

TOWNSHIP OF UNION BOARD OF EDUCATION
WORKSESSION MINUTES – October 14, 2025 – 7:00 p.m.

NOTICE OF MEETING:

TO ALL BOARD OF EDUCATION MEMBERS:

The worksession meeting of the Board of Education of the Township of Union was held on Tuesday, October 14, 2025 at 7:00 p.m. at the Administration Building, 2369 Morris Avenue, Union, New Jersey pursuant to the notice sent to each member. Action was taken.

Ms. Carbonell called the meeting to order at 7:02 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, Ms. Marissa McKenzie, Dr. Jose Rodriguez, Mrs. Yolanda Koon

ALSO PRESENT:

Mr. Lester Taylor, Esq.

Mrs. Conteh-Mackey asked for a moment of silence for the two young girls from Cranford that were murdered. We support the families and respect and honor the two young girls.

Mrs. Faria led the Board 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.

Approval of Minutes:

Minutes will be approved at the regular meeting of the Board.

Communications:

Communications are part of personnel and operations.

Comments from Public (on resolutions in **BOLD** and **ALL MATTERS**):

Ms. Carbonell - 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.

Virginia Jeffries – indicated that the Board is in violation because there is not enough room for the public. POL-1 – indicated there is no contract in place and asked if there was an RFP. She also indicated that since the policies/regulations are in existence, they must be published as a revision. POL-9 – not properly published.

Christine Zurka – asked do you want us to work harder without a contract? We make a quarter of the teacher's salary. There is a long list of resignations/retirements on the agenda.

James Frazier – president of UCES – he stands in solidarity with those that received a rice letter. The vague rice letter violates fairness. Transparency protects everyone. The UTEA stands firm in equity; not here to divide; our schools thrive in unity. Please commit to transparency.

Ann Margaret Shannon – The UTEA asked that this meeting be moved three times and got crickets. Where are the chairs? Why can't you accommodate? There is no respect. Mediator said not to put the statement out and you did. She is disappointed and disgusted.

Gene Woods – Union solidarity makes us great and some try to break us up. Each member should support all. We are disappointed on how we are treated. Let's find hope as in the Mission Statement.

Christina Birstler – also disappointed.

Peter Leone – social studies teacher and UTEA VP – disappointed that he couldn't access his financials until he signed off on the policies. Our first amendment rights were violated by taking our signs; taking religious holidays off calendar. Every building is out of compliance for special education. Nurses need breaks. Everything lowers morale and is hurting school culture.

Barbara LaMorte – retired employee. She doesn't understand why Ann Margaret received a rice letter. She is a brilliant woman.

Tanya Martin Cooper – she is standing up for Ann Margaret. She indicated that everyone is working for the students, and it is unacceptable that people are being denied space to come to this meeting; it is purposeful exclusion. She also indicated that it was troubling that a rice letter was used as intimidation. What are we modeling for our students – stop disappointing us.

Tabatha Walton – disappointed that you are going after the UTEA president.

Julie Klickus – UVTS president – she is here for Ann Margaret. Governor Murphy has mandated labor history. She was disappointed that Union didn't use this as a teachable moment. She asked that Union do better and not be disappointing.

Glenn Robertson – New Providence Education Association President – disappointed. There are five local presidents here. Mediation impasse happens but targeting union leadership and using a rice notice as intimidation – you are leading an anti-union district.

Katherine Lewis – resigned in January from Union. She indicated that she is more than disappointed and that the district keeps doing unjust things to people and continues to go in the wrong direction. She indicated she was forced to leave and that is sad.

Matt Beverage – English teacher at Burnet – he indicated he is also disappointed. He hopes the district recognizes that they stand here for our kids.

Lydia Arrietta – she indicated that they were trained last week on security and the doors are not working properly. She indicated that they are not respected, and she is disappointed.

Amanda Maxwell – 7th grade science teacher – she is disappointed in everyone.

Ted Tympanict – as board members, you are the bosses – it all reflects on you. Whoever made that decision, it is not a good look. You are behind the eightball, think of their needs and what they need and asking you to do the same.

Eric Gabriel – teacher in the district – found his passion and disappointed because teachers are being undervalued; something needs to change.

Superintendent's Report: October 28, 2025

Superintendent's Report will take place at the regular meeting of the Board.

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. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT OF HIB

Superintendent's Report of Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying (HIB) for the period September 16, 2025 to October 14, 2025, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes (*no vote required; for reporting purposes only*).

E-7. APPROVE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT – LIVINGSTON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Approve Jordan Toma to provide professional development training, "I'm Just a Kid with an IEP" to the Livingston Elementary School staff on October 13, 2025 (district PD Day for principals) [to be paid using Mental Health Grant Funds #20497].

E-15. APPROVE SUSPENSION – STUDENT

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

(Mr. Nasta stepped out of meeting prior to vote.)

DISCUSSION:

None

AYE: Mr. Cohan, Mrs. Conteh-Mackey, Mrs. Faria, Mr. McDowell,
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-7. 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-16a. APPROVE UPDATED PRESCHOOL CONTRACT – GATEWAY FAMILY YMCA

Approve Updated Preschool Contract with Gateway Family YMCA, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

F-16b. APPROVE UPDATED PRESCHOOL CONTRACT – TOWNLEY PRESCHOOL-WONDER TWIN POWERS

Approve Updated Preschool Contract with Townley Preschool-Wonder Twin Powers, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

F-16c. APPROVE UPDATED PRESCHOOL CONTRACT – YM-YWHA OF UNION COUNTY

Approve Updated Preschool Contract with YM-YWHA of Union County, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

F-16d. APPROVE UPDATED PRESCHOOL CONTRACT – BRAINIAC’S CHILDCARE CENTER

Approve Updated Preschool Contract with Brainiac’s Childcare Center, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

F-16e. APPROVE UPDATED PRESCHOOL CONTRACT – UNION TOWNSHIP COMMUNITY ACTION ORGANIZATION

Approve Updated Preschool Contract with Union Township Community Action Organization, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

F-16f. APPROVE UPDATED PRESCHOOL CONTRACT – KEAN UNIVERSITY

Approve Updated Preschool Contract with Kean University, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

F-16g. APPROVE UPDATED PRESCHOOL CONTRACT – KIDDIE QUARTERS

Approve Updated Preschool Contract with Kiddie Quarters, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

F-16h. APPROVE UPDATED PRESCHOOL CONTRACT – KINDERCARE

Approve Updated Preschool Contract with KinderCare, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

F-16i. APPROVE UPDATED PRESCHOOL CONTRACT – WONDER WORLD

Approve Updated Preschool Contract with Wonder World, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

DISCUSSION:

Mr. Cohan advised the Board that the preschool contracts were previously adopted; however, there was an update from the State, and therefore the contracts needed to be re-adopted.

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/Technology 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-3. APPROVE REQUEST FROM TOWNSHIP OF UNION RECREATION DEPARTMENT - USE OF JEFFERSON SCHOOL PARKING LOT – TRUNK OR TREAT

Approve request from the Township of Union Recreation Department to use the Jefferson School parking lot for the annual trunk or treat event on October 18, 2025 from 9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. (rain date of October 19, 2025), in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

O-6. APPROVE JUNIOR CLASS BONFIRE

Approve Junior Class Bonfire to take place on the UHS practice field on October 16, 2025 from 5-9 p.m. (with a rain date of October 23, 2025).

O-7. APPROVE REQUEST FOR USE OF JEFFERSON SCHOOL – TOWNSHIP OF UNION POLICE DEPARTMENT

Approve request from the Township of Union Police Department to use the cafeteria and the gym at Jefferson School for the Annual Mischief-Free Night on Thursday, October 30, 2025, from 3:30 p.m. to 11:00 p.m.

DISCUSSION:

Ms. Santana had concerns regarding O-6 and Mrs. Conteh-Mackey indicated that this event is a staple of the high school and the fire department reassured us that it is a controlled fire and all will be fine.

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. APPROVE SUBSTITUTE LISTS

Approve Substitute Lists for the 2025-2026 school year.

Name	Position	Rate
Thomas Campbell	Daily sub	\$140.00/per day
Nicholas Rocha	Daily sub	\$140.00/per day
Farzana Saleem	Daily sub	\$140.00/per day
Marjorie Lopez	Daily sub	\$140.00/per day
Arshi Ahmed	Daily sub	\$140.00/per day
Donna Kaiser	Daily sub	\$150.00/per day
Michelle Nelson	Daily sub	\$140.00/per day
Christopher Jones	Daily sub	\$140.00/per day
Gerald Yoselevich	Daily sub	\$150.00/per day
Nicole Bobbitt	Daily sub	\$140.00/per day
Elizabeth Marroquin	Daily sub	\$140.00/per day
Little Underwood	Daily sub	\$140.00/per day
Gary Mobley	Coach	\$8,060.00

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 following policies were moved by Mrs. Faria, seconded by Mr. McDowell, for **FIRST READING**:

POL-1. POLICY 8467.1 – WEAPONS SCREENING

Approve Policy 8467-1 – Weapons Screening, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

POL-2. POLICY 0143 – BOARD MEMBER ELECTION APPOINTMENT

Approve Policy 0143 – Board Election and Appointment, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

POL-3. POLICY 0173 – DUTIES OF PUBLIC-SCHOOL ACCOUNTANT

Approve Policy 0173 – Duties of Public-School Accountant, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

POL-4. POLICY 0174 – LEGAL SERVICES

Approve Policy 0174 – Legal Services (M), in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

POL-5. POLICY 0177 – PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

Approve Policy 0177 – Professional Services (M), in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

POL-6. POLICY 1570 INTERNAL CONTROLS

Approve Policy 1570 – Internal Controls (M), in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

POL-7. POLICY 1620 – ADMINISTRATIVE EMPLOYMENT CONTRACTS

Approve Policy 1620 – Administrative Employment Contracts (M), in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

POL-8. POLICY 1636.01 – NOTIFICATION OF PROMOTION, NEW JOB, AND TRANSFER OPPORTUNITIES (NEW)

Approve Policy 1636.01 – Notification of Promotion, New Job, and Transfer Opportunities, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

POL-9. POLICY 1648.15 – RECORDKEEPING FOR HEALTHCARE SETTINGS IN SCHOOL BUILDINGS – COVID 19 (ABOLISH)

Approve to Abolish Policy 1648.15 – Recordkeeping for Healthcare Settings in School Buildings – COVID 19 (M).

POL-10. POLICY 2422 – STATUTORY CURRICULAR REQUIREMENTS

Approve Policy 2422 – Statutory Curricular Requirements (M), in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

POL-11. POLICY 5339.01 – STUDENT SUN PROTECTION (NEW)

Approve 5339.01 – Student Sun Protection (M), in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

POL-12. POLICY 6111 – SPECIAL EDUCATION MEDICAID INITIATIVE (SEMI) PROGRAM

Approve Policy 6111 – Special Education Medicaid Initiative (Semi) Program (M), in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

POL-13. POLICY 6220 – BUDGET PREPARATION

Approve Policy 6220 – Budget Preparation (M), in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

REG-1. REGULATION 8467.1 – WEAPON DETECTION SYSTEM

Approve Regulation 8467-1 – Weapons Detection System, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

REG-2. REGULATION 1570 – INTERNAL CONTROLS

Approve Regulation 1570 – Internal Controls (M), in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

REG-3. REGULATION 6111 – SPECIAL EDUCATION MEDICAID INITIATIVE (SEMI) PROGRAM

Approve Regulation 6111 – Special Education Medicaid Initiative (Semi) Program (M), in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

REG-4. REGULATION 6220 – BUDGET PREPARATION

Approve Regulation 6220 – Budget Preparation, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

DISCUSSION:

Mrs. Faria advised the Board and community that the changes indicated were on the recommendation of Strauss Esmay.

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

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: Mr. Cohan (POL-2-13; REG-2-4)

MOTION CARRIED

Residency Committee Resolutions:

Mrs. Faria reported on the following:

R-1a. 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 for the 2025-2026 school year:

Student No.	School	Grade
#296047	Union High School	9 th grade

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

For informational purposes only (no vote required): The following **residency investigation and hearing** were completed and the listed student voluntarily transferred to the district of residence for the 2025-2026 school year:

Student No.	School	Grade
#266651	Union High School	12 th grade

For informational purposes only (no vote required): The following totals are as of the September 16, 2025 Board meeting (2025-2026 school year):

Students Removed:	0
Students Voluntarily Transferred:	1

Approval of Bills:

Approval of the Bills will be at the regular meeting of the Board.

Unfinished Business:

None

New Business:

Ms. Santana – the football team had a big win and the first win for the new coach

Dr. Benaquista – this is a younger team; they never gave up.

Mr. Nasta – the bonfire – many board members will be in attendance – this is for the students, and the district should be there for the students.

Ms. Carbonell – attended back-to-school night at UHS and was able to speak with teachers and counselors.

Mr. Taylor – indicated that there is misinformation out there about the UTEA contract. Even though the contract is expired, you are protected and covered under that contract until a new contract is signed.

There is no anticipated conversation in closed or open session for those who received the Rice notices.

MOTION FOR EXECUTIVE SESSION:

Moved by Mrs. Scott-Hayden, seconded by Ms. Santana, that the Board go into Executive Session at 8:04 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, labor practice lawsuit.

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 10:31 p.m.

MOTION TO RETURN TO PUBLIC SESSION:

There being no further business before the Board, it was moved by Ms. Santana, seconded by Mrs. Faria, that the Board return to public session at 10:31 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

MOTION TO ADJOURN:

There being no further business before the Board in public session it was moved by Mr. Cohan, seconded by Mr. Nasta, that the meeting be adjourned at 10:32 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

