

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, January 20, 2026 at 5:45 p.m. at the DMK Black Box Theater, 1980 Morris Avenue, Union, New Jersey pursuant to notice sent to each member.

Mrs. Scott-Hayden called the meeting to order at 5:47 p.m.

PRESENT AT ROLL CALL:

Ms. Dicxiana Carbonell, Mr. Michael Cohan, Mrs. Elsie Conteh-Mackey, Mr. Ronnie McDowell, Mrs. Nancy Minneci, Mr. Greg Nasta, Ms. Chastity Santana, Mrs. Kimberly Scott-Hayden

ABSENT AT ROLL CALL:

Mrs. Guida Faria

ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT:

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

ALSO PRESENT:

Mr. Christopher Buggy, Esq.

Ms. Carbonell 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 Ms. Santana, seconded by Mr. Cohan, that the Board go into Executive Session at 5:49 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.

TOWNSHIP OF UNION BOARD OF EDUCATION

Regular Meeting Minutes

January 20, 2026

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

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED

The Board returned to public session at 7:02 p.m.

MOTION TO RETURN TO PUBLIC SESSION:

There being no further business before the Board, it was moved by Mrs. Minneci, seconded by Ms. Santana, that the Board return to public session at 7:02 p.m.

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

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED

Approval of Minutes:

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

1. December 9, 2025 – worksession
2. December 9, 2025 – executive session
3. December 16, 2025 – regular meeting
4. December 16, 2025 - executive session

DISCUSSION:

None

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

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED

Communications:

REQUEST FROM CENTRAL JERSEY ALLSTARS TO USE UHS GYMNASIUM

Request from Central Jersey AllStars to rent the Union High School Gymnasium on Sunday, April 12, 2026 from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m.

REQUEST FOR LEAVE UPDATE – RODRIGUEZ

Request for leave update from Alicia Rodriguez, school counselor-Union High School, new leave date December 15, 2025.

REQUEST FOR LEAVE UPDATE – DALY

Request for leave update from Shannon Daly, English teacher-Union High School, new return date March 2, 2026.

REQUEST FOR INTERMITTENT LEAVE – WHITEMAN-LAND

Request for paid intermittent FMLA from Michaela Whiteman-Land, special service-Union High School, January 5, 2026-February 13, 2026.

REQUEST FOR INTERMITTENT LEAVE – WALKER

Request for paid intermittent FMLA from Lauren Walker, director-Pre-K, January 5, 2026-January 5, 2027.

REQUEST FOR INTERMITTENT LEAVE – CLASS

Request for paid intermittent FMLA from Maria Class, security-Jefferson School, January 5, 2026-January 5, 2027.

REQUEST FOR INTERMITTENT LEAVE – STEEB

Request for paid intermittent FMLA from Linda Steeb, math teacher-Kawameeh Middle School, December 15, 2025-June 30, 2026.

REQUEST FOR INTERMITTENT LEAVE – PAYTON

Request for paid intermittent FMLA from Jameelah Payton, counselor-Union High School, December 15, 2025-June 30, 2026.

REQUEST FOR INTERMITTENT LEAVE – NICK

Request for paid intermittent FMLA from Michele Nick, teacher-Kawameeh Middle School, January 5, 2026-January 5, 2027.

REQUEST FOR INTERMITTENT LEAVE – PLAZA

Request for paid intermittent FMLA from Vilma Plaza, paraprofessional-Connecticut Farms Elementary School, September 1, 2025-June 15, 2026.

REQUEST FOR INTERMITTENT LEAVE – HAMPTON

Request for paid intermittent FMLA from Deanna Hampton, fourth grade teacher-Livingston Elementary School, December 10, 2025-June 15, 2026.

REQUEST FOR INTERMITTENT LEAVE – BOYD

Request for paid intermittent FMLA from Glenn Boyd, custodian-Connecticut Farms Elementary School, December 24, 2025-December 24, 2026.

REQUEST FOR INTERMITTENT LEAVE – NICK

Request for paid intermittent FMLA from Michelle Nick, math teacher-Kawameeh Middle School, January 5, 2026-January 5, 2027.

REQUEST FOR INTERMITTENT LEAVE – LYTLE

Request for paid intermittent FMLA from Ann Lytle, math teacher-Union High School, January 1, 2026-January 1, 2027.

REQUEST FOR INTERMITTENT LEAVE – GRACA

Request for paid intermittent FMLA from Susana Graca, paraprofessional-Kawameeh Middle School, January 5, 2026-June 20, 2026.

REQUEST FOR INTERMITTENT LEAVE – THOMPSON

Request for paid intermittent FMLA from Robert Thompson, special education teacher-Union High School, January 6, 2026-January 6, 2027.

REQUEST FOR INTERMITTENT LEAVE – CICALESE

Request for paid intermittent FMLA from Jennifer Cicalese, special education teacher-Livingston Elementary School, January 6, 2026-June 20, 2026.

REQUEST FOR INTERMITTENT LEAVE – LAKE

Request for paid intermittent FMLA from Kelly Lake, science teacher-Burnet Middle School, January 9, 2026-January 9, 2027.

REQUEST FOR INTERMITTENT LEAVE – MOUSSALLEM-MOUTIS

Request for paid intermittent FMLA from Sandra Moussallem-Moutis, biology teacher-Union High School, January 7, 2026-June 7, 2027.

REQUEST FOR INTERMITTENT LEAVE – STEVENSON

Request for paid intermittent FMLA from Davina Stevenson, physical education teacher-Franklin Elementary School, January 7, 2026-January 7, 2027.

REQUEST FOR LEAVE – MITSAELIDES MICCICHE

Request for paid child rearing leave followed by unpaid FMLA/NJFLA from Maria Mitsaelides Micciche, ESL teacher-Battle Hill Elementary School, March 27, 2026-October 31, 2027.

REQUEST FOR LEAVE – DAMIANO

Request for unpaid FMLA from Adriane Damiano, physical education teacher-Union High School, February 23, 2026-May 8, 2026.

REQUEST FOR LEAVE – OLIVEIRA

Request for paid child rearing leave followed by unpaid FMLA/NJFLA from Marissa Oliveira, English teacher-Union High School, February 23, 2026-September 1, 2026.

REQUEST FOR LEAVE – ROBSON

Request for paid child rearing leave followed by unpaid FMLA/NJFLA from Leane Robson, school counselor-Livingston Elementary School, April 20, 2026-May 8, 2026 (P/P maternity leave) and May 11, 2026-October 21, 2026.

REQUEST FOR LEAVE – CRUZ

Request for paid child rearing leave followed by unpaid FMLA/NJFLA from Stephanie Cruz, CST-Livingston Elementary School, May 26, 2026-December 7, 2026.

REQUEST FOR LEAVE – CALDAROLA

Request for paid FMLA from Anne Marie Caldarola, art teacher-Hannah Caldwell Elementary School, February 3, 2026-TBD.

REQUEST FOR LEAVE – WILLIAMS

Request for paid child rearing leave followed by unpaid FMLA/NJFLA from Bridget Williams, science teacher-Burnet Middle School, April 20, 2026-December 1, 2026.

REQUEST FOR LEAVE – GIGANTINO

Request for paid FMLA from Kathleen Gigantino, paraprofessional-Battle Hill Elementary School, February 3, 2026-March 16, 2026.

REQUEST FOR LEAVE UPDATE – PRICE BARBOSA

Request for leave update from Jacqueline Price Barbosa, teacher-Union High School, new return date March 2, 2026.

REQUEST FOR INTERMITTENT LEAVE – NIGRINIS

Request for paid intermittent FMLA from Lisetty Nigrinis, world language teacher-Union High School, March 23, 2026-March 23, 2027.

REQUEST FOR INTERMITTENT LEAVE – CARLIN

Request for paid intermittent FMLA from Donna Carlin, secretary-Administration Building, January 12, 2026-January 12, 2027.

REQUEST FOR INTERMITTENT LEAVE – TEIXERIA

Request for paid intermittent FMLA from Rosa Teixeria, CST-Burnet Middle School, January 12, 2026-June 15, 2026.

REQUEST FOR INTERMITTENT LEAVE – INGRASSIA

Request for paid intermittent FMLA from Mary Ingrassia, paraprofessional-Union High School, January 15, 2026-January 15, 2027.

REQUEST FOR INTERMITTENT LEAVE – FOX

Request for paid intermittent FMLA from Zara Fox, music teacher-Connecticut Farms Elementary School, November 1, 2025-June 30, 2026.

LETTER OF RESIGNATION – WAHBA

Letter of resignation from Erini Wahba, English Language Arts Teacher-Union High School, effective February 20, 2026.

LETTER OF RETIREMENT – AGUILAR

Letter of resignation, for the purpose of retirement, from Helen Aguilar, special education teacher-Kawameeh Middle School, effective July 1, 2026.

LETTER OF RETIREMENT – FIGUEIREDO

Letter of resignation, for the purpose of retirement, from Rosa Figueiredo, preschool teacher-Connecticut Farms Elementary School, effective July 1, 2026.

LETTER OF RESIGNATION – REYNOSO

Letter of resignation from Jeny Reynoso, bus driver-Transportation Department, effective January 24, 2026.

LETTER OF RESIGNATION – GEORGE

Letter of resignation from Sheren George, paraprofessional-Burnet Middle School, effective January 12, 2026.

LETTER OF RESIGNATION – LANNO

Letter of resignation from Catherine Lanno, paraprofessional-Battle Hill Elementary School, effective February 14, 2026.

LETTER OF RESIGNATION – MAUER

Letter of resignation from Bonnie Mauer, part-time occupational therapist-district wide-special services, effective April 1, 2026.

LETTER OF RETIREMENT – NEDELKOV

Letter of resignation, for the purpose of retirement, from Nenad Nedelkov, 2nd shift custodian-Jefferson School, effective September 1, 2026.

LETTER OF RESIGNATION – GILLIARD

Letter of resignation from Roslyn Gilliard, cafeteria/playground aide-Washington Elementary School, effective January 31, 2026.

Comments from Public (on resolutions):

Mrs. Scott-Hayden - thanked everyone for attending tonight's meeting and that the Board values their input and appreciates their time. She reminded the audience that all comments are to be respectful and constructive, and to refrain from calling out and yelling. The Board is unable to engage in back-and-forth dialogue; however, your comments will be reviewed and considered, and if feasible, the Superintendent or designee will provide a response at a later date.

No comments from the public on resolutions.

Board Vice President Cohan asked for a moment of silence in memory of Jim Jeskey who was employed by the district for 52 years. He was a PE/health teacher at UHS and was a soccer coach and assistant baseball coach at UHS.

Superintendent's Report: January 20, 2026

Representatives of Suplee, Clooney & Company, the district's auditors, indicated that by statute the district's financial statements must be reviewed by auditors and the recommendations must be reported at a Board meeting. Therefore, the following four recommendations were reported by Mr. Korecky (see Correction Action Plan – F-14):

1. 2025-001 – detailed invoices be received prior to the disbursement of funds in accordance with Board policy (Hannah Caldwell).
2. 2025-002 – the purchasing law be followed with respect to entering into contracts with vendors, using Board approved not to exceed amounts and encumbering funds prior to receipt of goods or services.
3. 2025-003 – all expenditures from Student Activity Funds be directly related to a student activity (Burnet).
4. 2025-004 – internal controls be implemented to provide for the safeguarding of physical checks (Burnet).

Mr. Zimmerman highlighted items in the Annual Comprehensive Financial Report and Management Report (see F-13 for reports), specifically Exhibit C-1, pages 87-97 – summary of financials as of June 2025.

Dr. Benaquista presented the following:

- Enrollment - 2025-2026 as of January 15th increased to 7,739
- School Board Recognition Month – a designated time to honor the vital, unpaid service of local school board members – Board members were presented and received a Proclamation from the State of New Jersey Executive Department

Student Liaison, Jacklyn Cassandra (accepted to Harvard University), introduced herself and indicated she is part of the UHS PAC Stage Crew, in the National Honors Society, in the National Spanish Honors Society and in Future Doctors of America. She gave an update on UHS Sports: boys basketball team – 12-1 record and is ranked 20th in the State on NJ.com; girls basketball team – 6-3 record; Bowling team -5-3 record; wrestling team 10-1 record. UHS hosted the Union County Wrestling Tournament and 6 wrestlers placed in the top 3. Coach DeBellonia was voted Union County Coach of the year. Ariel Azereo earned his 100th high school career win. UHS PAC – spring musical this year is Frozen: The Broadway Musical.

Dr. Benaquista presented the following:

- Book Vending Machines – several schools across the district have introduced book vending machines. This initiative supports literacy growth, positive behavior and student engagement. It was funded through a State grant dedicated to literacy improvement.
- Absenteeism – a task force was created to take on chronic absenteeism in New Jersey schools.
- HIB Bi-Annual Report – September 2025-December 2025 – reported by the Superintendent (see E-2).
- TUPS Attendance Initiative – average for December 93.83 K-12; December Attendance Award: Connecticut Farms Elementary School – 3rd grade class – 95.293%
- HIB Report – January 14-January 20, 2026 – Founded: 4; Unfounded: 5 (see E-1-1A); Affirm HIB – December 17, 2025-January 13, 2026 – Founded: 6; Unfounded: 1 (see E-1-1)
- ParentSquare Update: 45% of parents/guardians have downloaded the App to date.

Education/Student Discipline Committee Resolutions:

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

E-1. *Agenda item reported at January 13, 2026 worksession (report of HIB).*

E-1A. *Agenda item affirmed at January 13, 2026 worksession (affirm HIB).*

E-1-1. AFFIRM SUPERINTENDENT'S DETERMINATION OF HIB

Affirm the Superintendent's determination of Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying (HIB) for the periods December 17, 2025 to January 13, 2026, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

E-1-1A. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT OF HIB

Superintendent's Report of Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying (HIB) for the period January 14, 2026 to January 20, 2026, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes (*no vote required; for reporting purposes only*).

E-2. APPROVE JANUARY REPORT – NJDOE – HIB

Approve the Township of Union Public Schools January report presented by the Superintendent as required by the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) of Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying (HIB). The report provides the public with the information collected from September 2025 through December 2025, as well as the number of incidents per school building, status of investigations, HIB investigators, nature of the HIB reports and the discipline resulting from the report findings. The HIB report also includes all training of school district personnel, building programs and assemblies during that time.

E-3. ACCEPTANCE OF NJDOE PHONE FREE SCHOOLS GRANT

Approve acceptance of the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) Phone Free Schools Grant in the amount of \$33,747.70 to the district for the 2025-2026 school year, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

E-4. APPROVE APPLICATION FOR LIFT GRANT

Approve application for the Literacy Initiative for Families and Thriving Communities (LIFT) Grant for the 2026-2027 school year.

E-5. APPROVE NJ TRANSIT SAFETY EDUCATION PROGRAM PRESENTATION

Approve NJ Transit to present the NJ Transit Safety Education Program to district students during the 2025-2026 school year at the high school level. The program is a free 45 minute statewide public transportation education program providing safety training by bringing rail, bus and pedestrian safety to life through age-appropriate education programs (no cost to district).

E-6. APPROVE DONATION OF BOOKS – BURNET MIDDLE SCHOOL LIBRARY

Approve list of donated books from Thorndike Press to the Burnet Middle School Library, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

E-7. APPROVE AGREEMENT WITH RUTGERS UNIVERSITY – EDUCATOR PREPARATION PROGRAM

Approve Agreement with Rutgers the State University of New Jersey, Graduate School of Education (GSE) to implement the Educator Preparation Program with the Township of Union Public Schools, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

E-8. APPROVE GIRLS ON THE RUN PROGRAM - FRANKLIN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Approve Girls on the Run Program at Franklin Elementary School for grades 3-4 (April 7-June 3, 2026 (Tuesdays and Wednesdays), from 3:20-4:35 p.m.), at a cost of \$25.00 per student (coaches: Tiffany Reid Anglin, Kari Graham, Eboni Dockery).

E-9. APPROVE SUSPENSION – STUDENT

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

E-10. APPROVE SCHOOL CALENDAR – STUDENTS – 2026-2027

Approve the school calendar for students for the 2026-2027 school year, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

E-11. APPROVE SCHOOL CALENDAR – STAFF - 2026-2027

Approve the school calendar for staff for the 2026-2027 school year, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

DISCUSSION:

None

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

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

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED

Fiscal and Planning Committee Resolutions:

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

F-1. TREASURER'S REPORT

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

F-2. SECRETARY'S REPORT

That the Secretary's Report dated December 31, 2025 be accepted.

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

Pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:23-2.11(a), I certify that as of December 31, 2025 no budgetary line-item account has obligations and payments (contractual orders) which in total exceed the

amount appropriated by the district Board of education pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:22-8 and 18:22-8.1.

/s/ *Yolanda Koon*

Yolanda Koon, Board Secretary

Dated

Pursuant to N.J.A.C.6A:23-2.2(h), we certify that as of December 31, 2025 after review of the secretary's monthly financial report (appropriations section) and upon consultation with the appropriate district officials that to the best of our knowledge no major account or fund has been over-expended in violation of N.J.A.C. 6A:23-2.2(d)3 and that sufficient funds are available to meet the district's financial obligations for the remainder of the fiscal year. This certification is solely based on the information provided by the School Business Administrator and Board Secretary and is assumed by the Board to be correct.

F-4. APPROVE APPROPRIATION TRANSFERS

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

F-5. APPROVE LIST OF CONTRACTS/PURCHASE ORDERS (*none at this time*)

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 at January 13, 2026 worksession (student field trips).*

F-8. APPROVE LIST OF 2025-2026 STATE CONTRACT APPROVED VENDORS

Approve the amended list of the 2025-2026 State Contract Approved Vendors pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:18A-10(a) (purchase through State agency; procedure) to facilitate schools' purchasing, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

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

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

School	Account/Department	Vendor/Description	Amount
Livingston Elementary School	Main Office	NED Show – selling of yoyos to offset cost	\$1,290.00
Burnet Middle School	Main Office	Worlds Finest Chocolates – chocolate fundraiser	\$1,480.00
Burnet Middle School	2004/Student Activity	Broadway Inbound – tickets to Broadway performance	\$2,891.00

Burnet Middle School	2004/Student Activity	US Coachways – bus to Broadway performance	\$1,069.43
Franklin Elementary School	Main Office	NED Show – selling of yoyos to offset cost	\$1,210.00
Union High School	33280/Wrestling	NJSIAA – Boys and Girls Region Wrestling Tournament Entry Fees.	\$7,500.00
Union High School	2527	Dorney Park – Junior class trip	\$17,000.00 (not to exceed)
Union High School	2527	Sunny Trail – transportation for Junior Class Trip	\$12,000.00 (not to exceed)
Union High School	3380/Soccer	DGS Sports, Inc. – soccer chairs for field house	\$4,258.52

F-9B. APPROVE FUNDRAISERS

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

Event Name	Date	Purpose
Online Pledges from family and friends	January 21, 2026-June 1, 2026	UHS/Baseball – to raise funds for end of season party/awards; extra apparel, meals for games
Online Clothing Sale	January 21, 2026-March 30, 2026	UHS/Boys Basketball – to raise funds to purchase shoes, sweatshirts, backpacks, end of year celebration

F-9C. ACCEPT DONATIONS

Accept the following donations:

From	For Use By	\$/Item
M.A.D.E. Stars LLC	Union High School – Marching Band	\$2,000.00
Community Member and Store Owner	Burnet Middle School – 7 th grade students – attending Broadway musical	\$350.00
Shutterfly LLC	Franklin Elementary School	\$1,048.64
Lowe's Westfield Art Association	Burnet Middle School Hannah Caldwell Elementary School	Donation of supplies – approximately \$525 per school Painting of murals at both schools (see attachments)

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

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

F-11. APPROVE INCREASE FOR MARILYN KUBICHEK – NEUROLOGICAL EVALUATIONS

Approve increase of the not to exceed amount for Marilyn Kubichek MD, FAAP to provide neurological evaluations for the 2025-2026 school year to \$60,000.00 (from \$25,000.00; an increase of \$35,000.00).

F-12. APPROVE APPLICATION – NEW JERSEY CHILD ASSAULT PREVENTION

Approve application for the New Jersey Child Assault Prevention (NJCAP) 2025-2026 training (at no cost to the district), in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

F-13. ACCEPT ANNUAL COMPREHENSIVE FINANCIAL REPORT AND MANAGEMENT REPORT

Accept the Annual Comprehensive Financial Report (ACFR) and the Auditor's Management Report, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes (auditors to present report to the public at the January 20, 2026 meeting).

F-14. APPROVE CORRECTIVE ACTION PLAN (CAP)

Approve the Corrective Action Plan for Single Audit Fiscal Year ending June 30, 2025, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

F-15. APPROVE ACCEPTANCE OF “BLUEY – ROAD TRIP” BOOK DONATION

Approve acceptance of the Community Policing Unit of the Union Police Department's donation of approximately 1,500 copies of “Bluey – Road Trip” by Penguin Young Readers Licenses (approximate value of \$8,985.00) to elementary schools across the district.

F-ATTY. *For informational purposes only – vote not required.* List of legal services paid as of December 16, 2025 for the 2025-2026 fiscal year, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

DISCUSSION:

None

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

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED

Operations/Technology Committee Resolutions:

Upon recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Operations/Technology Committee presents the following resolutions for the Board's consideration:

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 for the month of December 2025 and, if applicable, bus evacuation reports for the 2025-2026 school year, in accordance with the non-public information appended to the minutes.

O-2. APPROVE REQUEST FROM CENTRAL JERSEY ALLSTARS TO USE UHS GYMNASIUM

Approve request from Central Jersey AllStars to rent the Union High School Gymnasium on Sunday, April 12, 2026 from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m.

O-3. APPROVE USE OF UNION HIGH SCHOOL LIBRARY FOR SPECIAL OLYMPICS OF NEW JERSEY YOUTH SUMMIT – LEADERSHIP IN ACTION

Approve the use of Union High School Library on April 8, 2026 from 7 a.m. to 1 p.m. for the Special Olympics of New Jersey Youth Summit – Leadership in Action. Attendees will include members of districts associated with the Special Olympics organization. Special Olympics of New Jersey staff will organize the library space for the summit and provide lunch to the attendees (at no cost to the district).

O-4. APPROVE PARTNERSHIP - NATIONAL COALITION OF 100 BLACK WOMEN

Approve partnership with the National Coalition of 100 Black Women to provide assemblies and mentoring for Union High School students.

DISCUSSION:

None

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

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED

Personnel Committee Resolutions:

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

P-7. APPROVE VICE PRINCIPAL – UNION HIGH SCHOOL

Approve Jerome Starr, as the Vice Principal of Union High School, at a contractual salary of \$111,402.00, with a start date to be determined.

P-8. APPROVE 10-MONTH SUPERVISOR – MATHEMATICS AND COMPUTER SCIENCE

Approve Robert Dally, as a 10-month Supervisor of Mathematics and Computer Science, at a contractual salary of \$110,023.00, with a start date to be determined.

P-9. APPROVE 10-MONTH SUPERVISOR – HUMANITIES SS/BUSINESS/ELA

Approve Dana Bobertz, as a 10-month Supervisor of Humanities SS/Business/ELA, at a contractual salary of \$114,023.00, with a start date to be determined.

DISCUSSION:

None

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

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED

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

P-1A. PERSONNEL ACTIONS – NEW HIRES

Personnel Actions-New Hires be approved in accordance with the information appended to the 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. APPROVE SUBSTITUTE LISTS

Approve Substitute Lists for the 2025-2026 school year.

Name	Position	Rate
Lina M. Sarrazola Palazio	Sub-custodian	\$16.00/hr.
Roslyn Gilliard	Daily sub	\$170.00/per day
Taylor Glover	Daily sub	\$160.00/per day
Giovanni Lockhart	Daily sub	\$160.00/per day
Deirdre Watley	Daily sub	\$160.00/per day (pending paperwork approval)
Nafessah Venable	Daily sub	\$160.00/per day (pending paperwork approval)

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
Erini Wahba	English Language Arts Teacher	UHS	2/20/2026	Resignation	3 yrs.
Helen Aguilar	Special Education teacher	Kawameeh	7/1/2026	Retirement	20 yrs.
Rosa Figueiredo	Preschool teacher	Connecticut Farms	7/1/2026	Retirement	17 yrs.
Jeny Reynoso	Bus driver	Transportation Dept.	1/24/2026	Resignation	1 yr.

Sheren George	Paraprofessional	BMS	1/12/2026	Resignation	15 yrs.
Nenad Nedelkov	2 nd shift custodian	Jefferson	9/1/2026	Retirement	9 yrs.
Catherine Lanno	Paraprofessional	Battle Hill	2/14/2026	Resignation	8 yrs.
Bonnie Mauer	PT OT	Districtwide – special services	4/1/2026	Resignation	26 yrs.
Roslyn Gilliard	Cafeteria/ playground aide	Washington	1/31/2026	Resignation	2 mos.

P-3B. APPROVE LEAVES

Approve leaves for the following staff:

Name	Position	Location	Eff. Dates	Reason
Alicia Rodriguez	School Counselor	UHS	New leave date 12/15/2025	New return date
Shannon Daly	English teacher	UHS	New return 3/2/2026	New return date
Michaela Whiteman-Land	Special services	UHS	1/5/2026-2/13/2026	Paid intermittent FMLA
Lauren Walker	Director-PreK	Administration Building	1/5/2026-1/5/2027	Paid intermittent FMLA
Maria Class	Security	Jefferson	1/5/2026-1/5/2027	Paid intermittent FMLA
Linda Steeb	Math teacher	KMS	12/15/2025-6/30/2026	Paid intermittent FMLA
Jameelah Payton	Counselor	UHS	12/15/2025-6/30/2026	Paid intermittent FMLA
Michele Nick	Teacher	KMS	1/5/2026-1/5/2027	Paid intermittent FMLA
Vilma Plaza	Paraprofessional	Connecticut Farms	9/1/2025-6/15/2026	Paid intermittent FMLA
Deanna Hampton	4 th grade teacher	Livingston	12/10/2025-6/15/2026	Paid intermittent FMLA
Glenn Boyd	Custodian	Connecticut Farms	12/24/2025-12/24/2026	Paid intermittent FMLA
Michelle Nick	Math teacher	Kawameeh	1/5/2026-1/5/2027	Paid intermittent FMLA
Ann Lytle	Math teacher	UHS	1/1/2026-1/1/2027	Paid intermittent FMLA
Susana Graca	Paraprofessional	Kawameeh	1/5/2026-6/20/2026	Paid intermittent FMLA
Robert Thompson	Special ed teacher	UHS	1/6/2026-1/6/2027	Paid intermittent FMLA
Jennifer Cicalese	Special ed teacher	Livingston	1/6/2026-6/20/2026	Paid intermittent FMLA
Kelly Lake	Science teacher	BMS	1/9/2026-1/9/2027	Paid intermittent FMLA

Sandra Moussallem-Moutis	Biology teacher	UHS	1/7/2026-1/7/2027	Paid intermittent FMLA
Davina Stevenson	Physical Ed teacher	Franklin	1/7/2026-1/7/2027	Paid intermittent FMLA
Maria Mitsaelides Micciche	ESL teacher	Battle Hill	3/27/2026-10/31/2027	Paid child rearing leave followed by unpaid FMLA/NJFLA
Adriane Damiano	PE teacher	UHS	2/23/2026-5/8/2026	Unpaid FMLA
Marissa Oliveira	English teacher	UHS	2/23/2026-9/1/2026	Paid child rearing leave followed by unpaid FMLA/NJFLA
Leane Robson	School counselor	Livingston	4/20/2026-5/8/2026 and 5/11/2026-10/21/2026	P/P maternity leave And paid child rearing leave followed by unpaid FMLA/NJFLA
Stephanie Cruz	CST	Livingston	5/26/2026-12/7/2026	Paid child rearing leave followed by unpaid FMLA/NJFLA
Anne Marie Calderola	Art teacher	Hannah Caldwell	2/3/2026-TBD	Paid FMLA
Bridget Williams	Science teacher	BMS	4/20/2026-12/1/2026	Paid child rearing leave followed by unpaid FMLA/NJFLA
Kathleen Gigantino	Paraprofessional	Battle Hill	2/3/2026-3/16/2026	Paid FMLA
Jacqueline Price Barbosa	Teacher	UHS	updated return 3/2/2026	Updated return date
Lisetty Nigrinis	World language teacher	UHS	3/23/2026-3/23/2027	Paid intermittent FMLA
Donna Carlin	Secretary	Admin. Bldg.	1/12/2026-1/12/2027	Paid intermittent FMLA
Rosa Teixeria	CST	BMS	1/12/2026-6/15/2026	Paid intermittent FMLA
Mary Ingrassia	Paraprofessional	UHS	1/15/2026-1/15/2027	Paid intermittent FMLA
Zara Fox	Music teacher	Connecticut Farms	11/1/2025-6/30/2026	Paid intermittent FMLA

P-4. APPROVE STUDENT TEACHERS AND INTERNSHIPS

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

P-5. APPROVE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT - MUJC

Approve Shawn Paterno, Principal of Livingston Elementary School, to attend professional development at the Morris Union Jointure Commission (MUJC) for the 2025-2026 school year, at no cost to the district.

P-6. APPROVE ATTENDANCE – NATIONAL SUPERINTENDENTS FORUM

Approve Dr. Benaquista to attend the National Superintendents Forum in St. Louis, Missouri from April 19-April 21, 2026, at a not to exceed cost of \$700.00.

DISCUSSION:

None

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

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED

Residency Committee Resolutions:

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

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

For informational purposes only (no vote required): The following residency investigations were completed and the listed students voluntarily transferred to the district of residence:

Student No.	School	Grade
#340612	Franklin Elementary School	4 th grade
#380812	Hannah Caldwell Elementary School	Kindergarten
#368014	Hannah Caldwell Elementary School	2 nd grade

Approval of Bills:

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

Unfinished Business:

Mr. Cohan – attended the wrestling tournament and was impressed by our wrestlers – they placed 3rd overall as a team.

Mrs. Minneci – spoke about Mr. Jesky and that he would run with his soccer players and the district was lucky to have him.

New Business:

Mr. Cohan – spoke about the DMK Black Box Theater and how there are so many great shows and there is a show “I love you, you’re perfect, now change”, in February being directed by Yvonne Lorenzo.

Mrs. Minneci – informed the Board and community that there is a SEPAG meeting on January 27th at the high school cafeteria.

Comments from Public:

Ann Margaret Shannon – Mr. Jesky was a very dear and great man. She indicated that the UTEA is looking forward to working with the new Board President. She indicated that the UTEA has been working behind the scenes and hopes that the Board is too.

Jill Hall – gave a shout out to Ms. Scocozza; she is a grant wizard. She indicated that she received a grant for Teen Truth on school pressure for students and a presentation for the staff.

Kathleen Bruns Meyers – congratulations to the new supervisors and Vice Principal. She attended the Varsity Senior Night for basketball and spent the day at the wrestling tournament. She advised the Board that tomorrow night is Senior Night for Wrestling. She indicated that she has received questions about redistricting and indicated if there is any communication about that. Dr. Benaquista indicated that the 5th grade raises a hurdle and trying to align with the referendum. We will come back with information next month.

Peter Leone – congratulated the student liaison, the new supervisors and Vice Principal and to the new Board President and Vice President. He indicated that he is looking forward to settling the contract.

David Arminio – he coached with Jim Jesky; he was a wonderful man and will be missed. He informed the community that cursive writing is being brought back into school. There is a blood drive on February 11th. There is a 250th Celebration Events calendar for 2026 on the Township website. There are various events taking place throughout the year.

MOTION FOR EXECUTIVE SESSION:

Moved by Mrs. Minneci, seconded by Mrs. Conteh-Mackey, that the Board go into Executive Session at 8:19 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: Ms. Carbonell, Mr. Cohan, Mrs. Conteh-Mackey, Mrs. Faria, Mr. McDowell, Mrs. Minneci, Mr. Nasta, Ms. Santana, Mrs. Scott-Hayden

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED

The Board returned to public session at 9:17 p.m.

MOTION TO RETURN TO PUBLIC SESSION:

There being no further business before the Board it was moved by Mr. Cohan, seconded by Mrs. Scott-Hayden, that the Board return to public session at 9:17 p.m.

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

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED

Upon recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the following resolution was moved by Mrs. Conteh-Mackey, seconded by Mrs. Faria, for adoption:

P-10. APPROVE REINSTATEMENT OF EMPLOYEE #10709

Approve reinstatement of Employee #10709 as a teacher at Burnet Middle School, effective January 28, 2026, subject to the conditions discussed in executive session.

DISCUSSION:

None

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

NAY: Ms. Santana

ABSTAIN: Mr. Cohan

MOTION CARRIED

MOTION TO ADJOURN:

There being no further business before the Board in public session it was moved by Mrs. Minneci, seconded by Ms. Santana, that the meeting be adjourned at 9:18 p.m.

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

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,

Yolanda Koon

YOLANDA KOON
BOARD SECRETARY

TOWNSHIP OF UNION BOARD OF EDUCATION

Regular Meeting Minutes

January 20, 2026