

NESHAMINY SCHOOL DISTRICT  
Langhorne, Pennsylvania

PUBLIC WORK SESSION MINUTES  
NESHAMINY BOARD OF SCHOOL DIRECTORS  
March 13, 2012

The Neshaminy Board of School Directors met in public work session on March 13, 2012 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  
Ms. Irene Boyle  
Mr. Scott E. Congdon  
Mrs. Susan Cummings  
Mr. Mike Morris  
Mr. William Oettinger  
Mr. Mr. Mark Shubin  
Mr. Anthony Sposato

**ADMINISTRATORS:**

Dr. Louis T. Muenker  
Mrs. Barbara Markowitz  
Dr. Jacqueline Rattigan  
Dr. Geeta Heble  
Mr. Anthony Devlin  
Mrs. Theresa Hinterberger

**BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:**

Mr. Kim Koutsouradis, Vice President

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

**SECRETARY:** Mrs. Jennifer Burns

**SOLICITOR:** Thomas J. Profy, III, Esquire

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Mr. Webb announced that prior to the meeting an Executive Session was held where contract issues were discussed.

**1. Call to Order**

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

**2. Pledge of Allegiance**

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

**3. Announcements**

Mr. Webb announced that Mr. Koutsouradis was not in attendance due to a family emergency.

**4. Superintendent's Report**

Dr. Muenker advised the Board on the following:

- Congratulated the middle school musicals that were held over the weekend.
- Dr. Muenker thanked those who assisted with the sudden emergency that occurred Saturday evening at the middle school.
- Neshaminy High School will be presenting "Laughing Stock" on March 14<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup>, and 17<sup>th</sup>.
- Neshaminy Dance Club will be presenting its 7th Annual "Neshaminy Idol" on March 29<sup>th</sup>, at 7:00 p.m. All proceeds will go to the American Cancer Society's Hope Lodge and the Wet Nose Rescue.

**5. Public Comment**

Stephen Pirritano, Feasterville, self-employed, said that after the contract is settled there is still the issue of how to use the district's buildings in a most productive way. He said that Neshaminy needs to think about focusing on the infrastructure and any future plans of consolidation that may be necessary.

Armando Carrasquillo, Langhorne, retired State Trooper, said he appreciates the service of the bus drivers in the Neshaminy District; however, he said there are some issues regarding bus drivers that need to be addressed in light of the tragic school bus accident that recently occurred in New Jersey. Mr. Carrasquillo

stated that he has seen buses traveling too fast in the school parking lot and some bus driver's texting and talking on cell phones while driving. Mr. Carrasquillo said these infractions should be investigated and addressed.

Charles Alfonso, Langhorne, semi-retired business executive, recalled that over one year ago he brought up an incident of a teacher writing a disparaging remark on Facebook regarding a student. Mr. Alfonso said that the matter was never addressed and the teacher later retired with full benefits and is now working as a substitute teacher for Neshaminy. He said this is an outrage and he called for the Board to remove this teacher and any other offenders from the substitute list.

## **6. Items for Discussion**

### **a) Budget Development**

Mrs. Markowitz advised the Board that as a result of the review of the 2012-2013 preliminary budget some of the subsidies payments were rolled into one payment called the Student Achievement and Education Block Grant. The Basic Ed funding piece will remain at the 2011 - 2012 budget amounts, as well as the Special Education funding. The Accountability Block Grant has been eliminated from the 2012 - 2013 budget year. An attempt to reconcile the budget is ongoing until June. Any budget savings ideas are welcomed. Please send ideas to [savingsideas@neshaminy.k12.pa.us](mailto:savingsideas@neshaminy.k12.pa.us).

Dr. Muenker remarked that State funding has been on a decline, therefore, it has become necessary to review the needs of the district and difficult decisions will have to be made regarding staffing, maintaining buildings, and school programs.

Mr. Webb reminded the public that the budget has a \$12 million deficit, which makes the job of balancing the budget an especially difficult task for the Board.

### **b) Comprehensive Annual Financial Report**

Mrs. Markowitz explained that the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report of the Neshaminy School District is brought to the Board as an informational item. Mrs. Markowitz stated that the report is divided into three sections, introduction, financials, and statistics. The information is presented in a manner that fairly represents the fiscal soundness of the District.

## **7. Items for Approval tonight**

### **a) Overnight Trips**

Dr. Rattigan advised the Board on the following trips:

- Neshaminy High School - Future Business Leaders of America Competition - Hershey, Pa - April 15<sup>th</sup> to April 18<sup>th</sup>, 2012

Mr. Congdon asked if the two chaperones were also teachers.

Dr. Rattigan replied they were.

Mr. Congdon asked if parents were able to attend the competition.

Dr. Rattigan replied that they were able to attend.

Mr. Congdon asked if the ratio of two chaperones per 26 students was typical.

Dr. Rattigan replied that the ratio is usually about one chaperone per 20 students.

There was Board consensus for said trip. (Mr. Koutsouradis was not present).

## **8. Items for Approval at the March 27, 2012 Public Board Meeting**

**a) Proposed School Calendar for 2012 - 2013**

Dr. Muenker provided the proposed school calendar for the 2012-2013 school year to the Board. Dr. Muenker asked the Board members to review same prior to the next Public Board meeting, at which time they will be asked to approve same.

Mr. Webb stated that the Proposed School Calendar for 2012 - 2013 will be an agenda item at the March 27, 2012 Public Board Meeting.

**b) PSBA Insurance Trust Agreement**

Dr. Muenker provided the Board with a copy of the PSBA Insurance Trust Agreement and asked the Board to review the agreement prior to the March 27, 2012 Public Board Meeting.

Mr. Webb stated that the PSBA Insurance Trust Agreement will be an agenda item at the March 27, 2012 Public Board Meeting.

**c) Bids/budgets transfers**

Mrs. Markowitz stated there were no bids and one budget transfer (Working Copy) 12-4 with two transactions and several sub transactions.

Mr. Webb stated that budget transfer (Working Copy) 12-4 will be an agenda item at the March 27, 2012 Public Board Meeting.

**9. Committee Reports**

**a) Board Policies**

Ms. Boyle advised the Board that the next meeting is scheduled for March 28<sup>th</sup>, at 5:15 p.m.

**b) Educational Development**

Mr. Shubin informed the Board that at their last meeting the Board reviewed various programs for remediation as well as the current status of the Keystone Exams future in the state of Pennsylvania. The next meeting is scheduled for March 19<sup>th</sup>, at 7:00 p.m. Topics will include Standards Based Grading.

**c) Finance/Facilities**

Mr. Webb advised the Board that the next meeting is scheduled for March 14<sup>th</sup>, at 7:00 p.m. Primary agenda items will include the budget and insurance.

**d) IU Board**

Mrs. Cummings informed the Board that at their last meeting they had a presentation from the transportation department that included ways to reduce cost.

**e) Education Foundation**

Dr. Muenker advised the Board that there is a Spring Phillies Basket being raffled to raise revenue for scholarships. To purchase tickets, contact Dr. Muenker's office.

**f) Technical School**

Mr. Oettinger advised the Board that at the last meeting discussions included teacher negotiations and budget development.

**g) Technology**

Mr. Congdon advised the Board that at the last technology meeting they discussed the district refresh program, computer refresh programs on the Delaware replacements, ipads in the classroom, elementary technology, and wireless implementations.

**h) Ad Hoc Facility Use Update**

Mr. Oettinger announced to the Board that the next meeting is scheduled for March 20<sup>th</sup>, at 6:00 p.m. Topics will include school consolidation.

**10. Public Comment**

Charles Alfonso, Langhorne, semi-retired business executive informed the Board that the feedback that he has received from students regarding the graduation requirement of PSSA scores has done nothing but create panic. He said that teachers have been pressing students about past knowledge to review for the tests and he questioned what current learning they may have missed during this time. Mr. Alfonso also stated that the district must look into revising the student registration process to avoid the problem of illegal students in the Neshaminy district.

Stephen Pirritano, Feasterville, self-employed remarked that he is a big supporter of the Home Access program. Mr. Pirritano said that he hopes that this important and positive tool will continue in the future and he would like to see the language included in the new contract that will insure that it will be carried on.

Mike Caputo, Penndel, retired, voiced his concern over a rumor that, due to Work to Contract, the IU teachers are not partnering with the mainstream teachers before or after school for prep time. Mr. Caputo said that he feels this will adversely affect the students and he would like to see this looked into.

Almando Carrasquillo, Langhorne, retired State Trooper, commented that it disturbs him to hear talk about the possibility of closing schools. He said how much more the parents, taxpayers and students have to give up for the NFT. Mr. Carrasquillo asked Mr. Webb to comment on this issue.

**11. Future Topics**

None

**12. Agenda Development for the March 27, 2012 Public Board Meeting**

None

**13. Board Comment**

Mr. Congdon said that the PSSA requirement for graduation is now a state law and the Board would be going against the law if they did not follow this mandate.

Mrs. Cummings said that she had the pleasure of attending the Neshaminy Gym Night and she thanked the Physical Ed Department, Dr. McGee, and all those involved in presenting a wonderful occasion.

Mr. Sposato stated that he also attended the Neshaminy Gym Night and was very impressed at the effort of the teachers and students in planning and running such a successful event. He also remarked that this matter of closing buildings is a sign of the times and not necessarily a result of the Union problems. Mr. Sposato said that the district must be very careful about how they spend the money they have and they must be economically responsible. Mr. Sposato agreed that, for safety reasons, the matter of bus driver's texting and talking on cell phones will be examined.

Mr. Shubin said that cutting educational programs will always be the last resort, so the community needs to understand that it may be necessary to make difficult decisions to close buildings instead. He also said he would like to see a statement from the NFT regarding whether they are currently in a Work to Contract or not and are they reneging on their own public statement that stated "Where there are students and parents, the NFT will be there." Mr. Shubin said if they are in a Work to Contract and teachers are acting in that regard, then they are a disgrace to their profession.

Mr. Oettinger asked for clarification regarding the matter of a possible second teachers strike.

Mr. Webb said that, at this time, the district and the NFT are in non-binding arbitration with ongoing hearings. Public comments are still being accepted by the arbitrator. He said that no strike can occur while the arbitration is ongoing and it has not been determined how long the arbitration will last. When the arbitrator rules, either side has the option to accept or deny the proposal. If the NFT denies the proposal they then have the right to strike. He stated that, by law, the teachers must work 180 days by the end of June, so there is a time factor involved. Mr. Webb said that by law he does not think it would be possible to cancel the contract and remove all the teachers, so at this time, he is not considering it.

**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 8:06 p.m.

Respectively submitted,

Jennifer Burns  
Board Secretary