

NESHAMINY SCHOOL DISTRICT
Langhorne, Pennsylvania

PUBLIC WORK SESSION MINUTES
NESHAMINY BOARD OF SCHOOL DIRECTORS
April 9, 2013

The Neshaminy Board of School Directors met in public work session on April 9, 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. Ritchie Webb, President
Mr. Scott E. Congdon, Vice President
Ms. Irene Boyle
Mrs. Susan Cummings
Mr. Kim Koutsouradis
Mr. William Oettinger
Mr. 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. Mike Morris

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

SECRETARY: Mrs. Jennifer Burns

SOLICITOR: Thomas J. Profy, IV, Esquire

An Executive Session was held from 6:15 to 7:05 where personnel issues were discussed.

1. Call to Order

Mr. Webb called the meeting to order at 7:07 p.m.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

Mr. Webb 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:

- Neshaminy High School's Tara Huber spoke at Columbia University on March 20, 2013.
- Heckman students take part in service project at Oxford Valley Mall.
- Samuel Everitt Elementary School raised \$2,297.52 for Pennies for Patients.
- Gave thanks to the Bucks County Commissioners for visiting Neshaminy High School.
- Committee on target for making presentation for full-day kindergarten on May 1st.
- Tentative date set for the STEM Symposium will be May 17 and 18th.

5. Public Comment

Ed Kern, retired, Levittown said he participated in the Millcreek Elementary visitation and he thanked Mr. Shubin for coordinating the event. Mr. Kern said that while he had a positive experience on the visitation, he is still opposed to super-sized elementary schools. He said that he doesn't think the administration of a larger school can really get to know the students and the family atmosphere is lost. Mr. Kern said he thinks a super-sized school will divide the district and he questions what will become of the closed buildings. He urged the Board to revisit other options and use resources to improve Neshaminy's technology, bring our buildings up code and increase security in all buildings.

Angie Manning, New Jersey teacher, Langhorne, also thanked Mr. Shubin for organizing the Millcreek Elementary visitation. Ms. Manning said that in April 2012 the state standards were changed for keyboarding and she questioned when these new courses will be offered to Neshaminy's elementary students.

Donald Gallagher, Lancaster County, stated that he came to the meeting to stand in solidarity with Donna Boyle on the "Redskins" mascot issue. He said there are many other people who also support Ms. Boyle's efforts to have Neshaminy do away with the term "Redskins" in favor of a less offensive mascot. He said it is important for the Board to consider the extent of the opposition to this mascot. Mr. Gallagher said the dispute damages the reputation of the Neshaminy community and it is time to retire the old school symbol and select something new.

Donna Boyle, child care provider, Langhorne, spoke about an incident in which her son performed a heroic act and saved a friend with no thought or concern for his own wellbeing. He simply did the right thing instinctively. Ms. Boyle said the Board should do what is morally right also and do away with the "Redskins" term.

Deb Harker, banker, Middletown Township said that a group of dedicated parents have worked very hard to obtain signatures in support of the MaST Charter School. They have gathered more than 1300 signatures and she asked the Board to reconsider their decision. Ms. Harker also asked those members of the Board who have not already visited MaST Charter School to do so, so they can experience what Neshaminy could gain from accepting the charter school.

6. Item for Discussion

a) Budget Development

Mr. Copeland advised the Board that there will be a Finance and Facilities meeting on April 18th and the agenda will be a more detailed look at the budget.

7. Items for Approval tonight

a) Overnight Trips

Dr. Rattigan advised the Board on the following trips:

1. Neshaminy High School - Pennsylvania Future Problem Solving State Championship - Radison Hotel, Camp Hill, PA - April 12 and 13, 2013.
2. Neshaminy High School Model UN Club Conference at UN Headquarters and Grand Hyatt Hotel - New York City - May 16 - 18, 2013.

Mr. Webb made a motion to approve said trips.

Mr. Koutsouradis seconded the motion.

The Board unanimously approved said trips. (Mr. Morris was not present.)

8. Items for Approval at the April 23rd Public Board Meeting

a) New Master Agreement and e-Signature Pilot with the PA Department of Education governing the use of state and federal grant money.

Mr. Copeland stated that the Pennsylvania Department of Education has created a new process for approval of the electronic email which allows us to receive federal and state money.

b) Bids/budgets transfers

Mrs. Markowitz stated there were two bids 14-12 and 14-13 and one budget transfer report (working Copy) 13-4 for \$500.

Bid No. 14-12

Bid Amount: \$174,900.00

Bid Description: Masonry repairs to the facade of Maple Point Middle School.

Bid No. 14-13

Bid Amount: \$91,132.80

Bid Description: Repaving of Maintenance Garage, Transportation Garage and Bus Driver parking areas which includes 9,493 SY on High School Campus.

Mr. Koutsouradis asked if Bid No. 14-13 went out for bid?

Mrs. Markowitz stated that there were five bidders, and this was the lowest bid.

9. Committee Reports

a) Board Policies

Ms. Boyle advised the Board that the next meeting is scheduled for April 24th, at 6:00 p.m.

b) Educational Development

Mr. Shubin informed the Board that the next meeting is scheduled for April 22nd, at 6:30 p.m., and discussions will include transition to the common core standards.

c) Finance/Facilities

Mr. Webb advised the Board that the next meeting will be on April 18th.

d) IU Board

Mrs. Cummings informed the Board that the next meeting is scheduled for April 16th, in Doylestown at the IU.

e) Education Foundation

Mr. Copeland informed the Board that he was not at the last meeting and will update the Board when the minutes come out.

f) Technical School

Mr. Congdon advised the Board that at the last meeting, discussions included class room size, room changes, emergency services class was added, and funding formula.

g) Technology

Mr. Shubin advised the Board that the date of the next technology 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, retired, Villages of Flowers Mill, stated that he is disappointed that the Board has not made any attempt to address the issue of the Neshaminy mascot name. He said if the Washington NFL team can change their name, then Neshaminy should consider it also. Mr. Rodos said he took part in the visitation of the super-school in Central Bucks and was impressed by their operation and he thinks this would be a good solution for Neshaminy.

Jim Jenca, retired, Levittown, agreed with the statement made by Deb Harker regarding the MaST Charter School. Mr. Jenca said that 1300 signatures in favor of the charter school is an impressive testimonial. He said he would like to see the two sides (MaST Charter and Neshaminy School District) come together in an agreement without litigation. Mr. Jenca remarked that he would like to see this work out for the sake of the students.

Donna Boyle, child-care provider, Langhorne, made another plea to the Board to change the Neshaminy mascot stating that it is very important to people with Native American ancestry. Ms. Boyle said the word "Redskins" is offensive and Neshaminy is the only school in Pennsylvania that is still using it. She said that she understands that change can be difficult, but she feels certain that Neshaminy will survive the change and we can be a strong, respectful and honorable district and community by making this change.

11. Future Topics

None

12. Agenda Development for the April 23, 2013 Public Board Meeting

Mr. Koutsouradis asked what is the status of the MaST Charter School issue and can it be brought up again at a later date.

Mr. Profy stated that he will obtain the requested information needed to address the question and get back to Mr. Koutsouradis at a later time.

13. Board Comment

Mr. Shubin commended Ms. Donna Boyle for her diligence regarding the mascot name. He said he would have no problem supporting a change of the mascot and he welcomes a discussion of the matter.

Mr. Congdon thanked everyone who attended the Central Bucks visitation. He stated that the decision that was made for consolidation was not a popular or easy decision to make, but it was a necessary one. Mr. Congdon also said he is not aware of any of the schools which are not up to code and he would like to hear of any facts regarding this matter. Mr. Congdon thanked the negotiating team for their hard work and he said if the NFT would accept the contract right now they could get the district back on track.

Mr. Copeland informed the public that a link for FAQ regarding the school consolidation and construction is now on the Neshaminy website for anyone's review.

Ms. Boyle said that she has been on record for saying that she understands parents want to have a choice; however, she wants to make it clear that the members of the Board want all the students to be equally taken care of. Ms. Boyle also said she visited the school in Central Bucks and was favorably impressed and she is encouraged that Neshaminy is doing the right thing regarding the size of the school that will be built.

14. Adjournment of Meeting

Mr. Webb moved the meeting be adjourned and Mr. Shubin seconded the motion. The Board unanimously approved the motion. Mr. Webb adjourned the meeting at 7:47 p.m.

Respectively submitted,

Jennifer Burns
Board Secretary