

NESHAMINY SCHOOL DISTRICT  
Langhorne, Pennsylvania

PUBLIC BOARD MEETING MINUTES  
NESHAMINY BOARD OF SCHOOL DIRECTORS  
February 19, 2013

The Neshaminy Board of School Directors met in public session on February 19, 2013, in the Harry M. Dengler, Jr., Performing Arts Center at Maple Point Middle School. The following persons were in attendance:

**BOARD MEMBERS:**

Mr. Ritchie Webb, President  
Mr. Scott Congdon, Vice President  
Mr. Scott Congdon  
Mrs. Susan Cummings  
Mr. Kim Koutsouradis  
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  
Mrs. Therese Hinterberger  
Mr. Anthony Devlin

**BOARD MEMBER ABSENT:**

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

**SECRETARY:** Mrs. Jennifer Burns

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

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

**Call to Order**

Mr. Webb called the meeting to order at 7:09 p.m.

**Pledge of Allegiance**

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

**Announcements**

None

**Solicitor's Report**

Mr. Profy advised the Board that the public hearing on the application for the School Lane Charter School, which was scheduled for tonight's meeting, will be continued till March 5, 2013 at 7 p.m. Notice of the rescheduled meeting will be published in the paper and notice will be provided to the applicant and the applicant's counsel.

Mr. Webb made a motion to reconvene the meeting for the application for the School Lane Charter School for March 5, 2013 at 7 p.m.

Mr. Shubin seconded the motion.

The Board unanimously approved said reports.

**Superintendent's Report**

Mr. Copeland advised the Board on the following:

- Poquessing Middle School Proudly Presents - "The Pajama Game," February 20, 21, and 22 at 7 p.m.
- Ferderbar Elementary Hosts Jump Rope for Heart.

- Business Computer and Information Video Conference (February 11th - March 13th).
- Neshaminy Dance Team Donates to the "Wet Nose Rescue."
- Neshaminy Presents 8th Annual Neshaminy's Got Talent - March 21, 2013.
- Award - Winning Program for Teens Comes to Neshaminy School District (7th Year)
- Buck's County Commissioners will provide funding to a social service agency to work with students on various crises.
- Public outreach to members of the community for people with backgrounds in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics to work with administration, parents, teachers, and students to where we are now and where we want to be in the future.
- Piloting a full-day kindergarten.

#### **Public Comment**

Steve Young, Langhorne, teacher and writer, asked the Board to match the contributions from the commissioner's office to support the crisis program at Neshaminy High School. Mr. Young expressed his concern that Neshaminy no longer has a sanctuary room with counselors and urged the Board to consider reopening TLC.

Jim Jenca, Middletown Township, retired, said he does not see any progress in the negotiation process and he asks the teachers to take a stand and address the situation. Mr. Jenca also expressed his disappointment that the MaST Charter School application was rejected and he asked the Board to reconsider when an appeal is presented from MaST. He asked if Mr. Shubin would comment on the decision for changing his vote.

Steve Rodos, Villages of Flowers Mill, retired, thanked the Board for considering a pilot program for full day kindergarten. Mr. Rodos urged the Board to restore the TLC program because it is a great program and there is, indeed, a need for it.

Donna Boyle, Parkland, Day Care Provider, stated that she had a meeting with Mr. Copeland in which he advised her to solicit support from other community members regarding her issue with the Redskins mascot name. Ms. Boyle said that she does not think this suggestion is satisfactory. She cited examples of organizations, e.g., Atlanta Braves, Michigan Department of Civil Rights, and Cooperstown, NY School District, who have or plan to remove Native American references as mascots. Ms. Boyle concluded by saying that the mascot name should be changed because it is racially offensive and Native American people should not have to endure this discrimination.

Howard Lindner, Langhorne, retired, remarked that he has learned that the Advisory Board for the School Consolidation project was presented with more than the two options for choice. He asked if this is the case, the taxpayers should be advised of what other options were given. Mr. Lindner said there are many students that are in need of crisis support and he urged the Board to get on board with the crisis team and prevent some of these tragedies that have been occurring.

Stephen Pirritano, Feasterville, self-employed, urged the Board to move forward with the consolidation proposal stating that it will enable the district to use the savings toward programs, such as STEM, which will make a positive impact on education in Neshaminy. Mr. Pirritano said it is imperative to move now before the district is faced with other foreseeable expenses from possible charter school approval.

#### **Approval of Minutes**

Mrs. Burns presented the minutes of January 22, 2013 and February 5, 2013. Upon motion of Mr. Congdon and seconded by Mr. Koutsouradis the Board unanimously approved the minutes of the January 22, 2013 and February 5, 2013 Board Meeting Minutes.

#### **Approval of Treasurer's Report, Check Register, and Exonerations of Personal and Per Capita Tax**

Mrs. Markowitz presented the following for approval:

- January 2013 Treasurer's Report, subject to audit

- Check Register – January 2013
- Personal and per capita tax exonerations for January 2013
- Budget Transfer Report (Working Copy) 14 -02

Mrs. Cummings moved the January 2013 Treasurer's Report be approved, subject to audit, Check Register for January 2013, the Personal and Per Capita Tax Exonerations for January 2013, and the Budget Transfer Report (Working Copy) 14 - 02 be approved. Mr. Morris seconded the motion.

Mr. Morris asked for information on check numbers, 199251, 199293, 199311, 199523, 199325, and 199326.

Mrs. Markowitz stated she would provide the information.

The Board unanimously approved said reports.

**Certified and Support Personnel Actions**

Mr. Copeland presented the following for approval:

- Elections – Certified Personnel
- Resignations and Leaves of Absence – Certified Personnel
- Elections – Support Personnel
- Sabbatical Leaves – Certified Personnel
- Extra Curricular Staff and Salary Report

Mr. Copeland recommended the approval of the personnel report for certified and support personnel.

Mr. Congdon moved the certified and support personnel actions be approved and Ms. Boyle seconded the motion.

The Board unanimously approved said reports.

**Motion: Approval of Revised Board Policies #535 and #811**

Mr. Congdon presented the following motion:

WHEREAS, in order to keep District Board Policies updated and current, revisions and new policies are recommended by the administration to the Board Policies Committee for review, and

WHEREAS, recommended policies meet the requirements of Federal Law; and

WHEREAS, after review by the Board Policies Committee, the District is ready to recommend:

Revised Policy 535 – Weapons

Revised Policy 811 – Acceptable Use of the Computers, Network, Internet, Electronic Communications and Technical Services

Revised Supplement to Policy 811 – Technology Use Guidelines for Staff

Revised Supplement to Policy 811 – Technology Use Guidelines for Students

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Neshaminy Board of School Directors approve the revised policies as recommended by the School Board Policies Committee.

Mr. Shubin seconded the motion.

Mr. Webb clarified that policy #811 stands as is.

The Board unanimously approved said reports.

**Motion: Approval of the BCIU #22 2013 - 14 Programs & Services and Instructional Materials & Research Budget**

Mr. Koutsouradis presented the following motion:

WHEREAS, the Neshaminy School District is one of the thirteen school districts in Bucks County that utilizes the services of the Bucks County Intermediate Unit No. 22; and

WHEREAS, the Neshaminy School District contributed to the support of the Bucks County Intermediate Unit; and

WHEREAS, the School Code requires that the Intermediate Unit budget be presented and acted upon by the Board of School Directors.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Neshaminy Board of School Directors approves the Bucks County Intermediate Unit Program & Services and Instructional Materials Research Services Budget for 2013 - 2014 in the amount of \$1,734,570 with our district share to be \$103,910.

Mrs. Cummings seconded the motion.

The Board unanimously approved said reports.

**Motion: Approval of Summer Programs for 2013**

Mr. Morris presented the following motion:

WHEREAS, the Neshaminy School District has operated a successful summer school program for 55 consecutive years; and

WHEREAS, in recent years has operated completely on a self-sustaining basis via student tuitions; and

WHEREAS, the following programs have been discussed with the Neshaminy Board of School Directors:

- Secondary Summer School (Enrichment and Make-up)
- Summer Fine Arts including Art, Instrumental Music, Summer Stock, and Summer Theater Workshop
- Summer Adventure Program

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Neshaminy Board of School Directors approves the request to operate summer programs for the 56th year.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that students residing in Neshaminy School District be given first preference for program involvement and related program activities.

Mr. Sposato seconded the motion.

Mr. Shubin asked Dr. Heble to give an update of any changes to the summer programs.

Dr. Heble responded that the program meets the needs of the courses offered throughout the year. There have been no changes in curriculum. She also stated that the curriculum will be looked at for revisions for the 2014 summer program.

The Board unanimously approved said reports.

**Motion: Approval of Host District Educational Services Agreement for Programming at Woods Services**

Mr. Oettinger presented the following motion:

Whereas, Woods Services, a residential approved private school and institution for school age students and adults requests the Neshaminy School District to oversee the educational program of students placed by non-educational entities under Section 1306, 1308, and 1309 of the School Laws of Pennsylvania; and

Whereas, to provide a program, a contract has been prepared between the Bucks County Intermediate Unit No. 22, who shall discharge all responsibilities assigned to the District under Sections 1306, 1308, and 1309 of the Pennsylvania Public School Code of 1949, and the Neshaminy School District who serves as the principal to the sub-contractor Bucks County Intermediate Unit No. 22.

Now, therefore, be it resolved, that the Board of School Directors approves the HOST DISTRICT EDUCATIONAL SERVICES AGREEMENT and authorizes the Board President to sign the contract on behalf of the Neshaminy School District.

Ms. Boyle seconded the motion.

The Board unanimously approved said reports.

**Motion: Approval of the Proposed 2013 - 2014 School Calendar**

Mr. Shubin presented the following motion.

WHEREAS, each year the Board of School Directors must establish an official school calendar for the coming year; and

WHEREAS, the six participating school districts of the Bucks County Technical High School strive to establish a common school calendar; and

WHEREAS, the Board of School Directors reviewed the proposed calendar at the February 5, 2013 Public Work Session; and

WHEREAS, the proposed calendar was forwarded for comments to each of the employee bargaining groups.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Neshaminy Board of School Directors adopt the attached school calendar for the 2013 - 14 school year.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Board of School Directors specifically designate Section 1502 holidays: December 24 and 26, 2013; February 17, 2014; and April 17 and 18, 2014 as five official local school district holidays.

Mrs. Cummings seconded the motion.

The Board unanimously approved said reports.

**Motion: Adoption of the 2013 - 2014 Preliminary Budget**

Mr. Webb presented the following motion:

WHEREAS, in accordance with Act 1 of 2006, the Board of School Directors has received a Proposed Preliminary Budget for the 2013-2014 fiscal year; and

WHEREAS, the Proposed Preliminary Budget was made available for public inspection on form PDE-2028 effective January 30, 2013; and

WHEREAS, in order to further comply with Act 1, the Preliminary Budget must be adopted by the Board of School Directors on or before February 19, 2013; and

WHEREAS, Act 1 further provides for "referendum exceptions", which must be submitted to and approved by the Pennsylvania Department of Education on or before March 7, 2013.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the 2013-2014 Preliminary Budget is adopted in accordance with Act 1 of 2006 and it shall be made available for public inspection as required by law.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the School District shall apply to the Pennsylvania Department of Education for exceptions specified under Act 1 as per the attached summary.

Neshaminy School District 2013-14 Preliminary Budget ACT 1 Provisions			
	Dollar Amount	Percent of Current Millage	Mill Equivalent
Allowable Tax Increase by Index	\$ 1,913,348	1.70%	2.5 mills
<b>Exceptions as Permitted by ACT 1 from PDE</b>			
School Construction	\$ -		
Special Education	\$ -		
Retirement Contributions	\$ 1,183,689	0.90%	1.5 mills
<b>Exceptions as Permitted by ACT 1 from Court of Common Pleas</b>			
Emergency or Disaster	Not applicable		
Court or Administrative Order	Not applicable		
Conditions Posing Immediate Threat	Not applicable		
<b>Total Allowable Exceptions</b>	<b>\$ 1,183,689</b>	<b>0.90%</b>	<b>1.5 mills</b>
Not yet approved by PDE			
<b>Legal Allowable Tax Increase</b>	<b>\$ 3,097,037</b>	<b>2.60%</b>	<b>4.0 mills</b>
Note: These amounts are just estimates and the figures might change slightly. The official forms were not on the state website as of February 14, 2013.			

Mr. Congdon seconded the motion.

Mr. Shubin asked where the district is with respect to the current deficit.

Mrs. Markowitz stated that the excess of expenditures over revenues is \$10,690,042; which is a 14.0 mill increase.

The Board unanimously approved said reports.

### **Federal Programs**

Mr. Copeland advised the Board that the total for Federal Programs is \$1,691,082.00.

### **Other Board Business**

None

### **Public Comment**

Steve Young, Langhorne, teacher and writer, remarked that the reopening of the Sanctuary Room with an outside counselor is a good start, but the district really needs to reinstate TLC. He stated that TLC provides the necessary support to students in crisis, while also providing education and it was very successful. Mr. Young implored the Board to re-establish the TLC program and he volunteered to be part of a committee to obtain the revenue that would be needed for this much needed program.

Steve Rodos, Villages of Flowers Mill, retired, asked about an expenditure for football equipment stating that reconditioned helmets are unwise considering the number of injuries associated with that sport, if that is, indeed, what the expenditure is for. He also questioned the expenditure of a tax refund to Kraftco, Inc. for \$120 thousand stating that he hopes the district fought against this. Mr. Rodos concluded by stating that there were various proposals presented regarding the school consolidation project and it was narrowed down to the proposal that the Advisory Board felt was most suitable.

Donna Boyle, Langhorne, Day Care Provider, remarked that oppression often happens in places that have mascots. Ms. Boyle referred to many disparaging remarks that she has received from bullies who are attempting to intimidate her into dismissing her cause.

Howard Lindner, Langhorne, retired, remarked that he is very proud to have taught several of those individuals who are now successful members of the community. He also expressed his utmost respect for the members of the Board. Mr. Lindner stated that the district should eliminate lead teachers and let department chairmen and administrators do the job that they were intended to do.

Joseph Funk, Director of Bucks County Health and Human Services, commended Mr. Copeland, Mr. Devlin and Ms. Gale for their involvement in the collaboration between the county and the school district for the crisis program. He mentioned that Mr. Copeland has positive outlooks and significant ideas that are completely supported by his organization. Mr. Funk said he is looking forward to a program that is far beyond what it had formerly been and it will enable students to receive services that are greatly needed.

Kim May, Langhorne, teacher, read excerpts from an article by Garrison Keillor, which parallels the misconceptions of the term "redneck" and the term "redskins."

Stephen Pirritano, Feasterville, self-employed said good things are happening in Neshaminy. He said the Educational Development Committee meeting is addressing many important issues. He also stated that the high cost of staffing was the issue that destroyed the TLC program and the program could be re-instated as long as it could be made affordable. Mr. Pirritano said he hopes that the Board will develop a policy on how to accept MOU's (memorandums of understanding) going forward.

**Board Comment**

Mr. Shubin explained that, on the advice of counsel he cannot state the exact reason for his vote against the MaST Charter School application; however, he did say that while he is for school choice, at this time, MaST failed to reach the necessary criteria for the application to be approved. Mr. Shubin also expressed his dismay that more parents and taxpayers do not attend the Educational Development Committee meetings stating that he would welcome suggestions and ideas from interested community members.

Mr. Oettinger explained that there were 7-8 consolidation plans that were proposed to the Ad Hoc Committee, which were narrowed down to the most fiscally responsible plans. He said the process is slowly moving forward and he is confident that the goal will be accomplished soon.

Mr. Koutsouradis expressed his disappointment that no teachers have come to the podium to defend the quality of education in Neshaminy whenever a charter school has applied to Neshaminy. He also stated that interviews with architects are scheduled and the school consolidation project is moving forward.

Mrs. Cummings stated that she was pleased to hear that full-day kindergarten is being looked into and asked if there is anything that the Board can do to assist in this endeavor. She also thanked the Bucks County Commissioners for providing the mental health support for Neshaminy High School.

Mr. Copeland said he would like to form a group of teachers, parents and experts on early childhood education to review the possibilities for the program and make recommendations to the Finance and Educational Development Committees.

Mr. Morris thanked Mr. Copeland for facilitating the mental health program. Additionally, Mr. Morris commented that the former TLC program was eliminated by the Department of Education, not the school board or the administration, because it was mishandled. Mr. Morris said that Neshaminy is a great school district, but many problems must be corrected and perhaps charter schools will be the solution.

Mr. Copeland clarified that teachers did participate in the presentation regarding Neshaminy schools putting aside any frustrations over the contract dispute. Mr. Copeland said that the district is currently in the process of evaluating the former TLC program and the possibilities of a future program. He stated that the Bucks County Commissioners were very kind to listen to his input and ideas concerning mental health and they were largely responsible for initiating this endeavor.

Mrs. Markowitz said that any large tax assessment appeals are disputed and a compromise was made.

Mr. Webb thanked Commissioner Marseglia for her leadership and cooperation with the crisis program.

**Adjournment**

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 8:26 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Burns  
Board Secretary