

NESHAMINY SCHOOL DISTRICT
Langhorne, Pennsylvania

PUBLIC BOARD MEETING MINUTES
NESHAMINY BOARD OF SCHOOL DIRECTORS
February 28, 2012

The Neshaminy Board of School Directors met in public session on February 28, 2012, 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. Kim Koutsouradis, Vice President
Ms. Irene M. Boyle
Mr. Scott Congdon
Mrs. Susan Cummings
Mr. Mike Morris
Mr. William Oettinger
Mr. Mark Shubin
Mr. Anthony Sposato

ADMINISTRATORS:

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

BOARD MEMBER ABSENT:

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

SECRETARY: Mrs. Jennifer Burns

SOLICITOR: Thomas J. Profy, III, Esquire

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

Call to Order

Mr. Webb called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance

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

Announcements

Mr. Webb announced that the Act 88 Non-Binding Arbitration Final Proposed offers from the NFT and the District will be posted on the district website and made available in the district office starting on February 29, 2012. He also stated that the public may comment in writing or in electronic form and it will be forwarded to the arbitrator.

Superintendent's Report

Dr. Muenker advised the Board on the following:

- Maple Point Middle School will be presenting the musical, "Into the Woods Jr.," on March 7th, 8th, 9th, and 10th.
- Carl Sandburg will be presenting the musical, "Tied to the Tracks," on March 7th, 8th, 9th, and 10th.
- The National Liberty Museum announced on Feb. 22, 2012 that Neshaminy High School English Teacher Dennis Howie was selected as a recipient of the "2011 Teacher as Hero Award" sponsored by State Farm®. Howie was nominated by Maple Point English teacher Jennifer Howie, Neshaminy High School English teacher Tara Huber, Neshaminy High School Science teacher Lisa Krieger, and Neshaminy High School senior Colleen Gallagher.
- Annual "Gym Night" will be held on March 2nd and 3rd.
- Food Drive in conjunction with "Gym Night" will be held from February 22nd through March 1st, and all proceeds will go to the Covenant House and Operation Helping Hands.

Public Comment

Susie Merchant, Langhorne, Healthcare Industry worker, commented that union membership dues and fair share collections are requested by the union to be deducted from the teachers' pay checks and remitted to the union by the school district. Ms. Merchant said the taxpayers assume the cost of the administrative fees for this service. She added that under Act 195 of 1970 an employer is not required to do this. She implored the Board to eliminate this agreement from the proposed collective bargaining agreement, because the district can better use this money where it belongs in educating the children.

Angie Manning, Langhorne, New Jersey teacher, thanked the Neshaminy community for their thoughts, prayers and concern over the recent tragic bus accident involving students of the Chesterfield Elementary School where she teaches.

Charles Alfonso, Langhorne, semi-retired business executive, informed the public that information regarding the PSSA rankings is available through a link on the Department of Education Website showing various Excel spreadsheets. The spreadsheets are categorized by year and subject matter for PSSA's and SAT's. Mr. Alfonso said that the spreadsheets must be combined by year for each subject and add the advanced and proficient results together, and then eliminate the sub-groups and other non pertinent data. Mr. Alfonso stated that the rankings prevail and whether they were meant to be used by the Department of Education is unimportant.

Stephen Pirritano, Feasterville, self-employed, stated that he opposes any proposition that would add the PSSA scores to a student's transcript. He said he thinks that making the test a graduation requirement is sufficient without the need to record the scores to the transcript. Mr. Pirritano said the Keystone tests will be implemented in the future and he looks forward to the district moving forward not backwards.

Jason Green, Langhorne, Penndel business owner, remarked that the he thinks the negotiations have gotten off track and he wants to remind everyone that this is about the students. He suggested that the Neshaminy School District conduct fund raisers to offset the budget deficit. Mr. Green volunteered to provide coupons to citizens to use in his store and he would match the savings and donate the proceeds to the district.

Approval of Minutes

Mrs. Burns presented the minutes of January 24, 2012 and February 14, 2012. Upon motion of Ms. Boyle and seconded by Mr. Shubin the Board unanimously approved the minutes of the January 24, 2012 and February 14, 2012.

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

Mrs. Markowitz presented the following for approval:

- January, 2012 Treasurer's Report, subject to audit
- Check Register – January, 2012
- Personal and per capita tax exonerations for January, 2012
- Budget Transfer Working Copy 12-3 with two transactions and one sub transaction
- Investment Summary

Bids

Mrs. Markowitz presented the following bids. Information was presented prior to the meeting.

Bid No. 13 – 1 General School Supplies

Amount: \$27,272.79

Bid Description: Various classroom and office supplies for use throughout the district for the school year 2012/2013

Bid No. 13-13 Maple Point Roof Top Air Conditioning Units

Amount: \$371,555.00

Bid Description: Replacement of three units at Maple Point Middle

Mr. Shubin moved the January, 2012 Treasurer's Report be approved, subject to audit, Check Register for January, 2012, the Personal and Per Capita Tax Exonerations for January, 2012, Budget Transfer Working Copy 12-3, Investment Summary, Bid No. 13-1, and Bid No. 13-13 be approved. Mrs. Cummings seconded the motion.

The Board unanimously approved said reports.

Certified and Support Personnel Actions

Dr. Muenker presented the following for approval:

- Elections – Certified Personnel
- Resignations and Leaves of Absence – Certified Personnel
- Elections – Support Personnel
- Sabbatical Leaves – Certified Personnel

Dr. Muenker thanked Mr. Wayne Casey and Mr. Roger Sigmon for their numerous years of service to the Neshaminy School District

Dr. Muenker recommended the approval of the personnel report for certified and support personnel.

Mr. Koutsouradis moved the Certified and Support Personnel Reports be approved and Mr. Sposato seconded the motion.

Mr. Webb called for a roll call tally and the tally indicated that the report passed by a vote of seven ayes, (Ms. Boyle, Mr. Congdon, Mrs. Cummings, Mr. Sposato, Mr. Koutsouradis, Mr. Oettinger, and Mr. Webb) and two nays, (Mr. Morris and Mr. Shubin).

Mr. Webb made a motion to table Revised Board Policy #512 High School Diploma and Mr. Koutsouradis seconded the motion.

The motion passed by a vote of eight ayes, and one nay, (Ms. Boyle).

Motion: Approval of Revised Board Policies #227, 327 and 427

Ms. Boyle 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 512 – High School Diploma

Revised Policies 227, 327 and 427 – Work Regulations and Guidelines

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

Mrs. Cummings seconded the motion.

The Board unanimously approved said motion.

Motion: Summer School Programs for 2012

Mr. Congdon presented the following motion:

WHEREAS, the Neshaminy School District has operated a successful summer school program for 54 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 55th year.

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

Mr. Shubin seconded the motion.

The Board unanimously approved said motion.

Motion: Approval of the BCIU #22 2012 - 2013 Programs & Services and Instructional Materials & research Services Budget

Mrs. Cummings 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 2012- 2013 in the amount of \$1,777,266 with our district share to be \$104,285.

Mr. Sposato seconded the motion.

The Board unanimously approved said motion.

Motion: Approval of the 2010 - 2011 Audit

Mr. Koutsouradis presenting the following motion:

WHEREAS, the audit for the Neshaminy School District for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2011, has been prepared by Maillie, Falconiero & Company, LLP.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Audit Report for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2011, be accepted in accordance with Section 24-2408 of the School Code.

Mr. Shubin seconded the motion.

The Board unanimously approved said motion.

Federal Programs

Dr. Muenker advised the Board that there were no updates to the Federal Programs. The total is \$1,397,990.00.

Other Board Business

None

Public Comment

Charles Alfonso, Langhorne, semi-retired business executive, commended the Board on the vote on 512. He reminded the Board that according to Pennsylvania Code 4.24 section G, the PSSA scores may be released only with the permission of the student and parent/guardian or student only over the age of 18. Mr. Alfonso said that his research has revealed that no data exists regarding a PSSA graduation requirement in the Montgomery County school districts. He added that only 6 of the 13 districts in Bucks County have the requirement and 3 of the 6 showed improvements in the district scores. Mr. Alfonso noted that 4 of the 13 districts were far ahead of Neshaminy in the scores before they implemented the PSSA as a graduation requirement.

Stephen Pirritano, Feasterville, self-employed, stated that it is imperative that Neshaminy put a longer school day into operation. He said that there is not enough time in the day for teachers to get more professional development and also teach a full day. Mr. Pirritano also mentioned that he acknowledges that our schools do need technical advancements, but he does not want to lose sight of the need for human technology. He said we do not want to design the curriculum so far in advance that once the electronic technology is unavailable, the education cannot continue.

Board Comment

Mr. Shubin thanked Dr. McGee, Neshaminy High School and the Middletown Community Foundation for the opportunity to participate in Challenge Day. He stated that it was an emotional and rewarding experience to attend this worthwhile event. Mr. Shubin explained that his "no" vote on the hiring practice was a protest vote, because he said we need to take a stand against the current hiring practice of teachers. He said that having the best possible teacher in the classroom is the most important thing we can do for the students and we must change the selection process now.

Mrs. Cummings asked if the grants for the district have decreased in the past years.

Dr. Muenker replied that the grant dollars have decreased over the years, which presents a definite challenge to the district.

Mr. Congdon said he previously provided an incorrect figure regarding the salary increases of teachers. He clarified that the teachers' salary can increase from \$42.6 thousand dollars per year to \$96 thousand dollars per year in 11 years in the step increases. Mr. Congdon said with the teachers' current ability to reach \$96 thousand dollars within 11 years time, he does not even see the need to discuss raises at this time. He also pointed out that Neshaminy is not the only district that has found it necessary to cut programs due to lack of

funds; other neighboring school districts have also had to cut programs. Mr. Congdon implored the teachers to elect a leadership that will require and enforce teachers to dress professionally in the classroom.

Mr. Morris reiterated Mr. Congdon's comments regarding the income of the teachers and added that the benefits are also a premium package that costs the district millions of dollars. He noted the free healthcare, opt-out benefit, retiree benefit, life insurance, disability benefits, among others all must be taken into consideration in the exorbitant cost that the district pays out.

Mr. Webb clarified that because the teachers can get the Masters Equivalency Credits they are able to accelerate the pay increases from \$42.6 thousand to \$96 thousand, but it does still take 11 years to achieve the full salary. He stated that the current contract requires that the teachers are hired from the long-term substitute pool, and this is a practice that hopefully will be changed with the new contract.

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 7:58 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Burns
Board Secretary