

TOWNSHIP OF UNION BOARD OF EDUCATION  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES – MARCH 19, 2019

TO ALL BOARD OF EDUCATION MEMBERS:

The regular meeting of the Board of Education of the Township of Union was held on Tuesday, March 19, 2019 at 7:00 p.m. at the Union High School Library, 2350 North Third Street, Union, New Jersey pursuant to notice sent to each member.

Mrs. Minneci called the meeting to order at 7:08 p.m.

PRESENT AT ROLL CALL:

Mrs. Sherry Higgins, Mr. Ronnie McDowell, Mrs. Nancy Minneci, Dr. Kalisha Morgan, Mr. Vito Nufrio, Mrs. Nellis Regis-Darby, Mrs. Linda Richardson, Mrs. Kim Ruiz, Mrs. Mary Lynn Williams

ABSENT AT ROLL CALL:

None

ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT:

Mr. Gregory Tatum, Mrs. Annie Moses, Mr. Gerry Benaquista, Mr. Gregory Brennan, Mr. Barry Loessel, Mrs. Sandra Paul, Mrs. Anne Hart, Mr. Craig Wojcik, Mrs. Kim Conti

ALSO PRESENT:

Mr. Lester Taylor, Esq. (arrived at 7:11)

Mr. Nufrio led the Board and audience members in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. Brennan read the statement required under the “Open Public Meetings Act”, a copy of which is on file in the office of the Board Secretary.

Dr. Morgan read the District’s mission statement.

COMMENTS FROM PUBLIC ON RESOLUTIONS:

Jeff Monge stated there are a number of items related to this year’s budget. It is disappointing and surprising that items related to F-13 Tax Levy, F-16 special services – relating to architecture, engineering, legal, audit and now physician related costs – education related – all that information was not available online. It wasn’t available last week and this showed up yesterday afternoon which is not transparency and I’m not sure what that’s about but it wasn’t available to the public.

I have a question as it obtains to the tax levy line items – special revenues – I would like to understand why that doubled and is there any bank cap money that is related to the increase in the tax levy which seems to be about \$1.11 million.

F-14 – capital projects – I heard that folks didn’t understand what the capital project budget title came to be specifically as it pertains to a school board that was in there which was

one-third of the budget. I see it is not there anymore. It doesn't answer the question as far as the process of bringing capital projects to the board for a vote without having that back-up.

Capital projects has gone down since 2016 it was \$3.5 million to \$1.1 million and now it is at \$231,000 – I want to know how much money we have available and how are we going to fund it in the future.

F-16 – that line item hasn't gone up but I believe it is about \$600,000 – the biggest increase – last year \$2.1 million and I questioned it when I was on the board on why it was \$1.4 million because the previous year was \$560,000 – so that increase has gone up over 100% from 2016 when it was \$440,000 and now it is \$2.1 million.

Legal fees – January bills were \$92,000, February bills were \$155,000, March bills were \$170,000 – that is \$418,000. We have a budget of \$200,000 – you increase to \$300,000 so you have blown your budget in three months. Looking at it closely there are invoices in there from January, February and some invoices in March. It shows up in F-2. It is showing me that we are paying people more than they should be paid or doubling the payment – the presentation is wrong in the legal bills and the presentation in F-2 has to be wrong in the last couple of months.

Mr. Taylor asked Madam President do you want answers now or at the end of public comment? Mrs. Minneci stated we should do it now.

Mr. Brennan stated we didn't use any bank cap – we didn't have any available to us this year. We are going with a straight 2% on the tax levy which is only 70% of our budget and that is about \$1.8 million this year. The tax rate this year is the best it has been in 6-7 years. It is down to 1.7% because of the assessed valuation in Town has gone up – that is the property values. That has helped in that area. The average home in Union – the tax impact would be \$78.07. Last year it was \$75.00. Mr. Monge stated you gave too much information I didn't ask that. Mr. Taylor stated Mr. Monge you had your public comment opportunity to make your statement and ask your questions, this is now the Board's opportunity with the administration to respond. It is not a back-and-forth dialogue. Again you make the comment, you can respond – the administration – they are public servants, they are accessible to you and the public by phone, email.

Mr. Monge stated Mrs. Minneci is giving him an opportunity to answer. Mr. Taylor stated through the chair I'm just trying to clarify the protocol for the public comment for the board of education meeting. I'm not trying to argue with you sir. Let him finish his response if there is some follow-up we will defer to the chair but we can't have a conversation on every single point that is not directly responded to. He can continue his response pursuant to the Open Public Meetings Act because it is not a conversation.

Mr. Brennan stated as far as special education you asked about that – that has been going up each year and that number comes from the special education department. Each department was met with separately.

Mr. Monge stated I'm just asking questions and trying to get answers. If I can help guide him – he is providing me information that I'm not asking him. It is very specific for the agenda. Mrs. Minneci stated this is now taking a lot of time. Maybe you can get the questions to him and he can get back to you. Mr. Monge stated the Board is voting on this. Mr. Taylor stated if I were you I would slide in a re-statement of your question and we can move on. But trying to influence how the Board votes is really beyond what you are supposed to be doing. In 10 words or less restate your question.

Mr. Monge stated F-13 – there is a line item that special revenues - \$6.3 million – prior to that it was \$3 million so it is twice as much – why is it doubled? The other thing was special ed related – that used to be physician related – it is \$2.1 million. In 2016 it was \$480,000 and legal fees? Mr. Brennan stated Kim can you answer the special education education – the increase? Mr. Tatum stated the question is why is it going up? Mrs. Conti stated I haven't had a chance to review this – number one. Number two – there was the big increase from 2016 to 2017 which I think is best answered by the business office. Mr. Brennan stated can I sit with you and go over these things with you. Mr. Monge stated they are voting tonight. Mr. Brennan stated they are voting to send this to the County. This is not the final budget.

Mr. Taylor stated public comment – pursuant to the Open Public Meetings Act – the public has the right at every public board meeting to comment and to ask questions. Legally and technically there is no obligation of the Board nor the administration to respond to the public. This Board being transparent, being community orientated and being professional attempts to respond when they can. If the administration and the Board can't respond – I'm not saying that is right or wrong – we agree to disagree, it is perfectly appropriate to attempt to meet with the requestor, the member of the public, the staff, etc. Whether you agree with that or not, the answer is the answer and the answer does not trigger a response. The three areas you asked about was special revenue, special ed and legal fees. The business administrator responded. If it is not satisfactory to you and you are disrupting the meeting. Mr. Monge stated you are talking in circles. Mr. Taylor stated I'm turning this meeting over to the chair so you can continue with public comment and the Board can vote their conscience on whatever issues are before it tonight.

Jill Hall stated I would like to address E-3 – to approve a staff member's child to attend public school here. I proceed with the utmost respect to the Board and my colleague and other colleagues that will be coming forward who are pursuing this. I have a heavy heart bringing this forward and conflicted on it. I have been sitting here for many years and we talk about having no money and no space.

Mrs. Minneci asked the members of the public to keep their voices down because we can't hear what is going on.

Mrs. Hall stated and I know this is a very important issue in this District. I have a little skin in the game because I live here and I work here. I heard this described as a “perk” and a “bonus”. I want you to see this from my perspective. This is a perk and bonus that is available to somebody that doesn't live in Town and that is not available to me because I do live in Town so my tax dollars are going to pay for it. I'm struggling and I know we have issues here. I never begrudge anybody that opportunity. With pre-k and kindergarten you know it will be very much

sought after. Are we going to have those kids for 12 years? I don't think it is inappropriate to simply ask as we move forward we really look at this and come up with a policy. A well written, well thought out, well researched policy because this may be a perk that we no longer can afford to provide to our staff members. I say that with the utmost respect to all of my colleagues.

Susan Lipstein stated why these numbers were not available last week at the worksession that Mr. Monge is talking about. We had a planning meeting that didn't get to the budget. We have seven of our members of the Board have not completed a three-year term. We have lots of new people. The planning meeting is the time to discuss these issues. At the worksession those numbers should have been available so that any questions could have been brought up in a timely fashion – not five minutes before you vote – that is not transparency, that is not being open – that is pushing something through at the last minute. The budget needs to be started to be worked on way beforehand so that everybody knows what is going on. I am a member of the public and I would like to know where the millions of dollars are going. Five minutes before vote is not acceptable to me.

Ann Margaret Shannon stated I just want to follow-up on Jill's comments. It is a hard subject. I live in Town and love the people I work with. My concern when you decide what to do – I still don't have an idea on what to do but my concern is the people that only do pre-k and kindergarten and go back to their town. Why are they using us for pre-k. When you decide what to do my concern is the people that use us for pre-k and kindergarten.

#### APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Upon recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the following minutes were moved by Mrs. Regis-Darby, seconded by Mrs. Williams, for adoption:

1. November 13, 2018 – worksession
2. November 13, 2018 – executive session #1
3. November 13, 2018 – executive session #2
4. November 20, 2018 – regular meeting
5. November 20, 2018 – executive session
6. December 11, 2018 – worksession
7. December 18, 2018 – regular meeting
8. December 18, 2018 – executive session

#### DISCUSSION:

None

AYE: Mrs. Higgins, Mr. Nufrio, Mrs. Regis-Darby, Mrs. Richardson, Mrs. Williams, Mrs. Minneci

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: Mr. McDowell, Dr. Morgan, Mrs. Ruiz, Mrs. Higgins (November 13 and 18)  
Mr. Nufrio (December 18), Mrs. Richardson (December 18) MOTION CARRIED

**COMMUNICATIONS:**

**REQUEST FROM SCHOOL AND COLLEGE OFFICIALS ASSOCIATION**

Request from School and College Officials Association to use the Union High School cafeteria on October 23, 2019 from 7:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. to present NJSIAA state soccer tournament rules to our membership.

**REQUEST FROM KAWAMEEH MIDDLE SCHOOL**

Request from Principal Malanda of Kawameeh Middle School requesting a plaque be placed at the entrance to the gym memorializing the services of Jack DeBarbieri and for the gymnasium be known as the Jack DeBarbieri Gymnasium.

**REQUEST FROM TOWNSHIP OF UNION EDUCATION FOUNDATION**

Request from Township of Union Education Foundation requesting the use of the gym and cafeteria at Jefferson School on Friday, September 27, 2019 from 3:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. for the third annual Township-wide pizza tasting contest and requesting a waiver of fees.

**REQUEST FROM UNION TOWNSHIP CHAMBER OF COMMERCE**

Request from Union Township Chamber of Commerce requesting the use of the Union High School facility site for the Chamber's 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Mayor's Day 5K Run on September 22, 2019.

**REQUEST FROM PATRICIA WIGGINS**

Request from Patricia Wiggins to leave the Little Library as a farewell gift to Washington School.

**CORRECTION TO REQUEST FOR LEAVE – JURGENS-LIPARI**

Correction to paid child rearing leave followed by unpaid FMLA/NJFLA (concurrently) from Danielle Jurgens-Lipari, teacher-Jefferson School, April 1, 2019-June 30, 2019.

**LETTER OF RESGINATION – RALSTON**

Letter of resignation from Ryan Ralston, custodian-Hannah Caldwell Elementary School, effective March 15, 2019.

**LETTER OF RETIREMENT – DIMAKOS**

Letter of resignation, for the purpose of retirement, from Linda Dimakos, teacher-Washington Elementary School, effective July 1, 2019.

**LETTER OF RETIREMENT – ERMAN**

Letter of resignation, for the purpose of retirement, from Sheryl Erman, teacher-Livingston Elementary School, effective July 1, 2019.

**LETTER OF RETIREMENT – SIBILIA**

Letter of resignation, for the purpose of retirement, from Carolina Sibilias, English teacher-Burnet Middle School, effective July 1, 2019.

**LETTER OF RETIREMENT – VALLIER**

Letter of resignation, for the purpose of retirement, from Nanette Vallier, school psychologist-Kawameeh Middle School, effective July 1, 2019.

**LETTER OF RETIREMENT – WIGGINS**

Letter of resignation, for the purpose of retirement, from Patricia Wiggins, teacher-Washington Elementary School, effective July 1, 2019.

**LETTER OF RETIREMENT – D’AGOSTINO**

Letter of resignation, for the purpose of retirement, from Mary Ann D’Agostino, special education teacher-Livingston Elementary School, effective May 1, 2019.

**UPDATE TO REQUEST FOR LEAVE – BRAXTON-WILSON**

Update to request for paid medical leave from Chandra Braxton-Wilson, librarian/media specialist-districtwide, new return date - March 1, 2019.

**EXTENSION TO REQUEST FOR LEAVE – GARAY**

Request for extension of paid medical leave followed by unpaid FMLA from Marlene Garay, special education teacher-Burnet Middle School, new return date – April 1, 2019.

**EXTENSION TO REQUEST FOR LEAVE – GLENN**

Request for extension of unpaid child rearing leave from Melissa Glenn, first grade teacher-Hannah Caldwell Elementary School, new return date – September 1, 2019.

**UPDATE TO REQUEST FOR LEAVE – HOMES KELLY**

Update to request for paid medical leave from Eileen Homes Kelly-kindergarten teacher-Connecticut Farms Elementary School, new return date – September 1, 2019.

**EXTENSION TO REQUEST FOR LEAVE – MELCHOR**

Request for extension of paid medical leave followed by unpaid FMLA from Julie Melchor, vocal music teacher-Jefferson School, new return date – April 1, 2019.

**REQUEST FOR INTERMITTENT LEAVE – MORIELLO**

Request for intermittent FMLA leave from Alexia Moriello, special education teacher-Hannah Caldwell Elementary School, March 1, 2019 - June 26, 2019.

**REQUEST FOR LEAVE – PIGGOTT**

Request for NJFLA leave from Ann-Maria Piggott, part-time aide-transportation department, March 25, 2019 – April 5, 2019.

**REQUEST FOR INTERMITTENT LEAVE – PHILLIPS**

Request for intermittent FMLA/NJFLA (concurrently) leave from Nonie Phillips, special education teacher-Burnet Middle School, February 28, 2019 – June 30, 2019.

**REQUEST FOR INTERMITTENT LEAVE – PUORRO**

Request for unpaid intermittent child rearing leave under FMLA/NJFLA (concurrently) from Matthew Puorro, physical education teacher-Hannah Caldwell Elementary School, May 9, 2019 – May 9, 2020.

**REQUEST FOR LEAVE – SARANGO**

Request for non-FMLA unpaid medical leave from Ana Sarango, part-time aide-transportation department, February 27, 2019 – March 29, 2019.

**UPDATE TO REQUEST FOR LEAVE – VINCENT**

Update to request for unpaid FMLA/NJFLA (concurrently) leave from Jaclyn Vincent, kindergarten teacher-Connecticut Farms Elementary School, new return date – March 8, 2019.

**REQUEST FOR LEAVE – DAMATO**

Request for unpaid FMLA from Laura Damato, principal-Jefferson School, February 28, 2019 - March 20, 2019.

**REQUEST FOR LEAVE – PAIGE**

Request for unpaid non-FMLA medical leave from Rosa Paige, cafeteria aide-Franklin Elementary School, April 2018 - June 30, 2019.

**REQUEST FOR LEAVE – CERCIELLO**

Request for unpaid FMLA/NJFLA (concurrently) from Luigi Cerciello, custodian-Livingston Elementary School, March 11, 2019 – March 29, 2019 (tentative).

**SUPERINTENDENT:**

Mr. Tatum stated tonight we have Union High School.

Mrs. Bossard stated good evening. We are happy to be here to speak with you about what is going on in the high school. We have a video to show you which Ms. Sterling created with her TV production students. You will get to see an overview of what is going on this year.

Presentation by Union High School – appended to minutes.

Mrs. Bossard stated we will talk to you about different things that are going on in the high school – CAD, woodshop, cosmetology and we will briefly tell you on what is happening.

Mr. Paterno stated we have eight new classes – Social Studies - History Through Media, Pop Culture and Film; African American History and Tomorrow’s Teachers (senior only Kean affiliate). There is a new club for students that want to go into education.

Career Education – is on the rise. We have a CAD program. We have Introduction to Drone Theory and Design. Real estate is using drones more often than anything else now. That field is really starting to pick-up. We want our students to get a little more knowledge on that and through CAD to design different things.

Our mathematics program – our computer science is a second tier – computer science principles and we have honors calculus and Algebra I with Lab – so those are the new programs for next year.

Mrs. Bossard stated we are going to talk about what we do at the high school to support all of our students. It is important to reach out and do multiple tier support systems. We are working on adjusting the schedule to meet the needs of those students that need support.

Mrs. Osty stated I'm the freshman Vice Principal at the high school. This marking period we just implemented Peer tutoring. Some of the students may be hesitant in going to a teacher so we started with our honor students. They are working with students that need extra help in math, English or foreign language. Those students can come in the morning and it is set up in the main office – anywhere from 6:30-7:30 – there are students there to help tutor. We have it during lunch every day. They can come in and they get a ticket to go to front of line to get lunch and then they come across the hall to the tutoring room. After school on Monday, Tuesday and Thursday we have tutoring in the main office. The students that are doing the tutoring receive community service hours so that also helps them achieve their hours. They also like helping the other kids. We track some of the kids in the beginning that weren't doing so well and we have watched their grades come up. It is working and we are happy for them. If the students want to sign up, the signs are hanging all over the buildings and all they have to do is scan it with their phones and they can sign up that way.

Mr. Ruddy stated our final afterschool program is "After-School Matters". It is small group instruction facilitated by a teacher in language arts and math and there is also a counselor component on social, emotional learning.

Mrs. Bossard stated there are often not a lot of information given about the classes that we offer at the high school. We do have several honor courses and advance placement courses and they are on the website. A lot of these courses lead to certification programs and college credits. Through the cosmetology program they can take the cosmetology test and they get licensed once they graduate high school. Our CAD program, students can take certification tests for that as well. We had a student who graduated two years ago that went through the CAD program and is working for an architecture company in New York and she is a project manager – one of the youngest. She is leading projects and designing homes, coffee houses, malls – all because she had gone through our CAD program and they were surprised at the firm that she even had that knowledge. She had the knowledge and the capabilities to be able to do the work because of this program.

We do have something called project acceleration through Seton Hall where the students can take the advanced placement courses and be able to get credits through Seton Hall – in math, Spanish, science and world language. We also have the Union County bridge program. Seton Hall University recognizes AP calculus course at their university and they give the students credit once they complete it. Allied Health – offers credits through Rutgers University.

ROTC program offers opportunity for a 4-year scholarship for the students that are involved in it. It gives them a chance to get an advanced promotion, higher pay – if they so choose to be part of the armed forces when they graduate high school.

Our students have attended a wide range of colleges and universities from ivy league to HVCU to UTI to the technical schools to schools away from here and students who choose to join an armed forces as well.

Mr. Paterno stated our fall sports came out very strong – our football team won the mid-state 38 Watchung Division championship. Our varsity boys' soccer won the Union County Conference championship. Our girls' tennis team was the Valley Conference championship. We do have numerous individual honors for student athletes.

Our winter sports – bowling took 2<sup>nd</sup> place in the Union County Tournament. Wrestling – Sarah Ilori – she took 5<sup>th</sup> in the first every girl's State Wrestling Tournament. Ice hockey – we will continue to Tri-Op with Dayton and Brearley High Schools. They had a great season and we have three students from Union playing.

ROTC – they maintained accreditation as an honor unit and distinction ranking program. They are in the top 10% of the United States. They are recognized Statewide and nationally. They won multiple competitions. The ROTC program is doing a great job.

Mrs. Bossard stated some individual things that have happened – Ayokunnumi Oluwakuyide – Faithful – State winner for the American Legion Oratorical Contest and she is heading to Indianapolis for the national competition. Yearly representatives to Girls' Career Institute at Rutgers University sponsored by the Woman's Club of Union. Numerous scholarship winners celebrated at our annual Senior Awards Night. We had the Unsung Hero award – it was a great event at the high school and Brittany Kennedy received that award.

Mr. McDowell stated one of the honor courses was offered to our students – which company are you working with. Mrs. Bossard stated I know the teacher works with the students and they work together like they are within the corporation in the classroom.

Mr. Tatum stated student/staff attendance: 95.2%/92.8%

#### Monthly Highlights

- On March 5<sup>th</sup> Union High School was toured by myself, as well as, town officials as part of a series called “Our Town” on TV34. This event was facilitated by Sal Terreza and Akua Boakye.
- On Wednesday, March 13<sup>th</sup> the district hosted the Unsung Hero program for all of Union County. This program honors student hero/heroines who are often overlooked, under traditional students recognized for their impact on schools, families or communities. We did have a representative Brittany Kennedy. Thank you to Mr. Arminio for being the MC for the evening.

Student Recognition

- Union High School's Valedictorian is Muscan Singh and the Salutatorian is Lauren Baran.
- Faithful Oluwakuyide of Union High School has won the New Jersey State American Legion Oratorical Contest. She will now go on to compete in Nationals.

Upcoming Events

- The next SEPAG Meeting will be Thursday, March 28th 6:30pm at Kawameeh Middle School.
- April 2<sup>nd</sup> is Autism Awareness Day. The district will recognize this day by wearing blue on this day. Several of the buildings will display a blue light in honor of "Light it Up Blue".
- Next District Planning Committee Meeting will be on Tuesday, April 30<sup>th</sup> at 6:30pm.

## EDUCATION/STUDENT DISCIPLINE COMMITTEE RESOLUTIONS:

Upon recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the following resolutions were moved by Mrs. Regis-Darby, seconded by Mrs. Richardson, that the following resolutions be adopted:

## E-1. AFFIRM SUPERINTENDENT'S RESOLUTION OF HIB

Affirm the Superintendent's resolution of Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying (HIB) conclusions for the month of February 2019, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

## E-2. APPROVAL OF 2019-2020 CALENDARS

Approval of the 2019-2020 calendars, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

E-3. *Agenda item tabled at meeting (child of employee to attend Union Township Schools).*

## E-4. APPROVE USE OF BATTLE HILL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL AND HAMILTON BUILDING

Approve Battle Hill Elementary School (July 2019) and the Hamilton building (June 27, 2019-August 31, 2019) for Extended School Year Program (ESY), ESY services, CST testing and/or home instruction.

## E-5. APPROVE RESPONSE TO INTERVENTION HANDBOOK

Approve Township of Union School District Response to Intervention (RTI) handbook, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

## E-6. APPROVE CURRICULUM TEMPLATE

Approve Township of Union School District new curriculum template, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

**E-7. APPROVE SOCIAL STUDIES COURSES**

Approve new courses to Social Studies Department at Union High School: (a) SS 420 S-History through Media, Pop Culture and Film; (b) SS 430: African American History; (c) SS 480: Tomorrow's Teachers.

**E-8. APPROVE NJDOE MANDATED TUITION CONTRACT**

Approve the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) mandated Tuition Contract for the 2018-2019 school year, in accordance with the non-public information appended to the minutes.

**DISCUSSION:**

Mrs. Minneci stated E-3 – is there any discussion? Mrs. Regis-Darby asked if we could table E-3? Mr. Taylor stated yes – any Board member can make a motion to table an item and set a date when it will be tabled to. Alternatively, the Superintendent can unilaterally pull an item from the agenda. I will leave it up to the Board.

**AYE:** Mrs. Higgins, Mr. McDowell, Dr. Morgan, Mr. Nufrio, Mrs. Regis-Darby, Mrs. Richardson, Mrs. Ruiz, Mrs. Williams, Mrs. Minneci

**NAY:** None

**ABSTAIN:** Mrs. Regis-Darby (E-5), Mrs. Ruiz (E-5)

**MOTION CARRIED**

Mr. Taylor stated E-3 there is a motion to table that.

Moved by Mrs. Regis-Darby, seconded by Mr. McDowell, that resolution E-3 be tabled.

**DISCUSSION:**

Mr. Nufrio stated since E-3 is a normal resolution – does that conflict with a current policy that permits an employee to request the attendance of their child? Mr. Tatum stated I believe the policy says it is discretionary to my authority. If there is a situation is admitted, I also give the authority if the (inaudible). So at the end of the day, it does say the recommendation. We have not amended the policy, we are just taking it off tonight. The policy has not changed so employees' children can still attend school here. Obviously there will be more discussion on this on what was said tonight.

Mr. Nufrio stated since the resolution is on the agenda and it went through your office and met with your approval. Mr. Tatum stated since this issue continues to surface, it means that further discussions is needed and there is still time within the school year to amend the policy.

Mr. Nufrio stated this particular resolution – I don't know what grade level this child is going to be approved at. Mr. Tatum stated I don't know off the top of my head and there was a discussion about a particular grade level but we talked in previous years about the policy that there were amendments that were going to be done to this particular policy and what I hear we need to revisit this again and maybe back for next meeting.

Mr. Nufrio stated policy states it needs to come back at the next regular meeting.

AYE: Mrs. Higgins, Mr. McDowell, Dr. Morgan, Mrs. Regis-Darby,  
Mrs. Richardson, Mrs. Ruiz, Mrs. Williams, Mrs. Minneci

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: Mr. Nufrio

MOTION CARRIED

FISCAL AND PLANNING COMMITTEE RESOLUTIONS:

Upon recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the following resolutions were moved by Mrs. Richardson, seconded by Mrs. Higgins, for adoption:

F-1. TREASURER’S REPORT

That the Treasurer’s Report dated February 28, 2019 be accepted.

F-2. SECRETARY’S REPORT

That the Secretary’s Report dated February 28, 2019 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 February 28, 2019 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/ Gregory E. Brennan  
Gregory E. Brennan, Board Secretary

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Dated

Pursuant to N.J.A.C.6A:23-2.2(h), we certify that as of February 28, 2019 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 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 DISTRICT WIDE TRAVEL AND RELATED EXPENSES**

Approve district wide 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. *Agenda item adopted at March 12, 2019 worksession (student field trips).*

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

Pre-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 2018-2019 STATE CONTRACT VENDORS**

Approve the amended list of the 2018-2019 State Contract 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-9. 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/Department	Vendor/Description	Amount
Burnet Middle School	Music	Villani Bus Co – Music in the Park	\$3,211.00
Burnet Middle School	Music	Festivals of Music – tickets	\$3,636.00
Burnet Middle School	Music	Festivals of Music – admission	\$1,603.00
Kawameeh Middle School	41/Music Production	C&R Graphics – playbills for Aladdin, Jr.	\$1,375.00
Kawameeh Middle School	41/Musical Production	CMT Sound Systems – sounds/lights for Aladdin, Jr.	\$5,840.00
Union High School	2012/Senior Prom	Grand Marquis – balance/total cost of prom	\$50,000.00 (not to exceed)
Union High School	2001/Music	Audio Inc. – rental of sound equipment for Chicago	\$7,500.00 (not to exceed)
Union High School	2012/Senior Prom	Anderson's – prom court supplies/prom favors	\$4,800.00 (not to exceed)
Union High School	2012/Senior Prom	Eggsotic Events – décor rental vendor senior prom	\$3,500.00
Union High School	2012/Senior Prom	Stumps Party – decorations for senior prom	\$1,700.00 (not to exceed)
Union High School	2001/Music	Home Depot – purchase of lumber etc – Chicago spring musical	\$1,614.57

**F-10. APPROVE 2018-2019 OUT-OF-DISTRICT STUDENT PLACEMENT LIST**

Approval be given to amend the 2018-2019 out-of-district student placement list, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

**F-11. APPROVE FUNDRAISERS**

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

Event Name	Date	Purpose
Lipsync Battle Fundraiser	4/26/19	UHS/Class of 2019 – to raise funds for the class of 2019 project graduation and senior trip
“Chicago” Concession Sales	3/29-4/7/19	UHS/Advanced Musical Theatre/UHSPAC – to raise funds for the production costs of “Chicago”
50/50 Raffle Fundraiser	3/29-4/7/19	UHS/Advanced Musical Theatre/UHSPAC – to raise funds for the production costs of “Chicago”
Latin Dance Class/Snack Fundraiser (after school)	5/3/19	UHS/National Spanish Honor Society-to raise funds for the farewell dinner, cords and future events
End of Year – Farewell Dinner	5/20/19	UHS/National Spanish Honor Society – to honor graduating students and say farewell to continued students
Lawn Sign Sale	4/26/19	UHS/Class of 2019 – to raise funds for the class of 2019 project graduation and senior trip
Kiss a Senior Goodbye candy gram	5/20-29/19	UHS/Class of 2019 – to raise funds for the class of 2019 project graduation and senior trip
UHS Apparel Sale	March/April 2019	UHS/Class of 2019 – to raise funds for the class of 2019
Senior Shirts Sale	March/April 2019	UHS/Class of 2019 – to raise funds for the class of 2019
Apparel Sale	March/April 2019	UHS/Track – to raise funds for the track team

**F-12. ACCEPT DONATIONS**

Accept the following donations, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes:

From	For Use By	\$/Item
LifeTouch	Union High School	\$1,425.26
Labor of Love Health Care LLC	Battle Hill Elementary School	Two Chrome Books

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*RESOLUTIONS F-13 THROUGH F-17 CONCERN THE PROPOSED BUDGET FOR THE 2019-2020 SCHOOL YEAR*

**F-13. APPROVE GENERAL FUND TAX LEVY**

Approve the General Fund tax levy of \$91,571,651 in the 2019-2020 school year, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

**F-14. APPROVE WITHDRAWAL FROM CAPITAL RESERVE TO CAPITAL OUTLAY (FUND 12)**

Approve withdrawal from Capital Reserve to Capital Outlay (Fund 12) in the amount of \$231,000 for the following projects, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes:

1. Bathroom renovations – districtwide	\$ 44,000.00
2. New flooring – districtwide	\$ 66,000.00
3. Masonry – districtwide	\$ 44,000.00
4. Asbestos – districtwide	\$ 22,000.00
5. Ceiling, lighting – districtwide	<u>\$ 55,000.00</u>
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<u><u>\$231,000.00</u></u>

**F-15. APPROVE TRAVEL EXPENDITURE MAXIMUM**

Approve Travel Expenditure Maximum (\$85,000), in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

**F-16. APPROVE ESTABLISHING A MAXIMUM DOLLAR LIMIT – PROFESSIONAL SERVICES**

Approve establishing a maximum dollar limit for professional services (\$2,484,000), in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

**F-17. APPROVE USE OF EXCESS SURPLUS FUNDS**

Approve the Board of Education to include in the General Fund Budget \$808,567 of the Board of Education’s excess surplus funds (@ 6/30/18 per audit) to help reduce the local tax levy.

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**F-18. APPROVE NON-PUBLIC SCHOOL ADDITIONAL FUNDING SECURITY AID PROGRAM AGREEMENTS – UCESC**

Approve the Union County Educational Services Commission 2018-2019 Nonpublic School Additional Funding Security Aid Program Agreements for the participating school located within the District: (a) Holy Spirit School and (b) St. Michael School, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

F-19. *For informational purposes only – vote not required.* List of legal services for the 2018-2019 school year, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

**DISCUSSION:**

Mr. Nufrio stated at the worksession I did ask for clarification of the amount that is currently left in the surplus. I think there needs to be a clarification as to what surplus we are talking about – unexpended funds or the surplus that covers what the State expects the District to have 2%. Can you explain the difference? Mr. Brennan stated the surplus is the money that is unexpended in the 2017-2018 budget as of June 30<sup>th</sup> – that is the end of business. We had \$800,000 that was unexpended for that particular year. That money by statute/regulations flows that \$800,000 back to the taxpayers in the 2019-20 budget as revenue. That surplus at June 30, 2018 was \$600,000 less than it was the previous June 30<sup>th</sup>. The other surplus we have to keep as

the 2% reserve. Mr. Nufrio asked what is that amount? Mr. Brennan stated \$2.5 million. Mr. Nufrio asked that money is still intact? Mr. Brennan stated yes. Mr. Nufrio asked what about the capital funds? Mr. Brennan stated the capital reserve is down to \$400,000. Mr. Nufrio stated \$2.5 million in the general fund. Mr. Brennan stated \$400,000 in capital reserve. Mr. Nufrio stated is quite less than what we are going to need to accomplish. Leaving us with zero is an expected process meaning you cannot leave those unexpended funds in a separate account, it must be returned back. Mr. Brennan stated no, it comes in as revenue for the budget in 19-20. It always skips a year. That is why June 30<sup>th</sup> – the surplus flows to the 19-20.

Mr. Nufrio stated our 2% is still intact. My last question is over the past years we talked about approaching our business of maintaining a certain amount of equilibrium by doing zero-based budget. Has that been accomplished? If so, what improvements have there been derived from a zero-based budget? Mr. Brennan stated when you look at a zero-based budget you are rebuilding the budget from scratch. Mr. Tatum and I met with different departments to ensure that the money that they are asking for is backed up with facts and it is not a want it is a need. We had them come in with a three-tier approach - high in the sky, a want and absolute needs. In our situation which I have been saying and Mr. Tatum and everyone has been put on notice that we are in a tight budget situation. We raise \$1.8 million on \$90 million of our total budget of \$130 million. We do not get an increase on the additional \$40 million that we need to run the school district. I have said this many times – when we do the math it really isn't a 2% increase on the whole budget it is about 1.3% increase in the budget. Salaries are going up – they are negotiated – 2.7%. Health benefits – last year they went up 12.8%. This year we got a good deal because our claims experience came down and we went with the new dental plan. We got an additional percent off – we were at 6.5% but that is still \$1.4 million. Right away you start with the benefits. Our tax levy increase is absorbed. We have to ensure that each department that comes to us for line item amounts in their budget that it is a real need.

Mr. Nufrio stated I received several phone calls this past week pertaining to the RIF we experienced last year and the questions were asked as to the understanding of how the RIF was approached and handled and at many of the meetings both Mr. Tatum and Central Office explained that through attrition, breakage and creative accounting (that is not to suggest anything) that we were able to return the bulk of the teachers and staff that were rified leaving 25 that were still not returned. Mr. Tatum stated it was less than that. They got jobs in other districts. Right now we have two people who are on long-term leave for an entire year and I'm pretty sure the people did not (inaudible) and I will also add that there are people where we actually contacted but had received jobs elsewhere.

Mr. Nufrio stated one question that was asked we began with a very large number over 100-140 and not being able to answer – how much of that process also involved getting into the budget and accessing some funds and it was once stated that we found some money – I recall hearing that – what was done was relative to what could be done but the question still remained was any of the budget tapped to accommodate the RIF positions? Mr. Tatum stated I'm not sure what you mean by tapped. Mr. Nufrio stated everything revolved around the surplus money that we have. Mr. Tatum stated the answer to the questions that you raised to Mr. Brennan – the answer is no. Mr. Nufrio stated an absolute no in terms of moneys that were not tapped and perhaps could have gone to other services. Mr. Tatum stated none of that money was tapped.

What I will say in last year's budget and you will see that things will be done differently for this year. We took look at repurposing certifications, filling positions where people resigned and/or retired. We did not tap into any of those reserve funds. It was all based on money that was in the budget.

Mr. Nufrio stated the persons that we are firing – referring to what Mr. Brennan alluded to earlier – was that last year's surplus was in excess of \$1.4 million and being that we are down to \$800,000 that was the reason for asking – was any of that unexpended funds tapped in order to accommodate the process. Mr. Tatum stated no. Mr. Brennan stated you can't touch that money once you close out the year; that is the audited number – you cannot touch that money it flows the year after to the 19-20 budget as revenue – the \$800,000.

Mr. Nufrio stated because the difference between the \$1.4 and \$800,000 is roughly \$600,000 so that was the question and I just needed to respond to that. Mr. Tatum stated that was generated from that; it is not from last year it was in the previous year and that is where the difference comes in. The surplus generated from this current school year won't be in 19-20 it will be in 20-21.

Mr. Nufrio asked what was the surplus number two year's prior? Mr. Brennan stated 17-18 school year – surplus? Mr. Nufrio stated the \$1.4 was for what year? Mr. Brennan stated 18-19. Our big job if you remember and that is why we are in the position last year for this current year budget was \$6.1 million – 17-18; 16-17 - \$4.5 million; 15-16 - \$6.7 million.

Mrs. Regis-Darby stated F-13 – there looks like there is a big difference from last year. Can you explain why there is a big difference? Mr. Brennan stated special revenues – that is for Title I – special revenue – Fund 20 – it comes from the State and federal government – part is probably the preschool, Title I, Title III – those are funds that Mrs. Guilfoyle manages and that is not part of the tax levy.

Mrs. Regis-Darby stated F-16 – the back-up says “public relations” in the title but in the budget it doesn't say “public relations” – so what am I voting on? Mr. Brennan stated it is a professional service, the public service, but I don't see it on the back-up either. We will make a friendly amendment to take off the “public relations” part of the resolution. We will just remove the words. Mr. Tatum stated the resolution appears annually and it pretty much reads the same way and the same question comes up every year. Our public relations is done in-house.

Mr. Nufrio stated was it ever explained on actually what it was? Mr. Tatum stated I don't recall. Mr. Taylor stated my comment is not about the amount on the resolution but it seems like it is an ominous resolution and I will remind the administration and the Board members that there is an accountability regulation in Title 6A that does limit and control a Board's expenditure of funds on public relations. It limits the ability to hire staff members who have over 50% of the responsibilities devoted to PR as well as spending money here from glossy publications, etc., color ink. Even if this is approved as presented, there is an accountability regulation governing individual contracts, personnel decisions and expenditures of those funds.

Mr. Nufrio asked do you know what that number is? Mr. Taylor stated I don't know if it has a said amount. It describes what is prohibited and I summarized that and again you can't hire a staff person to be your public relations person any more. It can't be over a certain percentage of their job responsibilities. You are supposed to do as much as you can in-house versus hiring a company. Your superintendent is your PR person versus hiring a spokesperson from the outside. That is generally what it is. Also to cut down on expenditures. School districts used to spend a lot of money on glossy ads and flyers and brochures to promote the district. A lot of that has to be done in-house if possible.

Mr. Nufrio stated I assume the intent originally was to cover for putting posting outs – newspaper expenses, media, advertisements. Mr. Taylor stated you are legally required to advertise your meetings so I wouldn't say advertisement. There are certain legal requirements for advertising. This is more so public relations. Mr. Nufrio stated not excluding advertisements. Mr. Taylor stated again, advertising is broad. You have certain legal requirements, open public meetings act advertising versus promotion is different than advertising.

Mrs. Regis-Darby stated for engineer we had a budget of \$160,000 and I would like to see a reduction but I saw there is a big reduction and we are down to about \$55-\$60,000 – why such a big reduction. Mr. Brennan stated when you think about our capital reserve being so low we are not going to be using an architect because we won't be having too many projects that require that.

Mrs. Regis-Darby stated the special services – it is a massive increase – can we talk about that increase. Mr. Brennan stated I wish Mrs. Conti could elaborate on that because it is a budget that came out of the special services department but this is fees for evaluations, increases in number of kids coming into the district and as well as going out-of-district. The related services have increased and that is State wide. Mrs. Regis-Darby stated I asked for the special services accountant to present to the Board. I think the numbers don't make sense to me and it has to make sense so I know what I'm doing for the District. I think someone needs to speak on these numbers. Mrs. Conti can't speak on it right now but somebody has to be held accountable for these numbers. Again, I would like to ask the Board for an opportunity to have the accountant from special services to present to the Board so at least we have an idea of what is happening with their budget.

Mr. Taylor stated the request is basically, if supported by your colleagues, to the Superintendent for a report to the Board on special services. Who he decides to delegate that responsibility is his business with respect to his role as the CSA. If he delegates it to that person which he may do or if he wants to present it to you himself – just from a governing standpoint – the request is made to the Superintendent for the information and he will have to deliver it to you in a manner that, irrespective of who gives it, answers your questions.

Mr. Tatum stated about the accounting department to make the presentation – that certainly can be done but since Mrs. Conti is here is there any expenditures that you would like to highlight tonight you can come forward at this time and scheduling an overview of what some of the increases are.

Mr. Brennan stated one of them is transportation. Mrs. Conti stated related services and I don't have the information in front of me of the areas that I am talking about are all within that line. For example, the related services can be nursing services on transportation – some children need nurses to and from school on the buses and that has had a major increase over the last couple of years. Also we have had a huge increase for the need for behaviorist in District and if you look at our District, we have one on staff which is not enough for a District our size. Behaviorists really do make a difference in children being able to stay in a least restrictive environment. Out-of-district and I know that is not part of related services but if you take a look at out-of-district costs that goes up and we have had a big increase over the last couple of years. There was a time where we cut down and that was several years ago when we returned a lot of students back to District but that number is increasing again. For the purposes of tonight, the explanations I'm giving are very simplistic because it is a big area. There is a lot of movement, changes, needs of the students that needs to be addressed. We are here for the students. The students deserve to have the services that they need and to make adequate progress and to also have a meaningful education so when they leave here and go to post-secondary choices that they are prepared. We must keep the students safe and if that means having a nurse on the bus to and from. There are certain things that are non-negotiable. The out-of-district placements – there has been an increase. We also are limited in space in the District.

Mrs. Regis-Darby stated this is not referenced to out-of-district placement or the nursing services that some students need. This is just in reference to something you just said. What are the goals of special education and you said least restrictive environment. How many students have been transitioned out of special services for 2018 that were classified as LDLC or OTC. Mrs. Conti stated OT is not classifications. Mrs. Regis-Darby asked how students have been declassified in special education in 2018? Mrs. Conti stated I would have to get back to you on that number. Mr. Brennan stated when you read this resolution it says pursuant to the Code – “the Board of Education must establish a maximum dollar limit for professional services” and that is what those are – it is a maximum limit. It is not the amount we are going to expend.

Mrs. Minneci stated restricted doesn't mean they are classified. It just means they are moved to another class or program. Mrs. Conti stated it has to deal with the services, right, where you are always starting with placements in the general education setting and then you take a look at the support and services that are needed to maintain the student in the gen ed setting and then you work back. Mrs. Minneci stated my point I was trying to make is “least restrictive” doesn't mean you are declassified. Mr. Tatum stated when you talk about different placements – we have had a number of students who come to us needing placement and we have to adhere to the IEP's. We get students that never attended class here and the only way to find out is to put them in a least restrictive environment. Mrs. Conti stated it is important to keep students from going out of District and in the least restrictive environment. Mr. Tatum stated there are a few students that were actually brought back and the projection is about 4-5 students to bring back for the 19-20 school year. When you talk about increasing transportation, with those students that come into the District, they also had transportation with the other school they attended. What might be helpful is to take a look at those numbers going forward. How many students are we getting? I'm not seeing that we are sending that many students out of district – I think it connected to other students coming here and never setting foot in the District. Mrs. Conti stated

if a student moves in with an IEP and has an out-of-district placement, we really don't have any knowledge of the student's educational performance so we typically, there are always other circumstances, we honor that IEP until we get to know the student and make an educated decision regarding placement. Transportation depends on routes. There are independent contractors that we use but it all depends on who is traveling where and you can't always group students on a bus. There are a lot of different circumstances.

Mrs. Ruiz stated well I certainly appreciate your off the cuff effort to try to answer the questions, I personally would have appreciated a better explanation. I still don't have an answer to the questions and I don't think anybody on the Board has an answer to the question as to why that special services number is at \$2.1 million and I hear you when you say it is the maximum but if you tell someone they can spend \$2.1 million guess what is going to happen – they are going to spend \$2.1 million and the increase is so significant from last year is that my concern is what prompted such a significant jump. Where is the evidence to show that we may need that much more money? This number comes from the business office while I understand that you have a separate accountant that deals with special services. I think out of fairness to the public and to this Board that has to vote on this, there should have been communication between your office and that accountant so when you are asked these questions, you have the information to answer the questions. It is obvious that you don't have the information to answer the questions for us. We are asked to vote on an item in a vacuum. We might as well vote blindfolded. I still don't have an answer to the question. I get that the services have increased. That is a general catchall phrase but to be fair we don't know in which area, what percentage, by how many dollars and we got this proposed budget yesterday with no back up information. I'm looking at a chart full of numbers. There is nothing in this. I think the rest of the Board is looking at the same thing I am – bunch of numbers – comparison from 2017-2018 versus the revised 2018-2019 and the proposed 2019-2020 but I don't know how you got to that number. It is difficult for me to make an educated decision and a vote when I have no clue why you are projecting that number. What prompted the projections and where did you see the need? What did special services show you that told you that we have to jump from \$1.4 million to \$2.2 million. Mrs. Conti stated it is all there in the numbers. Mrs. Ruiz stated there is nothing in here.

Mrs. Conti stated when we base the budget, you take a look at what you spend the year before and you try to project based on what you spent the previous year. Mr. Tatum will tell you can't ever tell students who are going to move in, what a child may need in 3-6 months so you based it on what it is. I hear what you are saying and I can't answer for you. I'm confident in our numbers and what we have. Out-of-district placement goes up 5-10% every year which is a huge increase every year. When I wanted to bring those students back years ago, it wasn't just a monetary decision, it was what the students needed and that is first and foremost to me. Even when we bring these students back that increase is going and going and then if you have students moving in it is really compounding the money. Believe me I have no problem explaining what it is. I understand here we are tonight and I'm just highlighting for you because that is really all I can do given the amount of time here is where you see the biggest increases which would be out-of-district. We get letters all the time if one of the out-of-district placements aren't seeing a lot of enrollment, they will say they are allowed to go above 10% - that is a huge increase and that is why it is so important to talk about least restrictive environments and to be able to have time in our department to build programs. We are the largest department in the District which is

responsible for a big piece of the budget. We talked about behaviors and we talk about monitoring and supervision, we need that to be able to monitor and build programs. We need space.

Mrs. Minneci stated you are talking about the price and how it goes up – can you give an example of what it costs to send one student out? Mrs. Conti stated the average is about \$100,000.

Mrs. Ruiz stated I understand that and I certainly appreciate what you are saying. The problem is you mentioned you had no issue explaining your budget to Mr. Brennan – that would have been ideal because we have to vote. Had that communication occurred then we would have answered to our questions but we don't have any. To Mrs. Regis-Darby's point, it would have been great if we could have had a presentation maybe a week ago so that is my only concern. It is not directed at you Mrs. Conti. I appreciate your efforts. I understand the position that you are in because you work with no notice or preparation so I do appreciate your efforts. But as a Board member, the parents and the residents of this Town elected us to do right by them and I don't feel that I'm doing right by them – I don't know what I'm looking at. How can I possibly vote on something when I'm clueless as to why certain numbers are and that is just my position.

Mr. Nufrio stated I have been on this Board for over 8 years and I recall recently sitting with Mr. Tatum and Mr. Brennan – we had an absolute emergency in our hands because the budget that had been submitted by the special ed services was not fully funded and throughout the course of the year, Mr. Tatum said we need to get money to these guys –we are running short. The underfunding in the past – you asked for \$10 you got \$8 so left you with \$2 in the hole and you can possibly continue to provide services if you don't have the money for it. We vowed as a Board on the recommendation by the Board and Mr. Tatum that shouldn't happen again because the law is very explicit about special services. They are mandates. They are not recommendations, suggestions and this Board were to microscope every budget that is submitted to the business office, we would never be able to accomplish it. I always said the stamping of the District is done without our approval but with that comes faith that we are getting the correct and honest and sincere accounting for those services. I for one never questioned whether special services was providing the right about bread, water – whether the kids were not being addressed properly – we would expect that the special services is doing their services, all that it has to do – not can do – it is required to do. Anything more is a cherry on top. As mentioned before, behaviorists I'm not as familiar with that particular title I know what it is but they are part of the child study team but only one in the district? Mrs. Conti stated we only have one in the District and we contract out. Mr. Nufrio stated and that also is a mandate. You need to have to accomplish those tasks of modifying or remediating behavioral aspects of a student. You can just snap your finger and expect that it is going to happen. Having said that the original question was the least restrictive environment does not mean that they are declassified, it doesn't work that way. Do you know offhand how many children this past year actually were promoted out of the least restricted environment and put into a general ed with resource teachers? Mrs. Conti stated I don't have a number right now because children are in a state of flux as their IEP's are done. Mr. Nufrio stated understood but there is going to be a number because the child study team reports to you. Mrs. Conti stated if you see the State indicator, we want to be passed the target. It is on the NJDOE's website for everyone to see.

Mr. Taylor stated Madame President, it is my understanding based upon the guidance from the DOE that every local school district has to submit its budget on or before March 20<sup>th</sup> to the Executive County Superintendent for review. It is the preliminary budget introduction and submission to the Executive County Superintendent. There is a statutory process that follows. Once the budget is preliminarily reviewed by the Executive County Superintendent, it is sent back to the school district where you as a Board have to have a public hearing on the budget. Tonight's presentation and submission is by no means final. There is still ample opportunity for the Board, for the public to have their questions addressed and answered. Not taking a position for or against – just saying tonight is not final step in the process. There will still be a public hearing and an opportunity for the Board not to just ask questions but also make amendments, modifications, adding or subtracting from the budget prior to its final adoption. I just say that to let you know this is not the final tonight and if the questions aren't answered, you still have more time. This is not to trivialize it or minimize – it is not the final document.

Mr. Nufrio stated perhaps that is a number that would make some sense to present to the public is that we started with 200 kids in a restricted environment, excluding the new entries, how many of those 200 did we manage to promote to general ed environment, least restrictive environment? I'm not saying to give it to me now but I think that is a number. Mr. Tatum stated I guess the question is meeting the targets. Mrs. Conti stated we go by the State's performance plan and indicators and it is right on the website.

Mr. Nufrio stated in the past few years we were confronted with underfunding and we have to hold some money to make sure that we weren't out of compliance. Whatever this number might be doesn't necessarily mean that she is going to spend every penny but it may come to that and come to be more because it is such a fluid situation. It can be a lean year or a very rich year. Mrs. Conti stated some years it can be. Mr. Nufrio stated but better to have the extra dollar than not to have it.

Mrs. Ruiz stated I know where you are coming from Mr. Nufrio and perhaps you are o.k. voting for something without any back-up but I'm not.

Dr. Morgan stated Mr. Nufrio you said the Board has always trusted what was brought before you but I feel that is irresponsible as a Board member. We must know what comes before us so we know what we are voting for. I make a recommendation to you Mr. Tatum that budget conversations begin in January. It is March 19<sup>th</sup>. We have to vote on things that need to be submitted tomorrow, that is unfair to me and every other Board member and the public. The budget process I know begins in November and present in small increments in January, February so we can make an educated decision – not final but just giving us some numbers so that we could have had the special education person come before us or any other department come before us.

Mr. Tatum stated before we move forward I would like to respond to your comments and they are well taken. First and foremost, you are correct the budget process does start at that time and we did start at that time. We meet on a monthly basis. Central Office and the Business Office and special services meet on a monthly basis and the bottom line is that is what committee

meetings are all about. The Finance Committee should really be ready to discuss that information. In terms of you getting information and the not getting the full update or full picture, there are a couple of things that go with that and the most important is one of them was last week you had a meeting that normally takes place in February – it normally doesn't take place in March. It was a mishap there. At last week's worksession, that would have been the time to really dig into the actual budgeting process and where we were and where we are tonight because at the end of the day this budget has been in preparation - I personally have been working on this budget, not only with the staff but individually, on weekends to make sure that this budget is balanced when it goes to the County. There will be another overview later on tonight and I talked to Mr. Taylor about this earlier today, in executive session. We are going to discuss some of the things that we talked about last night when we had a Finance Committee meeting. Not to say what you are saying is not correct, but again we talked about responsibility of this office and I think those pieces were in place unfortunately because I do the Personnel Committee and I think we should talk about reporting out on what we talk about in individual committee meetings but unfortunately I not only sit in the Finance Committee and sometimes I'm in Personnel simultaneously. We have a monthly meeting and talking about budget. We always know where we are and what our next steps are and those monthly updates should be to you guys on a monthly basis because we put together a plan last year and in that plan it was specific that you were going to be getting overviews of where we are during the course of the year – that was a corrective action plan last year. As I meet with the staff monthly and going over the budget numbers and looking at where the increases are – special services is about \$38 million of the school budget and I know that because those numbers are being discussed in these meetings. My concern is I'm starting to feel like I have to be at every one of these things in order for you guys to understand where we are. Last night we spent a lot of time on this but again the real mishap here is that last week we should have had that meeting like we normally do and unfortunately the planning session is usually in February not in March and that was just a mishap with the scheduling of the meetings. The truth is there should be a monthly update. We would be supposed to talk every month about the secretary's report and that should be the contents of the committee meeting.

Mrs. Regis-Darby stated the other committees should take a lead from the Education Committee because every time we meet, before every meeting the Education Committee presents what happened in committee. I think it was Gwen Thornton who told us that is the way it is supposed to be. We have to have someone take the minutes there and they are to report back to the entire Board what was discussed. Moving forward everyone should look at the Education Committee to see what we are doing and go from there.

Mr. Nufrio stated I'm not going to take personal offense about being irresponsible because that is not me. I took it the way you said it. The fact is I question each and every time the aspects of the budget but when it comes to special education, I will stand on my record – for the number of years that I have been on this Board and the 40 years as an educator and administrator – that special education you don't mess with. We already experienced a few times under funding which put our kids in jeopardy, the entire district in jeopardy, of being out of compliance so yes I do trust that department is doing the right thing. Who on this Board is really that experienced and can say you really don't need an extra behaviorist – none of us can. Let's put that behind us. I questioned a lot of things on this budget and I don't act irresponsible.

Dr. Morgan stated I did not call you irresponsible. I said it is irresponsible for anyone to sit up here and vote for a budget that they did not see. I'm not calling out special education. I'm talking about the entire school budget. I understand special education as you do. However, we cannot continue to operate in this manner. I'm sorry you took offense to it that is not what I meant.

Mrs. Minneci stated F-7A – can you talk about that. Mr. Benaquista stated each Board member has a back-up for the field trips. It was in reference to the presentation last week and Mr. Ferroni, one of our teachers, wanted to share this with the Board member. I don't need to read it but it absorbed what comments were said and they reflected on it and made changes. First of all with the title – health, mind and body teen retreat as well as “at risk” – that is out of it. It is not on teacher recommendation, it is on the application process. Mrs. Minneci stated that is on the presentation we had last week. It is a great opportunity for teens.

Mr. McDowell stated the budget, the deadline is tomorrow – what are the consequences if this budget is not approved? Mr. Brennan stated we would have to ask for an extension. This is just to submit the proposed budget. If more information is requested by Board members and with permission of the Superintendent, we will provide that and the special education department will oblige. Mr. McDowell stated F-16 – special ed related that is the entire budget. Mr. Brennan stated no, the entire special ed budget is \$38 million.

Mrs. Ruiz stated I see that the scoreboard is gone. Why was it removed? I'm glad it was. Mr. Brennan stated it should never had made it to the agenda and I said that last week. It is a \$134,000 item and it did make the agenda and it was during a worksession, it wasn't going to be voted on. It was immediately removed. We are not going to spend that money when our capital reserve is \$400,000. My bad for not catching it as a Business Administrator but it ended up there.

Mrs. Nufrio stated I know we had Mrs. Conti in the hot seat but I'm going to ask one question to Mr. Brennan – when that number was presented to you by special services, did you find it any way unusual, abnormal, out of order, unexplained or otherwise? Mr. Taylor stated I would rather that question not be posed and/or answered in public. Mr. Nufrio stated he put it on the agenda. Mr. Taylor stated from a budgetary standpoint, the fact that it was there, the question is already answered, because it is on the agenda. I don't want to get into issues about his questioning the performance, integrity etc. of employees that may be presenting the information in public. Mr. Nufrio stated I'm not questioning that. He reviewed it obviously. Mr. Taylor stated I'm saying not to answer that question. Thank you.

AYE: Mrs. Higgins, Mr. McDowell, Dr. Morgan, Mr. Nufrio, Mrs. Regis-Darby,  
Mrs. Richardson, Mrs. Ruiz, Mrs. Williams, Mrs. Minneci

NAY: Dr. Morgan (F-7A, F-13, F-14, F-15, F-16, F-17), Mrs. Regis-Darby (F-7A, F-13, F-14,  
F-15, F-16, F-17), Mrs. Williams (F-7A)

ABSTAIN: Mr. McDowell (F-13, F-14, F-15, F-16, F-17), Mrs. Regis-Darby (F-2), Mrs. Ruiz  
(F-7A, F-13, F-14, F-15, F-16, F-17), Mrs. Minneci (F-8 #8992 only)

**MOTION CARRIED**

**OPERATIONS COMMITTEE RESOLUTIONS**

Upon recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the following resolutions were moved by Mrs. Richardson, seconded by Mrs. Williams, for adoption:

**O-1. APPROVE SECURITY DRILL/BUS EVACUATION REPORTS**

Pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:41-1 and P.L. 2009, Chapter 178, approve the following security drill and bus evacuation reports for the 2018-2019 school year, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

O-2. *Agenda item tabled to future meeting (organizational chart).*

**O-3. APPROVE DISPOSAL OF EQUIPMENT**

Approve the disposal of a paper folder (Serial #15998) which is deemed no longer serviceable by the District, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

**O-4. APPROVE JOINT RESOLUTION FOR TRANSPORTATION – SUSSEX COUNTY REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION COOPERATIVE**

Approve the Joint Resolution for Participation of Transportation Services with the Sussex County Regional Transportation Cooperative for the 2018-2019 school year, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

**O-5. APPROVE AUTHORIZATION TO EI ASSOCIATES**

Approve authorization to EI Associates to submit all necessary plans and paperwork to the Department of Education concerning the exterior wall repair design at the Administration Building to serve as an application to the Office of School Facilities and an amendment to the District's Long Range Facility Plan. This is an "Other Capital" project and the District is not seeking State funding but will fund the project through the District's Capital Reserve (Fund 12) Account.

**O-6. APPROVE TRANSPORTATION SERVICES AGREEMENT – ESSEX REGIONAL EDUCATIONAL SERVICES COMMISSION**

Approve the Transportation Services Agreement with the Essex Regional Services Commission for the 2018-2019 school year, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

**O-7. APPROVE REQUEST FROM SCHOOL AND COLLEGE OFFICIALS ASSOCIATION**

Approve request from School and College Officials Association to use the Union High School cafeteria on October 23, 2019 from 7:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. to present NJSIAA state soccer tournament rules to membership, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

**O-8. APPROVE REQUEST FROM KAWAMEEH MIDDLE SCHOOL**

Approve request from Principal Malanda of Kawameeh Middle School requesting a plaque be placed at the entrance to the gym memorializing the services of Jack DeBarbieri and

for the gymnasium be known as the Jack DeBarbieri Gymnasium, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

**O-9. APPROVE REQUEST FROM TOWNSHIP OF UNION EDUCATION FOUNDATION**

Approve request from Township of Union Education Foundation requesting the use of the gym and cafeteria at Jefferson School on Friday, September 27, 2019 from 3:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. for the third annual Township-wide pizza tasting contest and requesting a waiver of fees, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

**O-10. APPROVE REQUEST FROM UNION TOWNSHIP CHAMBER OF COMMERCE**

Approve request from Union Township Chamber of Commerce requesting the use of the Union High School facility site for the Chamber’s 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Mayor’s Day 5K Run on September 22, 2019, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

**DISCUSSION:**

None

**AYE:** Mrs. Higgins, Mr. McDowell, Dr. Morgan, Mrs. Regis-Darby,  
Mrs. Richardson, Mrs. Ruiz, Mrs. Williams, Mrs. Minneci

**NAY:** None

**ABSTAIN:** Mr. Nufrio

**MOTION CARRIED**

**PERSONNEL COMMITTEE RESOLUTIONS**

Upon recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the following resolutions were moved by Mrs. Williams, seconded by Mrs. Regis-Darby, for adoption:

**P-1. PERSONNEL ACTIONS**

Personnel Actions be approved in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

**P-2. APPROVE SUBSTITUTE LISTS**

Approve Substitute Lists for the 2018-2019 school year in accordance with the information in the hands of each Board.

**P-3. ACCEPT LETTERS OF RESIGNATION/RETIREMENT**

Accept letters of resignation/retirement from the following staff:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Position</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Eff. Date</u>	<u>Reason</u>	<u>Notes/ Corrections</u>
Ralston, Ryan	Custodian	HC	3/15/19	Resignation	
D’Agostino, Mary	Special Education Teacher	Liv	5/1/2019	Retirement	
Dimakos, Linda	Elementary Teacher	Wash	7/1/19	Retirement	

Erman, Sheryl	Elementary Teacher	Liv	7/1/19	Retirement	
Sibilia, Carolina	Teacher of English	BMS	7/1/19	Retirement	
Vallier, Nanette	School Psychologist	KMS	7/1/19	Retirement	
Wiggins, Patricia	Elementary Teacher	Wash	7/1/19	Retirement	

P-4. APPROVE LEAVES

Approve leaves for the following staff:

Name	Position	Location	Leave Dates	Leave Type Regarding updated info only.	Notes/ Corrections
Braxton, Chandra	Librarian/Media Specialist	DW	<b>Update to Return: 3/1/19</b>	Returned early from Paid Medical Leave	Returned Early
Garay, Marlene	Special Education Teacher	BMS	Extension Return 4/1/19	Extension of Paid Medical Leave and Unpaid FMLA	Org. leave began 2/5/19. FMLA entitlement not to exceed 12 unpaid weeks.
Glenn, Melissa	First Grade Teacher	HC	Extension Return 9/1/19	Extension of Unpaid Child Rearing Leave- Non FMLA	FMLA entitlement time has been exhausted.
Holmes Kelly, Eileen	Kindergarten Teacher	CF	Update to Return: 9/1/19	Paid Medical Leave	Org. leave began 9/1/18.
Jurgens, Lipari Danielle	Elementary Teacher	Jeff	Update to dates: 4/1/19-6/30/19	Paid Maternity and Unpaid FMLA/NJFLA (Concurrently)	Not to exceed FMLA/NJFLA 12 week entitlement.
Melchor, Julie	Vocal Music Teacher	Jeff	Extension Return 4/1/19	Extension of Paid Medical leave and Unpaid FMLA	FMLA entitlement not to exceed 12 unpaid weeks.
Moriello, Alexia	Special Education Teacher	HC	3/1/19-6/26/19	Intermittent FMLA Leave	FMLA entitlement not to exceed 12 weeks.

Piggot, Ann-Maria	Part Time Aide	Transportation	3/25/19-4/5/19	NJFLA Leave	NJFLA entitlement not to exceed 12 weeks.
Phillips, Nonie	Special Education Teacher	BMS	2/28/19-6/30/19	Intermittent FMLA/NJFLA (Concurrently)	FMLA/NJFLA entitlement not to exceed 12 weeks.
Puorro, Matthew	Physical Education Teacher	HC	Intermittent 5/9/19-5/9/20	Intermittent Child Rearing Leave FMLA/NJFLA (Concurrently)	FMLA/NJFLA entitlement not to exceed 12 weeks.
Sarango, Ana	Part Time Aide	Transportation	2/27/19-3/29/19 Return 4/1/19	Non FMLA Unpaid Medical Leave	Does not meet FMLA Requirements.
Vincent, Jaclyn	Teacher of Kindergarten	CF	Update to return Return: 3/8/19	Unpaid FMLA/NJFLA (Concurrently)	Not to exceed FMLA/NJFLA 12 week entitlement.
Damato, Laura	Principal	Jeff	2/28/19-3/20/19	Unpaid FMLA	Not to exceed FMLA 12 week entitlement.
Paige, Rosa	Café Aide	Franklin	4/2018-6/30/19	Unpaid Medical leave (NON FMLA)	Does not meet FMLA Requirements
Cerciello, Luigi	Custodian	Livingston	3/11/19-3/29/19 (tentative)	Unpaid FMLA/NJFLA (Concurrently)	FMLA/NJFLA entitlement not to exceed 12 weeks.

**P-5. APPROVE TEACHER – MASTERS PROGRAM IN EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP**

Approve Alison Brehm to proceed with her research to qualify for the completion of the College of St. Elizabeth's Master's Program in Educational Leadership, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

**P-6. APPROVE TEACHER – MASTERS PROGRAM IN EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP**

Approve Michael DiPaolo to proceed with his research to qualify for the completion of the College of St. Elizabeth's Master's Program in Educational Leadership, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

**P-7. APPROVE DISTRICT COMMUNICATION LIAISON - ARDITO**

Approve Nicholas Ardito as the communication liaison to local law enforcement agencies for the 2018-2019 school year, at no cost to the District.

**P-8. APPROVE STUDENT TEACHERS AND INTERNSHIPS**

Approve student teachers and internships for the 2018-2019 school year, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

**DISCUSSION:**

None

**AYE:** Mrs. Higgins, Mr. McDowell, Dr. Morgan, Mr. Nufrio, Mrs. Regis-Darby,  
Mrs. Richardson, Mrs. Ruiz, Mrs. Williams, Mrs. Minneci

**NAY:** None

**ABSTAIN:** None

**MOTION CARRIED**

**RESIDENCY COMMITTEE RESOLUTIONS**

Upon recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the following resolutions were moved by Mrs. Williams, seconded by Mrs. Ruiz, for adoption:

**R-1. APPROVE LIST OF STUDENTS REMOVED FROM ROLLS**

Approval be given to amend the list of students removed from the rolls [four (4) students exited from February 1 through February 28, 2019 (2 from elementary and 2 from high school) or a total of twenty-seven (27) students for the 2018-2019 school year] who are not domiciled in this school district and two (2) students who will be allowed to complete the 2018-2019 school year, in accordance with the non-public information appended to the minutes.

**R-2. APPROVE TO REMOVE STUDENT**

Approval to remove student #226738 from the attendance rolls as the student has been determined to be ineligible to attend the Township of Union Public Schools as a resident student.

**R-3. APPROVE TO REMOVE STUDENT**

Approval to remove student #270588 from the attendance rolls as the student has been determined to be ineligible to attend the Township of Union Public Schools as a resident student.

**R-4. APPROVE TO REMOVE STUDENT**

Approval to remove student #206538 from the attendance rolls as the student has been determined to be ineligible to attend the Township of Union Public Schools as a resident student.

**R-5. APPROVE TO REMOVE STUDENT**

Approval to remove student #301030 from the attendance rolls as the student has been determined to be ineligible to attend the Township of Union Public Schools as a resident student.

AYE: Mrs. Higgins, Mr. McDowell, Dr. Morgan, Mr. Nufrio, Mrs. Regis-Darby,  
Mrs. Richardson, Mrs. Ruiz, Mrs. Williams, Mrs. Minneci

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED

#### APPROVAL OF BILLS

Upon recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools and moved by Mrs. Regis-Darby, seconded by Dr. Morgan, that the Board concur with the bills listed in the permanent bound register appended to the minutes and be ordered for payment.

#### DISCUSSION:

None

AYE: Mrs. Higgins, Mr. McDowell, Dr. Morgan, Mr. Nufrio, Mrs. Regis-Darby,  
Mrs. Richardson, Mrs. Ruiz, Mrs. Williams, Mrs. Minneci

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: Mrs. Minneci (Vendor #49500)

MOTION CARRIED

#### UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

Mr. Nufrio stated just a question in the planning session I did ask if you had any contact with Officer Smith. Mrs. Hall stated she came back yesterday – we are all set. It will be in May – 5 days of her time and grades will be determined by Mrs. Bossard but most likely freshman and sophomores. Mr. Tatum stated I want to thank Mrs. Hall for sending me the email yesterday.

#### NEW BUSINESS:

Mrs. Minneci stated April is story time and the ABA committee is going to have a reading on March 23<sup>rd</sup> at 1043 Stuyvesant Avenue.

Mr. McDowell stated we would like to recognize some of our outstanding students in our school district. A freshman Wrestler – Sarah Ilori – placed 5<sup>th</sup> in State competition – one of the first female wrestlers.

We also have athletes of the month – Gabriella Martinez – 9<sup>th</sup> grade – bowler and Kevin Oliviera – 12<sup>th</sup> grade – bowler.

The PTA had a reflections program and their theme was Heroes Around Me – the following students have advanced to the next round: Jordan Boakye, Nicholas Laube, Cassandra Freyre, Darlene Ransom, Emily Flores, Angelina Baquero, Zuriel Marino, Bridget Kelly, Kaitlyn Pello, Dabny Campos, Maria Hanna, Justine Murphy. Mr. Benaquista stated next month we are going to invite the kids here.

Faithful Oluwakuyide advanced to National American Legion Oratorical Competition.

Brittany Kennedy was selected for our Unsung Hero Award. Thank you to Mr. Arminio for having that arranged for our District to present that.

Takiyah Harris, a senior, is on the Inaugural Advisory Council for the NJSIAA. She is one of approximately 100 students selected.

Kawameeh's play Aladdin was a great success as was Burnet's production of the Wiz. The high school will be doing the high school edition of Chicago – March 29<sup>th</sup>-31<sup>st</sup> as well as April 5-7.

#### COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC:

David Arminio announced that the Boy Scouts are having their dinner tomorrow and they are honoring one of Union's citizen – Jeff Monge is being honored as a community advocate for children of our Town. He stated he didn't hear anything about our retiring teachers and they have given a lot for our children. Mr. Benaquista stated they will be recognized as all of our retirees.

Mr. Arminio stated he wanted to point out two people behind the scenes of the Unsung Hero – Mrs. Moses and Yvonne Lorenzo who coordinated the whole thing and there were 33 schools that participated. Thank you.

The Friends of the Union Public Library is going to continue the summer program for ESL students. They get summer help in continuing their learning of the English language.

June 1<sup>st</sup> is fast approaching and don't know if you have a Relay for Life Team. Let's get on the ball and create a team.

Ann Margaret Shannon stated President of the UTEA and I have to stand up for special services – I constantly feel they are scapegoats. If you want to know where the money is going, go into the schools and look at the list of all the different teachers, paras and programs that we have. Look at the busing, we have a 50-person bus for regular ed kids and all the buses for the kids that come to our school. The special ed department does a fantastic job but I think people move to Union because of the special ed department. In third and 4<sup>th</sup> grade you have two classes that share a special ed teacher so for 40 kids there is 10-12 special ed kids and they have a full-time teacher. We have to realize this is an expensive part of our education and it is necessary. Somebody asked how many people move out of special ed? I would venture to say very minimal. I don't know why people are looking for a fix sometimes. We have an excellent department but it is very costly. I hope that everyone remembers that they do a great job.

Jeff Monge stated I'm a parent of a special needs child – my son gets the services. The issue here is you have a line item which was formerly physicians and related services. This is third parties from outside the District and I think there is an issue in the District and Dr. Morgan pointed something out that I didn't know. You have an accountant function within special services and there is always a disconnect between those numbers and how our folks came up with the numbers from the business office. That function is the business office. You put together the numbers and it is being derived from that department and then the business office is talking to the Board. I'm not blaming anyone but I'm just saying that is a continued issue. You are voting for a cap. A cap needs to be within the budget. You can't have a cap of \$5 million and then your budget can only support \$2 million. That is a very important line item that you

need to understand what is behind those numbers because from \$480,000 to \$2.1 million – how was it derived.

I said earlier about legal fees – you need to take a look at that. You voted on F-2 that had numbers in there for the last three months that were wrong. If you assume those numbers are right, then you had \$480,000 in legal fees that you paid and you didn't pay \$480,000. Take a look at it because it is a wrong number; otherwise you are paying people more than they should be paid.

Lastly, as far as process – that budget meeting – you have a finance calendar – that meeting should have happened last month. This should have never happened. You have to follow your finance calendar and process is important. I got some information I tried to OPRA – I didn't get all the information I hoped but there is something as far as transparency and accountability. I'm not trying to throw anybody under the bus I'm just saying the honest truth. You have people that are receiving money through capital campaign and then there is a relationship. You have Joe Cryan the State Senator who is the chairperson of Board of Education candidates and he is receiving money and those folks are getting hired here. That needs to be disclosed. I looked at the number online. Our attorney one of the guys provided \$15,000 to your campaign. You don't know that but that's due diligence so that should have been disclosed. All we're saying is you have to disclose. Mrs. Higgins you voted for an insurance company that provided \$7,800 to your campaign – you shouldn't have voted and it should have been disclosed. It is about transparency and doing the right thing for our kids and there is nothing wrong with doing due diligence and making sure that we are totally transparent.

Susan Lipstein stated the other thing that comes to mind which I have said twice is communication. A planning meeting that is scheduled for less than two hours to go over everything that is discussed in August and we have 7 out of 9 members who have not filled a full 3-year term. You have to cut them a break, they need to learn. At the planning meeting because you did not finish the agenda and they didn't get it at the worksession because the numbers weren't there, if they don't have that information they can't do what they were elected to do and all of you were elected. I'm suggesting another planning meeting be scheduled. We will continue to be asking for answers.

Thank you from the foundation for allowing us to do a fundraiser – that is September. We have a sip and paint fundraiser on Thursday night. We will be sending out our grants on May 8<sup>th</sup>. If anyone knows how important small amounts of money are is me because we work so hard to raise money and then we get grants and we know they are wonderful ideas and the money is in the District. There is legitimate reasons for all to work together and the money goes where it is supposed to go.

Cara West stated I care deeply for the students in this Town – not just my children but every single student. My north star – my reason why I do everything I do is to make sure that every student in this District receives the best education that the District can provide. When I look at this District I see problems that are plentiful that it is difficult to even start to address them. When I look at this District, I see certain schools improving while others are left behind. When I look at this District, I see teachers, other school staff, PTA and parent volunteers,

leaderships, administrators that neither reflect the diversity of our Town nor even to seem to have the best interest of the children in their actions or their words. It should not be the responsibility of me as a parent to come and tell you that is not o.k. For a school to be populated mostly of people of color to be left in disrepair with chaotic and hazardous conditions, while schools on the other side of Town, the side most of you live on, and most of the staff live on, have much less serious issues. Children are being failed in this District at an astonishing rate – especially if that child is a person of color. Whenever (inaudible) the immediate problem is addressed with no proactive measures in order to protect other students and staff from similar incidences. My son who has multiple medical and emotional disabilities is in a school where there are multiple fights a day where students and staff are sustaining serious and long-term injuries because of disrepair and violence in the building. A school where children are free to roam in the hall without supervision or fear of consequence; where the gym doors are broken and provide no protection to a child if there was to be a lockdown. Where windows and door glass are replaced with cardboard or left broken rather than repaired. Where a ceiling caved in and caused children to miss weeks' worth of gym class; where an entire sink fell out of the wall of a girls' bathroom. Staff and administration are so busy pointing fingers at each other and they don't realize that it is the children that are losing.

I'm not here to place the blame on one person at what is happening at Burnet. When the new principal was announced parents were told by Central Office that the employee would receive mentoring. To my knowledge that never happened. It is also very difficult to assume a leadership position after having worked on a peer level with those that you must supervise. It is difficult for an administrator to effectively work when he is constantly undermined by his staff. However, teachers and staff reached out multiple times regarding issues in the building that were required but ignored. Parents bring issues to light and they are addressed for that specific instance with no further action. Many claims were made by administrations for parents and nothing has happened as a result. Lack of follow through is an issue. Lack of collaboration is an issue. Lack of order and safety is a huge issue not only are children not receiving the same education as their peers just across Town at the other middle school – they are in considerably more danger as well.

We as the taxpayers implore the people of the District to keep our children safe and educate them. We elect the Board of Education to represent the interest of all parents and taxpayers. All of you need to take a hard look at yourself in this District and figure this mess out before another child is hurt or doesn't receive the education that they deserve.

Paul Casey stated I was at the worksession last week and a presentation was done on the millionaire mansion and I'm unclear of what happened tonight because when you look at 7A and it shows a list of trips and I don't know what was approved. Mr. Benaquista stated it was approved tonight to move forward. Mr. Ferrone will start working on getting applications out and if anyone wants to submit an application can. Mrs. Minneci stated the name was changed. Mr. Benaquista stated Mr. Ferrone sent information and I shared with the Board members and it was added to the field. They reflected on it and they chose to make some changes based on people's inputs.

Mr. Casey stated I'm a non-profit administrator and in leadership positions for the last 20 years. I think highly of Mr. Ferrone too and I think he is a great teacher but this organization is coming into our Town has no data to show what they want to do or the children of Union works or they have done it with somebody else. I feel like we are using our kids as test dummies for something that we are not sure that works or that they have the experience doing. It seemed to me that it was passed without the appropriate level of oversight and discussion. Mr. Benaquista stated I will also make sure that Mr. Ferrone gets every parent's permission slip first. I don't want you to think the kids can apply without the parent's approval.

Chasity Santana stated I hear things in Union with reference to our education system. This is the way it has been done for years. Do not reinvent the wheel. It has been told to me so many times. I'm not going to stop the wheel. I do not blindly lead and I will not blindly follow. Question everything – Union lacks transparency. We are giving numbers a few hours a day before we vote on something and then we are told it is a preliminary vote. I put you back there, if I voted for you or not, I need you to question.

Our Extended School Year program is a necessary vessel for our children who qualify. This is not an option for children like my son. This year the Township is cutting this program. It used to be a 5-day program and it is now a 4-day program. When I asked I was told it was happening because the attendance is low on Fridays because parents go on vacation. I would like to see data on that. I would like you to ask for data on this topic. I know we need budget cuts but watch what you are cutting because I can walk around cutting things myself.

We are trending dangerous territory when we start looking to make cuts at the expense of special education kids. When we start at the elementary level to help our children with special needs, like my son, it is with the hopes that by the time he gets to high school he will not need as much support and it would be less money that we are spending on our children with special education and I heard this many times before – our children that need these services – the numbers are not going down and this is across the board not just in Union. We are going to need more money consistently.

A question I have – our accountant for special services – who does she report to? Mr. Brennan stated Mrs. Conti. Mrs. Santana stated she reports to Mrs. Conti and no body oversees her as far as accounting because I thought that falls under you Mr. Brennan. It is a secret that I have, I have a master's of science in accounting – so accountants speak to accounts.

On a positive note, our reflections for the National PTA – its new theme next year – 2019-2020 – “Look Within”. My Kawameeh PTA meeting is tonight. I spoke to them and I'm hoping our PTA meetings will not interfere with the Board of Education meeting because I want to have a seat at the table. Maybe nobody else does but we should be able to have a seat as a parent for our PTA and as a parent here asking questions.

I went to Elizabeth High in 1993; it wasn't the safest place but because of the staff I felt safe. I myself when I was in the building witnessed three separate fights. I think we need a lot of help in Burnet. My children are in Kawameeh. But as Cara said I care about every single child in this District. I don't want any child to fear going to school. Whatever school it is. We

need a lot of help in Burnet. I don't know what I can do. I don't know how much we as parents can do but that is what we are here for.

Elsie Macki stated \$180,000 recouplement for lunch moneys – have we gotten any closer to figuring out how to get that money back? I think I have been active with the board for 6 years and as you know my passion is special education because of my child and all the kids of Union. Once again we are at a meeting talking about the budget for special services. Every time we go through this, me as a parent with a child who gets these services, you feel attacked. You feel like everyone is looking at you.

Special services took a beating tonight. Every individual that works in special services are absolutely committed to our children and there is no question about it. My child has excelled with the staff members and all that we do. In terms of budget, I just think there needs to be better communication across the board and more transparency. Every year we come here and Mrs. Conti is called to the table to try to explain it. We need some understanding.

I want to talk about a rumor that is floating around – rumor is cuts will be requested from special services to offset budgetary issues. That is a problem and I will come to every board meeting. We tread on dangerous areas when we start to say let's look to cut services. You can't cut services for these children. I will say this again. No parent, no woman gets pregnant and carries a child, has the baby and says my child is going to be autistic or my child is going to have a special needs. You have the baby shower, you have the excitement and you plan a life for your child and then you get a diagnosis. This is not a journey that anyone asks for. This isn't a journey I would wish on anybody. It is really important when you are planning these budget and you have to cut, let's tread carefully with special services.

I want to invite everybody to CPAC. A presenter is coming to present basic rights in special education workshop. It is open to everybody. I think the problem is people just don't understand. You think you understand but you don't. So come understand the process and learn about – get educated so we can make informed decisions.

Is there an ad hoc committee for food services? Mrs. Ruiz stated it was announced at the worksession last week that members were appointed to the committee – Mrs. Darby, Mrs. Higgins, Mr. McDowell and myself.

Jill Hall stated Officer Smith was very excited to have the opportunity to come in and she is very generous with her time. We are also having several presentations regarding the vaping concerns that has become so prevalent. On April 11 there will be a parent meeting through Title I – Mrs. Guilfoyle, Mrs. Ahearn and others have it organized. There will be a series of workshops. On April 29<sup>th</sup>, Prevention Links will be coming to the high school to do a presentation. Prevention Links is the County addiction provider and prevention provider and he has a very high level of expertise on vaping. On March 26<sup>th</sup> I'll be doing a presentation entitled "Disconnected" and it focus on the love/hate relationship that parents in 2019 currently have with their child and their child's electronic device and we are going to be talking about how it alters brain chemistry and how we are seeing some real mental health concerns connected to that.

We call her Faithful and she deserves her name on every banner imaginable. I also want to bring attention to the two teachers that coached her Mr. Camillo and Ms. Mangarella who worked very tirelessly with Faithful in getting her to the point where she was so eloquent in her speech and she certainly deserves that recognition that she got. Are we sending the two advisors to St. Jude – did we approve that. Mr. Benaquista stated that was approved last week. The first advisor was included in that. We are working with the Business Office how we can create that requisition and get payment for the second advisor. Obviously we have to do everything legally. As of today, we were still bouncing questions around and hopefully have it done tomorrow. Mrs. Hall stated I appreciate that and I know it is not a matter of not wanting to do it, it is the matter of doing it the right way.

Mrs. Lopes stated I have been coming here for about two years and I don't come all the time. I think what we are missing is you talk to each other and know what is going on. It seems like people are attacking each other instead of talking to each other. This is my point from outside. You write all these things down and you should know what you are putting in the agenda to vote or not to vote. It is simple, it is brainstorming. Talk to each other; we elected you to work for our kids to make this a better place for our kids. If you are not communicating then we are not going anywhere. We should be listening to each other rather than wanting to be the first one to talk and the first one to answer. Talk to each other and see what is going on with Burnet. Burnet is a big thing going and everybody is talking about it. I have spoken to Mr. Harrell this past week. My kid says the teachers get no respect from the kids because they are told from other teachers that you don't have to listen to them because they aren't even teachers. They are real teachers. The teachers have to respect the teachers that are there for the kids not for themselves. They have to work together as well. I think it is better to hear it from you. Work it out, talk to each other and let us know what is going on. Help us out to understand what you are doing is for the good of our kids. Instead of us sitting over there thinking you are not doing this for the good of our kids, you are doing it for your own agenda.

#### MOTION FOR EXECUTIVE SESSION:

Moved by Mrs. Ruiz, seconded by Mrs. Williams, that the Board go into Executive Session at 10:08 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.

- Pending or anticipated litigation, contract negotiation and matters falling under the attorney-client privilege. In the matter of: R.L., S.W., D.B and M.B.
- Matters involving employees and terms of their employment and contract.

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: Mrs. Higgins, Mr. McDowell, Dr. Morgan, Mr. Nufrio, Mrs. Regis-Darby,  
Mrs. Richardson, Mrs. Ruiz, Mrs. Williams, Mrs. Minneci

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED

The Board returned to public session at 11:41p.m.

MOTION TO ADJOURN:

There being no further business before the Board in public session it was moved by Mrs. Regis-Darby, seconded by Mrs. Ruiz, that the meeting be adjourned at 11:41 p.m. All present voting YES MOTION CARRIED

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,

GREGORY E. BRENNAN  
BOARD SECRETARY