

NESHAMINY SCHOOL DISTRICT
Langhorne, Pennsylvania

PUBLIC BOARD MEETING MINUTES
NESHAMINY BOARD OF SCHOOL DIRECTORS
(WORK SESSION)
March 14, 2006

The Neshaminy Board of School Directors met in public session on March 14, 2006, in the Board Room of the Maple Point Middle School. The following persons were in attendance:

BOARD MEMBERS:

Mr. Richard M. Eccles, President
Mrs. Sue C. Barrett, Vice President
Mr. Joseph R. Blasch
Mr. Jason Bowman
Ms. Irene M. Boyle
Mr. Frank J. Koziol
Dr. William H. Spitz
Mr. Ritchie Webb

ADMINISTRATORS:

Dr. Louis T. Muenker
Mr. Joseph V. Paradise
Dr. Sandra Costanzo
Mrs. Jacqueline Rattigan
Mr. Bruce M. Wyatt

BOARD MEMBER NOT PRESENT:

Mrs. Susan Cummings

SECRETARY:

Mrs. Anita E. Walls

SOLICITOR:

Thomas J. Profy, III, Esquire

OTHERS: Approximately 8 persons from the public, staff and press

1. **Call to Order**

Mr. Eccles called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

2. **Pledge of Allegiance**

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

3. **Announcements**

Mr. Eccles announced that Mrs. Cummings was ill this evening. Dr. Muenker advised that Mr. Wilson had a family illness that precludes him from attending this evening.

4. **Public Comment**

Mr. Solis Basen, Langhorne, PA, stated that at the last meeting there was discussion regarding the PSSA test results. It was proposed to spend approximately \$250,000 a year for four new teachers. Mr. Basen inquired why older students could not tutor the younger students in order to earn community credits and have volunteer retired senior educators tutor the higher grades. This could save the district \$250,000 a year. Mr. Basen would like the Board to consider this suggestion.

5. **Items for Approval**

a) **Overnight Trip – Mr. Wyatt**

Trip information distributed for the following trip was self-explanatory:

- I. Neshaminy High School, Maple Point Middle School and Neshaminy Middle School Student Problem Solving Competition, April 21 & April 22, 2006, Harrisburg, PA

Mr. Wyatt noted that the Student Problem Solving Program is part of the Academic Enrichment program in Neshaminy School District. The program is funded by the district. Students do very well at the competition.

There was board consensus for the trip.

b) Summer School Programs for 2006

Mr. Wyatt advised that this would be the 49th year of the summer school/summer stock program. An outline was provided to Board members. All programs are scheduled to be held at Maple Point Middle School. The fees reflect a \$5.00 increase in registration. Salaries for all staff are as per the contract.

Mr. Eccles inquired how many non-resident students participate in the program. Mr. Wyatt responded that approximately 10%-15% are non-resident students who participate in make-up courses which are not offered at other school districts.

c) Proposed School Calendar 2006 - 2007

Dr. Muenker reviewed the 2006-2007 proposed school calendar with Board members. Mrs. Barrett inquired what Act 80 denoted. Dr. Muenker advised that it was a day that students did not attend school and staff would have an in-service day with workshops related to the curriculum. Dr. Muenker further advised that by law students need to attend school 180 days of the year. By contract the district can determine how many in-service days would take place over and above the 180 days for the staff.

Mr. Blasch questioned the number of days students are in attendance as well as teachers when an in-service day exists during a month. Dr. Muenker advised that an Act 80 day is counted as a student day, but the actual days are added up with PDE as days that students have actual attendance. Total student days include eight (8) Act 80 days for elementary students and seven (7) Act 80 days for secondary students.

Mr. Koziol inquired whether it would be possible to keep the schools open on April 2, 3 and 4 and close the school sooner on June 15th. Three days in the summer would be saved and offer another weekend for vacations and the utilities could be cut off sooner. Dr. Muenker advised that some days off are due to contract obligations.

d) Bucks County Intermediate Unit #22 Programs and Services and Instructional Materials & Research Budget for 2006 - 2007

Dr. Muenker advised that comparisons can be seen regarding the contribution rates from various neighboring school districts. Mr. Paradise noted that payments to the IU increase considerably as a result of services that the district purchases. Mr. Paradise advised that this is for the administrative portion and operating budget of the IU.

e) Election of Board Member to the Intermediate Unit Board

Dr. William Spitz will represent Neshaminy School District with the IU Unit. A motion will be presented at the public meeting at the end of the month.

f) Response to the Auditor General's Audit for Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2002 and 2001

Mr. Paradise reviewed a letter received from the Auditor General's Office and a response which Mr. Paradise provided to the Commonwealth, Department of Auditor General. There was a claim that Neshaminy was not acting within the law by not periodically and randomly checking the background of bus drivers. Mr. Paradise took exception to the issue and provided a verbal and written comment. Although it could be constructive criticism for the district, Mr. Paradise does not feel that the district was violating any existing law or policy. Mr. Paradise advised that the state has requested that a formal response needs to be voted upon by the Board. This matter will be placed on the agenda at the end of the month. Mr. Paradise suggested that it could then be referred to Board policy

committee for review. Mr. Paradise noted that the district's present procedure only requires that at the beginning of employment the employee's background is checked for criminal conduct.

Board discussion took place regarding the issue. Dr. Spitz noted that the issue presently is that Neshaminy has not broken any existing law. A separate question is whether Neshaminy would like to consider having Board policy look into the matter.

Mr. Eccles would like to be proactive and respond that the district did not violate any laws; however, the district would have the Board Policy Committee review the matter.

Mr. Profy advised that Act 34 sets out a format that the school district must follow. It also has a list of various criminal convictions which disqualify a person being an employee of the school district that is upon the initial application. There is also in Act 34 a grandfather provision which before the effective date of the Act employees cannot in effect go back and condition their current employment upon something that happened prior to the effective date of the Act. Mr. Profy believes that there is no basis for the distinction with bus drivers and other employees of the school district. Mr. Profy believes that there have been some changes in the law regarding the licensing of bus drivers. Researching that Act could serve as a basis for distinguishing drivers from other employees.

Mr. Profy believes that the response, if it is the Board's determination, would be accept what has been stated by Mr. Paradise, however, the matter will be referred to policy committee for consideration of a board policy.

Mr. Profy further advised that the Collective Bargaining agreements provide certain guidelines and some employees have been grandfathered out of Act 34 and those employees would need to be treated differently and hence would need to be researched.

Dr. Muenker advised that the district has approximately 1500 employees and administrative issues would need to be dealt with regarding who would pay for the various checks.

Mr. Paradise would draft an appropriate response.

g) Approval of Bids/Budget Transfers

Information distributed prior to the meeting. Mr. Paradise reviewed the following bids and advised that three of the bids would need approval this evening and the fourth bid would be presented at the end of the month for approval.

Bid No. 06-25 – Asbestos Floor Tile Removal at Oliver Heckman Elementary and Herbert Hoover Elementary Schools

Bid Amount: \$88,000.00

The bid is for removal of asbestos floor tile and associated mastic and acoustic ceiling surfacing material from Oliver Heckman Elementary School and Herbert Hoover Elementary School, as outlined in the 5 Year Capital Projects Plan. This completes the tile removal at Heckman and Hoover schools.

Bid No. 06-26 – Floor Tile & Carpet Installation at Oliver Heckman Elementary School

Bid Amount: \$103,000.00

The bid is for installation of vinyl floor tile and carpeting in hallways, office, library and classrooms at Oliver Heckman Elementary School. This is as outlined in the 5 Year Capital Projects Plan.

Bid No. 06-27 – Exterior Door Replacements at Heckman Elementary, Maple Point Middle School, Neshaminy Middle School and Bus Maintenance Building

Bid Amount: \$85,736.00

The bid is for replacement of original exterior doors at the buildings noted.

Bid No 07-01 – General School Supplies

Bid Amount: \$148,843.63

The bid is for various classroom and office supplies for use throughout the district for the school year 2006/2007.

Mr. Paradise noted that the bids were scheduled to be approved on February 28th and it is almost two months after the bid opening. The schedule is getting tight and approval is necessary at this time.

Mr. Webb made a motion to approve Bid Nos. 06-25, 06-26 and 06-27. Mr. Bowman seconded the motion.

The Board unanimously approved the bids. Mrs. Cummings was not present.

Bid No. 07-01 and Budget Transfer Report 06-2 (Working Copy) will be presented for approval at the March 28th meeting.

6. Superintendent's Report

Dr. Muenker advised that a question was received regarding the number of portables to be placed at the high school construction site and the answer is 16 which were obtained through the state bid project. The configuration at the high school would be 9-12 and the enrollment figures do include 9th graders.

7. Committee Reports

a) Board Policies Committee

Mr. Bowman advised that a meeting is scheduled for March 23rd at 7:00 p.m. The committee will take a look at the school discipline policy in light of the findings and recommendations of the Task Force.

b) Educational Development

Dr. Spitz advised that a meeting is scheduled for Monday, March 20th at 6:30 p.m. The committee would be discussing courses to improve the PSSA scores and the implementation of an electronic grade book for teachers.

c) Finance and Facilities

Mr. Webb advised that a meeting is scheduled for March 22nd at 7:00 p.m. Budget discussions would begin.

d) Intermediate Unit Board

Dr. Spitz advised that he attended his first meeting. The IU will be receiving additional funding for an early intervention program provided for preschoolers with disabilities.

e) Educational Foundation

No report.

f) Technical School

Ms. Boyle advised that the meeting is scheduled for March 27th. Ms. Boyle advised that there was discussion regarding the lengthy lines in the parking lot regarding enrollment and the school will probably go to a lottery system.

g) Technology

Mr. Koziol advised that a meeting will take place on March 16th at 6:00 p.m. and Mr. Denton will be presenting the needs for the upcoming year and the plans for the next three years.

8. Future Topics

a) 2006-2007 Working Draft Budget

9. Agenda Development for March 28, 2006

10. Other Board Business

Mr. Blasch advised that three board members attended the PSBA Legislative Conference. Mr. Blasch reported that Governor Rendell was proposing a lap top computer for every desk in the high school. Discussions took place on early childhood development and monies being spent on pre-K to offset problems that might occur in later grades and attending alternative schools.

Mrs. Barrett requested that Mr. Paradise provide the Board with an update on the state of the District buildings by the end of the school year.

Mr. Eccles advised Board members that an Executive Session will be held after the meeting to discuss pending litigation.

11. Adjournment

Mr. Bowman moved the meeting be adjourned and Mr. Blasch seconded the motion. The Board unanimously approved the motion. Mr. Eccles adjourned the meeting at 7:44 p.m.

Respectively submitted,

Anita E. Walls
Board Secretary