

TOWNSHIP OF UNION BOARD OF EDUCATION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES – December 19, 2023

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, December 19, 2023 at 7:00 p.m. at the Union High School Library, 2350 North Third Street, Union, New Jersey pursuant to notice sent to each member.

Ms. McKenzie called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m.

PRESENT AT ROLL CALL:

Mrs. Yocasta Brens-Watson, Ms. Marissa McKenzie, Mrs. Nancy Minneci, Mr. John O’Shea, Mrs. Nellis Regis-Darby, Ms. Chastity Santana, Mrs. Kimberly Scott-Hayden, Mrs. Mary Lynn Williams

ABSENT AT ROLL CALL:

Ms. Dixiana Carbonell

ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT:

Dr. Gerald Benaquista, Dr. Gretel Perez, Mrs. Fernanda Manochio

ALSO PRESENT:

Mr. Christopher Buggy, Esq.

Mr. O’Shea led the Board and audience members in the Pledge of Allegiance and read the district’s mission statement.

Mrs. Manochio 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.

Ms. McKenize stated that there will be no executive session this evening.

Approval of Minutes:

Moved by Mrs. Minneci, seconded by Mrs. Brens-Watson, that the following minutes be adopted:

1. November 1, 2023 – special meeting
2. November 1, 2023 – executive session
3. November 14, 2023 – worksession
4. November 14, 2023 – executive session
5. November 21, 2023 – regular meeting
6. November 21, 2023 - executive session

DISCUSSION:

None

AYE: Mrs. Brens-Watson, Mrs. Minneci, Mr. O’Shea, Mrs. Regis-Darby, Ms. Santana,
Mrs. Scott-Hayden, Mrs. Williams, Ms. McKenzie

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: Mrs. Williams (November 14th minutes)

MOTION CARRIED

Communications:

REQUEST FROM CROSSROADS CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP – BATTLE HILL
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL GYM

Request from Crossroads Christian Fellowship for the use of the Battle Hill Elementary School gym for a bi-weekly volleyball gym night starting on January 18, 2024 (Thursday nights at 7:00 p.m.). Requesting waiver of all fees.

REQUEST FROM TOWNSHIP OF UNION – JEFFERSON SCHOOL CAFETERIA
AND PARKING LOT

Request from the Township of Union for the use of Jefferson School cafeteria and parking lot for the Township’s MLK Day of Service on January 15, 2023 from 7:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. (volunteers to sort donated winter clothing, non-perishable food items and have lunch).

REQUEST FOR INTERMITTENT LEAVE – AMBROSE

Request for intermittent FMLA sick leave, followed by unpaid FMLA leave from Veronica Ambrose, third-grade teacher-Battle Hill Elementary School, November 21, 2023-June 22, 2024.

REQUEST FOR INTERMITTENT LEAVE – OSBORNE

Request for intermittent FMLA/NJFLA leave from Melissa Osborne, special education teacher-Burnet Middle School, November 20, 2023-June 30, 2024.

REQUEST FOR INTERMITTENT LEAVE – FIGUEIREDO

Request for intermittent FMLA/NJFLA leave from Rosa Figueiredo, PreK teacher-Connecticut Farms Elementary School, November 27, 2023-June 30, 2024.

REQUEST FOR EXTENSION OF LEAVE – MOUTELA

Request for extension of paid medical leave from Isabel Moutela, special education teacher-Jefferson School, new return date January 5, 2024.

REQUEST FOR EXTENSION OF LEAVE – SADLER

Request for extension of paid medical leave from Jeff Sadler, special education teacher-Union High School, new return date January 5, 2024.

REQUEST FOR EXTENSION OF LEAVE – KESSOCK

Request for extension of paid FMLA leave from Tracy Kessock, Transportation Manager-Transportation Department, new return date January 22, 2024.

UPDATE TO REQUEST FOR LEAVE – CLARKE

Update to request for unpaid FMLA/NJFLA leave from Teresa Clarke, special education teacher-Union High School, December 11, 2023-March 8, 2024.

REQUEST FOR LEAVE – DUPLISSIS

Request for paid child rearing leave followed by unpaid FMLA/NJFLA from Kerri Duplissis, physical education teacher-Hannah Caldwell Elementary School, February 2, 2024-June 30, 2024.

REQUEST FOR LEAVE – FERRETTI

Request for paid medical leave from Cynthia Ferretti, second grade teacher-Washington Elementary School, December 22, 2023-January 22, 2024.

REQUEST FOR LEAVE – KOON

Request for paid medical leave from Yolanda Koon, School Business Administrator/ Board Secretary-Administration Building, December 13, 2023-January 5, 2024.

REQUEST FOR LEAVE – MORRISON

Request for paid medical leave from Kimberlie Morrison, kindergarten teacher-Washington Elementary School, December 18, 2023-December 22, 2023

LETTER OF RESIGNATION – BENAQUISTA

Letter of resignation from Brienna Benaquista, Career Ed/Business Teacher (Allied Health)-Union High School, effective January 31, 2024.

LETTER OF RESIGNATION – BUSH

Letter of resignation from Tarinesha Bush, preschool intervention and referral specialist-Preschool Department, effective, January 31, 2024.

LETTER OF RETIREMENT – PORTER

Letter of resignation, for the purpose of retirement, from Moira Porter, English Language Arts teacher-UHS, effective July 1, 2024.

LETTER OF RETIREMENT – TAVARES

Letter of resignation, for the purpose of retirement, from Robert Tavares, skilled maintenance (carpenter)-Buildings and Grounds Department, effective March 1, 2024.

LETTER OF RETIREMENT – GIGANTE

Letter of resignation, for the purpose of retirement, from David Gigante, special education teacher-Union High School, effective February 1, 2024.

LETTER OF RETIREMENT UPDATE – NOONAN

Update to letter of resignation, for the purpose of retirement, from Colleen Noonan, paraprofessional-Battle Hill Elementary School, new retirement date July 1, 2024.

Comments from Public (on resolutions and all other matters):

Jill Hall wished everyone a happy holiday and thanked the outgoing Board members for their time and wished them well. She was elated about the P-8. She gave a shout out to the UHS students – they wrote 3100 notes of appreciation to students and teachers.

Debra Coppola stated she is a special ed teacher at the high school and she is advocating for the interim principal to be the principal. The main office is short one vice principal. The principal has a firm but kind approach.

Dr. Albert Smith wished everyone a happy holiday. He stated our interim superintendent works well with all staff and he thanked him for his hard work and his sacrifices.

David Arminio congratulated the Board members who are leaving the Board and wished everyone a happy holiday. He also stated that the Historical Society is having their first winter open house on Saturday. There are new student programs on the 2nd floor and new exhibits at the Parsonage.

Dr. Guy Francis stated P-8 – superintendent – this is an outgoing Board and lam duck. Why not vote next month. Hillside did this and they were challenged and I don't think that is fair. Good luck to Dr. Benaquista.

Paul Casey stated the community has gone through a process for a superintendent. He wished this was done in September instead of wasting money on a firm. He thanked the outgoing Board for their services.

Kristen Nunes stated on behalf of the UTEA of elementary, she thanked the Board for putting Dr. Benaquista on the agenda. He will restore the district and the UTEA will work with him. Happy Holidays.

Ann Margaret Shannon stated P-8 – Dr. Benaquista is a great fit for Union and he has proven himself. Good luck to the outgoing Board and Happy Holidays.

Ronnie McDowell stated thank you to the outgoing Board. He stated he understands Dr. Francis' point but he thinks that they would have arrived at the same conclusion. He also stated he wanted to publicly apologize to Dr. Benaquista for statements he made years ago. He stated that Dr. Benaquista would do a marvelous job as superintendent.

Michael Cohan stated thank you to the outgoing Board for their services and that next month he will be joining the Board. He also thanked the Board for choosing Dr. Benaquista as superintendent. He looks forward to working with Dr. Benaquista and the Board.

Antonette stated congratulations to Dr. Benaquista. She also thanked Mrs. Regis-Darby for the assistance she gave her as a new parent of Union. She stated she hopes to see great things in Union and to be part of that.

Superintendent’s Report:

Dr. Benaquista presented his report on the state of the schools. The presentation is appended to the minutes and a summary is below:

Impact Employee Recognition – aims to acknowledge administrators, educators and staff members who, through their actions, dedication and achievements, have profoundly influence the lives of our students. Paula Chapman – Battle Hill Elementary School Art Teacher and the students artwork is being recognized tonight.

Student Farmer Frontline – What’s up with TUPS? – a team of passionate individuals to share positive news stories about the Township of Union Public Schools.

Visionary Leadership – Mentorship Academy – Empowering Leaders for Success – just had their second meeting.

Union High School Allied Health – students began clinical starting at Kawameeh Middle School and Union Senior Center to speak, socialize and answer questions with the seniors and taking their blood pressure and pulse.

ROTC and Allied Health students received training in the “Stop the Bleed” initiative.

TUPS Safety/Security – school violence – districtwide communication – December 19, 2023. A letter was sent out to the community. We will work with the stakeholders to stop the violence.

Dr. Perez spoke on districtwide literacy – this year, part of our PD and PLCs are focusing on the science of reading for SPED and K-5 staff.

Dr. Benaquista presented the TUPS grant updates and spoke about the High Impact Tutoring Grant that will help increase ELA and math support .

HIB – Affirmed:	November 15-21, 2023	November 22-December 12, 2023
Founded:	6	9
Unfounded:	1	3
Inconclusive	2	5
HIB – Reported:	December 13-19, 2023	
Founded:	6	
Unfounded:	5	
Inconclusive:	1	

Student Liaison - Gia Patel presented the following UHS Fall-Winter Highlights:

- National Honors Society Induction – 82 seniors inducted
- UHSPTA Random Acts of Kindness evening

- Stop the Bleed – a vital campaign urging bystanders to be prepared to assist in a bleeding emergency
- First Student Farmer Frontline Newsletter
- Grand opening of the Farmer’s Café
- Football – Kordal Hinton was named BCC American Gold Conference Player of the Year and First Team All Group 5 for LB; Renick Dorilus was named Third Team All Group 5
- Boys Soccer – Tyler Monteiro, Kayden Grave, John Genao, Paulo Ferreira and George Asante were All State, All County and All Conference
- Girls Soccer – Kayla Rodrigues and Onyeka Moneme were First Team All-Conference
- Gymnastics – Laila Willis was First Team All Union County for vault, beam and all around
- Volleyball – Alexys Belino and Guiliana Gallo were First Team All-State Conference
- Cross Country – Shawn Casey, Cassidy Kidd, Paul Oyem, Lucas Sena were First Team All-Conference.
- Wrestlers attended the Dover Wrestling Tournament – two champions – Gabe Hargrove and Nick Bertolotti; second place - Aidan Cross, Ariel Azeredo and Dan Collin; fourth place – Aviel Hernandez and Woodley Aucieli; fifth place – Joshua DeLeon
- Female wrestlers participated in the Bloomfield Tournament – Alissa Alcindor defeated the reigning state champion
- Girls Basketball Team will participate in the Benovengo Memorial Holiday Tournament at Scotch Plains High School during Christmas break
- Track Team has its first meet at the North Shore Pre-National Invitational at Ocean Breeze Athletic Complex in Staten Island on Saturday
- Union High School Baseball team participated in the Union Police Department’s Santa in Blue. They volunteered to sort and wrap gifts that were donated by the community

Dr. Benaquista stated “A Look Forward” – job/internships and TUPS bumper sticker design contest.

Education/Student Discipline Committee Resolutions:

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

E-1. Agenda item approved at December 12, 2023 worksession (affirm Superintendent’s determination of HIB – November 15, 2023-November 21, 2023).

E-1A. Agenda item reported at December 12, 2023 worksession (report of HIB – November 22, 2023-December 12, 2023).

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

Affirm the Superintendent’s determination of Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying (HIB) for the period November 22, 2023 to December 12, 2023, 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 December 13, 2023 to December 19, 2023, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes (*no vote required; for reporting purposes only*).

E-2. APPROVE ACCEPTANCE OF GRANT AWARD – MARK SCHONWETTER HOLOCAUST EDUCATION FOUNDATION

Approve acceptance of the grant award in the amount of \$1,000.00 from the Mark Schonwetter Holocaust Education Foundation (MSHEF) for the 2023-2024 school year (funding to be used to create a Holocaust Resource Lending Library at Union High School).

E-3. APPROVE ACCEPTANCE OF NJ LEARNING ACCELERATION PROGRAM: HIGH IMPACT TUTORING COMPETITIVE GRANT AWARD

Approve acceptance of the NJ Learning Acceleration Program: High Impact Tutoring Competitive Grant Award in the amount of \$614,000.00 for the 2023-2024 school year to provide ELA and mathematics tutoring for grades three and four along with on demand virtual tutoring for grades three through twelve, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

E-4. APPROVE SUBMISSION OF SCHOOL BASED MENTAL HEALTH GRANT

Approve to submit the School Based Mental Health Grant for the 2023-2024 school year in the amount of \$375,000.00 to coordinate school psychologist externs from Kean University to work with district students.

E-5. APPROVE COMPLETION OF ESEA PERFORMANCE REPORT

Approve the completion of the ESEA Performance Report in EWEG due December 22, 2023.

E-6. APPROVE STUDENT ASSEMBLIES – JEFFERSON SCHOOL

Approve the following assemblies for Jefferson School: (a) Mobile Ed Productions, “Quest for Kindness” assembly on March 19, 2024 at a cost of \$1,495.00 and “Freedom Within” assembly on April 12, 2024 at a cost of \$1,495.00 (to be paid using Title I SIA funds account #20113); and (b) Prismatic Magic Educational Laser Assembly “Bullying Prevention” on January 24, 2024 at a cost of \$1,428.00 (to be paid using Title I SIA funds account #20113).

E-7. APPROVE COORDINATION OF GRADUATE LEVEL SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGY EXTERNS – KEAN UNIVERSITY

Approve to coordinate graduate level School Psychology Externs from Kean University, as part of the requirements of the School Based Mental Health Grant Award for the 2023-2024 school year (all salaries will be paid using School Based Mental Health Grant Award and approved by the NJDOE), in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

E-8. APPROVE NJDOE ANNUAL PRESCHOOL OPERATIONAL PLAN UPDATE

Approve New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) Division of Early Childhood Services Annual Preschool Operational Plan Update, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

E-9. APPROVE RFP - HIGH-IMPACT TUTORING GRANT VENDORS

Approve the following, as the NJDOE approved vendors, for the High-Impact Tutoring Grant Award, to coordinate ELA and Mathematics tutoring for district students in grades 3 and 4 at the agency site during the 2023-2024 school year: (a) Huntington Learning Center - not to exceed \$458,869.00 and (b) Tutor Me (virtual on-demand) - not to exceed \$155,131.

E-10. Agenda item approved at December 12, 2023 worksession (License/Conference Agreement-Kean University).

E-11. APPROVE THE FOLLOWING CURRICULA

Approve the following curricula:

1. AP Computer Science Principles
2. Grade 2 Math
3. Grade 3 Math
4. Grade 4 Math
5. Grade 5 Math
6. Grade 11 English Language Arts
7. Algebra II/Honors Algebra II
8. Geometry/Honors Geometry
9. World Language Grade 9-12 Level I
10. World Language Grade 9-12 Level II
11. World Language Grade 9-12 Level III
12. World Language Grade 9-12 Level V
13. World Language Grade K-2
14. World Language Grade 3-5
15. World Language Grade 6
16. World Language Grade 7

E-12. APPROVE SERVICE AGREEMENT - RUBICON WEST LLC (ATLAS)

Approve Service Agreement with Rubicon West LLC (Atlas) for curriculum warehousing and management at a cost of \$30,000.00 per school year for the 2023-2024, 2024-2025 and 2025-2026 school years [prorated cost for 2023-2024 school year will be \$16,249.99], in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

E-13. APPROVE EXTENSION OF SUSPENSION – STUDENTS

Approve to extend the out of school suspension of the following students: ID #250848, 256000, 268289, 266075, 261334, 260059, 250882, per the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools.

DISCUSSION:

None

AYE: Mrs. Brens-Watson, Mrs. Minneci, Mr. O’Shea, Mrs. Regis-Darby, Ms. Santana,
Mrs. Scott-Hayden, Mrs. Williams, Ms. McKenzie

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. O’Shea, seconded by Mrs. Brens-Watson, for adoption:

F-1. TREASURER’S REPORT

That the Treasurer’s Report dated November 30, 2023 be accepted.

F-2. SECRETARY’S REPORT

That the Secretary’s Report dated November 30, 2023 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 November 30, 2023 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 November 30, 2023 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-4A. APPROVE APPROPRIATION TRANSFERS

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

F-4B. APPROVE RETROACTIVE JUNE 2023 APPROPRIATION TRANSFERS

Approve retroactive June 2023 appropriation transfers in cycle 14 (audit entry), as follows:

	Debit	Credit
11-000-291-270	\$81,718.84	
11-140-100-100		\$29,494.70
11-000-270-518		\$23,627.29
11-000-261-610		\$10,293.93
11-000-223-500		\$14,479.00
11-000-222-100		\$ 3,823.92
11-000-291-220	\$19,184.35	
11-190-100-500		\$ 9,827.00
11-190-100-610		\$ 9,357.35

F-5. APPROVE LIST OF CONTRACTS/PURCHASE ORDERS

Approve the attached list of contracts and/or purchase orders 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. Agenda item approved at December 12, 2023 worksession – districtwide student field trips).

F-6A. 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-7. APPROVE LIST OF 2023-2024 STATE CONTRACT VENDORS

Approve the amended list of the 2023-2024 State Contract 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-8A. 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
Union High School	#3240/Football	BSN Sports – Varsity football backpacks for players	\$4,080.00

F-8B. APPROVE FUNDRAISERS

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

Event Name	Date	Purpose
Coffee Corner	December 2023- June 2024	BMS/Special Olympics Play Unified – to raise funds Special Olympic sports and CBI programs
Candy Grams, Bake Sales, Dress Downs, Spirit Week, After School Events, Teacher Grams	December 2023- June 2024	BMS/PBSIS – to raise funds for PBSIS program
Pie a Teacher; Tape a Teacher to the Wall, Guess How Many in the Jar, Friendship Bracelets Sale, Smecils Sale, Dress Like Your Favorite Storybook Character	December 1, 2023- June 30, 2024	Connecticut Farms/Student Council – to raise funds for homeless shelter and Legacy-decorate hallways with kindness-4 th grade class of 2024

Pretzel Sale	December 20, 2023- June 30, 2024 (bi- monthly)	Franklin – to raise funds for Franklin Fun Day.
Holiday Movie Fundraiser	December 19-22, 2023	Jefferson/PBSIS – to raise funds for PBSIS rewards
Ned Show	January 25, 2024	Washington/Guidance Counselor – to raise funds to pay it forward and to another school to host assembly
Bake Sales	December 20, 2023- June 17, 2023 (monthly)	KMS/Garden Club – to raise funds for gardening supplies
Blast Fundraiser	December 20, 2023- June 20, 2024	UHS/Boys Basketball – to raise funds to purchase additional equipment, end of season party and team activities
Blast Fundraiser	December 19, 2023- June 20, 2024	UHS/Wrestling – to raise funds to send wrestlers to summer camp, end of season party and team activities
Senior Superlative Award Night	February 2024	UHS/Class of 2024 and Yearbook – to raise funds for the senior class and yearbook
Mr. UHS	April 1, 2024	UHS/Class of 2024 – to raise funds for senior activities
Winter Wonderland	December 2023	UHS/Class of 2024 – to raise funds for the senior class
Dine to Donate	December 2023- June 2024	UHS/Class of 2024 – to raise funds for the senior class
Fashion Show	January 2, 2024- June 20, 2024	UHS/Fashion Show – to raise funds for senior activities
Penny Wars	February 2024	UHS/Class of 2024 – to raise funds for senior activities
Bake Sale	December 19, 2023	UHS/Empowerment Club – to raise funds for club expenses
Monthly Snack Sale	December 20, 2023- June 20, 2024	UHS/Asian Student Alliance – to raise funds for upcoming events and activities
Bingo Event	December 2023	UHS/Dance Team – to raise funds for competitions and costumes
Coat Drive	January 2, 2024- February 2, 2024	UHS/Girls Empowerment Club – to collect coats for women and children who are displaced due to domestic violence
Bake Sale	January 24, 2024	UHS/Class of 2026 – to raise funds for class of 2026
Candy Sale	December 2023- March 30, 2024	UHS/Class of 2026 – to raise funds for class of 2026
Valentine's Candy Grams	February 6-15, 2024	UHS/Class of 2026 – to raise funds for Class of 2026
Dine to Donate	December 20, 2023- June 30, 2024	UHS/Junior Class – to raise funds for the junior class
Bake Sale	December 20, 2023- June 30, 2024	UHS/Junior Class – to raise funds for the junior class

F-9. ACCEPT DONATIONS

Accept the following donations, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes:

From	For Use By	\$/Item
Shutterfly, LLC	Kawameeh Middle School	\$2,466.35
Shutterfly, LLC	Burnet Middle School	\$1,799.81
Shutterfly, LLC	Livingston Elementary School	\$2,123.05
Plymouth Rock Assurance	UHSPAC	\$500.00

F-10. APPROVE 2023-2024 OUT-OF-DISTRICT STUDENT PLACEMENT LIST

Approval be given to amend the 2023-2024 out-of-district student placement list, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

F-11. APPROVE ACCEPTANCE OF NJSIG SAFETY GRANT

Approve acceptance of New Jersey Schools Insurance Group (NJSIG) Safety Grant (2021/2022) in the amount of \$18,768.00.

F-12. APPROVE TRANSPORTATION CONTRACT AGREEMENT

Approve Transportation Contract Agreement with Ewing Board of Education for (a) the Extended School Year (ESY), July 5, 2023-August 15, 2023 at a cost of \$213.00 per day (30 days) with a not to exceed amount of \$6,390.00 and (b) the regular school year, September 6, 2023-June 21, 2024 at a cost of \$164.50 per day (183 days), not to exceed \$30,103.50, in accordance with the non-public information appended to the minutes

F-13. APPROVE TRANSPORTATION CONTRACT AGREEMENT

Approve Transportation Contract Agreement with Ewing Board of Education for the period November 8, 2023-June 21, 2024 at a cost of \$164.50 per day (140 days) with a not to exceed amount of \$23,030.00, in accordance with the non-public information appended to the minutes.

F-14. ACCEPT ADDITIONAL \$2 MILLION CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT STATE AID

Accept the additional \$2,000,000 Capital Improvement of State Aid, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

F-15. APPROVE SERVICES BY FAMILY CENTER AT MONTCLAIR

Approve the service of intensive therapy by the Family Center at Montclair for a district student, on an as needed basis, at the rate of \$175.00 per hour (not to exceed \$6,000.00), in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

F-16. APPROVE SITES FOR WORK BASED LEARNING AND COMMUNITY BASED INSTRUCTION

Approve the sites for Work Based Learning (WBL) and Community Based Instruction (CBI) at (a) Union High School, (b) Burnet Middle School and (c) Kawameeh Middle School, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

F-17. APPROVE CLOSE OUT OF LEGAL SERVICES FOR INDEPENDENT AFFIRMATIVE ACTION/DISCRIMINATION INVESTIGATION – PETER B. FALLON, ESQ.

Approve the close out for legal services for independent affirmative action/discrimination investigation attorney - Peter B. Fallon, Esq. for the 2022-2023 school year and investigations were finalized in 2023-2024 school year (not to exceed \$10,000.00).

F-18. APPROVE NONPUBLIC SCHOOL TECHNOLOGY INITIATIVE PROGRAM SPENDING PLAN – UCESC

Approve the Union County Educational Services Commission (UCESC) Nonpublic School Technology Initiative Program spending plan for St. Michael School located within the district for the 2023-2024 school year, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

F-19. *For informational purposes only – vote not required.* List of legal services for the 2023-2024 fiscal year, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

F-20. APPROVE DISTRICT WIDE TRAVEL AND RELATED EXPENSES

Approve district wide 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-21. APPROVE PETTY CASH ACCOUNT – FARMER’S CAFÉ

Approve a petty cash account at Union High School for the Farmer’s Café in the amount of \$1,500.00 to be replenished as needed (not to exceed \$5,000.00) for the 2023-2024 school year.

F-22. APPROVE ESTABLISHMENT OF FARMER’S CAFÉ CHECKING ACCOUNT – CONNECT ONE BANK

Approve the establishment of the Farmer’s Café checking account at Connect One Bank for operational purposes of the work-based learning program.

DISCUSSION:

None

AYE: Mrs. Brens-Watson, Mrs. Minneci, Mr. O’Shea, Mrs. Regis-Darby, Ms. Santana, Mrs. Scott-Hayden, Mrs. Williams, Ms. McKenzie

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED

Operations Committee Resolutions:

Upon recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the following resolutions were moved by Ms. Santana, seconded by Mrs. Minneci, 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 2023-2024 school year, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

O-2. REPORT ON OFFICIAL REPORT OF ANNUAL SCHOOL ELECTION

Report on the Official Report of the annual school election held on November 7, 2023 as follows (*report only, no vote required*):

Three-year term:	Michael Cohan	4,997
	Elsie Conteh-Mackey	4,877
	Ronnie McDowell	4,915
	Write-in	258

O-3. APPROVE UPDATED 2023-2024 SCHOOL CALENDAR

Approve updated 2023-2024 School Calendar, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

O-4. APPROVE REQUEST FROM CROSSROADS CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP – BATTLE HILL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL GYM

Approve request from Crossroads Christian Fellowship for the use of the Battle Hill Elementary School gym for a bi-weekly volleyball gym night starting on January 18, 2024 (Thursday nights at 7:00 p.m.). Requesting waiver of all fees (Certificate of Insurance requested).

O-5. APPROVE REQUEST FROM TOWNSHIP OF UNION – JEFFERSON SCHOOL CAFETERIA AND PARKING LOT

Approve Request from the Township of Union for the use of Jefferson School cafeteria and parking lot for the Township’s MLK Day of Service on January 15, 2023 from 7:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. (volunteers to sort donated winter clothing, non-perishable food items and have lunch), in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

DISCUSSION:

None

AYE: Mrs. Brens-Watson, Mrs. Minneci, Mr. O’Shea, Mrs. Regis-Darby, Ms. Santana, Mrs. Scott-Hayden, Mrs. Williams, Ms. McKenzie

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED

Personnel Committee Resolutions:

Upon recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the following resolutions were moved by Mrs. Scott-Hayden, seconded by Mrs. Minneci, 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 2023-2024 school year.

Name	Position	Rate
Jamir X. Reddick	Sub-custodian	\$16.00/hr.
Stephanie Araujo	Daily sub	\$120.00/per day
Nancy Agnis	Daily sub	\$120.00/per day
Predena Francois	Daily sub	\$120.00/per day
Paul Han	LT LE sub	\$35.00/per hour

P-3. ACCEPT LETTERS OF RESIGNATION/RETIREMENT

Accept letters of resignation/retirement from the following staff:

Name	Position	Location	Eff. Date	Reason	Notes
Brienna Benaquista	Career Ed/ Business teacher (Allied Health)	UHS	1/31/2024	Resignation	
Tarinesha Bush	Preschool I&RS	Preschool Dept	1/31/2024	Resignation	
Moira Porter	English Language Arts teacher	UHS	7/1/2024	Retirement	
Robert Tavares	Skilled Maintenance-Carpenter	Bldgs and Grounds Dept	3/1/2024	Retirement	
David Gigante	Special Ed teacher	UHS	2/1/2024	Retirement	
Colleen Noonan	Paraprofessional	Battle Hill	Updated 7/1/2024	Retirement	Originally approved at 4/25/2023 Bd mtg with 1/1/2024 effective date

P-4. APPROVE LEAVES

Approve leaves for the following staff:

Name	Position	Location	Leave Dates	Leave Type	Notes
Veronica Ambrose	3 rd grade teacher	Battle Hill	Intermittent 11/21/2023-6/22/2024	Intermittent leave	
Melissa Osborne	Special Ed teacher	BMS	Intermittent 11/20/2023-6/30/2024	Intermittent FMLA/NJFLA leave	
Rosa Figueiredo	PreK teacher	Connecticut Farms	Intermittent 11/27/2023-6/30/2024	Intermittent FMLA/NJFLA leave	
Isabel Moutela	Special Ed teacher	Jefferson	Extension of leave – new return date 1/5/2024	Extension of paid medical leave	
Jeff Sadler	Special Ed teacher	UHS	Extension of leave – new return date 1/5/2024	Extension of paid medical leave	
Tracy Kessock	Transportation Manager	Transportation Dept.	Extension of leave – new return date 1/22/2024	Extension of paid FMLA	
Teresa Clarke	Special Ed teacher	UHS	Updated 12/11/2023-3/8/2024	Updated – unpaid FMLA/NJFLA	
Kerri Duplissis	PE teacher	Hannah Caldwell	2/2/2024-6/30/2024	Paid child rearing leave followed by unpaid FMLA/NJFLA	
Cynthia Ferretti	2 nd grade teacher	Washington	12/22/2023-1/22/2024	Paid medical leave	
Yolanda Koon	School Business Admin/Board Secretary	Administration Building	12/13/2023-1/5/2024	Paid medical leave	
Kimberlie Morrison	Kindergarten teacher	Washington	12/18/2023-12/22/2023	Paid medical leave	

P-5. APPROVE STUDENT TEACHERS AND INTERNSHIPS

Approve student teachers and internships for the 2023-2024 school year, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

P-6. APPROVE DESIGNEE – STUDENT ACTIVITIES ACCOUNT

Approve Jennifer Hajkowski as the additional designee for the ConnectOne “Union High School Student Activities Account”.

P-7. APPROVE TERMINATION OF EMPLOYEE #13233

Approve termination of Employee #13233, effective December 20, 2023.

DISCUSSION:

None

AYE: Mrs. Brens-Watson, Mrs. Minneci, Mr. O’Shea, Mrs. Regis-Darby, Ms. Santana,
Mrs. Scott-Hayden, Mrs. Williams, Ms. McKenzie

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED

Moved by Mrs. Scott-Hayden, seconded by Ms. Santana, that the following resolution be adopted:

P-8. APPROVE APPOINTMENT AND EMPLOYMENT CONTRACT – BENAQUISTA
Approve the appointment and employment contract of Dr. Gerald Benaquista, as Superintendent, for the term of December 20, 2023 through June 30, 2027, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

DISCUSSION:

None

AYE: Mr. O’Shea, Ms. Santana, Mrs. Scott-Hayden, Mrs. Williams, Ms. McKenzie

NAY: Mrs. Brens-Watson, Mrs. Regis-Darby

ABSTAIN: Mrs. Minneci

MOTION CARRIED

Dr. Benaquista stated thank you and he is grateful to the Board and to the community.

Residency Committee Resolutions:

Upon recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, Mrs. Minneci presented the following resolution for informational purposes only:

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
#300528	Burnet Middle School – 6 th grade
#320520	Franklin Elementary School – 4 th grade
#266075	Union High School – 10 th grade

Approval of Bills:

Upon recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools and moved by Mrs. Brens-Watson, 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: Mrs. Brens-Watson, Mrs. Minneci, Mr. O'Shea, Mrs. Regis-Darby, Ms. Santana,
Mrs. Scott-Hayden, Mrs. Williams, Ms. McKenzie

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED

Unfinished Business:

Ms. McKenzie stated she enjoyed working with all of the Board members that are leaving. She appreciates Mrs. Darby for her input; will miss Mr. O'Shea's words of wisdom and will miss the conversations with Mrs. Brens-Watson. She appreciates all the hard work and dedication.

Mrs. Minneci thanked all the outgoing Board members. She stated she learned a lot about education from Mrs. Darby and finance from Mr. O'Shea.

Mrs. Scott-Hayden thanked all the outgoing Board members and stated that we learned a lot from each other.

Mrs. Williams stated this was the best Board in years; we have gotten a lot done. Enjoy your retirement.

Mrs. Minneci stated congratulations to Dr. Benaquista.

Mrs. Regis-Darby thanked the following: Jordan, Tyler, Sidney, the David Arminio and family, Mr. & Mrs. Monge, Dr. & Mrs. Francis, Vauxhall Civic Center, Brookside Heights community, Highland Avenue, Livingston School community, UHS community, the teachers, paras and SBLs, Dr. Perez, Mrs. Koon and Diane, Lester Taylor and his firm. She appreciates everyone. She stated it has been an honor to be on the Board. She will push Dr. Benaquista because I want you to succeed for all the kids. She also stated she is very grateful and thankful to be part of this community.

Mrs. Brens-Watson stated she echoes what Mrs. Darby stated and that this has been a journey. We touch many people and she is thankful to serve on this Board and has learned and grown. We can make positive changes in Union. She is thankful to her family for supporting her and she is thankful for the educators. She asks that the new Board do their best to keep politics out of education because we are on the children's side. She stated it has been an honor and a pleasure. Thank you, Mrs. Cappiello, for pushing me to get things done and thank you to Mrs. Koon.

Mr. O'Shea thanked the people of Union and stated he has learned a lot. He also stated he did the best that he could for the district and the students. The dedication of our teachers get us to excel and we have to get all the teachers on board. The Township is a very diverse community that shows progress; therefore the education should show progress and parents need to get involved. We need to bring back the learning trades and send out surveys to the students

to find out their interests. The kids are here to learn and they need to understand discipline. Thank you to Union for letting me serve. It has been a pleasure to be on this Board.

New Business:

Ms. McKenzie stated thank you to Gia and Neissa and congratulations for being inducted into the National Honor Society.

Mrs. Williams stated that she and Mrs. Minneci attended the ribbon cutting for the new business in the high school – the Farmers Café. It was so nice and they bake and make coffee. The students are getting job experience. Congratulations to Dr. Benaquista and to the National Honor Society inductees.

Mrs. Scott-Hayden stated congratulations to Patricia Frazier who will fill the vacant position on the Township Committee.

Congratulations to Dr. Benaquista and what I want to say to some people who may wonder if we acted hastily or why we stopped in the middle of a search I would just say if not then who and if not now when. I heard someone come to the mic and speak of coherent leadership and I picked up my pen and started writing my thoughts. Coherent leadership is important while I definitely feel we have that in Dr. Benaquista. We have to remain vigilant and passionate as we look to move the district forward. We have to make sure that we focus on social justice and equity in every aspect. Our values should reflect our community and our students who enter our doors every day. We will get the ship turned around and just because someone is the pilot of the vessel, we are all accountable to make sure that the vessel meets its destination. The passengers on board the ship are students, the navigators are administration, the crew is our staff and our parents in our community. The ship is a sail, and the future is bright, the ride may get bumpy but we will prevail. Why, because we are Union so congratulations. We are here to work with you. We will support you and we will be successful to the community. Thank you for coming out. We hope you come out more. We hope you support our superintendent, us, our staff, and our educators. There is a lot of work to be done but we are ready, and we are here to do the work. Thank you and have a great holiday.

Mrs. Minneci stated she is on the Senior Citizens Advisory Board and the seniors loved having Allied Health students come in and take their blood pressure. Students can also get community service hours by cutting grass, etc. for the seniors.

Ms. Santana asked for a moment of silence for Demetrias Aberi, a former student of the district who passed away. When students leave, we want them to know they are remembered. We sacrificed a lot of time for the district and the outgoing Board sacrificed their time and supported us. Thank you for your time.

She stated that she became the biggest advocate for Dr. Benaquista, our new superintendent. We have so much work to do and I will push you for the betterment of our district.

Thank you, Ms. McKenzie, as Board President, you showed me how to be objective. Union might be what it was but it is becoming something great. She stated she believes in our students, teachers, leadership and in Union.

MOTION TO ADJOURN:

There being no further business before the Board in public session it was moved by Mrs. Regis-Darby, seconded by Mrs. Brens-Watson, that the meeting be adjourned at 8:42 p.m.

AYE: Mrs. Brens-Watson, Mrs. Minneci, Mr. O'Shea, Mrs. Regis-Darby, Ms. Santana,
Mrs. Scott-Hayden, Mrs. Williams, Ms. McKenzie

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,

Yolanda Koon

YOLANDA KOON
BOARD SECRETARY