

NESHAMINY SCHOOL DISTRICT
Langhorne, Pennsylvania

PUBLIC WORK SESSION MINUTES
NESHAMINY BOARD OF SCHOOL DIRECTORS
March 4, 2014

The Neshaminy Board of School Directors met in public work session on March 4, 2014 in the Harry M. Dangler, Jr., Performing Arts Center at the Maple Point Middle School. The following persons were in attendance:

BOARD MEMBERS:

Mr. Scott E. Congdon, President
Ms. Irene Boyle, Vice President
Mr. John Allen
Mr. Mike Morris
Mr. Stephen Pirritano
Mr. Ron Rudy
Mr. Mark Shubin
Mr. Anthony Sposato

ADMINISTRATORS:

Mr. Robert L. Copeland
Mrs. Barbara Markowitz
Mrs. Theresa Hinterberger
Mr. Anthony Devlin
Dr. Gloria Hancock
Mr. Don Harm

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:

Mrs. Susan Cummings

OTHERS: Approximately 75 persons from the public, staff and press

SECRETARY: Mrs. Jennifer Burns

SOLICITOR: Thomas J. Profy, IV, Esquire

1. Call to Order

Mr. Congdon called the meeting to order at 7:09 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:

- Albert Schweitzer Elementary School - Service Learning Club Presentation
 1. Mrs. Jen Hanley and Mrs. Deb Crawford - Teachers
 2. Students: Emma Fielder, Kaitlyn Smith, Megan Smith, Payton Moore, Sydney Merchiere, Olivia Giberson, Mason Allen, Corey McCall, Eric Sexton, Donny Little, Cameron Moore, Alexa Parisian, Haley Martino, Erika Chichilitti, Nathan Mervin, Connor Brian, Yarin Ulmez, Carter Sherin.

Mr. Copeland gave an update on the budget process.

Mr. Devlin gave a PowerPoint presentation on reduced reliance upon the Intermediate Unit.

Mr. Congdon read a statement concerning the current proposed plan of the closing of Miller Elementary School and the possibility of moving the fifth grade up to the secondary buildings.

5. Public Comment

Shannon Kilcoyne, self employed, resident of Langhorne, presented the Board with a petition including 325 signatures of parents who are against moving fifth grade students to middle school. She asked the Board why the profit and loss statement is not available to taxpayers. She also asked the Board to elaborate on their proposal for moving fifth grade to middle school.

Nancy Zimmerman, pre-school employee, resident of Langhorne, voiced her concerns about moving fifth graders to middle school asking what is being done to prepare the students. She also asked about class size, decisions about what middle schools will be involved and why this is being considered if there is currently empty space in the elementary schools, which originally initiated the discussion about consolidation. Ms. Zimmerman suggested that the Board consider the possibility of forming a kindergarten center.

Colleen Finley, Neshaminy elementary school teacher, resident of Langhorne, spoke on behalf of the teachers and parents of Walter Miller Elementary School. She presented the Board with a number of questions including what building will the Miller students be attending in September should the school be closed, will fifth graders still participate in a music program, and will guidance counselors be added to the middle schools.

Debbie Letham, senior scientist, resident of Levittown, asked the Board to explain further regarding the plan to move the fifth grade to middle school and what is planned for the students who currently attend Walter Miller Elementary School.

Dave Marsden, resident of Langhorne, expressed his concerns that fifth graders are not emotionally and mentally mature enough to move to middle school prematurely.

6. Items for Approval Tonight

a) Overnight Trips

Mr. Harm submitted the following trips for approval:

1. Neshaminy High School Band to PMEA Region VI Band Festival, Unionville High School - March 13 - 15, 2014.
2. Neshaminy High School to PMEA All State Band/Orchestra/Choir Festival, Hershey, PA - March 26 - 29, 2014.
3. Neshaminy High School Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA) to State Level Leadership Conference, Hershey Lodge, PA - April 6 - April 9, 2014.
4. Neshaminy High School Dance Team to the Russell Athletic Bowl, Orlando, Florida - December 26 - December 30, 2014.

Mr. Pirritano made a motion to accept said trips.

Mr. Copeland stated that all trips will be calendared in the future.

Members of the Board requested that chaperones be listed and identified on all future trips and Mr. Harm agreed to this request.

Ms. Boyle seconded the motion.

The Board unanimously accepted said motion by a vote of 8 ayes and 0 nays. (Mrs. Cummings was not present.)

Mr. Pirritano noted that Mr. Copeland has insured that the MOU's have been properly created including ending dates and reviewed by legal counsel and the Board.

Mr. Morris made a motion to separate items b and c.

Mr. Congdon seconded the motion.

The Board unanimously accepted said motion by a vote of 8 ayes and 0 nays. (Mrs. Cummings was not present.)

b) Memorandum of Agreement with NESPA regarding 2013- 2014 inclement weather

Mr. Congdon presented the following motion:

MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT

This Memorandum of Agreement ("MOA") is entered into by and between the Neshaminy Educational Support Professional Association ("NESPA") and the Neshaminy School District ("District").

WHEREAS, as a result of the number of lost student days due to inclement weather the 2013/2014 school calendar needs to be revised to rescheduled lost student days; and,

WHEREAS, the calendar revision requires scheduling April 14, 15, and 16 which were originally school holidays, as student make up days; and,

WHEREAS, the current Collective Bargaining Agreement between the District and NESPA includes a Memorandum of Understanding ("MOU") that precludes the use of these days as make up days; and,

WHEREAS, NESPA, recognizing the hardship placed on the students of the District by the days lost due to inclement weather, is willing to waive the prohibition set forth in paragraph 5 of the MOU for this year only.

NOW, THEREFORE, the District and NESPA agree as follows:

1. NESPA waives the requirement of the MOU and agrees to permit the District to utilize April 14, 15 and 16 as student makeup days this year only.
2. Any bargaining unit members for whom these days would have been unpaid days off may, but will not be required to work on these days.
3. Any bargaining unit members noted in paragraph 2 above who choose not to work on these days must notify the District by no later than March 19, 2014 of that choice.
4. Any bargaining unit members noted in paragraph 2 above who choose not to report to work for these days will be scheduled, in accordance with current District practice, to work (3) days incrementally or consecutively at some point prior to June 30, 2014.
5. This MOA is applicable for the 2013-2014 school year only.

NESHAMINY EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT
PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATION

NESHAMINY SCHOOL DISTRICT

By: _____

By: _____

Scott E. Congdon, Board President

Date: _____

Date: _____

Mr. Shubin seconded the motion.

The Board unanimously accepted said motion by a vote of 8 ayes and 0 nays. (Mrs. Cummings was not present.)

c) Memorandum of Agreement with NFT regarding 2013 - 2014 inclement weather days

Mr. Shubin presented the following motion:

MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT

This Memorandum of Agreement ("MOA") is entered into by and between the Neshaminy Federation of Teachers ("NFT") and the Neshaminy School District ("District").

WHEREAS, as a result of the number of school days lost during the 2013/2014 school year due to inclement weather the 2013/2014 school calendar needs to be revised to reschedule lost student days: and,

WHEREAS, the calendar revision requires scheduling April 14, 15, and 16, which were originally school holidays, as student make up days; and,

WHEREAS, there are several issues relating to the use of personal days that the parties wish to address; and,

WHEREAS, the "District" and the "NFT" recognize that under article X, section 10.11.2 of the collective bargaining agreement bargaining unit member earn two (2) personal days per year; and,

WHEREAS, the "District" and the "NFT" recognize that pursuant to article X, section 10.11.3a personal day cannot be taken the day before or after a school holiday;

NOW, THEREFORE, the "District" and the "NFT" agree as follows:

- 1.** The District will, for the 2013-2014 year only, allow certified staff members who have unused personal days available to use a personal day on April 16, 2014 if they are able to submit confirmation of a nonrefundable plane or location reservations for that day with payment made prior to February 10, 2014.
- 2.** The District will waive the requirements of section 10-11.3 for the period of April 14th through April 16th.
- 3.** If a certified staff member does not have an unused personal day available to be used on April 16 but meets the above listed criteria that staff member will be able to use a personal day on April 16th which day is "borrowed" from and subtracted from that employee's personal day allotment for the 2014-2015 year provided he/she meets the following conditions:
 - a. The certified staff member must acknowledge that they will be returning to active employment for the entire 2014/2015 school year;
 - b. The certified staff member must qualify for the Service Benefit set forth in section 6-11 of the collective bargaining agreement and have enough days in his/her sick bank so that the District could recoup the value of the personal day taken should the certified staff member not return for a full year. Paragraphs 1, 2 and 3 are applicable for the 2013-2014 school year only and do not set a precedent or establish a practice.

4. The collective bargaining agreements shall be interpreted to mean that personal days are prorated based on time worked.

5. An in service day identified by the District as an exchange day under Appendix B shall be treated as a school holiday for the purposes of the application of section 10-11.3.

_____	_____
For The NFT	Scott E. Congdon, Board President
_____	_____
Date	Date

Mr. Allen seconded the motion.

The motion passed by a vote of 7 ayes, and 1 nay, (Mr. Morris). (Mrs. Cummings was not present.)

d) Transfer of Student/Transfer of Entity

Mr. Congdon presented the following motion:

Whereas, the transfer of certain Neshaminy students with disabilities from IU-operated Emotional Support, Specialized Learning Support, and Emotional Support/Autistic Support classes to District operated programs would facilitate the integration and inclusion of these students in their schools, render more efficient the administration and oversight of programming for these students, and yield cost savings to the District and its taxpayers; and

Whereas, such transfer could be subject to the “transfer between entities” provisions of the Pennsylvania Public School Code, be it therefore RESOLVED--

That, effective with the commencement of the 2014-2015 school term, the Neshaminy School District shall transfer students currently on caseloads of Emotional Support, Specialized Learning Support, and Emotional Support/Autistic Support classes currently operated by the Bucks County Schools Intermediate Unit No. 22 (“BCIU”) to caseloads of District-employed teachers, as identified in the Special Education Plan Revision Notice submitted herewith and here approved for submission to the Pennsylvania Department of Education;

That, effective with the conclusion of any applicable BCIU extended school year programming or July 1, 2014, whichever is sooner, the classroom space in District-operated schools in which such transferred students currently receive services shall revert to the exclusive use and control of the District;

That, effective with the commencement of the 2014-2015 school term, such transferred students shall be assigned to appropriately-certified teachers either currently employed by the District or currently in the District furlough pool, to the maximum extent possible given the program needs of the students; and

That, to the extent that the transfer of students as required herein is deemed the transfer of an IU class or program "as a unit," the District shall adhere to any applicable provisions of the Public School Code governing transfers of programs between school entities.

Mr. Shubin seconded the motion.

The Board unanimously accepted said motion by a vote of 8 ayes and 0 nays. (Mrs. Cummings was not present.)

7. Items for Approval at the March 18th Public Board Meeting

a) 2014-2015 School Calendar

Mr. Copeland stated that at the March 18, 2014 Public Board Meeting the 2014- 2015 School Calendar will be an agenda item.

b) Summer Programs 2014

Dr. Hancock presented the 2014 Summer Program to the Board.

Mr. Shubin asked if the summer curriculum program has been reviewed and updated.

Dr. Hancock stated that it was.

Mr. Pirritano asked if the program can accept additional students.

Dr. Hancock stated that the program will be able to meet the needs that are required.

c) Bids/Budget Transfers

Mrs. Markowitz stated that there are no Budget Transfers and that there is one bid, 15 - 01 for general school supplies and it will be an agenda item at the March 18th Public Board Meeting.

8. Committee Reports

a) Board Policies

Ms. Boyle stated to the Board that the next meeting is scheduled for March 25th at 6:30 p.m.

b) Educational Development

Ms. Boyle stated to the Board that the next meeting is scheduled for March 11th at 6:30 p.m.

c) Finance/Facilities

Mr. Congdon advised the Board that the next meeting is scheduled for April 7th.

d) IU Board

Mrs. Cummings was not present.

e) Neshaminy Education Foundation

Mr. Shubin advised the Board that the date will be announced at a later time.

f) Technical School

Mr. Morris stated to the Board that at the last meeting they reviewed the budget process.

g) Technology

Mr. Shubin informed the Board that the next meeting is scheduled for March 19th at 7:00 p.m.

h) Facilities Ad Hoc Committee

Mr. Pirritano informed the Board that the next meeting is scheduled for March 10th at 7:00 p.m.

i) Legislative

Mr. Shubin stated to the Board that the first meeting was very productive and objectives have been set to be reviewed at the next meeting in March.

9. Public Comment

Gina Nelson, school teacher, resident of Middletown Township, stated that she is concerned about 10 year old children being in the same building with 14 year old students. Ms. Nelson mentioned things that will be lost to fifth graders such as recess, move-up day, safety patrol program, service learning club, and elementary year book. She also voiced concerns about the academic impact on the students and the struggle they will have with the transition of moving to middle school.

Raina Schumaker, remarked that fourth and fifth graders at Oliver Heckman already change classes for math, social studies and science so she thinks that they will adapt very well when they go to middle school. Ms. Schumaker asked the Board to explain the obligation that the district has regarding PSERS. She also asked for a comment regarding the budget and raising taxes.

10. Future Topic

None.

11. Board Comment

Mr. Shubin remarked that he appreciates all the concerns that have been voiced and he asked the public to bear with the Board while they make an informed decision. He said everyone should keep an open mind and he reminded the public that the Board's objective is to bring good things to the district.

Mr. Pirritano thanked the public for their questions and encouraged them to attend the Ad Hoc Committee meeting on March 10th to obtain answers to their concerns. Mr. Pirritano stated that the plan must follow the proper process to be fair to everyone and to reach the proper decision.

Mr. Morris urged concerned parents to attend the Ad Hoc Meetings in order to have their questions and interests heard by the Board. He explained his no vote for the MOU for the NFT stating it is nothing personal, but rather an attempt to be fair to all employees of the district. Mr. Morris asked Mr. Copeland if keyboarding classes are available to fifth graders. He also asked Mr. Copeland if he can provide a report on police responses to the school district for complaints about assaults and drug issues so he can evaluate the impact it may have on moving fifth graders to middle school.

Ms. Boyle asked Mr. Morris for clarification regarding his request to separate the vote regarding the MOU for the Support Staff and the NFT.

Mr. Morris stated that he commends the Support Staff for their professionalism and he has reservations about the Certified Staff being granted vacation days when there is an issue of making up inclement weather days because it is the students who are harmed.

Mr. Congdon stated that the PSERS information will be gathered and presented. He further explained that the MOUs that were voted on extended the same opportunity to the NFT that the Support Staff already had in place, as long as the guidelines in the MOU are followed.

12. Adjournment of Meeting

Mr. Congdon moved the meeting be adjourned and Mr. Shubin seconded the motion. The Board unanimously approved the motion. Mr. Congdon adjourned the meeting at 8:45 p.m.

Respectively submitted,

Jennifer Burns
Board Secretary