

NESHAMINY SCHOOL DISTRICT
Langhorne, Pennsylvania

PUBLIC WORK SESSION MINUTES
NESHAMINY BOARD OF SCHOOL DIRECTORS
February 5, 2013

The Neshaminy Board of School Directors met in public work session on February 5, 2013 in the Harry M Dengler, Jr. Performing Arts Center at the Maple Point Middle School. The following persons were in attendance:

BOARD MEMBERS:

Mr. Scott E. Congdon, Vice President
Ms. Irene Boyle
Mrs. Susan Cummings
Mr. Mike Morris
Mr. William Oettinger
Mr. Mark Shubin
Mr. Anthony Sposato

ADMINISTRATORS:

Mr. Robert L. Copeland
Dr. Jacqueline Rattigan
Mrs. Barbara Markowitz
Dr. Geeta Heble
Mr. Anthony Devlin
Mrs. Theresa Hinterberger

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:

Mr. Ritchie Webb, President
Mr. Kim Koutsouradis

OTHERS: Approximately 50 persons from the public, staff and press

SECRETARY: Mrs. Jennifer Burns

SOLICITOR: Thomas J. Profy, III, Esquire

Mr. Congdon announced the prior to the meeting an Executive Session was held.

1. Call to Order

Mr. Congdon called the meeting to order at 7:11 p.m.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

Mr. Congdon requested those in attendance join in the salute to the flag.

3. Announcements

None

4. Superintendent's Report

Mr. Copeland advised the Board on the following:

- Maple Point Commemorates Martin Luther King Day with Service Project.
- Neshaminy High School FBLA Regional Winners.
- Spanish and French National Honor Society Induction.

Mr. Copland asked the Board for their approval for the Guy's Racing Club to use Neshaminy High School's Idlewood trails in June.

Mr. Congdon made a motion to approve the Guy's Racing Club to use Idlewood trail in June.

Mr. Shubin seconded the motion.

The Board passed the motion by a vote of seven ayes, and zero nays. (Mr. Webb and Mr. Koutsouradis were not present.)

5. Public Comment

Charles Alfonso, Langhorne, business executive, expressed his indignation that public speaker, Howard Lindner, was cut-off when he disapprovingly mentioned a Board member's name in his comment. He stated that the Board should not censor comments directed toward a Board member whenever a speaker disagrees with that member. Mr. Alfonso also called for the school consolidation matter to be sent to a referendum. He said taxpayers must have the final word on this issue.

Jim Jenca, Middletown Township, retired, applauded the entire School Board for their efforts. Mr. Jenca said he does not understand why the NFT will not accept the latest contract offer. He asked for the Board to comment on what progress, if any, was made at the last negotiation session. He reiterated his displeasure that the drug testing and background check language was omitted from the latest offer. Mr. Jenca said he feels the contract should be pulled from the table and revised down and take the district back from the NFT leadership.

Angie Manning, Langhorne, New Jersey public school teacher, asked the Board to approve the application for MaST Charter School. She said that Neshaminy parents need to have the option of an alternative school, especially one that offers full-day kindergarten. Ms. Manning said that while she is unable to set up a field trip to check out large schools, she and Dr. Carla Quinlisk have done research on this issue and they are willing to share the information with the Board. Ms. Manning also suggested that the Board send notes home with children to inform parents of the school consolidation issue, because she said that many families are not aware of what is going on.

Tom Miller, Middletown Township, truck driver, stated that he is in favor of closing schools if it will save money for the district. However, he said that he is not in favor of building a mega-school, which would cost the district money that they do not have. He suggested an alternative idea of using trailers as temporary classrooms while adapting to the changing enrollment.

Deb Harker, Middletown Township, said she attended the MaST Charter School Open House in Philadelphia, which had a huge turnout. Ms. Harker said she hopes that more Board members will take the opportunity to attend another Open House in the future. She said the students that attend MaST are so excited and enthusiastic about their school. She implored the Board to approve the MaST application, so that parents will have the option of another school for their children.

Ed Kern, Levittown, retired, referenced a newspaper article written by a Neshaminy student about programs that have been cut. Mr. Kern expressed his concern over the void that has been created over the cutting of these educational programs. Mr. Kern urged the Board to give the appropriate thought to reinstating programs that have been cut and implementing new programs instead of spending money on new school construction. Mr. Kern asked the Board to form a plan for the proposed closed elementary schools. He also wondered why the former Neshaminy Middle School could not have been converted into an elementary school instead of being demolished.

Howard Lindner, Langhorne, retired, thanked Mr. Alfonso for his comments regarding the incident at the last public meeting. He said he attended a meeting in which prospective architects were interviewed for the school construction project. Mr. Lindner expressed his disappointment that several Board members were absent from this important meeting. He stated that he feels that school closings may be a necessary action; however, he is still in favor of a referendum to give taxpayers a voice in this matter.

6. Items for Discussion

a) Budget Development

Mr. Copeland stated that the budget process is ongoing.

Mrs. Markowitz stated that at the next meeting the Board will be voting on the preliminary budget.

b) Draft of the 2013 - 2014 School Calendar

Mr. Copeland advised the Board on the 2013 - 2014 School Calendar and stated that the Board's approval will be needed at the next meeting.

7. Items for Approval Tonight

a) Acceptance of the 2011 - 2012 Audit

Motion: Acceptance of the 2011 - 2012 Audit

Ms. Boyle read the following motion:

WHEREAS, the audit for the Neshaminy School District for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2012, has been prepared by Maillie, Falconiero & Company, LLP.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Audit Report for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2012, be accepted in accordance with Section 24-2408 of the School Code.

Mrs. Cummings made a motion to accept the 2011 - 2012 Audit.

Mr. Morris seconded the motion.

The Board passed the motion by a vote of seven ayes, and zero nays. (Mr. Webb and Mr. Koutsouradis were not present.)

b) Overnight Trips

Dr. Rattigan advised the Board on the following trips:

1. Neshaminy High School - Eastern Regional Bowling Championship - Reading, PA - February 28th to March 2, 2013
2. Neshaminy High School - FBLA State Leadership Conference and Competition - Hershey Lodge, Hershey, PA - April 14th to 17, 2013

Mr. Oettinger made a motion to accept said trips.

Mrs. Cummings seconded the motion.

The Board passed the motion by a vote of seven ayes, and zero nays. (Mr. Webb and Mr. Koutsouradis were not present.)

8. Items for Approval at the February 19th Public Board Meeting

a) Revised Board Policies

Dr. Rattigan advised the Board on the following policies:

- Policy #811 - Acceptance use of the Computers, Network, Internet, Electronic Communications and Technical Services Policy and Supplement to Policy #811 - Technology Use Guidelines for Staff and Technology Use Guidelines for Students
- Policy #535 - Weapons

b) Approval of the 2013 - 2014 Preliminary Budget

Mr. Copeland stated that at the February 19, 2013 Public Board Meeting the Approval of the 2013 - 2014 Preliminary Budget will be an agenda item.

c) Appointment of Architect

Mr. Copeland stated that at the February 19, 2013 Public Board Meeting there will be a motion presented for the approval for the appointment of an architect.

d) BCIU #22 - 2013 - 2014 Programs & Services and Instructional Materials and Research Budget

Mr. Copeland stated that at the February 19, 2013 Public Board Meeting the BCIU #22 - 2013 - 2014 Programs & Services and Instructional Materials and Research Budget will be presented for approval.

e) Summer School Programs for 2013

Mr. Copeland stated that at the February 19, 2013 Public Board Meeting the Summer School Programs for 2013 will be an agenda item.

f) Woods Services Agreement

Mr. Copeland stated that at the February 19, 2013 Public Board Meeting the Woods Services Agreement will be an agenda item.

g) Bids/budgets transfers

Mrs. Markowitz stated there was one bid 14-02 for athletic and physical education supplies.

Bid No: 14 - 02

Bid Amount: \$68,373.30

Bid Description: Supplies for physical education programs and various team sports for the school year 2013- 2014.

9. Committee Reports

a) Board Policies

Ms. Boyle thanked all the community members who came out to the last meeting and advised the Board that the next meeting is not scheduled, when the date is known it, will be posted on the website.

b) Educational Development

Mr. Shubin informed the Board that the next meeting is scheduled for February 11th, at 6:30 p.m.

c) Finance/Facilities

Mr. Copeland advised the Board that at the last meeting the committee interviewed a number of architects and chose three architects, who submitted their proposals presentations. The architects will now submit supplemental information and the committee will submit their recommendations to the Board.

d) IU Board

Mrs. Cummings informed the Board that at the last meeting there were two presentations, the interlibrary delivery service of Pennsylvania, and also the extending school year services.

e) Education Foundation

Mr. Copeland informed the Board that there is no date set as of yet.

f) Technical School

Mr. Morris advised the Board that the last meeting the committees were developed and also a dinner was held given by the students for the Board Appreciation.

g) Technology

Mr. Shubin advised the Board that the date of the next technology meeting has not yet been set.

h) Ad Hoc Facility Use Update

Mr. Oettinger announced to the Board that the next meeting has not yet been scheduled.

10. Public Comment

Steve Rodos, Villages of Flowers Mill, retired, stated that he is against funding any charter school for the purpose of offering full-day kindergarten, when we should be offering full-day kindergarten in all of

Neshaminy Elementary Schools. Mr. Rodos also said that he hopes that the remnants of the TLC program are being sustained.

Howard Lindner, Langhorne, retired, agreed with Mr. Rodos that Neshaminy is overdue for a full-day kindergarten. He stated his support of a referendum for the school consolidation question saying that taxpayers do respond on important issues and come out to vote when they are passionate about the subject.

Charles Alfonso, Langhorne, business executive, mentioned that he attended the open house for the MaST Charter School in Philadelphia. He stated that, in his opinion, the educational system, curriculum, and teaching staff of the Neshaminy District are profoundly outdated. Mr. Alfonso said that MaST Charter School ranks extremely high among the nation's charter schools and the Board should approve their application. He urged the Board to allow MaST to take over all schools within the district.

Stephen Pirritano, Feasterville, self-employed, remarked that he sent all Board members and some of the Administrators his comments on the Policy meeting indicating his objections to Policy 811. Mr. Pirritano said that while he is usually in favor of choice, he is foremost a public school supporter and, therefore, he is torn about the charter school application. He said he cannot support funding a charter school system by defunding the public school system. Mr. Pirritano stated that he does not understand how some people can think that the school consolidation is being rushed when it has been a matter for discussion since 2005.

Jim Jenca, Middletown Township, retired, said he supports the MaST Charter School because he is in favor of choice and he feels the Neshaminy School District is deficient and parents need another choice. Mr. Jenca congratulated Mr. Copeland on the outstanding service he is providing to the district and remarked that he is exactly what Neshaminy needed.

Almando Carrasquillo, Langhorne, retired, conveyed his frustration with Policy 811. He said that requiring a minor to sign a contract is coercion and will not hold up in court. Mr. Carrasquillo stated that in order to be allowed access to school computers, students must sign the contract, which puts the burden for all liability on the students and parents.

11. Future Topics

None

12. Agenda Development for the February 19, 2013 Public Board Meeting

None

13. Board Comment

Mr. Oettinger said that at the last negotiation meeting the two sides were in separate rooms and the mediator conferred about trivial language issues that were brought up by the NFT. Mr. Oettinger said the school consolidation issue is certainly not being rushed. There have been countless meetings regarding the matter for many years. He also said he is in favor of full-day kindergarten and he is willing to have the matter researched. Mr. Oettinger concluded by offering thoughts and prayers to the Neshaminy student who was recently seriously injured in the Boston tour bus accident.

Mr. Morris advised that he will ask the School Board's attorney about the validity of minors signing the Policy 811 agreement. He said that the last negotiation meeting was disheartening, because nothing was resolved. He added that he will never support "Equal Say" in the new contract.

Mr. Shubin agreed with Mr. Oettinger's request for prayers for the seriously injured Neshaminy student hurt in the bus accident. He expressed his concern for the school menus and food program in the Neshaminy district. He said the food choices are completely inadequate and changes are needed. Mr.

Shubin said that Governor Corbett's proposal to privatize liquor sales is something the public should investigate and support, because the proposal will provide profits from the sales to fund a new education program for Pennsylvania schools.

Mr. Sposato said that he shares concerns for educational development in Neshaminy, and there are several exciting new programs that are being discussed. He said he will see about preparing a presentation for the public in the near future. Mr. Sposato said the consolidation issue has been studied to death and it is time for a decision. Mr. Sposato said that the district is looking at \$40 million in repairs to old buildings and that would be the same cost of building a brand new facility, which will be much more practical. There would be savings on maintenance costs and operational costs and these savings can go towards educational programs.

Mr. Oettinger assured the public that the district is doing everything that is needed to insure the safety of children in our schools.

Mr. Congdon said he attended the Bucks County Technical School dinner and the presentation was outstanding and a job well done. Mr. Congdon said the members of the school board pay the same taxes as everyone and they are acutely aware of the responsibility of spending taxpayer money. He reiterated the comments about taking action on the school consolidation issue, which has been discussed for many years. Mr. Congdon said the consolidation will actually save the district money by eliminating costly repairs to outdated buildings, improving existing schools and adding new educational programs..

14. Adjournment of Meeting

Mr. Shubin moved the meeting be adjourned and Ms. Boyle seconded the motion. The Board unanimously approved the motion. Mr. Congdon adjourned the meeting at 8:20 p.m.

Respectively submitted,

Jennifer Burns
Board Secretary