

TOWNSHIP OF UNION BOARD OF EDUCATION  
SPECIAL MEETING – REALIGNMENT MINUTES

April 27, 2024

NOTICE OF MEETING:

TO ALL BOARD OF EDUCATION MEMBERS:

The special meeting of the Board of Education of the Township of Union was held on Saturday, April 27, 2024 at 9:30 a.m. at the Administration Building, 2369 Morris Avenue, Union, New Jersey pursuant to the notice sent to each member.

Ms. Santana called the meeting to order at 9:31 a.m.

PRESENT AT ROLL CALL:

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

ABSENT AT ROLL CALL:

Mrs. Nancy Minneci (arrived 9:38 a.m.), Mrs. Mary Lynn Williams (arrived 9:50 a.m.)

ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT:

Dr. Gerald Benaquista, Mrs. Yolanda Koon

ALSO PRESENT:

Lester Taylor, Esq.

Mr. McDowell led the Board in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. McDowell 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.

Realignment Discussion:

The Board had discussions on the following (see district realignment conversation attached):

- Determine organization of schools/district
- Neighborhood elementary schools
- Cost benefits – potential savings
- Additional support to students

- Involvement – administrators, teachers, educational support staff, staff unions, special education/special services team members, parents, PTAs, community leaders, neighborhood associations, civic groups
- Data needed – previous report, student population/demographic data, current NJDOE report card, student achievement data, student attendance data
- Challenges – unease with change; concerns of impact on current “community”

### Comments from the Public:

Guida Faria asked the following questions: What is the number of students per building? What is the problem if we do nothing? Does every student in this town experience the same? Jefferson had no connection during that year; less transition improves SEL.

David Arminio asked preschool – would that impact transportation; would it benefit to add to elementary buildings to keep PreK in the building?

Susan Lipstein stated she would like to see change. Please try and find the data that has already been collected. We have been trying to make a change for almost ten years.

Kristen Nunes stated she is pro Jefferson and feels we are in a great place. We need many meetings to make this happen and it would not have happened if the other people had not wanted to do it.

Mr. Abraham stated he once was in the Board’s seat and that his daughter is a product of the Township of Union school system. He is currently an employee and I like the ideas as we cannot continue the way we are structured. Will this reconfiguration\realignment address the needs all over the district. We have to come up with ideas as there is not enough property to own in the town. I’ve voiced my concerns and ideas once before and would be happy to share.

### MOTION TO ADJOURN:

There being no further business before the Board in public session it was moved by Mr. Cohan, seconded by Mrs. Conteh-Mackey, that the meeting be adjourned at 11:07 a.m.

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

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,

*Yolanda Koon*

YOLANDA KOON  
BOARD SECRETARY