

UNION TOWNSHIP BOARD OF EDUCATION
WORKSESSION MINUTES
MAY 12, 2009

Meeting was held at James M. Caulfield Administration Building, 2369 Morris Avenue, Union, New Jersey 07083

PRESENT AT ROLL CALL: Mr. Gary Abraham, Mr. David Arminio, Mrs. Linda Gaglione, Mr. Steven Helmstetter, Mr. Thomas Layden, Mr. Anthony Manochio, Mrs. Versie McNeil, President; Mr. Francis Perkins, and Mrs. Judy Salazar

ABSENT AT ROLL CALL: None

ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT: Dr. Theodore A. Jakubowski, Mr. Gregory Tatum, Mr. James J. Damato, Ms. Karen M. Dunn and Mr. Anthony Magliacano

The meeting was called to order by Mrs. McNeil at 7:00 p.m. Mr. Manochio 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.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mrs. McNeil stated that the minutes should be reviewed by the board for approval at the regular meeting.

COMMUNICATIONS:

Mr. Damato stated that the communications had been referred to the appropriate committees.

EDUCATION/STUDENT DISCIPLINE COMMITTEE

Mrs. Salazar stated that the committee had met prior to the worksession and she presented the Education/Student Discipline agenda. Mrs. Gaglione stated that the district would be introducing new math courses for the 2009-2010 school year and the new courses will be Foundations of Math 1, 2 and 3. Dr. Jakubowski said that the reason for these new courses was due to the changes in the high school graduation requirements, the district needed to put in courses to make sure that students can get enough mathematics credits to graduate. He said that the district is trying to institute some sort of a foundation course which includes pre-algebra because all students will be required to pass an Algebra test in order to graduate. Mrs. Gaglione said that if a student who is in ninth grade now is not passing Algebra, the student would get the Foundation course next

EDUCATION/STUDENT DISCIPLINE COMMITTEE

year and the student could possibly have two math courses next year. Dr. Jakubowski said that was correct. He said that he believed that the high school redesign starts with the current eighth grade and three years of math are required to get a high school diploma. Dr. Jakubowski said that there are currently students who are taking two math courses in the same year.

DISCUSSION ITEM

N.J.Q.S.A.C. - Mr. Tatum said that the district is in the planning process for N.J.Q.S.A.C. and a districtwide committee is being developed by Dr. Jakubowski which will include administrators, teachers and other required personnel. He said that he has been communicating with districts that have already gone through the process in order to plan for N.J.Q.S.A.C. Mr. Tatum said that N.J.Q.S.A.C. will be a huge undertaking that will require the district to focus on a number of issues that will be evaluated, such as facilities, governance of the district, as well as curriculum. Dr. Jakubowski said that Ms. Lishak had shared the N.J.Q.S.A.C. process with the board several months ago. He said that this process includes a self-assessment and then individuals will come into the district to check. Dr. Jakubowski said that passing all five areas of the evaluation is not easy. He said that Rahway failed at least one of the areas and Springfield had problems with the governance portion of the evaluation because there was an issue with a board member who did not go to a required seminar. Dr. Jakubowski said that the committee would consist of himself, the two curriculum directors, Mr. Arminio who would be representing the board of education and two teachers and a member of the community. He said that the self assessment is tough but he knew what had to be done in some areas. Dr. Jakubowski said that he would be very disappointed if the district does not pass. He said that the district's test scores make it a little more challenging than some other districts and some of the special education needs make it more challenging as well. Dr. Jakubowski said that there were some questions about the district's racial balance of students that are classified. He said that he has tried to explain this issue. Dr. Jakubowski said that there are students who have come into the district who have already been classified. He said that the Executive County Superintendent wields a great deal of power with the Commissioner of Education and he felt that New Jersey School Boards ought to be taking a close look at what is happening in Trenton. Mrs. McNeil asked if the building principals have started preparing their checklists. Dr. Jakubowski said that they have. He asked Mr. Magliacano when he would be doing walkthroughs of the buildings. Mr. Magliacano said that he has already done one and another is scheduled in June. Dr. Jakubowski said that Ms. Lishak has met with Supervisors and Principals and before they leave in June, they must submit a checklist of items and at the administrators' meeting in August, the administrators will be advised what still needs to be done. Dr. Jakubowski said he was very confident with the fiscal portion of the evaluation and if there are any areas of concern, Ms. Dunn will be able to handle them.

FISCAL AND PLANNING COMMITTEE

Mrs. Gaglione stated that the committee met earlier in the evening and she presented the Fiscal and Planning agenda. Dr. Jakubowski said that the low interest rate will definitely impact on the district. Mr. Perkins asked how the low interest rate will effect the projections for revenue. Ms. Dunn said that she did decrease the amount of interest income expected significantly for the 2009-2010 school year. Mr. Perkins asked if the actual interest was above, at or below that amount which is anticipated. Dr. Jakubowski said he believed it was a little below what was anticipated. Ms. Dunn said that it was anticipated when the budget was being developed that the interest rates would be decreasing but she said that the district would continue to be aggressive in its approach to get the best return possible. Mr. Helmstetter asked whether the investments could be made for longer terms. Ms. Dunn said that when the investments are renewed next week, the district will be going for different terms but she said that the district had to be careful because it was coming to the end of the year and the investments are done pursuant to the bills and claims and other revenue. She said that it was hard to go longer than thirty (30) days and the reason it is done for specific terms is so that it will be in conjunction with the board meetings for approval.

OPERATIONS COMMITTEE

Mr. Helmstetter said that the Operations committee met earlier in the evening and he presented the agenda.

DISCUSSION ITEM

Four (4) Major Projects: (a) Administration Building; (b) UHS Auditorium; (c) I.T. Department and (d) Hannah Caldwell School - Mr. Helmstetter asked if the board could get an update on these projects. Dr. Jakubowski said that the board has previously discussed which projects were priorities. He said that he hoped that the Administration Building project would be completed over the summer. Dr. Jakubowski said that it is anticipated that the administration building would be closed the last week of July and the first week of August. He said that a schedule would be set up for the individuals who would be working during those weeks. Dr. Jakubowski stated with regard to the UHS Auditorium, there were plans drawn up some time ago which were prepared by DiCara Rubino but he felt that the district should consider a "facelift" of the auditorium rather than the "enthusiastic" plan that was presented by DiCara Rubino. He said that he thought lighting, the sound system and seating were the real priorities. Dr. Jakubowski said that he has met with Mr. Rago and he is comfortable with these upgrade suggestions. Mrs. Gaglione asked about the floor in front of the stage which seemed to be "chopped up". Dr. Jakubowski said that the floor in the front of the stage was "chopped up" because several rows of seats were removed to accommodate the extension of the stage for the spring musical productions. Dr. Jakubowski stated with regard to the

DISCUSSION ITEM

I.T. Department said that he would like to see the department moved by January 1st so that the Directors of curriculum can be housed in the central office. Mrs. Gaglione asked where the I.T. Department would be moved to. Dr. Jakubowski said that the I.T. Department would be moved to the area that housed the old auto body shop at Union High School. He said that some of the work can be done "in house". Dr. Jakubowski said that the renovation at Hannah Caldwell will allow for the conversion of the space into pre-school classrooms. He said that the district has applied for some financial assistance from the State for this project.

Dr. Jakubowski said that Mr. Sienkielewski stated that moving all of the equipment from the I.T. Department's present location would not be an easy task.

Mr. Arminio asked if the big mound of dirt that was near Washington School was going to be removed. Mr. Magliacano said that the dirt would be used to backfilled in after the rubber surface was installed on the playground at Washington School. He said that the rubber edge slopes off and there has to be a gradual incline to the surface. Mr. Magliacano said that most of the dirt would be used for this purpose and any excess would be removed by the maintenance department.

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

Mr. Manochio said that the Personnel Committee met with the Superintendent earlier in the evening and he said that the Superintendent has recommended all of the resolutions be approved. He presented the agenda.

DISCUSSION ITEM

Staffing – Dr. Jakubowski said that he has met with all building principals to determine what the district's staffing needs are for the upcoming school year. He said that Sgt. Anthony Davis, who presently works with the JROTC at Union High School is trying to get transferred back to Florida and Sgt. Samuel Bobé, who is an ROTC instructor from Florida is trying to get transferred to New Jersey because his family lives in this area. Dr. Jakubowski said that Sgt. Davis and Sgt. Bobé met at the National Drill Team competition several months ago. He said that Sgt. Davis is waiting for his commitment letter from the Army about this change before he submits his resignation to the district. Dr. Jakubowski said that another position that he would like to fill is for a school psychologist. He said the individual did an internship in the district and this person would be working with Mr. Kaufman. Dr. Jakubowski said that Mr. Kaufman was reassigned as a Behaviorist for this past school year and it has worked out very well. He said that Mr. Kaufman does much more counseling in this position and the new person would be working with Mr. Kaufman. Dr. Jakubowski said that he would also like to hire a speech teacher who is an individual who went through the Union School system but she was going for another interview before she would make a decision. He said that he knew of

DISCUSSION ITEM

one opening for a social studies teacher somewhere in the district and there was also a resignation from a math teacher at the high school and he believed that another math teacher would also be leaving. Dr. Jakubowski said that he and Ms. Guilfoyle would be interviewing for these positions. He said that there are two teachers whose contracts will not be renewed for the new school year; one of which is an industrial arts teacher and this will be very difficult to fill. Dr. Jakubowski said that he believed that a reading specialist should be hired to cover the two middle schools. He said that he would like to post for this position. Dr. Jakubowski said that another challenging position to fill will be the Mr. Cariello's position. He said that he had already posted for an Interventionist to cover Livingston School. Dr. Jakubowski said that after that position is filled he would also like to post for an INRS Coordinator. He said that this is a position that never existed in the district but he believed that it was something that was necessary for the district. Dr. Jakubowski said this was brought to light by the requirements for N.J.Q.S.A.C. He said that he would also like to extend the number of periods at the middle schools which has worked out very well at the high school. Dr. Jakubowski said that he felt the most important thing that he has done as superintendent would be that he instituted a nine period day at Union High School because there would be many programs at the high school that would have had to be done away with because of all of the new academic requirements for high school graduation.

APPROVAL OF BILLS

Mrs. McNeil stated that the bills would be approved at the regular meeting next Tuesday.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Mrs. McNeil said that Mrs. Gaglione had prepared a list of Board Goals which was distributed to all board members. She asked if the board agreed that the board should adopt these goals. Mr. Perkins asked what the specific requirement for board goals was and how many goals was it necessary for the board to adopt. Dr. Jakubowski said that districtwide goals were needed for N.J.Q.S.A.C., which were in place. Dr. Jakubowski said in terms of board goals, he was not exactly sure if board goals are asked for. He said that he would check tomorrow to see if they were required. Mrs. McNeil said that she was on another district's website and board goals were posted.

Mrs. McNeil asked about the paperless agenda. Mr. Damato said that the contracts had been signed, prepared a purchase order and Mrs. Ditri was following up with New Jersey School Boards.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Mrs. McNeil asked if the district's website would be updated after the technology department is relocated. Dr. Jakubowski said that the website can get a facelift at any time. He said that the items that need to be posted, are being posted in a timely manner. Dr. Jakubowski said that he felt that the technology department was understaffed but he thought that the bids that would be awarded next week will be of assistance to the department. Mr. Perkins asked if the board members had ever heard of "Kindle". He said that this was an electronic device which can store 1500 textbooks. Mr. Perkins said that he would like to explore the possible use of this product. He said that he thought that each device costs approximately \$400 and he was not sure that the district couldn't "wrangle" some money to purchase them. Mr. Perkins said that he was going to go look at the device. Mrs. McNeil said that she thought that Kindle had a website that can be accessed by anyone. Mr. Perkins said that Princeton University has all of its textbooks available to be downloaded onto this device. Dr. Jakubowski said that at one of his Superintendent's Meetings this device was discussed. He, personally, thought this was a great idea but the problem is what happens if these are distributed to the students, what happens if the device gets lost.

Mr. Helmstetter said that he believed the new board members names had not yet been posted on the web page.

Mrs. McNeil said that she wanted to take a consensus of the board about the date of the August Planning Session. She said that it is presently scheduled on August 18th and she would be on vacation and not able to attend. Mrs. McNeil said that Mr. Arminio has also indicated that he will not be available on the scheduled date. She suggested that the date be changed to the Tuesday before. Dr. Jakubowski suggested that everyone look at their schedules and a new date can be discussed at next week's meeting.

Dr. Jakubowski said that he has been receiving requests from individuals and adult groups to rent the football field. He said that for right now, he has decided not to allow outside groups to use the field. Dr. Jakubowski said that both Hillside and Springfield have already sent him letters asking if their football teams could use the field in the fall. He said that these school districts are going through some changes and he did not mind allowing them to utilize the field. He said that his other concern is that because the fence is left open so that individuals can access the track, there are a lot of people on the field all of the time. Dr. Jakubowski said he did not know if the field could be locked to keep individuals off but if it is locked up tight, the track will not be accessible. He said he did not want the field abused and ruined. Dr. Jakubowski said that the field had an eight to ten year lifespan and at the end of six years he did not want to be redoing the field. He did not know how to keep people off the field without locking up the entire facility. Ms. Dunn asked if the concept used by the Short Hills Mall for walkers could be implemented. She said that individuals who want to walk the mall must

OLD BUSINESS

register and are given badges. Mr. Arminio said that he is near the field many evenings during the week and when individuals are walking the track they bring their children and the children are running up and down the bleachers. Dr. Jakubowski said that he was aware of this fact and it has been going on for years. Mrs. Gaglione said that some of the children are also horse playing on the field. Ms. Dunn asked what time the lights are turned off. Dr. Jakubowski said that the lights are not turned on. Mr. Magliacano said that the only time the lights are on the timer is during football season. Dr. Jakubowski said that there were particular signs posted because the police department requested them but this has not deterred individuals from going on the field. Mr. Helmstetter suggested that a sign be posted on the field stating that the "Field is not for public use" and if there are trespassers, the district would be able to call the police and have them arrested. Mr. Abraham asked if it would be possible to put a tarp on the field when it is not in use and that would deter use of the field and still allow for the use of the track by the community. Mr. Arminio said that he has seen fields that have "rope chain" across the field in several spots so that individuals would not have use of the entire field. Dr. Jakubowski said he thought this was something that the district could look into. Mr. Abraham thought that anything that will protect the investment that the district has made in the field should be tried. He said that if too many people are able to use the field, it will be torn up quickly and something that is supposed to last ten years maybe twelve years, may only last six years. Mr. Abraham said even though there is a drainage system on the field, the tarp may deter people from using the field and when a school team needs the field the tarp can be removed.

Dr. Jakubowski said that there will be some changes for the end of the school year. He said that he met with Mr. Gibbons and it has been decided that all exams will be pushed back one day so that there will be exams given on the next to the last day at the high school and is not just a "make up" day. Dr. Jakubowski said that was to attempt to make the last days a little more serious for the students. He said that he has already spoken to transportation about the change. Dr. Jakubowski thought this was worth a try to see how it would work. He said that the high school will change to marking periods instead of semesters for the next school year. Dr. Jakubowski thought that these were positive changes. He said that the first week of testing at the middle schools went well.

Dr. Jakubowski said that the high school was nominated for a number of Rising Stars awards including Best Musical; Matthew Corbin was nominated as Best Supporting Actor; Best Orchestra; Best Director; Best Scenery and others. He believed that the high school received about a dozen nominations. Dr. Jakubowski said that he just taped a show with the Valedictorian and Salutatorian of the senior class as well as students from FBLA and DECA. He said that the Boys' Track Team won the Union County Competition and the Girls' Softball Team is still competing in the County Tournament. Mr. Manochio asked when high school graduation would

be. Dr. Jakubowski said that graduation was scheduled for June 23rd. Mr. Manochio asked if all other school end of year activities were scheduled for the day before. Dr. Jakubowski said that there was a schedule put in place so that nothing overlapped. He said that he made a commitment a few years ago that he would set up a schedule so that parents were conflicted on which event to attend.

Mr. Manochio said that he and Mr. Tatum went to the Teachers' Recognition Breakfast last week. He said that it was the first time he had attended this event and he thought it was a marvelous experience for all of the teachers from Union County. Mr. Tatum said it was nice to sit with the teachers and see them being recognized.

Dr. Jakubowski said that he was very disappointed that the 50 year graduating class could not be recognized this year. He said that the Class of 1959 is not having their reunion until next November and maybe there could still be something held on a Saturday in the fall at the high school if a sponsor can be found.

NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Arminio asked what communication has been extended to all retirees that have tendered their letters of resignation and what has the board done in response to those letters. Dr. Jakubowski said that he believed the board has done nothing in particular. He said that in years past the board would host a reception for all retirees, those employees with 25, 30 and 35 years of service and all of those individuals who volunteered hours throughout the school year but that has to stopped because of all of the new regulations. Mr. Arminio suggested that the board send a letter or a card to acknowledge these individuals for their service. Mrs. McNeil said that this suggestion would be taken into consideration because she felt something should be done. Dr. Jakubowski said that the board could invite all the retirees to the June board meeting and each individual could be presented with a resolution. Mrs. Gaglione asked if all individuals who retired during the school year. Dr. Jakubowski said that he did have a list of all individuals who retired throughout the year. He said that he would create a letter for each individual.

Mr. Layden said that he recently found out the Union Music School stopped a few years ago and he wanted to know the reason it is not in operation anymore. Dr. Jakubowski said that the program was never sponsored by the Board of Education. He said that the program was self sufficient and self funded. Dr. Jakubowski said that it was a very good program but people lost interest in the program. He said that the program was not a part of the board's budget but the board did allow this group to use a district facility for no cost.

COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

Ms. Hall said that today at Union High School the students attended a drunken driving simulation program. She said that it was a very powerful presentation. Ms. Hall said that there was a car which was hooked up to a computer brought in and students were able to "drive" using virtual technology to simulate different road conditions, speed limits and different levels of blood alcohol to simulate reaction times. She said that some of the students were really surprised at their reactions between different blood alcohol levels. Ms. Hall said that the students also viewed a video entitled "Smashed" which was very moving and graphic and it dealt with under aged drinking and the consequences. She said that it was done in a documentary style and it depicted young people who had been brought into trauma centers after being involved in car crashes. Ms. Hall said that she did the debriefing after the video and spoke to the students about brain injuries, recovery times and other statistical information which was given in the film. She said that the students asked some very good questions and she hoped that next year there would be enough money available so that two "cars" could be brought in because some of students could not experience the car due to time constraints. Ms. Hall said that she also hoped that both the juniors and the seniors would be able to attend the program next year. Mr. Perkins said that much emphasis is put on "drunk" driving but there are also the problems of impairment due to talking on a cell phone, putting on lipstick or eye makeup or even a lack of sleep the night before. Ms. Hall said that one of the issues involving one of the young people in the video was talking on a cell phone and she did speak to the students about this. She said that several health classes before the program are really required to speak to the students about all of the issues that they will see in the video and then a few classes after the program to answer any questions or concerns that the students may have as a result of the program. Dr. Jakubowski said that this program is geared toward the seniors because it is prom time. He said that the most fortunate thing about the prom is that most of the students are driven to the prom in a limousine but the problem is that many of the students go down the shore immediately after returning from the prom. Mr. Perkins said that the problem is that when an individual is too impaired to drive, they usually do not realize it. Dr. Jakubowski said that this year's senior prom will be held on a Thursday night because the cost to attend is considerably less than it being held on a Friday night.

MOTION FOR EXECUTIVE SESSION

Moved by Mr. Manochio, seconded by Mr. Abraham that the Board go into Executive Session to discuss personnel, negotiations and student issues 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 presenting voting yes.

THE BOARD RETURNED TO PUBLIC SESSION AT 9:20 a.m.

MOTION TO ADJOURN

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

Respectfully submitted

JAMES J. DAMATO
BOARD SECRETARY