

TOWNSHIP OF UNION BOARD OF EDUCATION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES – March 18, 2025 – 6:00 p.m.

NOTICE OF MEETING:

TO ALL BOARD OF EDUCATION MEMBERS:

The regular meeting of the Board of Education of the Township of Union was held on Tuesday, March 18, 2025 at 6:00 p.m. at Town Hall, Main Meeting Room, 1976 Moris Avenue, Union, New Jersey pursuant to notice sent to each member.

Ms. Carbonell called the meeting to order at 6:04 p.m.

PRESENT AT ROLL CALL:

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

ABSENT AT ROLL CALL:

Mrs. Nancy Minneci

ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT:

Dr. Gerald Benaquista, Dr. Jose Rodriguez, Mrs. Yolanda Koon

ALSO PRESENT:

Mr. Lester Taylor, Esq.

Mr. McDowell led the Board and audience members in the Pledge of Allegiance and read the district's mission statement.

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

MOTION FOR EXECUTIVE SESSION:

Moved by Mrs. Scott-Hayden, seconded by Ms. Santana, that the Board go into Executive Session at 6:07 p.m. to discuss the following subject matters without the presence of the public in accordance with the provisions of N.J.S.A. 10:4-12b: personnel, legal update.

Please take notice that minutes will be taken of the discussion conducted during the executive session and the Board will disclose the minutes of the executive session when the disclosure will not result in unwarranted invasion of individual privacy or prejudice to the best interests of the Board of Education and provided that such disclosure does not violate federal, state or local statutes and does not fall within the attorney/client privilege.

Action may be taken when the Board reconvenes in public session.

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

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED

The Board returned to public session at 7:05 p.m.

MOTION TO RETURN TO PUBLIC SESSION:

There being no further business before the Board it was moved by Mrs. Scott-Hayden, seconded by Ms. Santana, that the Board return to public session at 7:05 p.m.

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

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED

Approval of Minutes:

Moved by Mrs. Conteh-Mackey, seconded by Mr. Cohan, the following minutes were adopted:

1. February 1, 2025 – special meeting/retreat
2. February 1, 2025 – executive session
3. February 11, 2025 – worksession
4. February 11, 2025 – executive session
5. February 13, 2025 – special meeting/meet and greet with PTA
6. February 18, 2025 – regular meeting
7. February 18, 2025 – executive session

DISCUSSION:

None

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

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED

Communications:

EMPLOYMENT SEPARATION – GILMARTIN

Employment separation from Kathleen Gilmartin, 12-month secretary-Special Services Department, effective January 3, 2025.

EMPLOYMENT SEPARATION – ROSS

Employment separation from Loetia Ross, long-term substitute security officer-Connecticut Farms Elementary School, effective December 20, 2024.

EMPLOYMENT SEPARATION – STROUP

Employment separation from Daniel Stroup, electrician-Buildings and Grounds Department, effective January 21, 2025.

EMPLOYMENT SEPARATION – WEST

Employment separation from Candace West, bus aide-Transportation Department, effective January 6, 2025.

LETTER OF RETIREMENT – FERRETTI

Letter of resignation, for the purpose of retirement, from Cynthia Ferretti, 2nd grade teacher-Washington Elementary School, effective July 1, 2025.

LETTER OF RETIREMENT – HUFF

Letter of resignation, for the purpose of retirement, from Heidi Huff, kindergarten teacher-Connecticut Farms Elementary School, effective July 1, 2025.

LETTER OF RESIGNATION – GONZALEZ

Letter of resignation from Celese Gonzalez, bus driver-Transportation Department, effective February 26, 2025.

LETTER OF RESIGNATION – HAVYAR

Letter of resignation from Amanda Havyar, RTI teacher-Hannah Caldwell Elementary School, effective April 22, 2025.

LETTER OF RESIGNATION – PENA

Letter of resignation from Jennifer Pena, kindergarten teacher-Washington Elementary School, effective April 14, 2025.

REQUEST FOR LEAVE UPDATE – LANGLEY

Request for leave update from Brittany Langley, speech specialist-Kawameeh Middle School, new return date September 1, 2027.

REQUEST FOR LEAVE UPDATE – TRAMUTA

Request for leave update from Janette Tramuta, school counselor-Hannah Caldwell Elementary School, new return date May 29, 2025.

REQUEST FOR LEAVE UPDATE – BURD

Request for leave update from Diana Burd, special education teacher-Jefferson School, new return date November 3, 2025.

REQUEST FOR LEAVE UPDATE – BRAVETTE

Request for leave update from Victoria Bravette, math teacher-Burnet Middle School, new return date June 2, 2025.

REQUEST FOR LEAVE UPDATE – HALL

Request for leave update from Shaquana Hall, custodian-Hannah Caldwell Elementary School, new return date June 30, 2025.

REQUEST FOR LEAVE – GARCIA

Request for paid child rearing leave followed by unpaid FMLA/NJFLA from Ashley Garcia, 5th grade teacher-Jefferson School, May 27, 2025-June 4, 2026.

REQUEST FOR LEAVE – GUERRA DaSILVA

Request for paid FMLA from Janine Guerra DaSilva, 2nd grade teacher-Hannah Caldwell Elementary School, April 2, 2025-May 2, 2025

REQUEST FOR LEAVE – MYERS

Request for unpaid FMLA leave from Stephen Myers, music teacher-Burnet Middle School, March 10-31, 2025, April 1-4, 2025, April 21-30, 2025, May 1-2, 2025, and June 2-7, 2025.

REQUEST FOR LEAVE – FIORDILINO

Request for paid medical leave from Maria Fiordilino, resource teacher-Burnet Middle School, February 24, 2025-March 14, 2025.

REQUEST FOR LEAVE – GABRIEL

Request for paid FMLA from Ana Gabriel, teacher-Jefferson School, March 6, 2025-April 6, 2025.

REQUEST FOR LEAVE – MENONI

Request for paid medical leave from Russell Menoni, PE teacher-Washington Elementary School, March 7, 2025-April 11, 2025.

REQUEST FOR INTERMITTENT LEAVE – MATEO

Request for paid intermittent FMLA from Susanna Mateo, secretary-Burnet Middle School, February 24, 2025-June 30, 2025.

REQUEST FOR INTERMITTENT LEAVE – WHITEMAN-LAND

Request for paid intermittent FMLA from Michaela Whiteman-Land, CST-Union High School, May 12, 2025-June 25, 2025.

REQUEST FOR INTERMITTENT LEAVE – DUBE

Request for paid intermittent FMLA from Heather Dube, PE teacher-Union High School, March 4, 2025-March 4, 2026.

REQUEST FOR INTERMITTENT LEAVE – KROM

Request for paid intermittent FMLA from Jennifer Krom, PreK teacher-Hannah Caldwell and Franklin Elementary Schools, April 21, 2025-April 21, 2026.

REQUEST FOR LEAVE – DAGENE-RITTER

Request for paid FMLA from Astride Dagene-Ritter, LDTC-Union High School, April 22, 2025-May 5, 2025.

Comments from Public (on resolutions):

Ms. Carbonell read the following statement:

“Good evening everyone. I’d like to take a moment to thank you all for being here today. As we begin the public comment portion of this meeting, I want to remind everyone that we value your input and appreciate your time and effort in sharing your thoughts and concerns.

As Ms. Koon stated previously, I ask that all comments be respectful and constructive, and that we refrain from calling out, yelling, and disrespectful language.

Each speaker will be given three minutes to address the board. Please remember that while we are eager to hear your perspectives, we may be unable to engage in back-and-forth dialogue during this portion of the meeting. However, your comments will be carefully reviewed and taken into consideration by the board, and if feasible, the Superintendent or designee, will respond to questions in real time or provide a response at a later time.

With that said, I invite our first speaker to approach. Please state your name and address.”

Virginia Jeffries – she had questions regarding fiscal agenda items, specifically the attorneys list and the Bill and Claims list. She also indicated that policies must have a first reading and then a final reading for adoption so that the public can comment on them..

Superintendent’s Report:

Kelly Piano, principal of Washington Elementary School and Melissa Glenn, PTA correspondent presented to the Board and audience (presentation appended to minutes) and the following was presented:

- iReady Growth – Math
- iReady Growth – Reading
- Wildcats of the Month – Respect, Responsibility, Kindness, Integrity, Fairness
- Students “Caught Being Kind”
- The Great Kindness Challenge – Kindness Moves
- Kindness Activities
- PTA events – Family Nights, Zumba Night, Curriculum Night, Fall Festival, Skate Night
- Upcoming Event – Heritage Night – May 29, 2025

Board President Carbonell thanked Ms. Piano and Ms. Glenn for their presentation.

Dr. Benaquista – congratulations to Jefferson School who was selected to participate as a showcase school in this year's NJPBSIS forum.

Laura Damato, principal of Jefferson School and Lisa McMahon, PTA president presented to the Board and audience (presentation appended to minutes) and the following was presented:

- PBSIS – Positive Behavior Support in Schools – creates a safe, positive, supportive and effective learning environment for all students.
- PBSIS – aims to improve social, emotional and academic outcomes for all students
- PBSIS – emphasizes preventing problems before they occur
- PTA – had many PTA Led Activities – including ice cream social, family bingo night, VIP dance and many more
- PTA – Upcoming events – teacher appreciation week, clothing drive, family fun night, plant sale, graduate lawn sign sale and pool party

Board President Carbonell thanked Mrs. Damato and Mrs. McMahon and congratulated them on the PBSIS award.

Dr. Benaquista – Leslie Nigro and Fatima DeCorte were selected for Governor's Educator of the Year and Service Professional.

School Representative – Ayana Josaphat, senior at Union High School, gave a presentation (presentation appended to minutes) and presented Positive Events for February and March 2025:

February:

- Black History Month – Essay contest held by the Vauxhall Historical Society
- National Honor Society students are continuing to provide free tutoring
- JROTC is currently preparing for the National High School Drill Championship in May
- Girls in Gear Program – enrichment program for young girls
- Strategic Planning Needs Assessment Survey – feedback from the district on how to improve

March:

- NJGPA – March 10-14
- Valedictorian, Salutatorian and Top 25 were acknowledged
- Allied Health
- SEPAG – training March 13th
- Peer Ambassadors – attended Kean Leadership Conference
- UHS Dance Team – participated in competition and scored elite gold
- WES and HCES – clothing drive/food drive
- West Point Academy – two UHS students, Ethan Santos and Ryu Javate were accepted

Athletics:

- 350 student athletes during winter season
- Wrestling, boys and girls basketball – all qualified for NJ State Tournament
- Caleb Duvelson and Babadera Olowe – 2025 Group 4 team shot put champions
- Girls 4x200 and 4x400 relay teams won the 2025 North 2 Group for winter track championship
- Ryu Juvate and Arian Betances qualified for the NJSIAA last chance qualifier for State Tournament – first time in 10 years
- Ariel Azeredo qualified for NJSIAA State wrestling tournament in Atlantic City

Board President Carbonell indicated to Ayanna that she did an amazing job with her presentation. She asked Ayanna what her plans are after graduation. Ayanna indicated that she planned on attending college and then attending law school

Dr. Benaquista presented his State of the School presentation (appended to the minutes) and the following was presented:

- Black History Month slide show
- UHS 2025 Unsung Hero – Damian Koziol
- HCES – kindergarten class celebrated 100th day of school
- Revenue Forecast Budget Impact – decrease of \$1,036,640 from last year
- 72% of the budget is salaries and health benefits - \$122,553,760
- 6.2% is transportation contracted services - \$10,591,067
- 10.4% is tuitions - \$17,824,296
- 4.5% is related services (special education) - \$7,725,429
- HCES – update
- Curriculum update – Reading Grades K-4 and Math Grades K-4
- In the news – It's All About U!
- Strategic Planning Needs Assessment
- HIB Affirmed Cases – 8 founded/3 not founded/inconclusive (February 19, 2025-March 11, 2025)
- HIB Report – 5 founded/6 not founded/inconclusive (March 12, 2025-March 18, 2025)
- BOE resolution highlight – Up the Bar

Board President Carbonell indicated to Dr. Benaquista that the Board asked for a lot from you in a short period of time and thanked him for his presentation.

Education/Student Discipline Committee Resolutions:

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

E-1. *Agenda item reported March 11, 2025 worksession (Report of HIB – February 19-March 11, 2025).*

E-1A. *Agenda item affirmed March 11, 2025 worksession (Determination of HIB – February 12-18, 2025).*

E-1. SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT OF HIB

Superintendent’s Report of Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying (HIB) for the period March 12, 2025 to March 18, 2025, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes (*no vote required; for reporting purposes only*).

E-1A. AFFIRM SUPERINTENDENT’S DETERMINATION OF HIB

Affirm the Superintendent’s determination of Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying (HIB) for the periods February 19, 2025 to March 11, 2025, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

E-2. APPROVE UP THE BAR - FAMILY WORKSHOP EVENT

Approve Up the Bar to provide a Family Workshop Event entitled “Learning Together: Simple, Fun Ways to Boost Your Child’s Success” for multilingual learners and their families at a cost of \$1,500.00 (to be paid for using Title III funds-account #20095), in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

E-3. APPROVE TO AMEND UHS SUMMER DATES – CREDIT RECOVERY PROGRAM

Approve to amend Union High School summer dates for the Credit Recovery Program to reflect July 1-August 4, 2025.

E-4. UHS LONG-TERM SUSPENSION – HOME INSTRUCTION

Approve to continue home instruction for the following Union High School students on long-term suspension: (a) Student #266593 and (b) Student #266641.

E-5. APPROVE MAKE-UP DAYS FOR HANNAH CALDWELL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Approve the following make-up days for Hannah Caldwell Elementary School: March 31, 2025, June 10, 2025 and June 19, 2025.

DISCUSSION:

Mr. Cohan thanked Dr. Benaquista for E-5 – make up days for HCES – a survey was taken and these were the top three days; the other schools will be closed on those days.

AYE: Mr. Cohan, Mrs. Conteh-Mackey, Mrs. Faria, Mr. McDowell,

Mr. Nasta, Mrs. Scott-Hayden, Ms. Santana, Ms. Carbonell

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED

[Fiscal and Planning Committee Resolutions:](#)

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

F-1. TREASURER'S REPORT

That the Treasurer's Report dated February 28, 2025 be accepted.

F-2. SECRETARY'S REPORT

That the Secretary's Report dated February 28, 2025 be accepted.

F-3. CERTIFY TREASURER'S AND SECRETARY'S REPORT

Pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:23-2.11(a), I certify that as of February 28, 2025 no budgetary line item account has obligations and payments (contractual orders) which in total exceed the amount appropriated by the district Board of education pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:22-8 and 18:22-8.1.

/s/ Yolanda Koon

Yolanda Koon, Board Secretary

Dated

Pursuant to N.J.A.C.6A:23-2.2(h), we certify that as of February 28, 2025 after review of the secretary's monthly financial report (appropriations section) and upon consultation with the appropriate district officials that to the best of our knowledge no major account or fund has been over-expended in violation of N.J.A.C. 6A:23-2.2(d)3 and that sufficient funds are available to meet the district's financial obligations for the remainder of the fiscal year. This certification is solely based on the information provided by the School Business Administrator and Board Secretary and is assumed by the Board to be correct.

F-4. APPROVE APPROPRIATION TRANSFERS

Approve appropriation transfers in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

F-5. APPROVE LIST OF CONTRACTS/PURCHASE ORDERS

Approve the attached list of contracts and/or purchase orders (copyrighted materials and licenses) pursuant to the requirements of N.J.S.A. 18A:18A-5 (bid exceptions to requirement for advertising) and 18A:18A-10(a) (purchase through State agency; procedure), in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

F-6. APPROVE DISTRICTWIDE TRAVEL AND RELATED EXPENSES

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

F-7. *Agenda item approved March 11, 2025 worksession (Student Field Trips).*

F-7A. APPROVE DISTRICTWIDE STUDENT FIELD TRIPS

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

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

Approve the amended list of the 2024-2025 State Contract Approved Vendors pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:18A-10(a) (purchase through State agency; procedure) to facilitate schools' purchasing, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

F-9A. APPROVED LIST OF CONTRACTS/PURCHASES (STUDENT ACTIVITY)

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

School	Account/Department	Vendor/Description	Amount
Burnet Middle School	2010/School Account	The Funplex – 8 th grade end of year trip deposit	\$5,087.50
Connecticut Farms Elementary School	2014/Gr. 4 Field Trip	Branch Brook Park Roller Skating Center – 1 hr. of interactive STEM lessons followed by roller skating	\$1,400.00 (not to exceed)
Kawameeh Middle School	41/musical production	Club Shue – t-shirts for cast/crew	\$1,600.00 (not to exceed)
Kawameeh Middle School	41/musical production	Audio Inc. – audio rental equipment for Matilda Jr.	\$7,000.00 (not to exceed)
Kawameeh Middle School	47/music	Music in the Parks – trip to Dorney Park for competition 5/30/2025	\$9,300.00 (not to exceed)
Kawameeh Middle School	52/Young Women of Purpose	Seaton Hackney Stables – field trip in April 2025	\$2,600.00 (not to exceed)
Union High School/Athletics	3280/Wrestling	NJSIAA – Boys & Girls Region Wrestling Tournament Entry Fees	\$6,500.00 (not to exceed)
Union High School/Athletics	3280/Wrestling	TCNJ Wrestling or TNT Wrestling – varsity and JV wrestling summer camp	\$13,000.00 (not to exceed)
Union High School/JROTC	2051/JROTC	Sport National Network-hotel fees not covered by Army for JROTC National Competition	\$5,000.00 (not to exceed)
Union High School/JROTC	2051/JROTC	US Coachways – bus rental for JROTC National Competition	\$12,404.61 (not to exceed)
Union High School	2084/social studies	New Jersey Hall of Fame Foundation – entrance fee for students	\$1,100 (not to exceed)
Union High School	2077/UHSPAC	Brian Lynch/Lounge it Up – lighting design and installation for Into the Woods	\$5,000.00 (not to exceed)
Union High School	2077/UHSPAC	Main Light LLC – lighting rental for Into the Woods	\$10,000.00 (not to exceed)
Union High School	2234/UHS Step Team	BSN Sports – team warm ups, shirts and duffel bags	\$6,000.00 (not to exceed)
Union High School	2234/UHS Step Team	Six Flags Great Adventure-admission, food, parking and transportation to Dancefest 25 – May 3, 2025	\$2,500.00 (not to exceed)

Union High School	46/UHS Clubs	Kiwanis – registration for Key Club convention	\$8,120.00 (not to exceed)
Battle Hill Elementary School	2012	Union Township Bus – transportation to Red Bulls Arena-April 28, 2025	\$1,100.00
Battle Hill Elementary School	2012	New York Red Bulls – field trip to Weather Education Day	\$4,427.00
Livingston Elementary School	Main Office	Turtle Back Zoo – first grade field trip to Turtle Back Zoom	\$1,500.00

F-9B. APPROVE FUNDRAISERS

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

Event Name	Date	Purpose
Spirit Wear Apparel Sale	March 12-June 24, 2025	Franklin – to raise funds for student activities
Mother's Day Plant Sale	May 7-9, 2025	Franklin – to raise funds for student activities
Car Wash	May 4, 2025 (rain date May 18, 2025)	KMS/G&T – to raise funds for out-of-state travel/trip
Dave & Buster Power Cards	March 11-April 2, 2025	KMS/Art Club – to raise funds for student field trip
Ms. UHS	April 24, 2025	UHS/EmpowerMENT – to raise funds for club shirts and scholarships
Dress Down – Month of April	March 28-April 1, 2025	UHS/UHSPAC – to raise funds for production costs, scholarships and other UHSPAC needs
Snack Sales	March 20-June 30, 2025	UHS/Senior Class – to raise funds for senior class events
Poppin Popcorn	April 1-May 31, 2025	UHS/Marching Band – to raise funds for band seasons
Donation/Fund Drive	April 20-May 1, 2025	UHS/Marching Band – to raise funds for band seasons
Painting Event	March 19-June 30, 2025	UHS/Key Club – to raise funds for next DECON Convention
Candy Fundraiser	March 19-June 19, 2025	UHS/Sophomore Class of 2027 – to raise funds for class of 2027
Minute to Give It (donation collection)	April 3-6, 2025	UHS/UHSPAC – to raise funds for production costs
Bake Sale	April – May 2025 Dates TBD	UHS/UHSPAC – to raise funds for advanced musical theatre production

F-9C. ACCEPT DONATIONS

Accept the following donations:

From	For Use By	\$/Item
Shutterfly LLC	Battle Hill Elementary School	\$1,264.82
PepsiCo Beverage Sales LLC	Union High School	\$581.57
PepsiCo Beverage Sales LLC	Union High School	\$817.40

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

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

F-11. APPROVE NONPUBLIC SCHOOL SECURITY AND TECHNOLOGY INITIATIVE PROGRAM SPENDING PLANS - UCESC

Approve the Union County Educational Services Commission (UCESC) Nonpublic School Security and Technology Initiative Program spending plans for United Academy of Union located within the district for the 2024-2025 school year, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

F-12. APPROVE PARTICIPATION IN COORDINATED TRANSPORTATION – WARREN COUNTY SPECIAL SERVICES SCHOOL DISTRICT

Approve resolution for participation in coordinated transportation with the Warren County Special Services School District for the 2025-2026 school year, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

F-13. APPROVE NORTH JERSEY BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES – BEHAVIOR SERVICES

Approve North Jersey Behavioral Health Services (dba Capstone Center) to provide applied behavior services to a district student at a cost not to exceed \$156,600.00 for the 2024-2025 school year [Account Fund #11-000-216-320-01-19], in accordance with the non-public information appended to the minutes.

F-14. APPROVE NORTH JERSEY BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES – BEHAVIOR SERVICES

Approve North Jersey Behavioral Health Services (dba Capstone Center) to provide applied behavior services to a district student at a cost not to exceed \$87,600.00 for the 2024-2025 school year [Account Fund #11-000-216-320-01-19], in accordance with the non-public information appended to the minutes.

F-15. APPROVE SUCCESS ON THE SPECTRUM – IN SCHOOL BEHAVIOR ANALYST SERVICE

Approve Success on the Spectrum (SOS) for in-school behavior analyst services to include: (a) consultative services as related to social/emotional behaviors, (b) conduct functional behavior assessments, (c) write behavior intervention plans, (d) IEP services, and (e) meetings/consultation with parents related to student progress, at the rate of \$124.00 per hour (not to exceed \$25,000) for the 2024-2025 school year [Account Fund #11-000-216-320-01-19], in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

F-16. APPROVE PARENT/PUPIL TRANSPORTATION CONTRACT – 2024-2025

Approve parent/pupil transportation contract for a special education student attending DLC Warren at the rate of \$49.00 per day (not to exceed \$5,390.00) for the period January 27, 2025-June 30, 2025, in accordance with the non-public information appended to the minutes.

F-17 APPROVE ACCEPTANCE OF ADDITIONAL GRANT AGREEMENT – NJDOE/FINANCE AND BUSINESS SERVICES

Approve acceptance of \$2,000,000 Building Infrastructure Grant Agreement (717-20250032) with the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE)/Finance and Business Services.

F-ATTY. *For informational purposes only – vote not required.* List of legal services paid as of February 18, 2025 for the 2024-2025 fiscal year, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

*Resolutions F-18 through F-24
Concern the Proposed Tentative Budget for the 2025-2026 School Year*

The Superintendent recommends approval to adopt the Tentative Budget for FY 2025-2026:

F-18. APPROVE GENERAL FUND TAX LEVY – TENTATIVE BUDGET

Approve the General Fund tax levy of \$109,576,551.86 in the 2025-2026 school year.

F-19. APPROVE TRAVEL AND RELATED EXPENSE REIMBURSEMENT

Approve Travel and Related Expense Reimbursement (not to exceed \$85,000.00) for the 2025-2026 school year.

F-20. APPROVE ESTABLISHING A MAXIMUM DOLLAR LIMIT – PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

Approve establishing a maximum dollar limit for professional services \$4,661,284.00 for the 2025-2026 school year.

F-21. APPROVE USE OF EXCESS SURPLUS FUNDS/FUND BALANCE

Approve the Board of Education to include in the General Fund Budget \$2,497,298.00 of the Board of Education's excess surplus funds \$1,500,000.00 and additional fund balance \$997,298.00 (@ 6/30/24 per audit) to help close budget gap.

F-22 APPROVE USE OF ENROLLMENT ADJUSTMENT

Approve in the tentative budget the adjustment for enrollment in the amount of \$39,645.00 in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-15.3. The district has fully exhausted all eligible statutory spending authority. The adjustment will be used for instructional supplies and will complete this by June 30, 2026, and acknowledges that it cannot be deferred or incrementally completed over a longer period of time.

F-23. APPROVE ADJUSTMENT FOR HEALTH CARE COSTS

Approve in the tentative budget the adjustment for increased costs of health benefits in the amount of \$1,391,538.00. The additional funds will be used to pay for the additional increases in health benefit premiums.

F-24. APPROVE EARLY CHILDHOOD PRESCHOOL BUDGET – 2025-2026

Approve the resolution approving the early childhood preschool budget for the 2025-2026 school year in the amount of \$9,853,762.00, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

DISCUSSION:

None

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

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED

[Operations Committee Resolutions:](#)

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

O-1. APPROVE SECURITY DRILL/BUS EVACUATION REPORTS

Pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:41-1 and P.L. 2009, Chapter 178, approve the following security drill and, if applicable, bus evacuation reports for the 2024-2025 school year, in accordance with the non-public information appended to the minutes.

O-2. APPROVE REQUEST TO USE UHS AUDITORIUM

Approve request from Living Word Church, Union, New Jersey to use UHS Auditorium on Sunday, April 20, 2025, from approximately 6:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., together with two custodian and one audio/visual person. Certificate of Insurance provided; Hold Harmless Agreement to be provided.

DISCUSSION:

None

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

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED

[Personnel Committee Resolutions:](#)

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

P-1A. PERSONNEL ACTIONS – NEW HIRES

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

P-1B PERSONNEL ACTIONS – EXTRA PAY

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

P-1C PERSONNEL ACTIONS – TRANSFERS

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

P-2. *Agenda item approved March 11, 2025 worksession (substitute lists).*

P-3A. ACCEPT LETTERS OF RESIGNATION/RETIREMENT

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

Name	Position	Location	Eff. Date	Reason	Years of Service
Kathleen Gilmartin	12-month secretary	Special Services Dept	1/3/2025	Employment separation	
Loetia Ross	Long-term sub security officer	Connecticut Farms	12/20/2024	Employment separation	
Daniel Stroup	Electrician	Bldgs and Grounds Dept	1/21/2025	Employment separation	
Candace West	Bus aide	Transportation Dept	1/6/2025	Employment separation	
Cynthia Ferretti	2 nd grade teacher	Washington	7/1/2025	Retirement	26 yrs.
Heidi Huff	Kindergarten teacher	Connecticut Farms	7/1/2025	Retirement	35 yrs.
Celese Gonzalez	Bus driver	Transportation Dept.	2/26/2025	Resignation	
Amanda Havyar	RTI teacher	Hannah Caldwell	4/22/2025	Resignation	
Jennifer Pena	Kindergarten teacher	Washington	4/14/2025	Resignation	

P-3B. APPROVE LEAVES

Approve leaves for the following staff:

Name	Position	Location	Leave Dates	Leave Type
Brittany Langley	Speech specialist	KMS	New return date 9/1/2027	New return date
Janette Tramuta	School counselor	Hannah Caldwell	New return date 5/29/2025	New return date
Diana Burd	Special ed teacher	Jefferson	New return date 11/3/2025	New return date
Victoria Bravette	Math teacher	BMS	New return date 6/2/2025	New return date

Shaquana Hall	Custodian	Hannah Caldwell	New return date 6/30/2025	New return date
Ashley Garcia	5 th grade teacher	Jefferson	5/27/2025-6/4/2026	Paid child rearing leave followed by unpaid FMLA/NJFLA
Janine Guerra DaSilva	2 nd grade teacher	Hannah Caldwell	4/2/2025-5/2/2025	Paid FMLA
Stephen Myers	Music teacher	BMS	3/10-31/2025 4/1-4/2025 4/21-30/2025 5/1-2/2025 6/2-7/2025	Unpaid FMLA
Maria Fiordilino	Resource teacher	BMS	2/24/2025-3/14/2025	Paid medical leave
Ana Gabriel	Teacher	Jefferson	3/6/2025-4/6/2025	Paid FMLA
Russell Menoni	PE teacher	Washington	3/7/2025-4/11/2025	Paid medical leave
Susanna Mateo	Secretary	BMS	Intermittent leave 2/24/2025-6/30/2025	Paid intermittent FMLA
Michaela Whiteman-Land	CST	UHS	Intermittent leave 5/12/2025-6/25/2025	Paid intermittent FMLA
Heather Dube	PE teacher	UHS	Intermittent leave 3/4/2025-3/4/2026	Paid intermittent FMLA
Jennifer Krom	PreK teacher	Hannah Caldwell and Franklin	Intermittent leave 4/21/2025-4/21/2026	Paid intermittent FMLA
Astride Dagene-Ritter	LDTC	UHS	4/22/2025-5/5/2025	Paid FMLA

P-4. APPROVE STUDENT TEACHERS AND INTERNSHIPS

Approve student teachers and internships for the 2024-2025 school year, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

P-5. APPROVE ATTENDANCE AT AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL PERSONNEL ADMINISTRATION

Approve Marissa McKenzie, Assistant Superintendent, and Vincent Rettino, Director of Personnel, to attend the American Association of School Personnel Administration (AASPA) 2025 Annual Conference in Nashville, Tennessee (October 6-10, 2025) for a total cost not to exceed \$8,000.00.

DISCUSSION:

None

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

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED

Policy Committee:

Upon recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Policy Committee presents the following policy(ies) for the Board's consideration (***FIRST/FINAL READING***):

POL-1. *Agenda item approved March 11, 2025 worksession (Policy 0155 – Board Committees).*

POL-2. *Agenda item approved March 11, 2025 worksession (Policy 7510 – Use of School Facilities).*

POL-3. *Agenda item approved March 11, 2025 worksession (Regulation 7510 – Use of School Facilities).*

Policy Committee:

Upon recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the following policies were moved by Mrs. Faria, seconded by Ms. Santana, for ***FINAL READING/ADOPTION***:

POL-4. POLICY 0141 – BOARD MEMBER NUMBER AND TERM

Approve Policy 0141 – Board Member Number and Term, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

POL-5. POLICY 2200 – CURRICULUM CONTENT (M)

Approve Policy 2200 – Curriculum Content, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

POL-6. POLICY 3160 – PHYSICAL EXAMINATION (M)

Approve Policy 3160 – Physical Examination (teaching staff), in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

POL-7. POLICY 4160 – PHYSICAL EXAMINATION (M)

Approve Policy 4160 – Physical Examination (support staff), in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

POL-8. POLICY 5337 – SERVICE ANIMALS

Approve Policy 5337 – Service Animals, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

POL-9. POLICY 5350 – STUDENT SUICIDE PREVENTION (M)

Approve Policy 5350 – Student Suicide Prevention, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

POL-10. POLICY 8420 – EMERGENCY AND CRISIS SITUATIONS (M)

Approve Policy 8420 – Emergency and Crisis Situations, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

POL-11. POLICY 8467 – FIREARMS AND WEAPONS (M)

Approve Policy 8467 – Firearms and Weapons, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

POL-12. POLICY 9181 – VOLUNTEER ATHLETIC COACHES AND CO-CURRICULAR ACTIVITY ADVISORS/ASSISTANTS

Approve Policy 9181 – Volunteer Athletic Coaches and Co-Curricular Activity Advisors/Assistants.

POL-13. REGULATION 3160 - PHYSICAL EXAMINATION (M)

Approve Regulation 3160 – Physical Examination (teaching staff), in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

POL-14. REGULATION 4160 – PHYSICAL EXAMINATION (M)

Approve Regulation 4160 – Physical Examination (support staff), in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

POL-15. REGULATION 5200 – ATTENDANCE (M)

Approve Regulation 5200 – Attendance, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

POL-16. REGULATION 8467 – FIREARMS AND WEAPONS (M)

Approve Regulation 8467 – Firearms and Weapons, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

POL-17. ABOLISH – POLICY 0164.6 – REMOTE PUBLIC BOARD MEETINGS DURING A DECLARED EMERGENCY (M)

Abolish Policy 0164.6 – Remote Public Board Meetings During a Declared Emergency.

POL-18. ABOLISH – POLICY 7231 – GIFTS FROM VENDORS (M)

Abolish Policy 7231 – Gifts from Vendors.

DISCUSSION:

None

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

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED

Residency Committee Resolutions:

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

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

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

Student No.	School
306012	Burnet Middle School – 7 th grade

R-2. APPROVE TO REMOVE STUDENTS FROM ROLLS

Approve to remove the following student from the attendance rolls as the students has been determined to be ineligible to attend the Township of Union Public Schools as a resident student:

Student No.	School
#250848	12 th grade-DCF Regional School

DISCUSSION:

None

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

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED

For informational purposes only (no vote required): The following totals are as of the February 18, 2025 Board meeting (2024-2025 school year):

Students Removed:	7
Students Voluntarily Transferred:	11

Approval of Bills:

Upon recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, and moved by Mr. Cohan, seconded by Ms. Santana, that the Board concur with the bills listed in the permanent bound register appended to these minutes and be ordered for payment.

DISCUSSION:

None

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

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED

Unfinished Business:

Ms. Santana - the district hosted the wrestling tournament and it was a great event; come out to support our team.

New Business:

Mr. Cohan – he attended his 28th St. Patrick’s Day parade. He had his grandfather’s walking stick and his dad’s sweater on. He was glad to see the JROTC marching unit. He challenged all Board members to attend the Memorial Day parade so they can all walk together. He also spoke about the closing of the education department in D.C. and that elections have consequences. He encourages the community to pay attention and let the elected officials know how you feel.

Mrs. Scott-Hayden – She attended an event where the ACLU spoke. She indicated that the ACLU will come to our schools and speak to our staff about ICE raids and your rights and our schools. They are highly informative. Dr. Benaquista indicated that he would reach out to them.

Mrs. Scott-Hayden read the following statement from Mrs. Minneci:

Thank you, Ms. Bruns Meyer, for inviting me to read to the pre-k classes at Livingston School. I really enjoyed reading to Ms. Bruns Meyer, Ms. Janowski, Ms. Cantone and Ms. Motley classes. The interaction was amazing. One student even told me that there was alliteration in the story. Thank you for our amazing student educators.

As a member of the Senior Citizen Advisory Board, I am pleased that our members are so grateful and happy that our UHS students come to the center and provide services.

Thank you to Ms. Royster and her cosmetology students for providing our seniors with manicures.

Thank you to Mrs. Zieser and her Allied Health students for providing a valuable service to our seniors.

This collaboration between our senior center Director, Mrs. Terezza and our administrators is amazing. This is a true example of collaboration within this great Township of Union.

Mr. Cohan – read to Ms. Bruns Meyers class and he indicated there is nothing quite like having hugs from 4 year olds.

Board President Carbonell – our security guard, Mr. Reilly, he courageously saved someone's life and he is recuperating with burned hands. Thank you for your service. Dr. Benaquista indicated that Mr. Reilly will be recognized for his heroic duty.

Comments from Public:

Lateesha Easterling – spoke about redistricting and what are the benefits. Will schools be upgraded for K-6? How will curriculum be structured? How will special needs and additional students be accommodated? Dr. Benaquista indicated that the realignment committees will come together on March 27th and thereafter an update on the realignment and any changes that will happen in the next year will be communicated to the parents and the community.

Ann Margaret Shannon – this was her 20th St. Patrick's Day Parade. Read Across America – the UPD and UTEA partnered together to buy books.

There is a rally tomorrow – so wear red – speakers will be Senator Cryan, NJEA, UTEA, the Mayor, Dr. Benaquista.

Natercia Lopes – the Board meeting location was not posted properly. She asked why POL-17 was abolished. She asked if we had a bidding policy. Ms. Carbonell stated yes. She indicated that Strauss Esmay is a company the district uses, and they provide updates according to state statute so if it is needed again, they will put it back in place.

Kathleen Bruns Meyers – thank you to all the readers – UPD, FD, parents, board members – it was a great collaboration. The kids love to be read to.

Trish Gomes – wants to make sure that the district is verifying union students; also the federal government is cutting meals – is there another plan to feed these kids.

Ms. Carbonell indicated that she is not sure on the cuts at this time; however, the state states we should plan conservation. We don't have all the answers yet and sometimes the state picks up and offers aid but we will come up with a plan.

Our residency investigators have been working diligently and verifying residency. We need to be vigilant so if you see something say something.

Mrs. Scott-Hayden – we have great investigators. We are doing our due diligence.

Luisa Biaz – residency verification – we need to be creative. She questioned P-5. Ms. Carbonell indicated we need to ensure staff has PD. She indicated that the April and May regular meetings will be at Town Hall.

Bernadette Watson – the Notice of Change in Meeting location is posted on the district website.

Ramon Hernandez – he has concerns with the policies because they don't show any details.

Virginia Jeffries – she has concerns concern with the bills and claims – not in sequential order, missing invoices numbers, not consistent, not in a running order, no dates of services, doesn't show the services rendered and some have no dates. She indicated that the meeting dates needs to be amended.

MOTION TO ADJOURN:

There being no further business before the Board in public session it was moved by Mr. Cohan, seconded by Ms. Santana, that the meeting be adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

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

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,

Yolanda Koon

YOLANDA KOON
BOARD SECRETARY

