

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, September 15, 2026 at 6:00 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 6:00 p.m.

PRESENT AT ROLL CALL:

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

ABSENT AT ROLL CALL:

Mr. Ronnie McDowell (arrived 6:05 p.m.), Mrs. Nancy Minneci (arrived 6:01 p.m.)

ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT:

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

ALSO PRESENT:

Mr. Christopher Buggy, Esq., Mr. Phil Stern, Esq.

Mrs. Scott-Hayden 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, and posted on the Board's official website under legal notices; a copy of which is on file in the office of the Board Secretary.

MOTION FOR EXECUTIVE SESSION:

Moved by Mr. Cohan, seconded by Mrs. Faria, that the Board go into Executive Session at 6:01 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 and legal matters.

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,  
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 Mr. Cohan, seconded by Mrs. Minneci, 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 Mr. Nasta, seconded by Mrs. Minneci, that the following minutes be adopted:

1. August 18, 2026 – regular meeting
2. August 18, 2026 – executive session #1 and #2

**DISCUSSION:**

None

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

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: Mrs. Faria, Mrs. Minneci, Ms. Santana

MOTION CARRIED

**Communications:**

**Use of Facilities:**

**REQUEST TO USE UHS TRACK – COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY/MFA FILM**

Request from Mia Clara Rubinstein (Columbia University/MFA Film) to use the Union High School track on September 8, 2026 from 9:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. for filming a music video/short film for pop artist Ari Lee's song "Olympics".

**REQUEST TO USE JEFFERSON SCHOOL PARKING LOT – TOWNSHIP OF UNION RECREATION DEPARTMENT**

Request from the Township of Union Recreation Department to use the Jefferson School parking lot on Saturday October 17, 2026 from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. for the Township's annual Trunk or Treat event.

**Letters of Resignation:**

LETTER OF RESIGNATION – DeJESUS

Letter of resignation from Jazmine DeJesus, paraprofessional-Jefferson Elementary School, effective August 24, 2026.

LETTER OF RESIGNATION – POSTERNOCK

Letter of resignation from Robyn Posternock, 10-month secretary-Jefferson Elementary School, effective August 17, 2026.

LETTER OF RESIGNATION – ASHIKWEI

Letter of resignation from Marijoe Ashikwei, 5<sup>th</sup> grade teacher-Washington Elementary School, effective October 28, 2026.

LETTER OF RESIGNATION – ROULEAU

Letter of resignation from Sherifaat Rouleau, Supervisor of Special Services-districtwide, effective November 10, 2026.

**Letters of Retirement:**

LETTER OF RETIREMENT – BIRSTLER

Letter of resignation, for the purpose of retirement, from Christina Birstler, school counselor-Union High School, effective September 16, 2026.

LETTER OF RETIREMENT – FILIPPONE

Letter of resignation, for the purpose of retirement, from Marcia Filippone, 10-month secretary-Kawameeh Middle School, effective January 1, 2027.

LETTER OF RETIREMENT – TENNEN

Letter of resignation, for the purpose of retirement, from Lindsey Tennen, special education teacher-Kawameeh Middle School, effective November 7, 2026.

LETTER OF RETIREMENT – HUBBARD

Letter of resignation, for the purpose of retirement, from Donna Hubbard, Administrative Assistant-Central Office, effective January 1, 2027.

**Requests for Leave:**

REQUEST FOR LEAVE – PERDOMO O’HARA

Request for paid FMLA from Jessica Perdomo O’Hara, preschool teacher-Franklin Elementary School, September 1, 2026-September 30, 2026.

REQUEST FOR LEAVE – SANTANGELO

Request for paid NJFLA from Carrie Santangelo, special education teacher-Connecticut Farms Elementary School, September 1, 2026-September 21, 2026.

REQUEST FOR LEAVE – DAMATO

Request for paid FMLA from Patricia Damato, elementary teacher-Battle Hill Elementary School, September 1, 2026-October 14, 2026.

**REQUEST FOR LEAVE – INGRASSIA**

Request for paid FMLA and unpaid FMLA from Mary Ingrassia, paraprofessional-Union High School, September 1, 2026-September 22, 2026 and September 23, 2026-September 30, 2026, respectively.

**REQUEST FOR LEAVE - D'AVANZO**

Request for paid FMLA from Richard D'Avanzo, teacher-Burnet Middle School, September 22, 2026-November 2, 2026.

**REQUEST FOR LEAVE – FISKE**

Request for paid FMLA from Cheryl Fiske, Vice Principal-Hannah Caldwell Elementary School, September 1, 2026-October 14, 2026.

**Requests for Leave Update:**

**REQUEST FOR LEAVE UPDATE – MENJIVAR**

Update to request for paid FMLA and unpaid NJFLA from Victoria Menjivar, Spanish teacher-Union High School, September 1, 2026-September 15, 2026 and September 16, 2026-December 17, 2026, respectively.

**REQUEST FOR LEAVE UPDATE – RIOLO**

Update to request for paid FMLA, paid medical leave and unpaid medical leave from Steven Riolo, custodian-Washington Elementary School, September 1, 2026-November 24, 2026, November 25, 2026-December 15, 2026, December 16, 2026-June 30, 2027, respectively.

**REQUEST FOR LEAVE UPDATE – BARBIERI**

Update to request for paid FMLA, unpaid NJFLA and unpaid maternity leave from Jessica Barbieri, teacher/coach-Washington and Connecticut Farms Elementary Schools, September 1, 2026-October 11, 2026, October 12, 2026-January 21, 2027 and January 22, 2027-January 29, 2027, respectively.

**Requests for Intermittent Leave:**

**REQUEST FOR INTERMITTENT LEAVE – DELLANNO**

Request for paid intermittent FMLA from Paul Dellano, math teacher-Burnet Middle School, September 1, 2026-June 30, 2027.

**REQUEST FOR INTERMITTENT LEAVE – CORTES**

Request for paid intermittent NJFLA from Tatiana Cortes, special education teacher-Connecticut Farms Elementary School, September 1, 2026-June 30, 2027.

**REQUEST FOR INTERMITTENT LEAVE – CICALESSE**

Request for paid intermittent FMLA from Jennifer Cicalese, special education teacher-Livingston Elementary School, September 1, 2026-June 30, 2027.

REQUEST FOR INTERMITTENT LEAVE – JACKSON

Request for paid intermittent FMLA from Erin Jackson, school counselor-Battle Hill Elementary School, September 30, 2026-June 30, 2027.

REQUEST FOR INTERMITTENT LEAVE – SINOCCHI

Request for paid intermittent FMLA from Jennifer Sinocchi, speech therapist-Connecticut Farms Elementary School, September 1, 2026-June 30, 2027.

REQUEST FOR INTERMITTENT LEAVE – HIGGINS

Request for paid intermittent FMLA from Kelly Higgins, elementary teacher-Connecticut Farms Elementary School, September 1, 2026-June 30, 2027.

REQUEST FOR INTERMITTENT LEAVE – CAMERON

Request for paid intermittent FMLA from Siddiquah Cameron, preschool teacher-Franklin Elementary School, September 1, 2026-June 30, 2027.

REQUEST FOR INTERMITTENT LEAVE – MANOCHIO

Request for paid intermittent FMLA from Fernanda Manochio, accountant-Central Office, September 1, 2026-June 30, 2027.

REQUEST FOR INTERMITTENT LEAVE – MANOCHIO

Request for paid intermittent FMLA from Cristina Manochio, school psychologist-Burnet Middle School, September 1, 2026-June 30, 2027.

REQUEST FOR INTERMITTENT LEAVE – RAFFAELE

Request for paid intermittent NJFLA from Robin Raffaele, teacher-Burnet Middle School, September 1, 2026-June 30, 2027.

REQUEST FOR INTERMITTENT LEAVE – RAFFAELE

Request for paid intermittent NJFLA from Adam Raffaele, teacher-Union High School, September 1, 2026-June 30, 2027.

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.

Virginia Jeffries – there were omissions from the minutes concerning her statement, the closure of Franklin Elementary School and the proposal to convert Franklin to a pre-k center was not included in the LRFP; asked if the auditors had the lease to the Lehigh Avenue offices; asked what the contract amount was for Northeast Interiors invoice and if it was budgeted; status of custodial staff; asked why there were so many lost checks, asked what is the contracted amount for DeLage Landen.

Mrs. Koon advised Ms. Jeffries that the minutes serve as the official legal record of what occurred and what actions the Board took at its meeting. They are not intended to be a word-for-word transcript of everything that everyone said. Under OPMA, the minutes must show the time, place of meeting, members present, subjects considered, actions taken and the vote of each member.

Mrs. Koon responded to Ms. Jeffries' other questions.

#### 9. Superintendent's Report:

Dr. Benaquista presented his Superintendent's Report (attached hereto); a summary is below:

- Enrollment – 2026-2027 (as of 9/15/2026) – 7,497
- New enrollments – June 15-September 15, 2026 – 772
- In-district enrollment:
  - Battle Hill 473
  - Connecticut Farms 483
  - Hannah Caldwell 498
  - Livingston 473
  - Jefferson 483
  - Washington 550
  - Burnet 922
  - Kawameeh 756
- UHS Graduation – 2026 Cohort – 636
  - June 2026 graduates – 593
  - Graduation rate – 93.2%
  - Summer graduates – 7
  - Updated graduation rate – 94.3%
  - Appeal window is open – final graduation rate forthcoming
- Chronic Absenteeism reduced over 20% in one year
- 2026-2027 TUPS Open House
- Convocation – Key Note Speaker – Brandon McCall from Teen Truth
- PreK Center at Franklin School – Ribbon Cutting Celebration
- Jefferson Elementary School – Celebrating a Historic Chapter – the last time the school was K-5 was 1969
- New E-Bike Law
- Mayor's Day Race – September 27, 2026
- HIB Affirmation – September 3-September 7, 2026 – 0
- HIB Reporting – September 8-September 15, 2026 - 0

Mrs. Scott-Hayden announced that attending this evening's meeting was a homeschool group of students from Union.

Mr. Cohan – spoke about Mr. Manzella and how he paved a path for all Board members and was a very special person, mentor, friend and public servant. He asked for a moment of silence.

Ms. Santana – spoke about the new E-Bike Law and the requirements and ordinance terms.

Dr. Benaquista advised the Board that he wanted to congratulate everyone on the banning of cell phones - Bell-to-Bell – other than a few reminders, it was very positive.

Mrs. Faria – with 171 students being registered in August, makes it difficult for the district in the beginning of the year and asked parent's to be more proactive on registering their students.

Ms. Carbonell wished all a very successful school year filled with good moments. She indicated that there were a few issues in the beginning with transportation. Dr. Benaquista indicated that there were some transportation issues that needed to be addressed concerning UCTS and our UHS athletes.

Ms. Carbonell asked if the out-of-district students/parents were receiving district communications. Dr. Benaquista indicated that they have created communications for all students/parents.

Mrs. Scott-Hayden asked about the number of requests to transfer students to other schools? Dr. Benaquista indicated that more than 50% have been accommodated; however, it is all based on space in the schools.

Dr. Benaquista advised the Board that they did have conversations with the Boys and Girls Club. However, that location would need transportation and at this time we do not have enough drivers.

Dr. Rodriguez advised the Board that the YMCA received additional site approval, and they will be calling parents on the waiting list for before/aftercare. There is still a waiting list for Pre-K 3 and 4.

Mrs. Scott-Hayden asked for confirmation that the YMCA still offers 7<sup>th</sup> grade students free membership. Dr. Rodriguez indicated that is correct and he will place the information on the website.

Mrs. Conteh-Mackey asked about ParentSquare usage. Dr. Rodriguez indicated that all families, including out-of-district families, are able to use ParentSquare.

#### Education/Student Discipline Committee Resolutions:

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

E-1. *Agenda item reported at September 8, 2026 worksession (Report of HIB-no incidents-August 19-September 8, 2026).*

E-1A. *Agenda item affirmed at September 8, 2026 worksession (Determination of HIB-July 22-August 18, 2026).*

**E-1-1. SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT OF HIB**

Superintendent’s Report of Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying (HIB) for the period September 8, 2026 to September 15, 2026 (no incidents to report), in accordance with the information appended to the minutes (*no vote required; for reporting purposes only*).

**E-2. APPROVE CBI SITES AND WBL**

Approve Community Based Instruction Site (CBI) and Work Based Learning (WBL)/School Enterprises for the 2026-2027 school year as follows: (a) School Enterprise – Farmers’ Field to Market: Student-Run Agricultural School Enterprise (proposed), (b) WBL/CBI – UHS – IT Department, (c) WBL/CBI – UHS – Gardens/Greenhouse, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

**E-3. APPROVE NJSIAA MEMBERSHIP CERTIFICATION**

Approve the NJSIAA Membership Certification for Union High School – Althea Bossard, Principal Certification and Ronald Zieser, Athletic Director Certification, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

**E-4. APPROVE MEDICAL SERVICES HANDBOOK AND SCHOOL HEALTH STANDING ORDERS**

Approve the Medical Services Handbook and School Health Standing Orders, revised August 2026, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

**E-5. APPROVE CONTRACT WITH READY SET GROW ACADEMY – MENTORING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

Approve contract with Ready Set Grow Academy to provide mentoring and professional development for Union High School students, families and staff at a cost of \$51,500.00 for the 2026-2027 school year paid for using ESEA funds, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

**E-6. APPROVE PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT – ELA EDUCATIONAL PLATFORM**

Approve partnership agreement with Holt Street Holdings d/b/a Riptoes to provide access to a free ELA educational platform for students, staff and families for the 2026-2027 school year, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

**E-7. APPROVE ACCEPTANCE OF FUNDS – NJDOE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY LEARNING GRANT**

Approve acceptance of funds in the amount of \$400,000.00 for the NJDOE 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Center Grant for the 2026-2027 school year.

**E-8. APPROVE EDUCATION SERVICES AGREEMENT 2026-2027 - EDUCERE**

Approve Education Services Agreement with Educere for access to virtual education programs and courses and other educational services offered by Participating Education Providers, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

**E-9. APPROVE GRANT APPLICATION**

Approve the Township of Union Education Foundation 2027 Grant Application, 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 Mr. Cohan, seconded by Ms. Santana, for adoption:

**F-1. TREASURER'S REPORT**

That the Treasurer's Report dated August 31, 2026 be accepted.

**F-2. SECRETARY'S REPORT**

That the Secretary's Report dated August 31, 2026 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 August 31, 2026, 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 August 31, 2026, after review of the secretary's monthly financial report (appropriations section) and upon consultation with the appropriate district officials that to the best of our knowledge no major account or fund has been over-expended in violation of N.J.A.C. 6A:23-2.2(d)3 and that sufficient funds are available to meet the district's financial obligations for the remainder of the fiscal year. This certification is solely based on the information provided by the School Business Administrator and Board Secretary and is assumed by the Board to be correct.

**F-4. APPROVE APPROPRIATION TRANSFERS**

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

**F-5. APPROVE LIST OF CONTRACTS/PURCHASE ORDERS**

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

**F-6. APPROVE DISTRICTWIDE TRAVEL AND RELATED EXPENSES**

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

**F-7. APPROVE DISTRICTWIDE STUDENT FIELD TRIPS**

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

**F-8. APPROVE LIST OF 2026-2027 STATE CONTRACT APPROVED VENDORS**

Approve the amended list of the 2026-2027 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 Name/Account #              | Vendor/Description                                                                                    | Amount                      |
|----------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Union High School    | 3201/Athletic Dept.                 | Newark Athletic Hall of Fame – table for induction of Coach Antonio Febellonia in the hall of fame    | \$1,525.00                  |
| Union High School    | 3240/3380/Boys Soccer/Boys Football | Township of Union Board of Education – reimbursement for boys' soccer and football (Amazon purchases) | \$4,256.25                  |
| Burnet Middle School | 2018/Chromebook fines               | Township of Union Board of Education – Chromebook fines                                               | \$12,000.00 (not to exceed) |

**F-9B. APPROVE FUNDRAISERS**

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

| Event Name         | Date                           | Purpose                                                                                                                                            |
|--------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Online Fundraiser  | September 16-30, 2026          | UHS/Field Hockey – to raise funds for end of year banquet                                                                                          |
| Online Fundraiser  | September 16-December 31, 2026 | UHS/Girls Soccer – to raise funds for end of year party, provide dinners for home soccer games, purchase rewards/gifts for end of year celebration |
| Online Fundraiser  | September 16-December 31, 2026 | UHS/Boys Soccer – to raise funds for training sessions, end of year party, awards/gifts for end of year celebration                                |
| Apparel Fundraiser | September 16-30, 2026          | UHS/Varsity Gymnastics – to raise funds for training, end of year celebration and mental health donation                                           |

## F-9C. ACCEPT DONATIONS

Accept the following donations:

| From                                          | For Use By           | \$/Item                       |
|-----------------------------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------------|
| Italian American Police Society of New Jersey | Burnet Middle School | \$1,500.00 of school supplies |

## F-10. APPROVE 2026-2027 OUT-OF-DISTRICT STUDENT PLACEMENT LIST

Approval be given to amend the 2026-2027 out-of-district student placement list (month of September), in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

## F-11. APPROVE ACCEPTANCE OF FUNDS – SPECIAL OLYMPICS UNIFIED GRANT

Approve acceptance of funds from the Special Olympics Unified Champion Schools 2026-2027 Grant for Kawameeh Middle School - \$750.00, in accordance with information appended to the minutes.

## F-12. APPROVE INLINGUA – TRANSLATION AND INTERPRETATION SERVICES

Approve Inlingua to provide translation and interpretation services for the 2026-2027 school year (not to exceed \$5,000.00) [Account Fund #7043/11-000-216-320-01-19], in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

## F-13. APPROVE JOINT TRANSPORTATION AGREEMENT – GATEWAY REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT

Approve State of New Jersey – Department of Education Student Transportation Unit, Joint Transportation Agreement with Gateway Regional High School District (host district), for school year 2026-2027, in the amount not to exceed \$29,081.00, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

## F-14. APPROVE RENEWAL OF MEMBERSHIP – NJSIG

Approve Indemnity and Trust Agreement Resolution with New Jersey Schools Insurance Group (NJSIG) to renew members for the periods July 1, 2026 through July 1, 2029, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

F-15. *Agenda item approved at September 8, 2026 worksession (early/aftercare contracts-YMCA).*

F-ATTY. *For informational purposes only – vote not required.* List of legal services paid as of August 18, 2026 for the 2026-2027 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 following resolutions were moved by Mrs. Faria, seconded by Mr. Nasta, for adoption:

O-1. APPROVE SECURITY DRILL/BUS EVACUATION REPORTS (*none currently*)

Pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:41-1 and P.L. 2009, Chapter 178, approve the following security drill for the month of August 2026 and, if applicable, bus evacuation reports for the 2026-2027 school year, in accordance with the non-public information appended to the minutes.

O-2. APPROVE SUBMISSION OF APPLICATION FOR USE OF RABKIN PARK

Approve the submission of the Picnic Area Application and Hold Harmless Agreement for the use of Rabkin Park on October 1, 2026 (rain date October 7, 2026) to the Union Township Parks and Recreation Department for the Special Services CBI Event, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

O-3. *Agenda item approved at September 8, 2026 worksession (use of UHS track).*

O-4. *Agenda item approved at September 8, 2026 worksession (use of school buses-Union RAMS)*

O-5. APPROVE REQUEST TO USE JEFFERSON SCHOOL PARKING LOT – TOWNSHIP OF UNION RECREATION DEPARTMENT

Approve request from the Township of Union Recreation Department to use the Jefferson School parking lot on Saturday October 17, 2026 from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. for the Township's annual Trunk or Treat event, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

T-1. APPROVE RECYCLING OF EQUIPMENT

Approve list of equipment for recycling, 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: Mr. Nasta (O-5)

MOTION CARRIED

## Personnel Committee Resolutions:

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 2026-2027 school year.

| Name           | Position              | Rate             |
|----------------|-----------------------|------------------|
| Layla Soares   | Daily Substitute      | \$160.00/per day |
| Ivette Garcia  | Daily Substitute      | \$170.00/per day |
| Iberca Jimenez | Substitute Bus Driver | \$31.65/per hour |

## 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 |
|---------------------|-------------------------------|----------------|------------|-------------|------------------|
| <b>Resignation:</b> |                               |                |            |             |                  |
| Jazmine DeJesus     | Paraprofessional              | Jefferson      | 8/24/2026  | Resignation | 1 yr.            |
| Robyn Posternock    | 10-month secretary            | Jefferson      | 8/17/2026  | Resignation | 3 yrs.           |
| Marijoe Ashikwei    | 5 <sup>th</sup> grade teacher | Washington     | 10/28/2026 | Resignation | 9 mos.           |
| Sherifaat Rouleau   | Supervisor – Special Services | Districtwide   | 11/10/2026 | Resignation | 10 mos.          |
| <b>Retirement:</b>  |                               |                |            |             |                  |
| Christina Birstler  | School counselor              | UHS            | 9/16/2026  | Retirement  | 28 yrs.          |
| Marcia Filippone    | 10-month secretary            | KMS            | 1/1/2027   | Retirement  | 25 yrs.          |
| Lindsey Tennen      | Special Ed Teacher            | KMS            | 11/7/2026  | Retirement  | 17 yrs.          |
| Donna Hubbard       | Administrative Assistant      | Central Office | 1/1/2027   | Retirement  | 30 yrs           |

## P-3B. APPROVE LEAVES

Approve leaves for the following staff:

| Name                        | Position           | Location                         | Eff. Dates                                                          | Reason                                                                        |
|-----------------------------|--------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Leaves:</b>              |                    |                                  |                                                                     |                                                                               |
| Jessica Perdomo O'Hara      | Preschool teacher  | Franklin                         | 9/1/2026-9/30/2026                                                  | Paid FMLA                                                                     |
| Carrie Santangelo           | Special Ed teacher | Connecticut Farms                | 9/1/2026-9/21/2026                                                  | Paid NJFLA                                                                    |
| Patricia Damato             | Elementary teacher | Battle Hill                      | 9/1/2026-10/14/2026                                                 | Paid FMLA                                                                     |
| Mary Ingrassia              | Paraprofessional   | UHS                              | 9/1/2026-9/22/2026 and 9/23/2026-9/30/2026                          | Paid FMLA and Unpaid FMLA, respectively                                       |
| Richard D'Avanzo            | Teacher            | BMS                              | 9/22/2026-11/2/2026                                                 | Paid FMLA                                                                     |
| Cheryl Fiske                | Vice Principal     | Hannah Caldwell                  | 9/1/2026-10/14/2026                                                 | Paid FMLA                                                                     |
|                             |                    |                                  |                                                                     |                                                                               |
| <b>Leave Updates:</b>       |                    |                                  |                                                                     |                                                                               |
| Victoria Menjivar           | Spanish teacher    | UHS                              | 9/1/2026-9/15/2026 and 9/16/2026-12/17/2026                         | Paid FMLA and Unpaid NJFLA, respectively                                      |
| Steven Riolo                | Custodian          | Washington                       | 9/1/2026-11/24/2026, 11/25/2026-12/15/2026 and 12/16/2026-6/30/2027 | Updated Paid FMLA, Paid medical leave, and unpaid medical leave, respectively |
| Jessica Barbieri            | Teacher/coach      | Washington and Connecticut Farms | 9/1/2026-10/11/2026, 10/12/2026-1/21/2027 and 1/22/2027-1/29/2027   | Paid FMLA, Unpaid NJFLA and unpaid maternity leave, respectively              |
|                             |                    |                                  |                                                                     |                                                                               |
| <b>Intermittent Leaves:</b> |                    |                                  |                                                                     |                                                                               |
| Paul Dellanno               | Math teacher       | BMS                              | 9/1/2026-6/30/2027                                                  | Paid intermittent FMLA                                                        |
| Tatiana Cortes              | Special Ed teacher | Connecticut Farms                | 9/1/2026-6/30/2027                                                  | Paid intermittent NJFLA                                                       |
| Jennifer Cicalese           | Special Ed teacher | Livingston                       | 9/1/2026-6/30/2027                                                  | Paid intermittent FMLA                                                        |
| Erin Jackson                | School Counselor   | Battle Hill                      | 9/30/2026-6/30/2027                                                 | Paid intermittent FMLA                                                        |

|                   |                     |                   |                    |                         |
|-------------------|---------------------|-------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|
| Jennifer Sinocchi | Speech Therapist    | Connecticut Farms | 9/1/2026-6/30/2027 | Paid intermittent FMLA  |
| Kelly Higgins     | Elementary teacher  | Connecticut Farms | 9/1/2026-6/30/2027 | Paid intermittent FMLA  |
| Siddiquah Cameron | Preschool teacher   | Franklin          | 9/1/2026-6/30/2027 | Paid intermittent FMLA  |
| Fernanda Manochio | Accountant          | Central Office    | 9/1/2026-6/30/2027 | Paid intermittent FMLA  |
| Cristina Manochio | School Psychologist | BMS               | 9/1/2026-6/30/2027 | Paid intermittent FMLA  |
| Robin Raffaele    | Teacher             | BMS               | 9/1/2026-6/30/2027 | Paid intermittent NJFLA |
| Adam Raffaele     | Teacher             | UHS               | 9/1/2026-6/30/2027 | Paid intermittent NJFLA |

**P-4. APPROVE STUDENT TEACHERS AND INTERNSHIPS**

Approve student teachers and internships for the 2026-2027 school year, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

**P-5. APPROVE TITLE IX COORDINATOR - ZIESER**

The Township of Union Board of Education affirms its commitment to compliance with Title IX and all applicable federal and State laws and regulations and directs the Superintendent or designee, Ron Zieser, Title IX Coordinator, to maintain appropriate policies, procedures, training and practices consistent with current legal requirements, at no additional cost to the district.

**P-6. APPROVE ALISON BREHM TO ATTEND MEETINGS**

Approve Alison Brehm to attend the following meetings: (a) 2026-2027 Project Director Meetings (mileage will be reimbursed from the 21st CCLC grant account #20733/20-458-200-580-01-20-YR02), (i) 1st Quarter Project Director Meeting In-Person on October 30, 2026 - at RWJ Fitness & Wellness Center, Hamilton (Mercer County) NJ, (ii) 2nd Quarter Project Director Meeting on January 27, 2027 -Virtual, (iii) 3rd Quarter Project Director Meeting on April 28, 2027 - at RWJ Fitness & Wellness Center, Hamilton (Mercer County) NJ, (iv) 4th Quarter Project Director Meeting on July 21, 2027 - at RWJ Fitness & Wellness Center, Hamilton (Mercer County) NJ, (b) 2027 Soaring Beyond Expectations Meeting (mileage will be reimbursed from the 21st CCLC grant account #20733/20-458-200-580-01-20-YR02) - New Jersey Principals and Supervisors Association (NJPSA) meeting on June 9, 2027, 12 Centre Dr. Monroe Township, NJ.

**P-7. APPROVE CHANGE OF SALARY CLASS #2 – EFFECTIVE SEPTEMBER 2026**

Approve Change of Salary Class #2 (effective September 2026), in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

**P-8. APPROVE CONTINUATION OF EMPLOYMENT FOR PREVIOUSLY NON-RENEWED STAFF MEMBERS**

Approve continuation of employment for previously non-renewed employee #13074 as a music teacher to replace Corrina Scaturro (transferred), at a contractual salary of \$88,904.00.

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: Mrs. Minneci (P-3b)

MOTION CARRIED

Approval of Bills:

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

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

Unfinished Business:

Mrs. Faria – attended curriculum night at UHS; she indicated the success of our students is a partnership with the schools and parents. She advised parents to reach out to the schools if your student is having problems.

Mr. Cohan – complemented the learning team and indicated there is a plan and framework being used; a lot of progress has been made. He also indicated that despite all the changes, it was a smooth opening, and it is due to the commitment of the staff, moving crew, custodians, teachers, paras, and support staff.

New Business:

Ms. Santana – welcomed the homeschool group of students. She advised students that you can register to vote at 17, and vote at 18. EF Tours is a wonderful group for our students, even the homeschool group can participate. She attended the volleyball games and invited all to attend. She also attended the Friday Night Lights with her colleagues, and it was a great time.

Ms. Carbonell – it is a pleasure to have the home school students here tonight. It has been 25 years since 911 and it changed the nation. Always remember 911.

It is Hispanic Heritage Month – learn something about this culture and celebrate with us – September 15-October 15, 2026.

Mr. McDowell reminded everyone to support our Marching Band.

**Comments from Public:**

Jill Hall – the Bell-to-Bell is going well; kids recognize it is better for them. Counselors at UHS will be sharing space with a vice principal. She has grave concerns about confidentiality, students unable to communicate with us - counselors must provide an atmosphere of trust and confidentiality for students, it becomes unsecure with others in a shared room and makes us vulnerable to liability. Dr. Benaquista indicated that the privacy will be there and we will provide space. It is a concept and looking to do this for the management of the building.

Virginia Jeffries – spoke about complaints filed against her by a district personnel have been dismissed and spoke about a Board member. Mr. Stern indicated the Board cannot do anything about this. Ms. Jeffries continued by alleging that the Franklin community was lied to and that nothing was approved by the State. There is no State funding and the property owners will have to pay for Franklin.

Avalon Schwabacher – student – indicated that she plays tennis for UHS and that Rabkin courts need to be repaired so they can continue practicing there; right now they have to practice elsewhere. Board President indicated that this will be looked into.

Dani Casinelli – her students are new to Hannah Caldwell and asked if anything would be done for a playground and is it the responsibility of the school or the board of education? Dr. Benaquista indicated that we are not able to do anything at this time; however, we are looking for grants to rebuild the playground. Mrs. Casinelli indicated that from her experience with her student, she feels that playgrounds help students to play with other children. Dr. Benaquista asked Mrs. Casinelli to share any visions she has with the school principal.

Kathleen Bruns-Meyers – Livingston Kindergarten teacher, formerly a pre-K-4 teacher. Franklin pre-K has the best principal. She advised the Board and administration that parents have been commenting on the drop-off time, and I told them to email Dr. Benaquista. She thanked everyone who worked so hard to get everything up and she advised all that Livingston Elementary School is 100 years old. Dr. Benaquista indicated that the start time for pre-k has not changed; however, travel time has changed for some parents and that is why we open early.

**MOTION FOR EXECUTIVE SESSION:**

Moved by Mr. Cohan, seconded by Ms. Santana, that the Board go into Executive Session at 8:37 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

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 9:03 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. Minneci, that the Board return to public session at 9:03 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

**MOTION TO ADJOURN:**

There being no further business before the Board in public session it was moved by Mr. Cohan, seconded by Ms. Carbonell, that the meeting be adjourned at 9:03 p.m.

All present voting YES

MOTION CARRIED

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,

*Yolanda Koon*

YOLANDA KOON  
BOARD SECRETARY

