you. The other day he came out of class and sat down in the hallway and said mom I left, there was so much noise that I couldn't take it. Another teacher called him into another classroom. It is things that is happening and been happening since September. I did call the principal and I did talk to him. He has been talking to my son. I don't know what came out of it My kids are not the talking type. I ask them about food they say everything is fine. I ask them about what is going on in school and everything is fine. So the only time I hear is when he is

very frustrated. He comes out of school and says I don't want to go back there – please don't let me go back there. I talk to him and say you have to go back. There is no other choice. I tend not to believe the kids I tend to minimize it and say it is really not like that, think it over, kids are kids, maybe they don't have parents that teach them better, they don't know, they are in a bad spot – stick with it and take it easy. Don't pay attention and ignore them. This is what I tell my kid. Until a couple of weeks ago I called Mr. Harrell and told him about it because it was to the point that he didn't really want to go back to school. So there is something going on there.

Solomon Lama stated I work at Burnet, special education teacher. I teach science there and have been there for about eight years. Burnet is a big school and houses a lot of students and we have to come up with a solution to end this cycle. I strongly suggest that we look at a plan that keeps the 6th graders separate from the rest of the population. At least until we develop a new culture. That building was never intended to be a middle school but it is. It is a big building and there is a lot of footprint and I think we should come up with a plan to end that cycle. Maybe keeping 6th graders on one side of the building; maybe turning the old special services into classrooms; maybe moving the science classrooms from the third floor for 6th graders down there so we can keep all the 6th graders together in one wing of the building.

The other thing is equity in our school or at least the appearance of equity. We have special activities that are going on in our school – new furniture, new space, new room but I have two colleagues that I work with and one of them has a classroom and she can't even use half of it because it is filled with lab equipment that she can't use and the students can't sit there. I have another colleague in a wheelchair for many years and she gets into the building through the loading dock – that is not acceptable. I had a student for three years that was pushed into the loading dock as well – that is not acceptable. I'm a special education teacher that is just not right.

Finally the issue of lockdown – personally I was injured at one point – a student flipped over a desk and it landed on my foot and broke my toe. The student wasn't trying to hurt me he was just very upset. When the ambulance came to take me out a lockdown was never called. I don't know why it wasn't called. I was carted out while students were in the hallway, looking at their favorite teacher. A couple of months later there was another issue where there were weapons in the school and a lockdown wasn't called. It is the principal's prerogative but I see a pattern. We were never informed of this until somebody else brought it up at a meeting. Usually an emergency meeting is called so we are aware of what is going on and rumors don't spread. During a regular scheduled meeting it was brought up – one of our colleagues had to bring it up and then we had a conversation about it.

These are the three main issues that I want to say. I am open to answer any of your questions any time. Thank you.

Chasity Santana stated security – I have always weighed 100 pounds soaking wet with rocks in my pocket. I have gone to school in the Bronx, Brooklyn and Elizabeth High School in the 90's. If we are not safe nothing is getting done. Our children need safety. I am going to tell you this – I'm not moving anywhere. My kids are going to the high school and if my kids are scared, I'm going to school with them and nobody is going to stop me. I'll catch a charge from

my kid just like anybody else in here will. We need to get this thing together from Burnet and I'm not going to say thank God I'm not at Burnet but maybe things will get moving because Burnet and Kawameeh are the same except I live on one side of Town and all the kids should be safe. We shouldn't be punching each other. We shouldn't be doing these things to each other. We need security. Male, female, black, white, ugly, pretty – we need security and that is where it all comes from.

Mrs. Hart you saved me the other day – Genesis – Ian is in 6th grade – he is my first kid to get this – an email, text alert – Genesis discipline alert and I don't know what is going on. I called the principal and everyone in the building – what is this in Genesis. They don't see it. I take a screen shot and everybody is trying to make sure that I'm crazy. We need help. There has to be something in Genesis. Is it going to stay in there forever, 3-6 months – this alert. I have no idea how to figure it out.

I need to feel a little bit more love in our buildings but I'm not going to stop going. We need to invite our parents in because your biggest problem should be that all these parents want to be in the school and know what is going on. If we had a 1000 parents in this meeting right now, this would not be happening.

Mr. Tatum did not want to go to my PTA reflection dinner. I do it for Jefferson and Kawameeh but Mr. Benaquista went. The reflection kids are being honored by the Mayor. I think BOE should honor them too. Mr. Benaquista stated we are talking about it next month. We are planning next month to honor all the kids.

Thank you for Mrs. Higgins to showing up to a PTA meeting.

Mr. Tatum stated I will put one disclaimer on one thing Mrs. Santana said. I happened to go into a school building and who was volunteering but Mrs. Santana and when I walked out she said you are coming tomorrow night and I didn't know what she was talking about. I did redeem myself by getting someone else there. Mr. Benaquista stated he didn't get back to you because he was trying to change his plans.

Mrs. Santana stated PTA reflection is an art program from the PTA and it should be in every school – if we have a chairperson for every school. Mr. Benaquista stated it was an amazing event. Mr. Tatum stated if you really want me to go to that program, you would have done what you normally do – ring the bell. Mr. Benaquista stated this is the first time I attended. I walked in thinking it was a Union event because we had so many Union people there being recognized – not knowing that it was a County event. The topic this year was amazing – “hero's around you”. Mrs. Santana stated next year's is “look within”. Every year is an event. It started in the 1960's with just an arts program.

MOTION FOR EXECUTIVE SESSION:

Moved by Dr. Morgan, seconded by Mrs. Regis-Darby, that the Board go into Executive Session at 10:03 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.

- Matters involving employees and terms of their employment and contract.

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: Mrs. Higgins, Mr. McDowell, Dr. Morgan, Mr. Nufrio, Mrs. Regis-Darby,
Mrs. Richardson, Mrs. Ruiz, Mrs. Williams, Mrs. Minneci

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED

The Board returned to public session at 11:06 p.m.

MOTION TO ADJOURN:

There being no further business before the Board in public session it was moved by Mrs. Regis-Darby, seconded by Mrs. Ruiz, that the meeting be adjourned at 11:06 p.m. All present voting YES MOTION CARRIED

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,

GREGORY E. BRENNAN
BOARD SECRETARY