

**UNION TOWNSHIP BOARD OF EDUCATION  
WORKSESSION MINUTES – MAY 8, 2007**

Meeting held at James M. Caulfield Administration Building, 2369 Morris Avenue, Union, New Jersey.

PRESENT AT ROLL CALL: Mr. Gary Abraham, President; Mr. Manuel Figueiredo, Mr. Steven Helmstetter, Mr. Anthony Manochio, Mrs. Versie McNeil, Mr. Francis Perkins, Mr. Steve Ruhl and Mrs. Judy Salazar

ABSENT AT ROLL CALL: Mrs. Linda Gaglione

The meeting was called to order by Mr. Abraham at 7:00 p.m. Mrs. McNeil led the board members and audience in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. Damato read the statement required under the "Open Public Meetings Act" a copy of which is on file in the office of the Secretary.

Mr. Abraham asked each board member to review the minutes of the organization meeting of April 24, 2007 for adoption at the regular meeting.

**COMMUNICATIONS:**

Mr. Damato stated that all communications have been referred to the appropriate committee.

**EDUCATION/STUDENT DISCIPLINE COMMITTEE**

Mrs. McNeil said that Mrs. Lombardi gave the committee information regarding the American Diploma Project, which is listed as an education discussion item on the agenda and will be addressed later in the meeting. She said that the committee also discussed Law Day 2007 which is a social studies elective and on May 1<sup>st</sup> students from the high school went to Merck and the students were introduced to the company and also were familiarized with careers and opportunities in law. Mrs. McNeil said that the students had the opportunity to speak to professionals; they found out what the legal description of a para-professional and law secretary were. She said that the people at Merck were very impressed with our students. Mrs. McNeil said that the committee also had a discussion regarding a course name change at Union High School. She said that the course is presently titled "Graphic Communications I, II, III and IV" and there is a request to change the name of the course to "Graphic Design – Commercial Art I, II, III and IV". Mrs. McNeil said that the change would just be in the title of the course and the course content will remain the same. She said that because

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the district receives funds from the Perkins Grant which is used to fund this course, the supervisor wanted to make sure that the title represented what the funding was for the course so that there will not be a problem with the State. Mrs. McNeil said that the committee also discussed course guides that need to be approved and these course guides were in line with the New Jersey State Standards. She said that the process for writing a course guide was also reviewed. Mrs. McNeil said that a curriculum writing team is usually made up with two teachers that actually teach the course in question and the subject supervisor is also a part of the committee. She said that after the curriculum guide is written it is shared with other teachers that actually teach the course and if there are any comments or questions the guides are revised. Mrs. McNeil said that the supervisor then submits the guide to Mrs. Lombardi for approval. Mrs. McNeil presented the Education agenda.

## DISCUSSION ITEMS

American Diploma Project

Mrs. Lombardi stated that she attended a meeting at the New Jersey Association of School Administrators last week. She said that Dr. J. Dullan, who is an assistant commissioner at the NJ Department of Education, did a presentation on redesigning New Jersey high schools. Mrs. Lombardi said that New Jersey has joined the American Diploma Project with approximately thirty (30) other states in the nation and anyone who wanted more information on the American Diploma Project at [www.achieve.org](http://www.achieve.org). She said that the purpose of the American Diploma Project is to raise the standards in our high schools and produce graduates who can succeed not only in college, but in any career that they choose to pursue. Mrs. Lombardi said that one of the major things that the policy recommendations are calling for is that the high schools in the State of New Jersey need to be redesigned and create new high school graduation standards in order to motivate high achievement and to meet what colleges are telling districts that students need and what employers are telling the districts that students need. She said that the district will be giving, for the first time; in May of 2008 an end of course biology test and that will replace the high school proficiency assessment in the area of science. Mrs. Lombardi said that all students, in May of 2008 who are taking a biology course will take the test. She said that it will not count during its first administration for adequate yearly progress or as a graduation requirement. Mrs. Lombardi also said that in May of 2008, the State of New Jersey is joining nine (9) other states as part of the American Diploma Project and administering an end of course Algebra II test to any high school who would like to participate. She said that as she listened to Dr. Dullan it seemed that the Department of Education will be going to the State Board in September with new recommendations for high school graduation requirements. Mrs. Lombardi said that right now the Department of Education feels that all students should take Algebra I, Geometry and Algebra II

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as their graduation requirement and the Department is also looking toward Biology, Chemistry and Physics as the science requirements. Mr. Helmstetter said that he saw drop out rates going up. Mrs. Lombardi agreed. Mr. Manochio asked if students who have taken biology had to take the end of year test. Mrs. Lombardi said that next year only, those students who take biology will be tested. She said that right now all a student needs to graduate is three (3) years of science but she believed that the Department of Education will be going to the State Board and "dictating" that the requirements would be one year of biology, one year of chemistry and one year of physics. Mrs. Lombardi said that the Department of Education says they are doing this to "better" the state's high school graduates and to make the students more competitive. She said that NJASA is writing a position paper that they will be sending to everyone involved in the process because there were many questions regarding these new requirements. Mrs. Lombardi said that the Department of Education is saying that they are going to have public input but the feeling that she got that these changes were already on the way. She said that the NJASA felt that it was a "one size fits all" approach and that is not the type of education that they want to provide and what is right for one student is not necessarily right for every student and certainly the district wants to prepare its students to do whatever they want to do in life but not all students will go to college and these requirements will certainly detract from students going into other trades or careers. Mrs. Lombardi said that Dr. Jakubowski was going to take the information and speak to the Union County Roundtable Superintendents and ask for input from them to send ideas to the person who is really crafting the position paper to see what can be done. She said that she got the feeling, however, that the Department of Education really wants to move forward with the new requirements. Dr. Jakubowski said that this issue has been discussed at the Roundtable already and next week when he is in Atlantic City, the NJASA Executive Committee will be discussing this again. He said that it is not just that many students will not be able to pass these requirements; the fact is that right now there is a lack of chemistry and physics teachers because the science component is not like it used to be. Dr. Jakubowski said that previously a teacher would have a certification in "science" but now the certifications are in specific areas. He said that if all of a sudden in Union every year 600 students have to take physics, the sections of physics that will have to run and the number of teachers required at the high school will increase drastically. Dr. Jakubowski said that there are many students in the high school who will not be able to pass these requirements. He said that the Commissioner of Education is from a community where she believes everyone achieves. Dr. Jakubowski said that not every student in Westfield is capable of passing physics. He said that he was not sure if they really understand how difficult implementing these requirements will be for districts. Dr. Jakubowski said the Department of Education is on the "fast

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track" with this as it was with the elimination of one of the testing dates for the HSPT. He said that he had given testimony in Trenton and when he was there he had the feeling that the individuals on the board of education who were listening to his presentation had no clue of what he was talking about and it was a "done deal". Dr. Jakubowski said he believed the same thing would happen in this case. He said that the Commissioner and a few other people will run it through the State Board of Education who will have no clue of the impact of these requirements. Mr. Manochio asked what role did the private sector play in this decision. Mrs. Lombardi said they played a very large role. Mr. Manochio asked what role industry played and was industry discounted and not made a part of what students not going on to college should be receiving in high school. Mrs. Lombardi said that industry should be a part of this. She said that she believed it was the Chairman of Prudential who is the person heading the "Redesign" committee and there is evidently a lot of input from there. Mrs. Lombardi said she felt there were policy makers but not many true practitioners on the redesign committee. She said that the initiative as it was described would be a P through 16 initiative with colleges onboard also as far as raising their standards slightly and communicating more with school districts as to what colleges want. Mrs. Lombardi said that even though the Department of Education is saying that this is supposed to be a redesign of American high schools, it really needs to be focused first at the middle school level. She said that she agreed with this but putting a test in at the high school and having it trickle down is not the way to do it. Mrs. Lombardi stated that the way to do it was to start at the middle school and build up, but that part of it was not discussed. She said that they indicated that middle schools were an integral component but they would start at the high school anyway. Mrs. Lombardi said that she had seen a draft of the position paper is good and there were a lot of recommendations at the meetings for changes. She said that she would send of copy of this document with Dr. Jakubowski when he goes to the New Jersey Association of School Administrators convention in a few weeks so that he can discuss this with other superintendents from New Jersey. Mrs. Lombardi said that the New Jersey Association of School Administrators was hoping to have a position paper completed by the beginning of July so that it can be reviewed and commented on again because they want to get to all the people involved prior to the Department of Education going to the State Board of Education. Dr. Jakubowski stated that the truth of it is, the Freeholders across the State whose pride and joy are the Vo-Tech schools in the County; the Vo-Tech schools will no longer exist. He said that it will be impossible for the Vo-Tech schools to continue unless the students go to school from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. Dr. Jakubowski said that the shared services will absolutely be over. He said that the only school that will survive is the Magnet School. Dr. Jakubowski said that any vocational program where a student needs three or four hours in the specified area to get a

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certification will not be able to survive. Mr. Perkins asked if it was a national initiative. Mrs. Lombardi said that the graduate requirements were not right now, they are specific to New Jersey although other states are also working on that. She stated that the American Diploma Project is a national program. Mr. Manochio asked if it was true that New Jersey has the highest rate of high school graduates in the nation. Mrs. Lombardi said that it was true. She said that in the PowerPoint presentation which was given by Dr. Dullan he had a lot of information about the amount of remediation that takes place in New Jersey Colleges and although he did not include the information in his PowerPoint presentation, beforehand he talked about how high the graduation rate is in New Jersey as well as the number of students who go on to college. Dr. Dullan did not include any of this information in the presentation which he will be taking out to the "world". Mrs. Lombardi said that she would keep the board informed of developments in this area.

National School Boards Association (NSBA) Call to Action - No Child Left Behind (NCLB)

Mr. Abraham stated that Mrs. Gaglione had sent an e-mail out regarding this discussion item. He said that the NSBA is asking that the local school boards pass a "sample" resolution in support of House Resolution 648 which was co-sponsored by Congressman Don Young from Alaska who is a former educator with regard to improvements in No Child Left Behind in 2007. Mr. Abraham said that there is backup material which has been distributed to the board which gives background on the bill and there is also a news release included from Congressman Young that details the sanctions, measuring adequate yearly progress, restructuring, state flexibilities and if nonpublic schools accept Title I funds would not be exempt. He asked the board if they were in favor of adopting the resolution and forwarding it to the NSBA. Mr. Manochio asked why the board would not support anything to improve the program. Mr. Perkins said because the board did not understand what it will do. He said that when NCLB came out and became law, he got a copy of it. Mr. Perkins asked if any board member had read the entire statute. He said that it required a significant amount of understanding and analysis to determine what the words mean and how they fit. Mr. Perkins said he was not suggesting that the board not adopt the resolution. He asked anyone to explain what changes will be put into affect with this new bill before the board decides whether it wants to "jump on board". Mr. Figueiredo said that NCLB had some good things about it but also had a lot of things that as an educator had a lot to be improved. He said that this bill was a "tweaking" of the original law and according to the Congressman's news release indicates that the new bill may allow for alternate assessments for students who are not proficient in English and

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alternate assessments for students with disabilities. Mr. Figueiredo stated that now all students must take the test that the main stream student population is taking and all students are held accountable. He said that the methods for measuring adequate yearly progress will be changed and approaches such as "value added" and "partial credit" will be used for meeting basic proficient targets and alternate methods of measuring AYP, as long as the goals of NCLB are satisfied. Mr. Figueiredo said that right now if a school does not meet certain indicators first year, the whole student population could receive supplemental services or have public school choice. He said that the new bill will limit the sanctions only to the group that did not meet AYP as opposed to the whole student body. Mr. Figueiredo said that these are some of the highlights that he saw as an educator that begin to make some changes. Mr. Manochio stated he did not think that anyone on the board has digested the entire law but if National School Boards is asking for support, he would assume that they have an inkling that this new bill will "tweak" the original legislation. He said that if testing is being changed in areas of need that is a change for the good. Mr. Abraham said that just by the district being involved during the past few years, the board has seen what the law has done in this district and as Mr. Figueiredo commented, this bill is a beginning to start to "tweak" the law. Dr. Jakubowski said that the problem with NCLB is the consistency among states. He said that the issue of NCLB is not that it is a good or bad law. Dr. Jakubowski stated he felt that the concept of NCLB was very good but the issue is that each state was able to develop its own parameters. He said for example, in New Jersey there is a base number to make target groups that is so low. He said in some states if 50% of the students in a particular assessed area fall below, then the school does not make "adequate yearly progress". Dr. Jakubowski said that nothing in Congressman Young's bill addresses the main issue that there is no consistency among the states in using the same parameters. He said that each state has also developed its own testing; there is not a national test. Dr. Jakubowski said that he absolutely thought that NCLB needed to be "tweaked" but he believed that if the parameters in New Jersey were the same as those in Pennsylvania, the district would be 100% better off than it is now. He said he did not know what supporting or not supporting a resolution will do for the district and he thought that reading the information regarding Congressman Young's bill is not specific enough to tell him what really should be done. Mr. Manochio said that it was the State of New Jersey that developed the parameters for the testing. Dr. Jakubowski agreed and when they were set it was stated that New Jersey wanted to be one of the first state's to support the initiative and once these parameters were set, New Jersey was not allowed to change the parameters. He said that if the federal government wanted to "tweak" the concept that each state should provide for every child and that every child should be able

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to meet some minimum requirements, he did not know what they want to "tweak".

Mrs. Lombardi stated that she had just received notification that the district can expect for 2007-2008 only 60% of the current year's Title I appropriation. She said that she would love to see some legislation that says if NCLB is to be continued that the federal government must commit the funding and not continue to cut the district back. Mrs. Lombardi stated that next year's budget was done using 85% of the funding from the current year. Mr. Perkins said that he had no basis for supporting or opposing the resolution and he was not suggesting that the board not adopt the resolution if there is any glimmer of hope in it because he felt that this was the way legislatures often operate. He said that he would doubt that any person in the House of Representatives or any Senator read the entirety of No Child Left Behind. Mr. Helmstetter asked if there was anything in the proposed bill that would hurt the district. Dr. Jakubowski said he read it and he did not think it contained anything that would hurt the district. Mr. Helmstetter thought there was no harm in the board supporting the resolution. Mr. Manochio thought that if the bill "tweaked" certain areas of the law, it would be a plus and he would support the resolution simply because National School Board's is asking that district's support it. Mrs. McNeil stated that as an educator she felt NCLB has positives and negatives but she thought funding was a big concern. She said that if National School Boards is asking district to support the resolution, they should reexamine the law because they want district to maintain certain levels and where will the funding come from. Mr. Ruhl said that he was on the fence about the resolution. Mr. Damato stated that the resolution attached with the back up was just a form and if the board wanted to insert in the resolution that there should be funding at 100%, the board could do that. Mr. Perkins said on that basis he thought the board should adopt the resolution. Mr. Figueiredo said that if other boards of education around the state and around the country would do the same, maybe it would have some impact. Mr. Tatum thought that it was a shot of reality right about now. He said that when NCLB was first initiated, it was hoped that there would be one hundred percent of one hundred percent and realistically, districts are now learning that there are individual differences and countering that with the American Diploma Project that Mrs. Lombardi spoke about earlier, he felt this project would "throw" everything out the window in New Jersey. Dr. Jakubowski agreed. Ms. French said that the district would not need her if everyone learned the same way. Mr. Abraham asked Mr. Damato to draft a resolution with the addition of the wording "100% funding" and send it home on Friday for the Board to review for adoption at the regular meeting. Dr. Jakubowski said that he would take a copy of the resolution to his superintendents' meeting and perhaps other districts can also add a paragraph regarding funding.

Mr. Helmstetter said that he met with Ms. Dunn yesterday and he reviewed fiscal resolutions F-1 through F14 inclusive. He presented the fiscal agenda.

## DISCUSSION ITEMS

### Morris Union Jointure Commission Grant

Kathy French, Director of Special Services spoke about a grant which the district was awarded through the Morris Union Jointure Commission. She said that the Governor has had two initiatives this year, one for enhancing in-district programs for the autistic population and one for enhancing and expanding in-district programs for students with disabilities. Ms. French said that the Morris Union Jointure got a call last week that they had been awarded \$500,000 to be used over the next two years. She said that she was approached as the director of special services to enter into a partnership with nine other districts. Ms. French said that each district will not receive an even proportional share and because Union is the largest district, it will receive the largest amount of money and over two years this will amount to between \$80,000 and \$90,000. She said that the areas that would be addressed would be to promote inclusive values in schools; program development and enhancement; professional development and planning the transition which would be those students who are in the Morris Union Jointure and bringing them back into district programs. Ms. French said three years ago, the district opened an autistic program in district and it has been expanding every year. She said that next school year; the oldest students will be at fourth grade. Ms. French said that the 2008-2009 school year will see these students going to Central-Five and preparation will have to be made in that building to take on the autistic program. She said that this grant money could not have come at a better time because now she would have the resources to do what is necessary. Ms. French said that the Morris Union Jointure has been dealing with the autistic population and other areas of disabilities for a long amount of time and they have wonderful resources; very good staff development and she felt that the district works very well with them. She said that the grant contains a section on "video conferencing" so that staff members will not have to leave the district and everything can be done through "video" conferencing here and it will be provided from a set site at the Jointure. Ms. French said she hoped to meet with the Jointure next week to start on the preliminary planning because the first project will be a staff development summer program for inclusive education and according to the grant the participants will be paid \$125 per day for attending these sessions and there will also be staff development put in place for the next school year. Mr. Manochio asked when the grant would start. Ms. French said that it will begin on June 1<sup>st</sup> and that is why she had to meet with the Jointure within the next week to start the planning. Dr. Jakubowski said that the district's relationship with the Morris Union Jointure is excellent and Ms. French's relationship with their Director

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of Special Services and their Assistant Superintendent really helps a lot. He said that the district does have a number of students who participate in the program and the district's relationship with the Morris Union Jointure with regard to Hamilton School is something that he would once again like to thank the members who were on the board at that time for allowing the district to lease the building rather than selling the building. He said that he looked forward to working closely with the Morris Union Jointure Commission. Dr. Jakubowski said that he, Mr. Damato and Ms. French were at the opening ceremonies for the Morris Union Jointure's new facility in Warren and it was very impressive. He said that he would take board member to visit the facility. Dr. Jakubowski said that if he had an autistic child he would want the child to go to the facility and not to New Providence or Union but he was working on a plan so that the younger students stay in Union and when would they graduate to go on to the program in Warren, so that they do not have to ride on a bus for forty-five minutes each way each day. He said that it is great working with Mr. Coleman and the rest of the staff at the DLC. Ms. French said that if Vo-Tech programs are cut in the future, the district will have to have a strong transitional component for certain students and that is what the district will be looking toward.

## Operations Committee

Mr. Ruhl stated that the Operations Committee met this evening and discussed the resolutions on the agenda. He presented the Operations agenda.

## DISCUSSION ITEMS

Telephone system update

Mr. Tatum said that he and Mr. Damato met with another possible vendor yesterday to give them an update on an entirely different type of system. He said that the vendor spoke of a system that has individual control units at every school, different from the systems that have previously been presented. Mr. Tatum stated that this vendor would be preparing and forwarding a proposal for this system. He said that he has had correspondence from OSI as well as ePlus, which is a Cisco system and they have given me updated information regarding their systems. Mr. Tatum said that as a result of all of the research that he has done, it seems that the district is looking at doing some type of bid proposal in order to get the process started. Mr. Damato said that it would be better for all of the vendors if everybody was on a "level" playing field and the only way to achieve that is to try to get a bid specification drawn up because technically speaking, there is only one company that has a state contract that the district could actually go out and purchase the system. He said that he has had numerous discussions with that company and

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Telephone system update

numerous discussions with other companies and he is not 100% happy with anyone. Mr. Damato said that if a bid specification can be drawn up to exactly what the district wants then the district will not have to piece meal certain parts to certain companies and certain parts to other companies and the financing goes to a third company; all of those components can be put into one bid and the project can be bid. He said that the only issue is that it will not be bid to purchase but as a lease/purchase/financing. Mr. Damato said assuming the gross amount for the equipment remains the same or is less, it would amortize the same way based upon the numbers that he had where they said "okay, if you switch over to our system, you will save over \$3,000 per month and have a brand new phone system." He said that as long as the gross number for equipment is equal to or less than that number, the district would be able to amortize it and it would be a positive cash flow situation to the district, more than what was proposed by the one vendor, that is \$2,000 or \$3,000 per month. Mr. Damato said that it takes a while to meet with all of the vendors to try to get as much information as possible. Mr. Tatum said that he was also awaiting a proposal from Verizon as well. He said that the one common denominator in the whole process is that all of the vendors do not have a state contract and some portion, if not all of it, would have to go to a bid. Mr. Tatum said that if the district were to consider all vendors equally, then the district must look to doing a bid for this project. Mr. Perkins asked who the one state contracted vendor was. Mr. Tatum said that OSI (Avaya) is the only vendor with a state contract. Mr. Helmstetter said the downside to this would be if the district goes out to bid, it would have to accept the low bid and did Mr. Tatum and Mr. Damato think that the "players" were competent enough. Mr. Tatum thought the main issue was whether or not the bid is written in the manner in which the specifications indicate what the district needs and if they are not, then the lowest bidder might very well be as good as "a wire and tin cans." Mr. Damato said that it may very well be Avaya and/or OSI as the lowest responsible bidder. Mr. Helmstetter asked who would be writing the specifications. Mr. Damato said that was another issue; how do you write the specs? He said that the person writing them would need to have a certain amount of technical knowledge to write the "technical" part of the specifications; he had the rest of the specs, the boilerplate legal part of the specifications. Mr. Damato said that someone needed to be consulted to write these specifications. He said that he and Dr. Jakubowski met the other day and Dr. Jakubowski suggested that he call Potter Architects to see if they know somebody who could write this type of specification. Mr. Damato thought that the person writing the specifications would need to have knowledge in electrical engineering because it involves high voltage, low voltage and a lot of wiring. Mr. Perkins asked if the district didn't have someone a few years ago that could write the specifications. Mr. Damato said that he thought the gentleman that came in to review the telephone system was doing the phone system to determine

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Telephone system update

if the district had any lines that were not in use. Dr. Jakubowski said that there was also someone came in as a consultant one time, but unfortunately he passed away. Mr. Helmstetter asked if the one vendor who has the state contract has given the district a dollar amount for the project. Mr. Damato said they had. Mr. Helmstetter asked if it was a significant saving. Mr. Tatum said that it was close to \$3,000 per month. Mr. Helmstetter asked if Mr. Damato or Mr. Tatum have contacted any other districts who are presently using this system. Mr. Tatum said that he reached out to one district and was informed that the system was working. He said that he had spoken to the technology supervisor and it works fine, but he did have some reservations. Mr. Helmstetter said that if this system is pretty good and the district is going to have another year and pay someone to prepare the specifications and the district's savings will be similar to what it would get somewhere else, he thought that the district should "pull the trigger and do the deal." Mr. Manochio asked if the \$3,000 included new equipment. Mr. Tatum said it was with the new equipment. Mr. Perkins asked what the district was presently paying per month for the phone system. Mr. Damato thought that the district was paying approximately \$17,000 per month. Mr. Helmstetter thought that the district was losing money by not acting promptly on this project. Dr. Jakubowski said that the technology department has worked very hard on this and has some real concerns about going with the state contracted vendor. He said that none of us are experts on this. Dr. Jakubowski said that he sat through presentations by Avaya, Cisco and other vendors and two minutes after they were done with their presentations, he could tell you what they even said. Mr. Manochio said he thought the technology department had come up with an idea of the direction they wanted to go. Mr. Tatum said that there is one other option available wherein the district could go for installation on a state contract and bid the equipment. Mr. Helmstetter still thought the district should just get it done; he asked for a consensus of the board (a) whoever could do the entire project on a state contract or (b) whoever can do the installation on a state contract and just bid the equipment. Mr. Perkins asked if a presentation could be given to the board which indicates the pluses and minuses of each proposal. Mrs. McNeil asked if a time frame could be set. Mr. Abraham stated that the board has been trying to set a time frame. He asked Mr. Tatum if he had some information from Avaya that he could share with the members of the technology committee to read and digest. Mr. Perkins said he just wanted a summary of all of the proposals and a recommendation as to which vendor to use. Dr. Jakubowski said that he could not do it because he would not be able to give the board an analysis as to why to choose one vendor over another. Mr. Damato said that is why he recommended the most reasonable way to approach this was to prepare a bid specification with what the district wants, these are all of the features that the district wants, tell us how much it will cost. He said that this would enable all vendors to bid on the

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project. Mr. Manochio said that the district did not know what it wanted. Dr. Jakubowski said that the district knows what it wants. He said that when the vendors gave their presentations and it was then discussed with the technology department, the district knows what it wants but it does not know how to say "this is better than this". Mr. Damato said by bidding the project you would be wiping out all of the negatives. Mr. Abraham asked if the board was in agreement that Mr. Damato be able to put together exactly what the Board wants and let vendors bid on what the district wants and needs. Mr. Helmstetter asked if Mr. Damato knew how long the bid process would take. Mr. Damato said that he needed to speak to Potter Architects to see if they know someone who can write the technical specifications for this bid. He said that the general thumbnail sketch is that the district is looking for basic phone features, a dial tone and a voice mailbox for every teacher. Mr. Helmstetter suggested that Mr. Damato check with other districts to see what process they used. Mr. Damato said that there are other district that have used bid specifications but unfortunately when we obtained those specifications they looked too much like one bidder's specifications. He said that he thought he could let the Board more information at next week's meeting. Mr. Tatum stated that he and Mr. Damato had a meeting with OSI on Friday. Mr. Damato said that at that time their proposal would be reviewed and the financing, that they cannot offer because the state contract only covers the equipment, will also be reviewed. He said that if the district wants to lease/purchase the equipment from OSI, an RFP would have to be requested from banks for the financing. Mr. Abraham asked Mr. Damato to report to the board as to a timeframe for bidding at next week's meeting.

## Personnel Committee

Mr. Manochio stated that the personnel committee met this evening and discussed all of the resolutions on the agenda. He presented the personnel agenda.

## DISCUSSION ITEMS

UHS Principal

Dr. Jakubowski said that in Executive Session he would discuss this issue.

Policy Committee  
Union High School Student Parking Policy

Mr. Perkins said that the process has been conducted in an appropriate way to develop policy on sensitive issues. The process is a proposal, some exploration, and receipt of comments, analysis, adjustment, discussion and finally adoption of a policy. He said that the board would not be in a position at the next regular meeting next to adopt this policy because there are still many concerns that have been expressed. Mr. Perkins said that he has gotten many responses on the web page which he was very happy to see. He distributed a list of the concerns that have been obtained from respondents along with responses that he had penned. Mr. Perkins said that some concerns were as simple as an objection about a registration not being transferable. He said he thought the solution to that would be that a student has the right to register as many vehicles as the student would like and would receive one registration permit, which is removable. Mr. Perkins stated that this was also one of the police chief's responses. He said that some of the concerns were a little more complicated particularly those surrounding the questions about privacy rights with regard to search and seizure and the more he looked at it, the more he concluded that not only should the district take the opportunity in developing parking regulations to increase security and safety measures that the district takes with regard to student parking but he felt that the board was obligated to do this under the law. Mr. Perkins said that several individuals had commented that they had taken a law course someplace, that they knew their constitutional rights and probable cause was necessary in order to make a search. He said that a police officer needs probable cause when he stops a civilian on the street to search but a teacher on a specified search of a student who is not involved in any extracurricular activities and who has not granted prior consent, needs a reasonable level of suspicion and those who have provided advanced consent can be totally random and do not need anything other than, "I want to look in your car" or "I want to look in your locker" or "I want to take a urine sample to test for drugs." He said that he cited a case involving the Hunterdon Central School District in which the State Supreme Court upheld this very approach with respect to drug testing as being a condition and granting consent to drug testing before a parking permit is obtained. Mr. Perkins asked that the board review the comments and concerns. He said that his is a preliminary report and hopefully when the process is complete the entire package will include all of the comments; the analysis being distributed tonight and a form of contract that the board proposes containing the specific rules. Mr. Perkins said that there is a parking policy in place at the high school at this time and this is also cited in the analysis. He said that some questions remain open; for example, someone asked about towing. Mr. Perkins said that the district has the ability to tow vehicles right now if it is improperly parked. He did not propose that this policy be voted on next week at the regular meeting because he will not have time to get everything together and he thought it would be advantageous if the board could take a look at

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the information distributed tonight and if something is missing, please bring it to his attention. Mr. Perkins stated that he also has a letter from Chief Kramer who suggests that there be different color hang tags for those who have a provisional driver's license as opposed to those driving with a full driver's license so that the provisional driver's license vehicles can be identified. He said that Chief Kramer also recommends that it be a hang tag as opposed to a decal, which can be removed and/or collected if parking privileges have been suspended. Mr. Perkins said that Chief Kramer also endorses the 10 mph speed limit. He also addressed the issues of no sitting in vehicles when parked, etc. and he would appreciate feedback from board members. Mr. Perkins said that the idea of having "assigned" parking places may present too much difficulty to have specifically assigned parking places but he would like to have further discussion on this issue. Mr. Ruhl said that last month the board asked for input from Dr. Jakubowski on who would be enforcing the policy once it is adopted. Dr. Jakubowski said that he has reviewed the issue. He said that there is always one security guard riding around the high school parking lot. Dr. Jakubowski said that at the end of the school day, enforcing the policy when students are getting into their cars, he said that there are teachers on duty after school as monitors and the vice principals and deans also go outside. Dr. Jakubowski said that the district would work on enforcing the policy the best it can. He said that additional personnel would not be hired to enforce this policy. Dr. Jakubowski said that the person who monitors the parking lot is outside all day long. He said he thought it would just take a combined effort by everyone to look at what is going on. Dr. Jakubowski said that with regard to randomly searching a car or asking students not to sit in their cars, certainly if a guard is outside and sees a violation they will certainly approach the vehicle. He said that the district can only enforce this policy when the students are on the property and the district will have no control of what students do after they leave the property. He said that there were some questions that he did not have answers for such as towing and how that will be handled but once the policy is established the administration will work out the procedures. Mr. Perkins said that the approach he thought was best for this policy that the district did not specify with a great deal of specificity what the implementation of the policy ought to be and it will be an administrative prerogative and he did not envision there will be the need for a lot of activity. Mr. Ruhl said that the board did not want to adopt a policy and there be no means of enforcement of the policy. Mr. Perkins said that he was so confident with the legal side of the policy that he would, without fee, defend the policy in a court action. Mr. Damato agreed with Mr. Perkins on this point. Mr. Ruhl said that the district spent money at the request of the police department to post no trespassing signs on our property. He said that he has made a point of coming through the parking lot at all different hours of the night

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because of his work schedule and he is constantly seeing kids hanging out in the parking lot. Mr. Ruhl said that he came to the fields near the high school for a soft ball game the other day with his daughter and the parking lot was full of broken glass. He said the glass only got there one way by breaking bottles. Dr. Jakubowski said that he has had conversations with township officials with regard to that. He said that he also purposely rides through the parking lot at night and the kids are sitting in the parking lot drinking their coffee and he did not think that anybody ever comes. Mr. Perkins said that there are other issues that have to be considered such as trucks cutting through our parking lot to go to Lousons Road. He said that the police chief commented that "adequate posting of the speed limit should be done to advise drivers unless the Board of Education applies for Title 39 Enforcement Approval from NJ DOT the speed limits are not enforceable by the police. The traffic bureau can provide the form, if necessary." Mr. Perkins said that a few years ago the board had discussed the parking lot area becoming effectively a public street and the board stopped that discussion because it did not want to deed the property over to the town. He said that he was not sure that this necessarily would be a predicate to Title 39 enforcement so that the board may be able to go to NJ DOT and without deeding over the parking area, have it so that the police can enforce the speed limit. Mr. Abraham asked if there weren't supposed to be a few more speed bumps installed in the parking lot. He thought that this would be one way to slow the cars down.

Approval of Bills

Mr. Abraham stated that the bills would be approved at the regular meeting.

Unfinished Business

Dr. Jakubowski said that the close for applications for elementary principal, supervisor of English 9-12 and supervisor of language arts and math K-8 will be on Friday, May 11<sup>th</sup>. He said that he had a discussion with the personnel committee this evening regarding the retirement of Karen People. Dr. Jakubowski said that due to her retirement, the district does not have a coordinator for Head Start. He said that he has met with the Head Start Policy Counsel and the reality is that the Policy Counsel is supposed to select a new coordinator. Dr. Jakubowski said that he would be reaching out to the UTEA to explain to them the situation and he was not so sure that the position needed to be posted. He will be meeting again with the Policy Counsel to review what they want. Dr. Jakubowski said that the reality is the district is only housing the Head Start Program and using district teachers, but the district is no longer the grantee or the delegate. He said that there may be a way to make sure that the person who is running the program is divorced from the district totally; would be paid by the district because the money comes through our accounts; but it not be a Board of Education employee.

## Unfinished Business

He said that there is currently an individual who works as a social worker in the Head Start Office and he has reached out to her about taking the position. Dr. Jakubowski said that the district will provide benefits for this individual. He said that the district did sign a contract for another year of Head Start program. Mr. Perkins asked if the money paid to the individual is all federal money. Dr. Jakubowski said it was. He said that Ms. People was an employee of the district and was being paid her teacher salary and an additional stipend to be coordinator of Head Start; the stipend was paid through the federal grant. Dr. Jakubowski said that if the individual who presently works in the Head Start Office were to accept the position, there would be a little increase to making her a full time employee but the district would be saving an entire salary. Mr. Manochio asked if Head Start selected someone from the outside, would they be able to set their own salary schedule. Dr. Jakubowski said that the salary guide would be set as a mutual thing and the district would stay involved only because the program is being housed here and he thought they would give him the courtesy to say involved. He said that reality of it is that they could probably set their own limits and he could not argue with them about it other than to say that if it was too excessive it would be taking away from the money that could be spent on the children in the program. Dr. Jakubowski said that the district is paid "per child" to house the program. Mr. Manochio asked if the district paying benefits was part of the agreement. Dr. Jakubowski said that he was not sure if this individual is presently receiving benefits; the teacher's benefits are paid by the board of education, because they are employees of the district. He said that having the teachers as board of education employees gives the district some control because the teachers must be evaluated according to NJ State mandates and laws.

## New Business

Mr. Abraham said that board members have expressed a concern regarding the lack of parental involvement in the schools. He said that the board is coming to find that it is harder to find parents to participate in PTA, etc. Mr. Abraham said that he and Mr. Tatum had a discussion right after the budget election and he echoed the sentiment that parental involvement has been gradually declining. He said that each board member is assigned as the board liaison to a particular school and he knew that Mr. Helmstetter in the past has made it a point to attend Executive Board Meetings of the PTA at whichever school he has represented. Mr. Abraham said that he was asked this past year as a representative to Burnet Middle School to attend Executive Board Meetings of the PTA which he did. He stated that he thought it would be in the board's best interest that if board members would make an appearance at Executive Board Meetings and show them

## New Business

that board members are available as a conduit between the Executive Boards of the PTA and the Board of Education and to show that the Board is concerned about what is going on at their particular school and they feel that the board is hearing what their concerns are. Mr. Abraham said that he had suggested to Dr. Jakubowski that maybe in the future the board might want to consider an Ad Hoc committee to try to figure out or come up with ways to stimulate some parental involvement in the educational process in the district. He said that he knew there were many concerned parents in the district but there are also parents that are "falling through the cracks." Mr. Abraham thought that it would be a good initiative on the part of the board to try and show that the board cares and will listen to their concerns. He said that he was open to any comments from board members regarding this issue. Mr. Abraham said that he knew some PTA meeting night's conflict with Board of Education meeting nights but he would appreciate the board members making an effort to attend PTA meetings. Mrs. McNeil said that she had attended the Executive Board meeting at Central-Five prior to the budget election and she did address the parents about the importance of voting in this election and supporting the budget. Mr. Perkins said that many years ago Mr. DiGiovanni made a real concerted effort to try to do the same thing and he felt that the board should constantly do this. He said that his comments regarding the writers' workshop at Connecticut Farms Elementary School last month indicated that one of the key elements was parental involvement. Mr. Perkins thought that each board member was an "at large" representative at each school. He was willing to support any plan that Mr. Abraham or any other member of the board came up with that looks like it has half a chance of getting parents involved. Mr. Abraham said that he heard Livingston School was having a problem trying to find a PTA president for the upcoming year. Mr. Manochio said that this problem is not isolated to this district, it is throughout the entire state. Dr. Jakubowski said that the Central Office Administrators have gotten away from attending open houses at the beginning of the school year and speaking to parents. He said that most schools do not know who their board of education liaison is and perhaps what the board should think about is attending "open houses" to welcome parents. Dr. Jakubowski suggested that this issue be discussed more fully at the planning session in August.

## Comments from the Public

Ms. Loessel said that she misses the PTA convention and she recalled that there were always very good seminars offered and it was a good opportunity to meet people from different schools. She said that when her children were in school there were fights as to who would be president, etc. Ms. Loessel felt that when speaking to the Executive Boards of the PTA you are "preaching to the choir"

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as these are the parents who are already involved. She said that with regard to the kids who park out in the high school lot at night, Ms. Loessel said that she knew that the police came through to check the kids and if they are doing nothing wrong, the police will check them but will leave them alone. She said there is no place in town for the kids to go. Ms. Loessel said that they cannot congregate in front of anyone's house because the neighbors call the police. She said that this is a community problem. Ms. Loessel said that parents are not involved with their children anymore. She felt that the Board of Education should get together with the Town and try to get people involved. Ms. Loessel said that she would be willing to do anything she had to do. She felt that a parking policy was necessary but it should only be enforced when there is a violation. Ms. Loessel said that she did not want to see "innocent" kids just because they are sitting in the parking lot, getting violations. She asked why the district needed a "roof study" (resolution O-5) when we know that the roofs are leaking. Mr. Damato said it was not a study; this resolution is for architectural fees to draw specifications for a bid to repair the roof. Ms. Loessel asked why a roofing company could not do the plans. Mr. Damato said that the specifications had to be prepared by an architect. Ms. Loessel asked if an architect was required for specifications for the new phone system. Mr. Damato said that the district did not need to have an architect do the phone system. Ms. Loessel said that Schering Plough deals with OSI and she was sure that someone from that company would be willing to come into the district and write the specifications instead of paying a consultant. Mr. Damato said that OSI is one of the vendors that would be submitting a bid for the project. Ms. Loessel thought that since OSI had a state contract, they did not have to bid. Mr. Abraham said that if the district chose not to go out for a bid, OSI would be the only vendor who had a state contract which does not require a bid to be done. Mr. Damato said that OSI wants to sell us a phone system. Ms. Loessel asked if the board knew what they wanted in a new phone system. Mr. Damato said yes but there are some issues with regard to wiring that are not consistent in any of the proposals that have been presented so far. He said this made him a little skeptical. Mr. Damato said that there were also compatibility issues involved. Ms. Loessel asked if Mr. Damato and Mr. Tatum went to other districts to see what systems they are using. Dr. Jakubowski said that he has spoken to individuals from other districts that have gone with a certain vendor and say the system is great and others say that another vendor is good. He said that when the vendors gave their presentations, there were things presented that he truly did not understand exactly what they are saying. Ms. Loessel asked when the district did the security with PMK if the phone system was an issue at that time because you could not call out on some of the phone lines. Dr. Jakubowski said that PMK did not do that, and

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that was one of the reasons the district did not have PMK do it. He said that there were issues with PMK with the security because of wiring in particular places and he did not think they got involved with the phone system itself. Mr. Damato said that it was ProMedia who got involved with the phones. Dr. Jakubowski said that ProMedia came into the district to do something and did not have a full state contract. Ms. Loessel asked if all the cameras and all security systems, such as door detectors, etc., up and running now. She said the last time that she asked there were still issues with a few items. Dr. Jakubowski said that everything is up and running including the duress buttons at the high school that Mr. Stegemann is doing something with. He said that if there is anything that the district still has issues with it may be some connectivity with regard to some of the duress buttons as to where do they go but other than that everything else is working well and even though it is not the best camera site, monitors can see when a door is open. Dr. Jakubowski thought that 90% to 95% was functioning but there may be some glitches. Ms. Loessel asked if there were cameras at the administration building. Dr. Jakubowski said that there was a camera inside at the entrance of the back door. Ms. Loessel asked if there were any camera on the outside of the administration building. Dr. Jakubowski said there were none. Mr. Damato stated that there are no cameras outside the administration building, but he has received proposals for this purpose and this a project which the board would like to include in a future budget. Dr. Jakubowski said that one of the nice things about the way the budget is set up now is that although there is a 4% cap on the amount of the tax levy can be increased, there is no cap on how much a district can spend if it can generate the revenue. He said that the district is presently negotiating with the Morris Union Jointure Commission to extend their lease at Hamilton School and if he can ever figure out the TARA aid that was received from the state and we still are not exactly sure how to use it, maybe some projects can be accomplished with those funds. Ms. Loessel asked if the district would be getting "motion" cameras. Mr. Damato asked what Ms. Loessel meant by "motion" cameras. Ms. Loessel said cameras that could at least "zoom in" on a situation. Mr. Damato said that there are so many different types of cameras; there are infrared cameras that will now be installed on the school buses and every time a new feature is added to a camera, the price increases. Ms. Loessel said that the buses that are parked outside the administration building keep on getting "graffiti" and this is a cost because they have to be cleaned. Mr. Damato said that the district has filmed individuals several times committing acts of vandalism in the district and have passed this information on to the police. Dr. Jakubowski said that the district did have an incident with multiple buses being vandalized with graffiti and a through an investigation a few

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individuals were caught but there has not been anymore graffiti on buses since that incident. Ms. Loessel asked if charges were pressed against the individuals who were caught. Dr. Jakubowski said that charges were pressed against them.

Ms. Hall commented about the discussion regarding parental involvement. She advised the board as a parent and as an employee of the district to just keep trying. Ms. Hall said that even if the same faces keep showing up because if the district stops doing that, it will be sending the same message out there that if the parents "give up" the district will give up too and this would not be an appropriate response. She said that there are new faces coming out. Ms. Hall said that there were over 600 people who attended Heritage Night at Kawameeh Middle School. She said it was baby steps but the district has the obligation to the community to keep trying to do those types of things. Ms. Hall said one suggestion she had was that board members should try to show up at an PTA Executive Board Meeting before the budget election because the grumblings after those meetings is always, "Oh sure, they show up at the end of March when they want to get the budget passed" and that is not a necessarily a fair observation on the part of some of those parents but she thought that maybe if the board members were present at Open House or at the Holiday Show would be helpful in getting a better response. Ms. Hall said that while the board is looking at the parking policy at Union High School, it might also be a good time for the board to look at the substance abuse and traumatic events policies as well, because some of the same issues are raised in these policies in terms of confidentiality and student rights and the board should make sure that there is consistency among those policies which is not to say that there isn't right now, but if the board is looking at things and the parking policy will be worded a certain way perhaps it would be appropriate to word it similarly.

Mr. Donnarumma said that some time ago when the district was installing the new cameras in the school buses, he recommended that cameras also be installed in the parking lot. He felt this was as good a time as any to do it because it can be integrated into the parking policy which is being proposed. He felt that this would be an added protect against vandalism of vehicles.

Ms. Ciampi said that she has been coming to Board of Education meetings forever and all she has ever heard is about the phone system. She said that she would love to see a phone system in place and it is time to make a decision. Ms. Ciampi asked if the front door of the high school is locked during the day. Dr. Jakubowski said the door is not locked because there is a "receptionist" sitting in the lobby at all times and an individual should not be able to get by the person on

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duty without identifying yourself. Ms. Ciampi asked if Dr. Jakubowski was talking about Frank. Dr. Jakubowski said that he was talking about Mr. Gerber at times and when he is not there one of the security guards takes over the reception desk. Ms. Ciampi said that it was her experience when entering the high school that the person asked her if she was a board member and when I said no, he told me to go on in. She said that she has just walked right by him and sometimes there is no one at the desk. Ms. Ciampi said that in this day and age with everything that has occurred, she thought the district should be more cautious, especially at the high school because this seems to be where a lot of issues happen if they do happen. She felt strongly that precautions should be taken. Ms. Ciampi asked if the board ever received the \$1.5 million reimbursement from the SCC. Mr. Helmstetter stated that he spoke to Ms. Dunn yesterday and approximately \$700,000 has been received and she anticipates receiving another \$200,000 because the district came in under budget on certain projects. He said that the SCC has closed out six of the eligible projects. Mr. Helmstetter said that the problem is that there are now new people at the SCC and now projects are being reviewed again. Ms. Ciampi said that she had gotten involved with Central-Five when her son was in the third grade because she felt very strongly that the parents needed to take some type of ownership for Central-Five because it was a one year school and those parents who had children going there for the first time did not know anything about the school. She said that she got involved when Mrs. Wright had a committee that would meet every so often which included representatives from other groups involved and that is how she was introduced to that school. Ms. Ciampi said that she reached out to third and fourth grade parents to have them get involved also. She said that she was a firm believer of parental involvement and she thought that it was the "personality" of the school that does not always open their doors to parents and she felt that this issue should also be revisited.

## MOTION FOR EXECUTIVE SESSION

It was moved by Mr. Manochio, seconded by Mr. Ruhl that the Board go into Executive Session to discuss personnel litigation and contract negotiations without the presence of the public in accordance with the provisions of *N.J.S.A. 10:4- 2b*. The Board will disclose the discussion conducted during the executive session, with notice to the public, 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. All present voting yes.

BOARD RETURNED TO PUBLIC SESSION AT 9:20 P.M.

MOTION TO ADJOURN

There being no further business before the board, it was moved by Mr. Ruhl, seconded by Mrs. McNeil that the meeting be adjourned. All present voting yes.

Respectfully submitted

JAMES J. DAMATO  
BOARD SECRETARY