

TOWNSHIP OF UNION BOARD OF EDUCATION  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES – AUGUST 18, 2020

NOTICE OF MEETING:

TO ALL BOARD OF EDUCATION MEMBERS:

The regular meeting of the Board of Education of the Township of Union was held on Tuesday, August 18, 2020 at 7:00 p.m. via ZOOM pursuant to notice sent to each member.

Mrs. Minneci called the meeting to order at 7:40 p.m. She apologized for the delay but the executive session went longer than expected and Board members were having difficulties getting on meeting.

PRESENT AT ROLL CALL:

Dr. Guy Francis, Mrs. Sherry Higgins (by phone), Mr. Ronnie McDowell, Mrs. Nancy Minneci, Dr. Kalisha Morgan, Mr. Vito Nufrio, Mrs. Linda Richardson, Mrs. Kim Ruiz, Mrs. Mary Lynn Williams

ABSENT AT ROLL CALL:

None

ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT:

Mr. Gregory Tatum, Mr. Gerry Benaquista, Mr. Manuel Vieira, Mr. Barry Loessel, Mrs. Sandra Paul, Mrs. Maureen Guilfoyle, Mr. Craig Wojcik, Mrs. Kim Conti

ALSO PRESENT:

Mr. Lester Taylor, Esq.

Dr. Francis led the Board and audience members in the Pledge of Allegiance.

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

Mr. Nufrio read the District’s mission statement.

Comments from Public on Resolutions:

Jeffrey Monge stated F-11 – approve maximum limit on professional services. This is another increase on legal. That represents another increase of \$185,000 – a 380% increase from the original budget of \$220,000. We are up to now \$835,000 and that is something you should really consider. Three years ago we had \$2 million less in professional services than what we have today. We took legal costs outside of the district and hired a third-party firm to save money. We were spending \$200,000 a year and now we are at \$835,000 – you should consider bringing that back in-house. You can hire a smaller boutique law firm.

F-17 – energy savings plan. The ESIP really works on the ability to generate a cost savings in electricity and utilities. Since we are in a pandemic, we are not going to have the same level of costs and that is something to consider and I don't know how that works. You are not generating the savings because you are not using as much electricity and utilities so how are you supposed to service the debt on that. That is something that should be looked at. A detailed budget and scope of work was never shared with the public nor the feasibility plan that was paid for. It would be great if that could be shared with the public.

Lastly, F-18 – a reduction of State aid – I just want to confirm – is that a reduction in the \$386,000 from the State so we are only getting about \$125,000?

Nellis Regis-Darby stated E-2 – is this accurate – the district is now approving the professional development plan for the 2019-2020? If it is not correct, I think the district needs to take a look at it because there are members on that particular plan that is no longer working within the district.

Mr. Taylor stated with respect F-11, Mr. Vieira had stated a number of times before that this agenda item is not limited to legal services – it is for the district's overall professional services across the board.

Also, for F-17 we have Ms. Gorab on the ZOOM call, she is the district's bond counsel if the Board would like an analysis of a response. It may be appropriate to both respond to Mr. Monge's question but also to educate the Board with respect to the agenda item that is on tonight's meeting.

Lisa Gorab stated the energy savings projects, the ECM's that are being undertaken are not underway yet. Hopefully by the time they do get underway and installed to a great degree, hopefully, children may be back in school. The other was to see the projects that will be included and the Board tonight on its agenda does have a resolution that does in fact approve those projects and does require the Board to post the plan to its website once it is approved by the Board so the specifics will be available after tonight's meeting.

The action with respect to energy savings plan – the resolution that you are going to adopt or at least consider tonight with respect to the plan – it approves the energy savings plan. This energy savings plan is a plan to improve the schools' facilities with energy projects to design to be at a tax-neutral basis because the savings will cover the costs of the debt. Those savings had been submitted to BPU, they have been verified by an independent third-party. The resolution would approve that plan subject to BPU approval. It has to be sent to the BPU for approval and we are waiting for that approval.

The resolution also authorizes the construction project with Schneider Electric to install and act as your energy services company in connection with that project. That contract has been negotiated and approved by the Board's counsel. Thirdly, the resolution authorizes an application to the Local Finance Board for their approval of the issuance of the bonds to finance the project. Finally, the resolution introduces on first reading what is called a refunding bond

ordinance which is the local form of legislation that would authorize the issuance of the bonds to finance the project.

Approval of Minutes:

Moved by Mrs. Richardson, seconded by Mrs. Higgins that the following minutes be adopted:

- 1. April 28, 2020 – regular meeting
- 2. April 30, 2020 – budget meeting

DISCUSSION:

None

AYE: Dr. Francis, Mrs. Higgins, Mr. McDowell, Dr. Morgan, Mr. Nufrio,  
Mrs. Richardson, Mrs. Ruiz, Mrs. Williams, Mrs. Minneci

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED

Communications:

REQUEST FOR EXTENSION OF LEAVE – LOPEZ

Request for extension of paid medical leave from Ovidio Lopez, custodian-Washington Elementary School, tentative return date September 1, 2020.

REQUEST FOR LEAVE EXTENSION – PISCIOTTA

Request for extension of paid medical leave from Lynn Pisciotta, confidential administrative assistant-Central Office, new return date of August 3, 2020.

REQUEST FOR INTERMITTENT LEAVE – CHURUS

Request for intermittent unpaid NJFLA/FMLA (concurrently) leave from Eric Churus, computer literacy/applications/programming teacher-Burnet Middle School, September 1, 2020-June 30, 2021.

REQUEST FOR LEAVE – ROBERTS

Request for unpaid non-FMLA internship from Shareenah Roberts, special services paraprofessional-Burnet Middle School, September 3, 2020-December 31, 2020.

REQUEST FOR LEAVE – GIANCASPRO

Request for intermittent FMLA from Denise Giancaspro, special services 10-month secretary, September 1, 2020-June 30, 2021.

LETTER OF RETIREMENT – LOPEZ

Letter of resignation, for the purpose of retirement, from Ovidio Lopez, custodian-Washington Elementary School, effective December 31, 2020.

LETTER OF RETIREMENT – WALLER-MOSES

Letter of resignation, for the purpose of retirement, from Annie Waller-Moses, Assistant Superintendent-Central Office, effective January 1, 2021.

LETTER OF RETIREMENT – TRUHE

Letter of resignation, for the purpose of retirement, from Jeffrey Truhe, health and physical education teacher-Connecticut Farms Elementary School, effective November 27, 2020.

LETTER OF RETIREMENT – SICKLES

Letter of resignation, for purposes of retirement, from Robin Sickles, art teacher-Burnet Middle School, effective October 1, 2020.

REQUEST FOR LEAVE – NICASTRO

Request for paid medical leave from Joyce Nicastro, kindergarten teacher-Connecticut Farms Elementary School, September 1, 2020-September 30, 2020

LETTER OF RETIREMENT – NICASTRO

Letter of resignation, for the purposes of retirement, from Joyce Nicastro, kindergarten teacher-Connecticut Farms Elementary School, effective October 1, 2020.

REQUEST FOR LEAVE – KESSOCK

Request for paid medical leave from Tracy Kessock, 12-month administrative assistant-Central Office/Transportation, August 26, 2020 to September 18, 2020.

LETTER OF RETIREMENT – TATUM

Letter of resignation, for the purpose of retirement, from Gregory Tatum, Superintendent-Central Office, effective January 1, 2021.

REQUEST TO REMOVE LEAVE – MENDES

Request to remove leave from Jessica Mendes previously approved on July 21, 2020 agenda.

REQUEST FOR EXTENSION OF LEAVE - HALL

Request for extension of unpaid FMLA/NJFLA leave followed by unpaid non-FMLA/non-NJFLA leave from Shaquana Hall, custodian-Hannah Caldwell, Elementary School, extension through October 31, 2020.

REQUEST FOR INTERMITTENT LEAVE - RAMEY

Request for intermittent FMLA from Joelle Ramney, math teacher-Burnet Middle School, September 1, 2020-June 30, 2021.

REQUEST FOR LEAVE - KRATZ

Request for leave under FFCRA for 12 weeks followed by unpaid non-FFCRA leave from Robyn Kratz, teacher-Hannah Caldwell Elementary School, September 1, 2020-June 30, 2021.

Mrs. Minneci stated the two retirements, Mr. Tatum and Mrs. Moses – thank you and we will miss you.

Mr. Taylor stated for those Board members that have conflicts, please abstain when voting.

Superintendent's Report:

Mr. Tatum stated a number of questions have arisen regarding the safety of the opening of our schools in September. As I reported in the past, the CDC and guidance from the State continues to change. The Governor announced that all school districts may elect to begin the school year in a virtual format.

The following assessments have been conducted in our district to facilitate a discussion for the district to reopen safely. Building and grounds – Mr. Loessel, Supervisor, reported that all classrooms in the district have some form of proper ventilation. He identified that all schools have three or more windows that now open. However, there are areas within the district that do not have windows in some office space areas. Mr. Loessel assessed the ventilation system in every school. He reported that all systems are working with the appropriate air flow. New filters have been installed in all rooftop air conditioning and heating units and HEPA filters have been installed. Additionally, all window units have the proper filters installed. However there are some areas of the district that would need renovation repairs. It is also reported that some of these repairs may be completed prior to beginning of schools but did not offer a guarantee that this should happen. He also informed me that he will have all the schools tested for airflow with respect to COVID 19.

Staffing – at this time approximately 300 staff members have initiated requests for leave of absence or to teach remotely. This will have a direct impact on the hybrid program because of the difficulty to establish class size for in-person instruction affecting social distance requirements of six feet.

Equipment and supplies – school supplies and equipment are arriving daily. Some of the personal protection equipment (PPE) happen to be on back order and will be required to really start the school year in an in-person fashion. This is an issue that many districts are facing around this State. Therefore I am recommending that our district begin the 2020-2021 school year in a virtual format. I like to establish a benchmark date of October 15, 2020 to assess our progress towards the possible reopening of the district with the hybrid program on November 1, 2020. I must caution everyone that this date will be subjected to changes should the district not be ready with all of the requirements to restart the hybrid model. I am also recommending a revised calendar that will begin remote instruction on September 9<sup>th</sup>. This will provide for additional preparation for the district's possible opening with the remote plan.

This Thursday will be our planning session. At this time more information will be discussed on the virtual format with input from the Board. The goal will be to discuss the virtual school day at the elementary, middle and high school levels. Mr. Wojcik will provide us with an overview of the virtual school content.

Craig Wojcik stated I will go through the platforms that will be available to the district. Mr. Tatum stated correct and what is available for students and teachers and what you have been training on over the summer. On Thursday, during the planning session, if the Board so desires, there is a report that has to be filed with the State based on our timelines and programs that we have developed for virtual only.

Presentation appended to minutes.

Mr. Wojcik stated I have been working with Sandra Paul and Ms. Guilfoyle to bring some resources into the district to prepare us as we potentially move towards virtual instruction. Over the summer the Teacher Technology Team (T3) has been providing training throughout the district to our district staff. We have done weekly trainings starting at the end of June and we have done three per week until the end of July. Starting in August we have been doing six per week. We have done a total of 40 training sessions. We have been averaging about 200 teachers per week showing up to our trainings. I have to commend our staff for their commitment to preparing for this school year. Also the T3 is working towards creating consumable information for teachers. We have our You Tube page that teachers can go to re-watch the videos that we have been posting and we are continuing to work to prepare those same types of consumable content for our students and parents so when we go to the virtual environment they have the resources at their disposal to make sure that they are trained up on what they need to do on their end.

New digital platforms that we brought into the district this year – G-suite – but one of the moves we made is to go to enterprise for Edu and what that will do is as Google rolls out their new features, specifically on Google Meet, we will have those in district but this upgrade also provides a lot of other features to the district that is going to be very valuable to us as we move forward. It provides the staff access to plagiarism checker. They can actually check students work against the entire internet as well as our local storage on Google Cloud – from student to student. More importantly, Sandra and I decided that this was something important for our district to focus on was it allows us to determine where our students' data is stored – making sure that it is stored in the United States. We want to ensure we are keeping our students safe and private.

Nearpod is one of the platforms we brought in – it is an instructional delivery tool. It allows the teachers to make every lesson interactive. Delivery of instruction, informative assessment, video with teachers, design assessments built into the videos, collaboration and it does all of that in one pane of glass. Instead of the teachers having to move from one classroom to another, they are able to provide all of those features within one format, one platform for ease and design for the teachers, as well as the students. It allows lessons to be applied to all potential environments. The teachers using Nearpod as they prepare their lessons, they will be able to work in virtual, hybrid and traditional instruction environments. If something does change, their work won't be for not.

Curated content and a shared library where teachers can curate content and share it within their building or within our district and that is one of the things that we were looking for as well where there is some collaboration where our teachers don't have to reinvent the wheel every time

if one teacher creates content that is useable by multiple teachers, they can share it across the building.

GoGuardian Teacher – is a difference maker when it comes to virtual instruction. One of the things we tried to do when we were in the classroom was to breakdown the four walls of the classroom and create opportunities for the students that we couldn't have provided to them inside the physical walls of the classroom without the technology. In virtual instruction, we almost have the opposite problem. The students are all over the Town and observing them and making sure that they are staying on task is one of the difficulties of virtual instruction. GoGuardian Teacher provides them with real time view into the students' activities, they can identify and correct students who are off task and they can communicate passively by sending a message through GoGuardian Teacher or they can place a video call right to their district Chromebook. It builds an opportunity so you can see what the students are doing in your class, even though they are all around the Town.

Newsela is an impressive platform. It aligns with our existing ELA curriculum and has content area across a variety of areas. It allows the teachers to assign any articles for the students to read that can be catered to their individual levels. The teachers can assign an article to entire class and each student can read that article at their level. The content will stay the same but the sentence structure and the vocabulary will be level based on the students' needs and there are built in assessment tools to determine student comprehension.

Flocabulary is more of a supplemental tool in the Nearpod family and it provides hip hop videos and instructional activities that promote literacy and spark creativity and it is just a different way of delivering information.

Zoom – we are in the process of bringing them in and creating accounts for all of the district staff; we are just waiting on the licensing to go through. The reason we opted for Zoom in district was because a lot of the tools that relatively critical for delivering virtual instruction are not going to be released by Google until their earliest date is the end of September and they have dates that roll out all the way to November.

All these features that people have become familiar with in Zoom, they won't be in Gsuite for quite some time. We want to make sure that our teachers have the ability to do what they need to do. We believe the combination of these resources will provide opportunities for our teachers to deliver instruction at a high level and quality for our students.

Mr. Benaquista stated that is a good start. We will go into greater detail on Thursday night. Mr. Tatum had to step out and asked me to step in and we can now move on to the agenda.

Education/Student Discipline Committee Resolutions:

Mrs. Ruiz gave in update on the Education/Student Discipline Committee meeting. Mrs. Ruiz stated breakfast and lunch program will continue to be offered when the new school year begins. It will be offered at every building and children will be able to pick up breakfast and lunch at their local school rather than their enrolled school.

Principals are working on a meet your teacher event which will be virtual. Mrs. Moses advised us the deadlines for those plans are by Friday to Mrs. Moses. Hopefully in the next two weeks parents will receive emails on that event.

Supply lists and schedules will be out soon. The target date is within the next two weeks. Freshman orientation is scheduled for August 31<sup>st</sup> and it will be virtual. We had a presentation by Dr. Cohen and Mrs. Moran on the pathways program and it will be continued. They were going to pick a liaison for each pathways and the four liaisons have been appointed. The students currently enrolled in the pathway program will be receiving welcome packets soon. There will be virtual meetings and the students will receive an email stating same.

Our teachers have been participating in PD sessions to prepare for teaching virtually. The overall topic being “how to manage synchronous and asynchronous teaching on the use of virtual platforms.” Mrs. Moses advised that the PD will be ongoing throughout the school year. The PD over the summer was not mandatory although a couple of hundred teachers did participate.

We also spoke about the CAD program and whether or not the software would be available on the Chromebooks because that was an issue for many of us when we closed down in March and it was not on the Chromebooks but it will be on the Chromebooks. We spoke yesterday on how we would assist those students that are in their senior year and need to take the certification test and Mrs. Moses followed up with me this morning to let me know that she looked into it and there are nine students that are currently lined up to take the certification this school year. Those seniors will be given separate computers that have the specific software that they need to prepare for that certification. For parents that don't know, Yvonne Lorenzo is currently overseeing the CAD program. If you have any other questions about your student in the CAD program, you can email Mrs. Lorenzo at [ylorenzo@twpunionschools.org](mailto:ylorenzo@twpunionschools.org). CAD parents will be receiving an email from the teachers in the next week or so.

Mrs. Moran reported that Mrs. Moses requested that a group of teachers come together to prepare and write an Amistad curriculum for grades K-12 and it is currently being written. The goal is to have it completed by December so it can be rolled out in January.

Dr. Morgan stated you said the Amistad curriculum will be written for January. Mrs. Ruiz stated the plan is to have it completed by December. Mrs. Minneci stated it is cross curriculum. Dr. Morgan stated the Amistad curriculum is already written. It is mandated by the State of New Jersey so what exactly are we doing? There was a training next week at Montclair State and I don't know if any of our teachers received that information to sign up and attend. The Amistad curriculum is not written by the district, it is something that is already written and mandated by the State. All we need to do is take the curriculum and infuse it into our cross curriculum. What are we writing? Mrs. Ruiz stated my understanding was that the curriculum that is currently being written by the group of teachers is to ensure that it is taught cross curriculum so our ELA teachers, our history teachers, our math teachers, etc. are infusing it into their curriculum. I agree with you Dr. Morgan that the Amistad curriculum was already prepared and had already been in place and we just needed to infuse it. But this is what Mrs. Moran and



Mrs. Moses reported on and I wanted to share. There were no exact details about what the curriculum would look like.

Dr. Morgan stated I would hope that if we are going to use Amistad, I'm very excited about that, but to say that we are writing it – is incorrect. Mr. Benaquista stated we are not rewriting it, we are expanding it throughout the district – into all the curriculum.

Dr. Morgan stated somebody asked earlier about the 19-20 professional development plan that we are supposed to vote on. Was that 19-20 or 20-21? Mr. Benaquista stated the one that is on the agenda is the professional development that we were able to complete for the 19-20 school year. The upcoming professional development will be posted and the deadline is in October so we will have it up for the upcoming school year.

Dr. Morgan stated 19-20 already occurred, are we just using Title I/Title II funds – why is it just coming up now? Mr. Benaquista stated the 19-20 was already approved, I think they put it on to reapprove what we were able to complete with COVID. We want to be able to complete some of the trainings by the end of the year.

Mr. Nufrio asked are we proceeding with the options for parents to select virtual or a combination thereof – which way are we going with this? Mr. Benaquista stated the recommendation of the Superintendent is that we start the year virtual based on the information he shared with everyone. Mr. Loessel, in about a month, will let Mr. Tatum know exactly where we are in our buildings. For the safety of all our students and staff, there are some areas that he felt still needed to be addressed and as well as we had approximately 300 staff members, for many different reasons – confidential reasons, that are requesting virtual to start the year. Some are directly related to the specifics Mr. Tatum was talking about.

Mr. Taylor – if you could help us – I believe it was for Mr. Tatum to make the Board aware of the direction we are going. I don't think a resolution needs to be done or a vote. Maybe you can advise us if we need to add on a resolution to now vote on virtual to start the year or just to make the Board and public aware.

Mr. Nufrio stated a lot of the neighboring districts are doing exactly that for at least the first marking period.

Dr. Morgan stated the question was do we need to vote and I think we don't need to. I think that it is the recommendation of the Superintendent.

Mr. Taylor stated I agree with you. There is no legal requirement for the Board of Ed to vote on the reopening plan. Whether it be hybrid, in person, remote, etc. There are a number of districts whereby the board is voting to support the recommendation of the administration and/or the plan that is being presented by the administration to the Executive County Superintendent and by extension the Commissioner. I view that as being more symbolic versus legally required. I do think it is well advised for that plan to be shared with the Board in advance of being presented to the County and the State. However, again there is no legal or ethical requirement

for it to be voted on. I will defer to the Board from a governing standpoint if you want to entertain a motion to “support” that submission, but it is not required.

Mrs. Minneci stated we will have a little more in-depth on Thursday at our planning session if there are any more questions about it but that is the Superintendent’s recommendation.

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

E-1. SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT OF HIB

Superintendent’s Report of Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying (HIB) for the period July 22, 2020 to August 18, 2020 (no HIB to report for this period) (*no vote required; for reporting purposes only*).

E-2. APPROVE DISTRICT PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Approve the 2019-2020 District Professional Development, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

E-3. APPROVE CURRICULUM GUIDES

Approve the following curriculum guides, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

1. African American History
2. Advanced Placement United States History I
3. Grade 5 Social Studies
4. Grade 6 Social Studies
5. Grade 7 Honors Social Studies
6. Grade 7 Social Studies
7. Grade 8 Honors Social Studies
8. Grade 8 Social Studies
9. Honors United States History I
10. United States History I
11. United States History II
12. World History
13. Mathematics Grade K
14. Mathematics Grade 1
15. Mathematics Grade 2
16. Mathematics Grade 3
17. Mathematics Grade 4
18. Mathematics Grade 5
19. Mathematics Grade 6

E-4. APPROVE CODE OF CONDUCT AND CORE VALUES – 2020-2021

Approve Code of Conduct and Core Values for the 2020-2021 school year, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

E-5. APPROVE MEDICAL SERVICES HANDBOOK AND SCHOOL HEALTH STANDING ORDERS

Approve Medical Services Handbook, revised 2020, and School Health Standing Orders for the 2020-2021 school year, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

E-6. APPROVE CONTRACTS – COMMISSION FOR THE BLIND AND VISUALLY IMPAIRED

Approve Service Contract with the State of New Jersey, Department of Human Services, Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired, for educational services for students in the District for the 2020-2021 school year, in accordance with the non-public information appended to the minutes.

E-7. APPROVE WELLNESS MANAGEMENT SERVICES OF TRINITAS REGIONAL MEDICAL CENTER - STUDENT SUPPORT

Approve contract with Wellness Management Services of Trinitas Regional Medical Center, to provide Student Support Services for the 2020-2021 school year, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

E-8. APPROVE COVID-19 PANDEMIC RELATED GUIDELINES FOR NURSES

Approve the COVID-19 Pandemic Related Guidelines for TUPS’ School Nurses, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

E-9. APPROVE REVISED SCHOOL CALENDAR - 2020-2021

Approve revised school calendar for the 2020-2021 school year, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

DISCUSSION:

Dr. Francis asked what was the revision on the calendar? Mrs. Ruiz stated the start date is September 9<sup>th</sup>.

Mr. Nufrio asked were there any other revisions done with the Code of Conduct? Or maintaining what we have in the past? Mr. Benaquista stated right now it will stay the same; if we need to add anything from the principals, we will get it approved next month. Mr. Nufrio stated it is a work in progress. Mr. Benaquista stated yes.

AYE: Dr. Francis, Mrs. Higgins, Mr. McDowell, Dr. Morgan, Mr. Nufrio, Mrs. Richardson, Mrs. Ruiz, Mrs. Williams, Mrs. Minneci

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED

Fiscal and Planning Committee Resolutions:

Mrs. Richardson gave an update on the Fiscal and Planning Committee meeting. Mrs. Richardson stated it was quiet over the summer. We are concerned about 20-21 financially and what is going to happen with the Governor. We spent time on the legal fees; 50% of the lawsuits

that need legal representation are for special needs and the other 50% are for personnel. Over the last 4-5 years, we currently have 30 cases which is the largest amount of cases that Mr. Vieira has seen in his history of working here. Four to five years ago we had 10-12 cases so there has been a big increase. The largest increases are costs for special ed and for legal representation. We have three large cases. The sale of the bonds – we have been working on for the last couple of months. In the end it is going to reduce the interest rates for the taxpayers – F-16. F-17 is approving the energy savings plan and this is the project that will not result in any additional costs to the taxpayers. We had a reduction in State aid.

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 July 31, 2020 be accepted.

F-2. SECRETARY’S REPORT

That the Secretary’s Report dated July 31, 2020 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 July 31, 2020 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/ Manuel E. Vieira

Manuel E. Vieira, Board Secretary

\_\_\_\_\_ Dated

Pursuant to N.J.A.C.6A:23-2.2(h), we certify that as of July 31, 2020 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. 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 2020-2021 STATE CONTRACT VENDORS**

Approve the amended list of the 2020-2021 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. APPROVE PETTY CASH ACCOUNTS – CBI INSTRUCTION**

Approve petty cash account for costs associated with students' IEP driven Community Based Instruction (CBI) for the 2020-2021 school year at the following schools: (a) Burnet Middle School - \$1,800.00; (b) Kawameeh Middle School - \$700.00 and (c) Union High School - \$5,500.00.

**F-10. APPROVE 2020-2021 OUT-OF-DISTRICT STUDENT PLACEMENT LIST**

Approval be given to amend the 2020-2021 out-of-district student placement list, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

**F-11. APPROVE TO AMEND THE MAXIMUM DOLLAR LIMIT – PROFESSIONAL SERVICES**

Approve amending the maximum dollar limit for professional services from \$3,314,000 to \$3,499,00, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

**F-12. APPROVE PILLAR CARE CONTINUUM – ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY**

Approve Pillar Care Continuum (Cerebral Palsy of North Jersey, Inc.) to provide Assistive Technology at the rate of \$995.00 per evaluation and augmentative and alternative communication evaluations at the rate of \$1,500.00 per evaluation. AAC training at \$200.00 per hour for the 2020-2021 school year (not to exceed \$5,000.00) [Acct. #11-000-219-320-01-19].

**F-13. APPROVE UCESC – TEACHER OF THE DEAF SERVICES**

Approve Union County Educational Service Commission (UCESC) to provide teacher of the deaf services at the rate of \$111.00 per hour (not to exceed \$4,000.00) for the 2020-2021 school year [Acct. #11-000-216-320-01-19].

**F-14. APPROVE EPIC HEALTH SERVICES – NURSING SERVICES**

Approve Epic Health Services Inc. to provide nursing services, at the rate of \$60.00/hr. for RN and \$50.00/hr. for LPN, as well as provide nursing transportation services at the rate of \$115.00 per trip (not to exceed \$280,000.00) for the 2020-2021 school year [Acct. #11-000-216-320-01-19], in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

F-15. APPROVE APPLICATION SUBMISSION – NJDOE 2020 BRIDGING THE DIGITAL DIVIDE GRANT

Approve application submission of the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) 2020 Bridging the Digital Divide Grant, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

F-16. APPROVE FORM AND SALE RESOLUTION

Approve resolution authorizing certain actions necessary in connection with the sale and issuance of not to exceed \$13,175,000 aggregate principal amount of Refunding School Bonds and authorizing the appropriate officials to do all acts and things deemed necessary and advisable in connection with the sale, issuance and delivery of said bonds, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

F-17. APPROVE RESOLUTION – ENERGY SAVINGS PLAN

Approve resolution (a) approving Energy Savings Plan (ESP), (b) authorizing the execution of a contract with Schneider Electric for undertaking ESP; (c) authorizing application to the Local Finance Board for financing of ESP, and (d) approving, on first reading, an ordinance for the issuance of Energy Savings Obligation Refunding Bonds to finance ESP, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

F-18. APPROVE PLAN FOR REDUCTION OF STATE AID

Approve plan for the reduction of State Aid in the amount of \$268,436 for the 2020-2021 school year, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

F-19. APPROVE PLATT PSYCHIATRIC ASSOCIATES – PSYCHIATRIC CONSULTANTS

Approve Platt Psychiatric Associates to provide in-office psychiatric evaluations for district staff.

F-20. APPROVE INLINGUA – TRANSLATION AND INTERPRETATION SERVICES

Approve Inlingua to provide translation and interpretation services for the 2020-2021 school year, not to exceed \$1,500.00 [Acct. #11-000-216-320-01-19], in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

F-21. APPROVE APPLICATION FOR NJCAP GRANT

Approve the application for the New Jersey Child Assault Prevention 2020-2021 Grant – Elementary, Teen and Special Needs – (CAP), in accordance with the information appended to the minutes. The amount of classes to be serviced may be adjusted based on final enrollment for the 2020-2021 school year.

F-22. *For informational purposes only – vote not required.* List of legal services for the 2020-2021 fiscal years, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

## DISCUSSION:

Dr. Francis stated F-18 – our increase in State from last year to this year was \$363,000. Mr. Vieira stated \$393,000. Dr. Francis stated if we subtract \$268,046 it gives us about \$120,000 increase in our State aid. Mr. Vieira stated correct.

F-19 – have you always worked with Platt Psychiatric Associates? Mr. Benaquista stated this is in reference to personnel issues. We haven't used Dr. Platt in the past but it is the first time for this. He has been used for special services in the past. Dr. Francis stated the reason I asked was their rates, are they competitive? I'm a physician and that seems like big amounts. Mr. Benaquista stated I'll be honest with you, I'm not using them until we can negotiate a reduction in rates. For one personnel matter that we need to address, I have contacted 15-20 doctors and we cannot get contracts from anyone. If you could pass anything on to me from an avenue to go down, I will be happy to reach out to other ones. I believe in getting multiple people approved. If the rate is better with someone else and the services are equal, we would go down that road.

Mrs. Ruiz asked why couldn't we get contracts? Mr. Benaquista stated not many doctor offices want to give clearance on personnel. The person we have the agreement with, it is expensive because they are not just seeing the person once and they are making sure before they sign off that it is o.k. to return.

Mrs. Richardson stated it is very hard to even find a psychiatrist and then to have them recommend whether or not they can return back to work, to school, is a large liability on their malpractice insurance.

Dr. Francis stated can you speak to the digital divide grant. Mrs. Paul stated the digital divide grant is a grant that the Governor spoke about and it is a combination of philanthropic collaboration with school districts in order to provide devices and internet access for parents and the community. A survey was sent out and we completed it. We completed the preliminary application form and it qualifies us for almost a million dollars for technology. Now we are waiting for the regular application so we can complete it and submit it to the State so that we can get the funding.

Mrs. Richardson stated this is geared toward low income students that do not have the ability to have computers. Mrs. Paul stated yes, primarily focused on any students that do not have a device. It would be part of our one-to-one program in the school district.

AYE: Dr. Francis, Mrs. Higgins, Mr. McDowell, Dr. Morgan, Mr. Nufrio,  
Mrs. Richardson, Mrs. Ruiz, Mrs. Williams, Mrs. Minneci

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: Mrs. Minneci (F-8-vendor 85992 only)

MOTION CARRIED

Operations Committee Resolutions:

Upon recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the following resolutions were moved by Mrs. Richardson, seconded by Mr. Nufrio, 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 2020-2021 school year, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

O-2. APPROVE PROPERTY/CASUALTY/WORKERS COMPENSATION BROKERAGE SERVICE – ACRISURE/FAIRVIEW

Approve Acrisure/Fairview Insurance Agency as the property/casualty/workers’ compensation brokerage service for the district for the period July 1, 2020 to June 30, 2021.

O-3. APPROVE SUBMISSION OF ANTICIPATED FACILITY RQUESTS

Approve submission of Anticipated Facility Requests for the 2020-2021 school year to the New Jersey Department of Education (Union County office), in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

O-4. APPROVE SUBMISSION OF ALTERNATE METHOD OF COMPLIANCE

Approve submission of the alternate method of compliance in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:26-6.3 and/or 6.4 for toilet room facilities for early intervention, pre-kindergarten and kindergarten classrooms (2020-2021 school year), in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

O-5. APPROVE SERVICE PROPOSAL – STANK ENVIRONMENTAL PEST CONTROL

Approve Service Renewal Proposal from Stank LLC Environmental Pest Control (Pest Control & IPM Law Compliance Services) for the period July 1, 2020-June 30, 2021, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

O-6. APPROVE AGREEMENT WITH BOYS & GIRLS CLUB OF UNION COUNTY

Approve agreement with the Boys & Girls Club of Union County for the 2020-2021 winter swim season, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

DISCUSSION:

Mr. McDowell stated O-4 – what is this? Mr. Loessel stated for pre-k and kindergarten, if there are no bathrooms in the classrooms, the teachers have to walk the students to the bathrooms. Mrs. Minneci stated we approve that every year.

AYE: Dr. Francis, Mrs. Higgins, Mr. McDowell, Dr. Morgan, Mr. Nufrio,

Mrs. Richardson, Mrs. Ruiz, Mrs. Williams, Mrs. Minneci

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: Dr. Francis (O-2)

MOTION CARRIED

Personnel Committee Resolutions:

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



**P-1A. PERSONNEL ACTIONS – NEW HIRES**

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

**P-1B PERSONNEL ACTIONS – EXTRA PAY**

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

**P-1C PERSONNEL ACTIONS – TRANSFERS**

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

**P-2. APPROVE SUBSTITUTE LISTS**

Approve Substitute Lists for the 2020-2021 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:

Name	Position	Location	Eff. Date	Reason	Notes
Lopez, Ovidio	Custodian	Washington	12/31/2020	Retirement	Currently on paid medical leave
Waller-Moses, Annie	Assistant Superintendent	Central Office	1/1/2021	Retirement	
Truhe, Jeffrey	Health and physical teacher	Connecticut Farms	11/27/2020	Retirement	
Sickles, Robin	Art teacher	BMS	10/1/2020	Retirement	
Nicastro, Joyce	Kindergarten teacher	Connecticut Farms	10/1/2020	Retirement	Currently on paid medical leave
Tatum, Gregory	Superintendent	Central Office	1/1/2021	Retirement	

**P-4. APPROVE LEAVES**

Approve leaves for the following staff:

Name	Position	Location	Leave Dates	Leave Type	Notes/ Corrections: All tentative approvals are pending required documentation.
Churus, Eric	Teacher of Computer Literacy/ Applications/ Programming	BMS	Intermittent FMLA/NJFLA 9/1/2020- 6/30/2021	Intermittent Unpaid NJFLA/FMLA	FMLA/NJFLA (concurrently) for Paternity leave Entitlement not to exceed 12 weeks.

Giancaspro, Denise	Special Services 10 Month Secretary	Hamilton/SS	Intermittent FMLA 9/1/2020- 6/30/2021	Intermittent FMLA	FMLA Entitlement not to exceed 12 weeks.
Lopez, Ovidio	Custodian	Washington	Extension through 8/31/2020 Tentative Return: 9/1/2020	Extension of Paid Medical Leave	Tentative Return: 9/1/2020. Org. Leave began 2/26/2020
Nicastro, Joyce	Kindergarten Teacher	Connecticut Farms	9/1/2020- 9/30/2020	Paid Medical Leave	
Pisciotta, Lynn	Confidential Administrative Assistant	Central Office	Extension/ Update to Return 8/3/2020	Return of 8/3/2020	Org. Leave began 6/3/2020 Returned 8/3/2020
Roberts, Shareenah	Paraprofessional for SS	BMS	9/3/2020- 12/31/2020	<b>Non</b> FMLA Internship	Unpaid Leave for internship. Does not meet requirements of FMLA entitlement.
Kessock, Tracy	12-month administrative assistant	Central Office/ Transportation	8/26/2020- 9/18/2020	Paid medical leave	
Mendes, Jessica	Elementary teacher	Franklin			Request to remove approved leave from 7/21/2020 Board mtg
Hall, Shaquana	custodian	HC	extension through 10/31/2020; tentative return 11/1/2020	extension of current unpaid FMLA/NJFLA leave followed by unpaid non- FMLA/non- NJFLA	FMLA/NJFLA entitlement not to exceed initial unpaid 12 weeks. Org. leave began 5/11/2020

Kratz, Robyn	elementary teacher	HC	9/1/2020-6/30/2021	leave under FFCRA for 12 weeks followed by unpaid non-FFCRA leave	FFCRA: Family First Coronavirus Response Act  FFCRA entitlement not to exceed initial 12 weeks
Ramey, Joelle	math teacher	BMS	intermittent leave 9/1/2020-6/30/2021	intermittent FMLA	FMLA entitlement not to exceed 12 weeks

P-5. APPROVE RESIDENCY INVESTIGATORS – 2020-2021  
 Approve residency investigators for the 2020-2021 school year, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

P-6. APPROVE DISTRICT DCP&P LIAISON  
 Approve Julia Vicidomini and Kim Conti as the district DCP&P liaison for the 2020-2021 school year, at no cost to the District.

P-7. APPROVE CARE STATION – EMPLOYEE PHYSICALS  
 Approve Care Station to perform employee physicals for the 2020-2021 school year [Acct. #11-000-213-330-01-54-0060].

P-8. APPROVE CHANGE OF SALARY CLASS – EFFECTIVE SEPTEMBER 2020  
 Approve Change of Salary Class (effective September 2020), in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

P-9. APPROVE AFFILIATION AGREEMENT – RUTGERS UNIVERSITY  
 Approve Affiliation Agreement between Rutgers University and the Township of Union Public Schools for internship request with special services, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

P-10. APPROVE ATTENDANCE – MUJC MEETINGS  
 Approve Kim Conti, Director of Special Services, Joseph Seugling, Supervisor of Special Services and Chris Carew, Interim Supervisor Special Services, to attend meetings at Morris Union Jointure Commission (MUJC), at no cost to the district for the 2020-2021 school year.

P-11. APPROVE ATTENDANCE – UCASE MEETINGS  
 Approve Kim Conti, Director of Special Services, to attend UCASE meetings at a cost of \$50 for the 2020-2021 school year.

P-12. APPROVE ATTENDANCE – MUJC MEETINGS  
 Approve Dr. Brian Kaufman and Marcel Royal to attend the Behaviorists Subcommittee meetings at the Morris Union Jointure Commission, at no cost to the District, for the 2020-2021 school year.

**P-13. APPROVE ATTENDANCE – MUJC MEETINGS**

Approve Dr. Brian Kaufman and Marcel Royal to attend Autism Symposium meetings at the Morris Union Jointure Commission, at no cost to the District, for the 2020-2021 school year.

**P-14. APPROVE STUDENT TEACHERS AND INTERNSHIPS**

Approve student teachers and internships for the 2020-2021 school year, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

**P-15. APPROVE AGREEMENT WITH EMPLOYEE #9891**

Approval of agreement with employee #9891, in accordance with the non-public information appended to the minutes.

**P-16. APPROVE AMENDED UHS ATHLETIC EVENT STAFF ASSIGNMENTS**

Approve amended Union High School Athletic Event Staff Assignments for the 2020-2021 school year, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

**DISCUSSION:**

Mrs. Minneci asked P-3 – do I abstain? Mr. Taylor stated if you have a conflict based upon any relatives employed in the district, etc. that would prohibit you from participating in the vote to appoint, evaluate, etc. the superintendent, at an extreme abundance of caution, I would advise you to abstain. While Mr. Tatum is free to submit his retirement and the presumptively the Board members would be in favor of it, I would hate for any member of the public to file ethics complaint against a Board member for voting to simply approve the resignation of the Chief School Administrator after a long and successful career.

Mr. Benaquista stated they would just abstain on the one individual. Mr. Taylor stated correct or any other individual they may have a conflict with.

Dr. Francis stated P-8 – can you explain the class changes? Mr. Benaquista stated every year based on the UTEA agreement, there are three classes – Class 3, Class 4 and Class 5. Class 3 is the BA, Class 4 is a masters or 34 credits and Class 5 is a masters and 32 credits. As the employees reach a certain level of credits or masters’ degree, once a year, during this time – August/September/October, depending on when we receive transcripts, you will see this on the agenda.

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

**NAY:** None

**ABSTAIN:** Mrs. Higgins (P-3), Mr. Nufrio (P-3-Mr. Tatum/Mrs. Moses and employee #10897),  
Mrs. Minneci (P-3) **MOTION CARRIED**

Residency Committee Resolutions:

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

R-1. APPROVE LIST OF STUDENTS REMOVED FROM ROLLS

Approval be given to amend the list of students removed from the rolls [two (2) students exited the month of August 2020 (1 from elementary, 1 from secondary) for a total of two (2) students for the 2020-2021 school year] who are not domiciled in this school district, in accordance with the non-public information appended to the minutes.

R-2. APPROVE TO REMOVE STUDENT

Approval to remove student #270596 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 #290569 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.

DISCUSSION:

None

AYE: Dr. Francis, Mrs. Higgins, Mr. McDowell, Dr. Morgan, Mr. Nufrio,  
Mrs. Richardson, Mrs. Ruiz, Mrs. Williams, Mrs. Minneci

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED

Technology Committee:

Dr. Francis gave an overview of the Technology Committee meeting.

Old Business

- Summer projects

- The main focus in June will be cleaning and redistribution of Chromebooks for the virtual summer program
  - Update: Continuation of Chromebooks from summer programs being cleaned. Still not have collected all Chromebooks from the summer program. Those in charge of the programs have been notified and are working on collecting the outstanding Chromebooks.
  - Update: Began working on PCs located in offices and classrooms at the schools for cleaning and updating
- Technology purchases from the CARES grant.
  - Update: Most of the Chromebooks purchased through the CARES ACT have been delivered. Working with building principals on an organizational and distribution plan for the devices. This will include information for parents about

the district Chromebook agreement and well as the schedule to pick up devices from the schools. 2nd thru 5th grade.

- Digital Divide grant
  - Waiting on the NJDOE to send out more information on application for the grant. Completed pre-application and was submitted to the NJDOE.
- Chromebooks for the high school.
  - Update: No changes to the previous month's update.
- Replacement of the district virtual server system
  - Update: Equipment is in the process of installation.
- WiFi infrastructure upgrade at elementary schools
  - Update: No updates from the previous month's update.
  - Update: No changes to the previous month's update.
- Working on current proposals for district telephone and notification systems.
  - Update: Waiting on NJDOE to release funding for the Alyssa's Law Act.
- T3 and PD for teachers - Craig
  - New features in Google Meet are coming
  - Media Specialists- ebooks on MackinVia available for UHS, KMS, and BMS. - Sandra
- Investigating a new district website that formats correctly for all mobile devices.
  - Update: No updates at this time
- Move from Systems 3000 for payroll and personnel to Genesis during the 2020-2021 school year.
  - Update: No updates at this time
- Interoperability between district business workflow systems - Genesis, Transfinder, NutriKids, TLC, Clever-Single Sign-On, etc.
  - Clever - Single SignOn for several of the district's online resources. Craig

#### Approval of Bills:

Upon recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools and moved by Mrs. Richardson, seconded by Dr. Francis, 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: Dr. Francis, Mrs. Higgins, Mr. McDowell, Dr. Morgan, Mr. Nufrio,  
Mrs. Richardson, Mrs. Ruiz, Mrs. Williams, Mrs. Minneci

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED

#### Unfinished Business:

Dr. Francis asked did Mr. Tatum submit his goals? Mr. Taylor stated for the 19-20, 20-21 school year? That topic should be discussed in closed session under personnel matter. I don't know if the superintendent has been riced for tonight. Nonetheless his goals, evaluation are

personnel. Dr. Francis asked can that information be sent to us, it is an obligation of the Board members. Mr. Taylor stated that is fine.

New Business:

Dr. Francis stated I would recommend that we increase our Zoom capacity from 300 to a higher number because we have more staff members signing on, this decreases the capacity for parents and the public at large, during this COVID pandemic. I think it would be fair and transparent for the public and everyone else if we could increase our Zoom capacity. Everybody should have an opportunity to sign in.

Mrs. Richardson stated if we need to go into executive session during the regular meeting, if we could set some time limits on each committee that presents so that we don't have the public waiting so long for us to get back to the room. It is only fair, they are taking the time to participate in the meeting as well and that we take consideration of their time and try to present what was discussed in committee and not go into detail in executive session.

Comments from the Public:

Reema Patel stated I am a special education teacher at UHS and a member of the UTEA social justice committee. I wanted to introduce our committee and ask for your support and the support of our fellow Township of Union community members. The social justice committee has already held two meetings over the summer. We have another meeting coming up next week and we already started planning action steps to make a difference. Our first goal was to write a UTEA statement promoting equity with the assistance of NJEA. Our committee has published a statement regarding the Black Lives Matter movement as well as our association's commitment to racial and social equity. Our committee's second goal is to work with central office to provide professional development on this topic. The goal is to train our teachers to navigate their unconscious biases and promote social justice teaching in their classrooms and to empower our students to identify and deconstruct institutionalized inequality. I wanted to use this platform to share two PD opportunities being offered. Kean University is offering two free graduate courses. They are entitled Teaching the Holocaust which will take place in the fall semester and Teaching Prejudice Reduction which will take place in the spring semester. We have had teachers that have attended these courses last year and they highly recommend them. The Amistad curriculum summer institute is taking place right now, August 18-22. Dr. Morgan had briefly mentioned it earlier tonight. It will include a series of YouTube, Zoom video lectures and activities that analyze New Jersey schools on the legacies of self-government and slave, native disposition, democracy, civil liberties and structural racism in our American narrative. I have attended three sessions today, as have a few other teachers from the social justice committee and throughout our district. We will be generating a report to share all the resources and strategies that we learn about that are presented. Finally our committee is working on developing a quarterly e-news letter that will outline the social justice committee's actions, future events, learning resources and PD opportunities that are available to staff and community members. Our hope is to promote transparency and community engagement. If you didn't already have a chance to join our social justice committee, it is not too late. Please send an email to [reema.patel237@gmail.com](mailto:reema.patel237@gmail.com). Finally, one concern that was brought up during our meeting was in relation to voter suppression for the upcoming presidential election. There is a concern that community members may be left out of the ballot. We wanted to know if there were any

arrangements or systems we can make for parents and Union households to get access to online voter registration and/or mail in ballots. Are there any supports that we can provide the local post offices. We think it is especially important due to the fact that it is the presidential election and that Board of Education positions are also up for vote.

Lilliana Almeida stated I have a comment about the pushback of the school – that was a fantastic decision on behalf of the Board and the Superintendent, in addition to keeping it remote, that was also a great decision. Congratulations to Mr. Tatum on his retirement. You did a great job and we appreciate everything you have done for our children. Also the question I had was on technology. A lot of parents from second grade up have mentioned that they received the agreement for the Chromebooks but anybody below that have not. Can you please advise on what we are doing for children from pre-k through first grade in terms of technology?

Susan Lipstein stated I want to congratulate Mr. Tatum and Mrs. Moses on their retirement. I have worked with them for many years and they have been terrific for our district and for our children. I am really going to miss both of them terribly. If we can get some kind of idea on what procedure the Board is going to follow to replace these two people. Especially the superintendent search which I have been involved with in the past, we have hired firms for superintendent searches so I would like to have a report from the Board once you have decided on how you are going to do this.

I wear my Education Foundation president hat – we have given out grants this year – 8 grants. We waited a while because we had to see what we were doing because of the pandemic so they are listed on our webpage. If people are interested, you can look there, and some of these things will be able to be done virtually and all the others will have to wait until we are in person teaching. We have some really creative ideas from wonderful teachers. If you want to help us financially we have a raffle drawing on September 24<sup>th</sup> because we were not able to have our spring fundraiser which we postponed to the fall and of course we will postpone it again. The money goes towards grants next year and if we are able to, awarding some equipment that can be used virtually – if we have funding we can go in many different directions. Thank you Mr. Tatum and Mrs. Moses for your service.

Judy Amorosa stated it is going to be a great loss to lose Mr. Tatum and Mrs. Moses. I have been in the district for a very long time. Mr. Tatum and Mrs. Moses you are wonderful and will be greatly missed. I want to wish you good luck. I'm confused about going all virtual because I think parents and staff need to plan. It was said that the Board does not have to vote on it. Is there a final decision or will you be discussing that at a later date? The parents and staff need to know to make plans.

Lisbeth Velasquez stated the last meeting was my first Board meeting. I was very disappointed and even more disappointed today. I emailed every single Board member and to this day no one replied. I would like answers to all my questions from the email. There are 300 teachers requesting a leave of absence. How many teachers in total in the district? And what are the plans of replacing those 300 teachers? Central Five was in limbo regarding following the elementary or the middle school plan – has anybody made a decision on that? In regard to the email I sent, I realized Mrs. Minneci and Irich did not have a district email – why do they not



have a district email? Mrs. Minneci stated we do have one. Ms. Velasquez stated if you go on the Board's website, it is not posted. That needs to be updated – my suggestion. My main issue is getting my answers from the first Board meeting a month ago which no one replied to.

Mr. Taylor stated this is your opportunity to address the Board. If you can state what those questions are and many instances the Board refers to the administration.

Mrs. Velasquez stated Jefferson – elementary or middle school plan? Training for custodial staff on airborne pathogens, infections and colds for sanitation purposes should be a requirement for all staff. Summer bridge was virtual learning focused on main classes.

Dr. Francis stated can you make it clear that we as Board members are not administering the district and therefore anything they write to us, we have to forward it to Central Office or the Superintendent. I wanted this to be made clear.

Mr. Taylor stated the school board members are governed by the New Jersey Code of Ethics for School Board members. It is codified in State Statute NJSA 18A:12-24.1. One of the subsection says that Board members will refer complaints and certain questions to the chief school administrator and Board members will not take action unless or until they have consulted with those that may be affected by it and only can take action upon the recommendation of the superintendent. While Board members are elected public officials, they are here, they have a public comment period to hear from the public, many of the responses if a response is appropriate under the law, ultimately will come from the administration. The Board sets policy for the district. The Board adopts a budget for the district and the Board hires a superintendent. Those are the three primary roles of a Board member. And of course they vote on issues recommended by the Superintendent. As Dr. Francis indicated, while your questions may have been addressed to them, I would presume any or all of them referred your questions to the administration. I don't say that to say the administration dropped the ball by not responding and in some instances matters are covered by confidentiality by certain personnel issues and/or certain deliberative discussions which are exempt from public disclosure under the law. Just by hearing your first 2-3 questions, I would submit those would have been appropriate for referral to the administration. In order to keep the protocol moving, maybe we can defer answers from the administration and Board after public comment because we have a lot of people.

Dr. Francis does that adequately respond to your request? Dr. Francis stated yes it does.

Mrs. Ruiz stated to be fair to Mrs. Velasquez, Mr. Tatum was copied on that email. I don't want her to think that we are not forwarding it to the right place. It was.

Mr. Taylor stated it was totally appropriate for Board members not to respond.

Mr. Nufrio stated also it is important to note that there is only one spokesperson for the district and that is the president of the Board. Anything that is addressed, whoever was copied, I looked at that as well but we are not permitted to respond individually or as a group. We don't do the day-to-day processes that are within the confines of Central Office.

Mr. Taylor stated that is part of your policy and Code of Ethics.

Nellis Regis-Darby stated thank you for the technology presentation for the upcoming school year. Was there a date for the Zoom – where the teachers will be able to have access to Zoom. With the Gsuite/Google Meets, when the teachers share their screen, they will not have the capability of seeing their students at that point. Also thank you Dr. Morgan for standing up for the Amistad curriculum. We all know that the teachers in this district, we are not curriculum writers, the New Jersey Department of Education do submit that Amistad curriculum and what we do as educators is we make adjustments to curriculum because we are not curriculum writers. Thank you Dr. Morgan for letting the Board know that we are not curriculum writers. I think a parent asked about the pre-k and kindergarten computer devices – will they be getting computer devices and I believe the attorney said we would be getting some answers to these questions at the end of this meeting and I will stay on to get those answers. Thank you.

Jeffrey Monge stated thank you Mr. Tatum and Mrs. Moses for their services. No one can ever question where their heart is – for our kids in the district. It was a pleasure to work with them to get things done over the last few years. I think the main point that came across for me and many parents that have been calling in for these last several months and asking questions is that those questions don't always get answered. I think the vast majority of them don't get answered. It is an ongoing concern that folks have and if there is a way to get a list of those questions and to have a question and answer and post it on the website that would be wonderful. I want to offer clarification. If you don't have energy savings, that energy savings provides the debt service for the work that is going to be done in the schools. It is something that I suggest you take a look at because we don't know how long this pandemic will continue. The other thing is that presentation that was provided last month, they were talking about certain projects which included roofs and I also saw UHS LED lighting as one of the things that were in the power point and I just want to make sure that the work that has been done in the district, that we are not going to redo work, especially roofs that have useful life remaining in them. Lastly, there was a scope of work that was created when putting this all together – it was before COVID-19 so I think the district should take a look at that scope of work and see how it speaks to COVID-19 needs today and maybe some adjustments need to be made because places like Franklin School where you have those windows that are shut closed and not able to up them up because of the central air. I don't know if you would ever be able to have a COVID-19 ready school at Franklin but those are the things we need to consider as a district and how that effects the reopening of our schools.

Kathleen Brunsmeyers stated congratulations and best wishes to Mr. Tatum and Mrs. Moses on their retirement and good luck to the sole survivor Mr. Benaquista on remaining in place. Thank you to all the custodial staff who have been working really hard over the summer to get the schools ready. They have so much more to do than they ever did before. I appreciate everything that everyone does in the building from the office staff, to the principals, to everyone, especially the custodial staff. In Mr. Tatum's suggestion/recommendation to have the school start virtual, I know that Mr. Taylor said that the Board doesn't have to officially vote but I would hope that our Board will offer whatever wording or verbiage going forward and putting a stamp of approval on what I'm sure was the hardest decisions that the Superintendent and staff had to ever make in their lives. Calling it when you know you have people who need the kids to

go to school, I know how hard that decision was and I hope that the Board will support Mr. Tatum, Mrs. Moses and Mr. Benaquista and put some verbiage to their decision whoever it gets passed on to that they are in support of him. I will be keeping all the Board members and anyone involved in the hiring process for the new positions in my thoughts and prayers because I know you have a great task ahead of you and I also will be keeping all my fellow staff in my thoughts and prayers as we start this new year in a different format. Enjoy the last few weeks of the summer.

Janice Rodas stated I have two kids that are enrolled in Battle Hill. My question is regarding my son. He is eligible for the pre-k 3 program for his speech therapy. Will somebody be reaching out to me with regards to how that go? They mentioned if he was in-person school, he would be pulled out two days a week for his speech. Is that something I need to speak with someone else about?

Mr. Taylor stated I want to invite the speaker to contact the Superintendent personally and separately and/or otherwise to the extent she doesn't want to do that, I would advise the administration not to respond as it involves a student, a privacy matter, it also involves an issue of special education and/or legal issues. Mrs. Minneci stated she is to contact the Superintendent's office directly.

Ann Margaret Shannon stated I want to thank Mr. Tatum. I have never had so many conference calls with Mr. Tatum, Mr. D'Avanzo and myself. The UTEA, after many discussions, did ask Mr. Tatum to consider 100% virtual because of the safety of the kids, the families and the staff. I want to thank Mr. Tatum for the hard decision and his staff for what they did tonight with 100% virtual. I know it will be difficult for everyone but I think it will make it much easier in the future if we do a step down as things get better.

Vikki Morrocco stated I'm a Franklin School educator. I hope everyone is well. Will teachers be able to work remotely and teach virtually from our classrooms? Just thinking about any staff that might have problems like unreliable internet and/or out-of-date technology. Mrs. Minneci stated thank you we will get back on that.

Yocasta Brens-Watson stated thank you to Mr. Tatum and Mrs. Moses for the years of work and dedication that they have put into our district and I know from my engagement with both of them that they have had our children's wellbeing and education at heart. Thank you to Dr. Francis and Mrs. Richardson for both of you advocating on behalf of us parents. You have access to these ZOOM meetings and increasing the number of participants and Mrs. Richardson for advocating on behalf of us in our time as participants in these meetings. When you have your own private meetings and to come back in time for us to be able to continue to hear; for years I have heard complaints from many different people about the lack of parental participation in Board meetings. Here we are showing up in the hundreds and most of us cannot join the meeting or we cannot remain on the meetings because these meetings take so long and we are parents and we have to take care of our children. There has to be an effort on the part of the Board for transparency and fairness in the way in which are being treated so thank you to both of you. The last meeting I attended there was a vote on an insurance company and giving them a contract on behalf of the district and it was brought up by more than one Board member that the company

had been hired in the past by the district and that they had fallen short in the delivery of services and the quality of services to the district so once they are on board with us again, will there be an opportunity to re-evaluate what they are doing and how they are delivering their services and will there be an opportunity to re-evaluate the contract and go back on this because I think the last thing we want to be doing – it is not just about saving money but it is also about the quality of the services that we are receiving. If the services are not up to par we are wasting our money.

Lydia asked will there be an official statement from the Board about the article on NJ.com about a janitor being accused of sexual misconduct within the district. As a parent this was extremely disturbing to read about.

Mr. Taylor stated the Board cannot comment on nor the administration comment on personnel items nor can the Board comment on pending litigation matters at any time.

Mrs. Higgins, Mr. McDowell and Dr. Morgan were not available at time of vote.

MOTION FOR EXECUTIVE SESSION:

Moved by Mrs. Richardson, seconded by Mrs. Ruiz, that the Board go into Executive Session at 9:34 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.

- Matters of personnel of attorney-client privilege; pending or anticipated litigation, specifically Mervin Rose v Ruiz, Francis, McDowell, Morgan and Cerceillo v UTBOE

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: Dr. Francis, Mr. Nufrio, Mrs. Richardson, Mrs. Ruiz,  
Mrs. Williams, Mrs. Minneci

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED

The Board returned to public session at 10:10 p.m.

Mrs. Minneci stated I want to thank everyone who came tonight and made comments.

MOTION TO ADJOURN:

There being no further business before the Board in public session it was moved by Mr. Nufrio, seconded by Mrs. Williams, that the meeting be adjourned at 10:10 p.m.

AYE: Dr. Francis, Dr. Morgan, Mr. Nufrio, Mrs. Richardson, Mrs. Ruiz,  
Mrs. Williams, Mrs. Minneci

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,

MANUEL E. VIEIRA  
BOARD SECRETARY

