

NESHAMINY SCHOOL DISTRICT  
Langhorne, Pennsylvania

PUBLIC BOARD MEETING MINUTES  
NESHAMINY BOARD OF SCHOOL DIRECTORS  
January 24, 2012

The Neshaminy Board of School Directors met in public session on January 24, 2012 in the Gymnasium at the 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  
Mr. Anthony Devlin  
Dr. Geeta Heble  
Mrs. Theresa Hinterberger  
Dr. Jacqueline Rattigan

**OTHERS:** Approximately 800+ persons from the public, staff and press

**BOARD MEMBER ABSENT:**

**SECRETARY:** Mrs. Jennifer Burns

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

---

**Call to Order**

Mr. Webb called the meeting to order at 7:08 p.m.

**Pledge of Allegiance**

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

**Announcements**

None

**Superintendent's Report**

Dr. Muenker read the following statement:

"Good Evening. Certainly it is evident that we have a large audience tonight. With that observation I am asking once again that we be respectful to those who choose to speak during public comment.

Board Policy allows for a one hour time limit for the first public comment period and twenty minutes for the second public comment period.

There certainly have been many feelings expressed and exhibited during the recent work stoppage. That said, our teachers did, in fact, follow and obey rules associated with Act 88.

This next stage in the process will include non-binding arbitration providing an opportunity for both sides to meet, discuss and work together to create an "affordable" agreement for all stakeholders.

Yet while this process takes on a new element, much work remains regarding the budget for the 2012 - 2013 school year.

Please allow me to digress for a bit...it seems like it was only a few years ago that I started my tenure here in the Neshaminy School District. I began my Neshaminy journey in November of 1990 working as an elementary

school counselor at Hoover Elementary. I had the privilege at that time to join a very dedicated staff of teachers and support workers. The kids were great and there was tremendous parent support. It was during this time that Building Principal, Rick Marotto, approached and encouraged me to consider pursuing a career in administration. Despite having already earned my Doctorate degree from Penn State, I needed to return to the classroom and attend evening classes at the Penn State Graduate Center at Great Valley to complete the required work for certification as a principal.

In 1993 I was appointed Assistant Principal at Poquessing Middle School and once again, met and worked with outstanding teachers and support staff workers. The kids were great (although sometimes challenging) and the parents were very supportive.

During the 1996 - 1997 school year I filled in as Principal of Walter Miller. No surprise here as again I worked with another group of dedicated teachers and support staff. I spent many days at lunch recess playing kickball with great kids supported by a very caring and supportive Miller community.

After a brief stint back at Poquessing, I was appointed Principal at Lower Southampton Elementary. Yes, a great staff to work with here too! With strong parent involvement and support.

After a few years at Lower South, I was appointed the Director of Pupil Services overseeing our special education, school psychologists, school counselors, nurses, social workers, and home and school visitor.

Shortly thereafter I was appointed the Human Resources Director and in addition was appointed the Assistant Superintendent for the District.

During this above mentioned period of time most aspects of our economy including our revenues were rather healthy. But as everyone has come to learn, the economy of late has been anything but "healthy." Timing is often "everything" but for me it was certainly both interesting and challenging.

As a result of the departure of our previous superintendent, the Board of School Directors asked me to sit as the District Superintendent in November of 2008.

The appointment came at a time when the Act 1 tax cap was lowered, revenues were trending lower, and state and federal assistance was diminishing. That first year the District was faced with a \$14Million projected budget deficit. With a lot of effort the budget was balanced for the 2009 - 2010 school year reflected with a \$92.00 tax increase for the average homeowner.

The next two years did not get much better. Although our expenditures stabilized, the projected budget deficit for the 2010 - 2011 school year was \$7Million and as you will remember there was a balanced budget along with a 0% tax increase delivered to our community. Last year at this time we were faced with a proposed deficit of \$11Million.

Although we were able to recommend a balanced budget in June it came at the expense of the elimination of middle school foreign language and 10th grade physical education along with once again a 0% tax increase.

In summary in a 3 year period of time we have had to address budget gaps that totaled \$33Million.

I spoke earlier to the importance and it is my hope that both the Board and our teachers can work together in the upcoming weeks to craft an agreement. That said, it is essential to the survival of this District that it again be "affordable."

This evening you will hear a brief report from Barbara Markowitz indicating that our proposed budget for next year reflects just shy of a \$12Million gap.

I am concerned and am currently examining our ability to sustain our current educational and extra-curricular programs. I am, indeed, low on rabbits to be pulled from our hat!

Keep in mind also that many of our buildings are in dire need of improvements. Single pane windows and outdated HVAC systems need to be addressed as like your home assets need to be protected.

Where do we go from here? If we do not work together then this question unanswered will at best be very problematic.

History tells us that no one wants programs and or people reduced or eliminated. Yet, what is our choice as budgets (by state law) must be balanced.

Regarding the overall future of the District; it is my firm belief that we must get "smaller" to survive.

One has only to glance at neighboring Centennial School District to see an example of a community making every effort to reduce its' future expenditures. The community has embarked with a plan that will close old, antiquated facilities coupled with the construction and renovation of schools ensuring a very efficient use of their K-12 buildings.

Here in Neshaminy we have stated before that it no longer can be "business as usual" on all fronts. These challenging times force us to examine what we are currently doing with everything that comes into play with how we support our children from their early entry in kindergarten until their final graduation day. This obviously encompasses our academic offerings, our extra-curricular offerings, and the buildings and staff needed and support our students.

It is becoming increasing evident that there is a lack of financial support coming from Harrisburg. We are, in many ways, being forced to control our own destiny here in Neshaminy.

If we do not work together or we refuse to accept the obvious, then I fear we too could eventually be a Chester-Upland nightmare.

Finally, let me fast forward by making an announcement to all of my Neshaminy family, which includes our students, our employee groups, our parents and community at large.

I have tonight delivered a letter to the Board announcing my intent to retire at the end of my contract, which is this June, 2012 ending my 38 ½ year career in education.

This declaration will allow the Board to begin a search for my replacement. I will certainly continue to work on all of the issues that I have addressed tonight during my remaining time as Superintendent of Schools.

Although a bit premature, I want to thank the Board for the opportunity to work for this great District during these last 21+ years. I would also like to thank all of the administrators, teachers and support staff I have come in contact with during my tenure here at Neshaminy; along with my special thanks to all the parents who have supported me in my many roles over the course of time!

"That's all for now." Thanks for listening!"

Mr. Webb made a motion to accept the resignation of Dr. Louis T. Muenker and Mr. Koutsouradis seconded the motion.

The motion passed by a vote of nine ayes, and zero nays.

Mr. Profy stated that the approval of notification to Louis T. Muenker, D.Ed. that the Board of School Directors does not intend to retain him for a further term of three (3) to five (5) years and that other candidates will be considered for the Office of Superintendent of the School District for a term commencing on July 1, 2012.

**Motion: Approval of Notification to Louis T. Muenker, D.Ed.**

Mr. Profy read the following motion:

WHEREAS, the Pennsylvania School code of 1949, as amended, "Code" requires that the Board of School directors give notice to the Superintendent of the School District at least one hundred fifty (150) days prior to the expiration of the term of office of the District Superintendent that the Board intends to retain him for a further term of from three (3) to five (5) years, or that another or other candidates will be considered for the Office; and

WHEREAS, the term of office of Louis T. Muenker, D.Ed. as Superintendent of Neshaminy School District expires on June 30, 2012;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of School Directors announces that the Board will not be retaining Louis T. Muenker, D. Ed. as District Superintendent for a further term and that another or other candidates will be considered for the Office of District Superintendent for the term to commence on July 1, 2012; and that the Board of School Directors will initiate a search for candidates for the position of District Superintendent.

Mr. Webb made a motion to accept said motion and Mr. Sposato seconded the motion.

The Board unanimously approved said motion by a vote of nine ayes, and zero nays.

**Public Comment**

Gail Dittes, Middletown Township, nurse, commented that she thinks the "Work to Contract" action and the teachers strike demonstrates that the teachers are setting an example of standing up for themselves. Ms. Dittes said that she has the right to expect both sides to work together to achieve a fair contract, but she added that taxpayers do not have any right to the details of the negotiations because it is not any of their business. Ms. Dittes stated that when everyone weighs in on the details, it is damaging to the negotiating process.

Kim Wojcik, Langhorne, homemaker, remarked that she volunteers as a classroom helper in her son's first grade class. Ms. Wojcik expressed what a pleasure it has been volunteering and how much she has enjoyed her relationship with her son's teacher. She spoke of her disappointment in receiving a letter from the teacher stating that they have been directed not to allow volunteers within the classroom during the ongoing negotiations. Ms. Wojcik said it was very difficult to explain this to her child, who was extremely upset over this decision. She said she does not blame the teacher, but she does blame the union and it is not acceptable to hurt children in this way.

Angie Manning, Langhorne, New Jersey teacher, thanked the individuals who reached out to her last week in support of her family's financial situation. Ms. Manning said in her school district the teachers have input, but not equal say. She commented that administrators put their jobs on the line when they declare their thoughts; the School Board members have to deal with voters and elections when they voice their opinions and she asks Neshaminy teachers what are they willing to put on the line for equal say.

Michele Fay, Langhorne, part-time worker and homemaker, said the teachers' actions are having a negative impact on the children of Neshaminy School District. She explained that when her daughter started fourth grade during the "Work to Contract" action it was very traumatic for her to enter a classroom that was cold, undecorated and uninviting. She said these harmful acts such as "Work to Contract" and striking hurts all the students, even those who excel scholastically and especially the students who struggle to keep up. Ms. Fay

said she blames all the teachers for hurting the students, because they are standing together in solidarity and are all accountable. She declared that hurting children should never be an option.

Joan Thomas, Langhorne, retired, questioned why the teachers are still employed since they are working without a contract. She said since no contract is in effect, the School District should dismiss all the teachers. She cited the example of when President Reagan fired the air traffic controllers in 1981. Ms. Thomas remarked that most people cannot afford a tax increase and she asked whether the NFT members even care about how much taxpayers are struggling in this economy.

Kathy Alford, Yardley, Neshaminy teacher, stated that she hopes that the community will listen to all the things that the teachers are standing up for, e.g., class size, voice in the district, students' rights and a fair contract. Ms. Alford said she was disappointed that Mr. Webb and the Board rejected the NFT's offer for around the clock negotiations and, if necessary, binding arbitration.

Stacy Kirsch, Langhorne, Neshaminy resident and teacher, said that parents need to teach children how to listen to the other side and how to learn to disagree without harsh words or anger. Ms. Kirsch said that this dispute will eventually be resolved, but the aftermath of anger and resentment will stay with the children a lot longer. She said that, as a community, we should be teaching the lesson of respectful behavior to the children. She said the Neshaminy School Board should be doing everything they can to end the dispute and allow the community to heal.

Lea Barr, Langhorne, Neshaminy teacher, urged the Board to put an end to the anger, chaos and disrespect that is dividing the community. She said the Board has a responsibility to help insure that the school system has a safe and unthreatening atmosphere for students and staff. Ms. Barr said the Board has not acted responsibly during this impasse. She said the Board allows public comment to become threatening against teachers and has used ugly adjectives in their media statements and blogs. She said if any Board members are ready to show common sense and work ethic they should influence the other members to do the same.

Sue Schnieder, Levittown, Neshaminy teacher, voiced her skepticism that Neshaminy schools have declined in performance in recent years. She said she doubts the validity of the formula that was used to rank Neshaminy within the state of Pennsylvania. Ms. Schnieder said she faults the Board that there is no new contract after four years of negotiations. She stated that the Board has abdicated their duties and decision making process to a vocal minority.

Donna Junod, Langhorne, Neshaminy teacher, said she loves her students and her job. She stated that no one wants a strike and they have tried to negotiate for four years. Ms. Junod said they do have community support and the NFT is willing to work to bring an end to the impasse. She said that there are staff members that live in and are members of the community and the name calling and derogatory signs about teachers does not speak well of the district.

Kyle McKafferty, Southampton, Neshaminy teacher, explained how valuable the senior teaching staff has been to her, and others, in the teaching community. She said that the teachers at the top of the pay scale are not wasteful spending; they are a priceless gift to every teacher. Ms. McKafferty said that teachers deserve respect and should not be trashed by the community. She said the teachers are willing to make concessions towards health care and other issues, but there must be negotiations.

Joan McGinley, Holland, Neshaminy teacher, said that she has felt uncomfortable during public meetings when teachers have been criticized and insulted and the Board has not defended them. She said that remarks made by Board members through letters or comments have confused and deceived readers and taxpayers. She said the NFT members, including younger teachers, stand together, unified more than ever. Ms. McGinley said the district is being torn apart because the Board has refused to negotiate for the past four years.

Anne Schmidt, Southampton, Neshaminy teacher, urged the Board to come through for the community by negotiating. Ms. Schmidt said the Board has not been willing to compromise and every offer from the NFT has been refused. She said that neither side is guaranteed that everything will go their way, but the NFT is willing to negotiate and submit to a neutral third party if it should be necessary. Ms. Schmidt stated that the Board has made empty legal threats. She urged that Board to work together to resolve these issues.

Almando Carrasquillo, Langhorne, retired State Trooper, urged the Board to continue to say no if the NFT does not accept their offer. Mr. Carrasquillo said that while the NFT claims they do not retaliate against students, he stated that "Work to Contract" actions, stripping the walls of teaching aides, refusal to sign awards and certificates, boycotting student events, and refusing to reach out to children who are falling behind all add up to retaliation against students. He said that wearing NFT shirts in the classroom is a sign of intimidation and it shows a lack of professionalism. Mr. Carrasquillo remarked that the NFT disregards what is best for the students because their goal is to become the highest paid teachers in Pennsylvania.

Kate Livingstone, Lower Makefield, Neshaminy teacher, said that respect and discourse, compassion and grace go much further than banter, rage, disrespect and hurtful words. She said she is distressed by the lack of civility that has been displayed recently. Ms. Livingstone said the signs portraying teachers as animals are degrading and hurtful. She stated that she teaches her students to be respectful of others and she is blessed to be a Neshaminy teacher. Ms. Livingstone asked the Board for a resolution and put an end to the stalemate with dignity and civility.

Dave Adams, Neshaminy resident, self employed, remarked that when the teachers marched from Maple Point Middle School he would have liked if they had marched through the residential areas to see how many homes are up for sale and senior citizens that cannot afford a tax increase. He said the community is behind the Board one hundred percent. Mr. Adams said that a settlement is needed, but it must be one that works for everyone. He commented that teachers had a positive influence on him as a Neshaminy student, but the NFT needs a reality check. He said the economy is struggling now and we need to come together and get a contract that is realistic and affordable.

Matt Pileggi, Levittown, Computer programmer, stated that in 2008 the Board proposed a three year contract with a one percent increase to the salary schedule, healthcare contributions of 15-17 percent and the elimination of the early retirement package. He said if that offer had been accepted salaries would have increased, no steps would have been missed in the salary schedule and teachers would have paid a reasonable contribution towards their healthcare coverage. He said that instead NFT negotiators countered with a six year term proposal that had significant pay increases, free healthcare and kept the early retirement package. Mr. Pileggi said this was the only offer on the table from the NFT for two years. He said the next NFT proposal in September 2010 offered a five year term demanding \$11 million in retro raises, free healthcare and maintaining the early retirement package. Mr. Pileggi stated that this was the proposal that was offered while parents were greeted with empty chairs during Back to School Night. He said that it was not until June 2011 when the Board's proposal was about to expire that the NFT proposed an eight percent contribution towards their healthcare, millions in retro pay, increased salaries and kept the full retirement package. Mr. Pileggi said the community has demonstrated their resolve to stand firm for a reasonable contract and he thanked the Board for standing with the community. Mr. Pileggi applauded Mr. Webb for his ongoing commitment to the Neshaminy School District and for his dedicated service.

Charles Alfonso, Langhorne, semi-retired business executive, reiterated his call for the Board to fire all teachers and immediately rehire the top twenty percent of teachers, evaluate and interview the next fifty percent, and replace the remaining teachers who fail to pass the interview. Mr. Alfonso also recommended that the Neshaminy School District file for Chapter 9 bankruptcy, which includes school districts. He said all contracts will be null and void and the new teaching staff can be offered a new affordable contract.

Cara DeLorenzo, Washington Crossing, Neshaminy teacher, said that anger is what she senses, division is what she sees, and sadness is what she feels. She said that we seem to be on a path of separation and not

unity and the words that are being exchanged are not promoting any solution. Ms. DeLorenzo said she feels sadness that her chosen profession of being a teacher is becoming questionable in her eyes. She questions whether it is really worth the cost that she is paying now. Ms. DeLorenzo declared that there is too much anger and division in the world as it is and why would we choose to add to it. She stated that we all have the power turn this situation around. Ms. DeLorenzo said this can happen by having meetings and more meetings and find a respectful solution.

John Speidel, Feasterville, parent, said that he is very involved in his children's education and he is very disappointed that recently it has become difficult to work with his eighth grade son on his school work. He stated that his son was informed by many of his teachers that they are too busy to use the Home Access Center, a tool which has been very important to his family. Mr. Speidel questioned why maintaining the Home Access Center is not a requirement of every teacher and why the administrators do not have the authority to direct teachers to use this tool. Mr. Speidel voiced his concern about whether the teachers who are deliberately neglecting their responsibilities will come back to a total commitment once the contract is settled.

Stephen Pirratano, Feasterville, self employed, commented that if the administration is not in control there cannot be direction in a school district. In response to the remarks about name calling, Mr. Pirratano stated that he has not participated in any name calling. He said that he respects teachers and has always reflected that. He said that teacher input is, indeed, important but it cannot be permitted to overrule the administration. Mr. Pirratano remarked that the facts are clear and the Board has always been transparent in their position and the facts are indisputable. Mr. Pirratano declared that if teachers have any questions about any lack of negotiation sessions, they should ask their leadership. He said that if the teachers want a choice in healthcare, it is in the July 18<sup>th</sup> proposal, which the NFT walked out on. Mr. Pirratano said that the "Work to Contract" actions are hurting the children and that is a fact. He concluded that the bottom line is what the district can afford and that is what will determine the contract.

#### **Approval of Minutes**

Mrs. Burns presented the minutes of November 22, 2011, December 5, 2011, December 15, 2011 and January 10, 2012. Upon motion of Mr. Webb and seconded by Mr. Shubin the Board unanimously approved the minutes of the November 22, 2011, December 5, 2011, December 15, 2011 and January 10, 2012 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:

- November and December, 2011 Treasurer's Report, subject to audit
- Check Register – November and December, 2011
- Personal and per capita tax exonerations for November and December, 2011
- Budget Transfer Working Copy 12-2 with two transactions
- Investment Summary

Mr. Congdon moved the November and December, 2011 Treasurer's Report be approved, subject to audit, Check Register for November and December, 2011, the Personal and Per Capita Tax Exonerations for November and December, 2011, Budget Transfer Working Copy 12-2, and the Investment Summary be approved. Mr. Koutsouradis seconded the motion.

Mr. Morris reviewed the dollar amounts of expenditures for healthcare benefits for the certified staff and retirees and Mrs. Markowitz verified the figures.

The Board approved said reports by a vote of eight ayes, and one nay, (Mr. Morris).

#### **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 recommended the approval of the personnel report for certified and support personnel.

Mr. Webb made a motion to separate the addendum to the personnel report regarding the leave of absence for Cynthia Rosales and Mr. Koutsouradis seconded the motion.

The Board unanimously approved said motion by a vote of nine ayes, and zero nays.

Mr. Webb moved the Certified and Support Personnel Reports with the exception of the addendum that was removed be approved. Mr. Shubin seconded the motion.

Mr. Congdon asked what is a pool candidate and how does one become a pool candidate.

Dr. Muenker stated that if one desires a long-term position and has eighty days of consecutive service in that position then they are entered into a pool and these candidates would be considered first for a long-term position.

The Board unanimously approved said reports.

Mr. Webb made a motion that the addendum for the request for leave by Cynthia Rosales be denied and Mr. Sposato seconded the motion.

The Board unanimously approved said motion.

Mr. Webb made a motion that Cynthia Rosales be terminated due to her lapse in certification and Mr. Sposato seconded the motion.

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

#### **Extra –Curricular Staff and Salaries Report**

Dr. Muenker advised the Board on the 2011-2012 extra-curricular activity salaries as budgeted and provided for in the certified staff contract. The total expenditures are \$255,397.00

Mr. Congdon moved the extra-curricular staff and salaries report be approved and Mrs. Cummings seconded the motion.

Mr. Morris asked if this was for the high school.

Dr. Muenker responded it is for the high school and middle schools.

The Board unanimously approved said motion.

#### **Motion: School Directors Recognition Month**

Ms. Boyle presented the following motion:



WHEREAS, the role of locally elected school officials has served the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and local communities meeting the needs of public education since the passage of the Free School Act in 1834; and

WHEREAS, these local boards have discharged their responsibilities to public education in a manner which has placed public education in the forefront of our educational systems; and

WHEREAS, locally elected officials have distinguished themselves and their communities in this nonpaid, volunteer public service commitment; and

WHEREAS, the contributions of these men and women should be recognized and appreciated by those who benefit from the workings of our public school system.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Neshaminy Board of School Directors hereby proclaims the month of January as School Director Recognition Month.

Mr. Shubin seconded the motion.

The Board unanimously approved said motion.

**Motion: Election of Board Member to the Intermediate Unit**

Mr. Congdon presented the following motion:

WHEREAS, the Bucks County Intermediate Unit #22 is governed by an Intermediate Unit Board of Directors, and

WHEREAS, the Neshaminy School District has duly elected a board member to participate on the Intermediate Unit Board, and Neshaminy's participation is critical to the operation of the Intermediate Unit, as well as the services afforded the Neshaminy School District, and

WHEREAS, the Neshaminy Board of School Directors has nominated Susan Cummings to serve on the IU Board. Her term expires on June 30, 2014, and she is eligible to succeed herself without limitations as to the number of terms or another representative from the school district may be nominated.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Neshaminy Board of School Directors appoint Susan Cummings to serve as the representative to the Bucks County Intermediate Unit Board of Directors.

Ms. Boyle seconded the motion.

The Board unanimously approved said motion.

**Motion: Solar Energy Power Purchase Agreement**

Mrs. Cummings presented the following motion:

WHEREAS, in order to provide solar energy to Neshaminy High School and Maple Point Middle School, the District has entered into negotiations for a Solar Energy Purchase Agreement with Sunlogics; and

WHEREAS, the District has reviewed the financial feasibility of the project at the Board Facilities Finance Committee meetings.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Neshaminy Board of School Directors authorizes the Solicitor and Superintendent to finalize the terms and conditions of a 20-year Solar Power Purchase Agreement with Sunlogics; and for the School District to enter into an Agreement with Sunlogics with terms and conditions acceptable to the Solicitor and Superintendent.

Mr. Shubin seconded the motion.

Mr. Webb noted that there is no cost to the district.

The Board unanimously approved said motion.

**Motion: Approval of Response to the Auditor General's Audit For Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2007 and 2008**

Mr. Koutsouradis presented the following motion:

WHEREAS, the Pennsylvania Auditor General's Office has completed an audit for the fiscal years ending June 30, 2008 and 2007; and

WHEREAS, this recently completed audit by the Auditor General indicated a recommendation to the district; therefore, it is now necessary for the Board of School Directors to officially respond in accordance with the Governor's Office Management Directive #325.10.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of School Directors accepts the audit report as submitted.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Board authorizes the Administration to prepare a response in accordance with the directives from the Department of Education.

Mrs. Cummings seconded the motion.

The Board unanimously approved said motion.

**Motion: Approval of Revised Board Policies**

Mr. Morris here 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 Policy 534 – Suspension and Expulsion  
Revised Policies 232, 332, 432 and 532 – Restrictions Upon Possession, Smoking and Tobacco Use

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. Congdon seconded the motion.

Mr. Morris made a motion to separate Revised Board Policy 512 – High School Diploma.

Mr. Oettinger seconded the motion.

The Board unanimously approved said motion.

The Board passed Revised Policy 534 – Suspension and Expulsion and Revised Polices 232, 432, and 532 – Restriction Upon Possession, Smoking and Tobacco Use by a vote of nine ayes, and zero nays.

Mr. Webb made a motion to approve Revised Policy 512- High School Diploma.

Ms. Boyle seconded the motion to approve Revised Policy 512 – High School Diploma.

Mr. Shubin stated that Revised Policy 512 – High School Diploma is regarding the requirement to pass the PSSA exams in order to graduate. Mr. Shubin stated that there is a plan in place to help students who do not do well in these tests.

Mr. Morris noted his concern with the “work to contract” and lack of participation regarding the NFT and how this may affect the students with regards to the PSSA tests. Mr. Morris stated that this is not the right time to pass this motion.

Mr. Congdon asked if this motion could prevent a student from graduating.

Mr. Shubin stated that this is a standard test and there is a plan in place to help those students who need extra help in order to pass the PSSA.

Mrs. Cummings noted that this has been an ongoing discussion for several years and there is safeguards put in place to help students who need help. Mrs. Cummings stated that she believes this is the right thing to do for the students.

Ms. Boyle stated that the committee has been discussing this for years and cannot delay these proceedings any longer.

Mr. Sposato stated that the children should be responsible for these tests. He also stated that these are basic skills and if the students are unable to do well they should not be thrown out into the world. Mr. Sposato is confident that by the students being held accountable for these tests it will show tremendously in test results.

The Board passed Revised Policy 512- High School Diploma by a vote of seven ayes, and two nays, (Mr. Morris and Mr. Oettinger.)

Mrs. Markowitz reviewed the 2012 – 2013 Preliminary Budget packet.

**Motion: Approval of the 2012- 2013 Preliminary Budget**

Mr. Oettinger 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 2012-13 fiscal year; and

WHEREAS, the Proposed Preliminary Budget was made available for public inspection on form PDE-2028 effective January 4, 2012; 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 January 24, 2012; 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 February 9, 2012.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the 2012-13 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.

Mr. Congdon seconded the motion.

The Board unanimously approved said motion.

Mr. Webb made a motion that the Board not use the exceptions and Mr. Congdon seconded the motion.

The Board unanimously approved said motion.

#### **Federal Programs**

Dr. Muenker advised the Board that there was one additional grant for \$2,000 for the Wellness Consumer Center Grant which brings the total to \$1,489,245.

#### **Other Board Business**

None

#### **Public Comment**

Larry Pastor, Middletown Township, business executive, thanked Dr. Muenker for his service and dedication to the community and proclaiming Dr. Muenker as one of the finest gentlemen that he has ever known. Mr. Pastor declared that since Neshaminy ranks as number 245 in PSSA's there is a serious problem in the district and it must be fixed now. Mr. Pastor remarked to the NFT that the taxpayers and parents are certainly not confused about the facts and what is going on in the district. He questioned if the teachers are really aware of what was offered in the July 18<sup>th</sup> Board proposal stating that they do not seem to be aware of the healthcare choices that were offered in that proposal. Mr. Pastor retorted that two "Work to Contract" actions and a strike do not demonstrate consideration or thoughtfulness about students, but rather a lack of concern. He said the NFT has used the children as hostages in an extortion scheme to gain money from taxpayers. Mr. Pastor stated that teachers have complained about lack of respect and nasty remarks, but the NFT has sullied the reputation of Neshaminy and the teachers.

Charles Alfonso, Middletown Township, semi retired business executive, expressed his outrage over the motion for the PSSA requirement for graduation. Mr. Alfonso said that this decision will penalize the students, which is totally unfair. He said after two "Work to Contract" actions and a strike Neshaminy PSSA scores can fall even lower and where will this leave the students.

Stephen Pirratano, Feasterville, self employed, advised the community that an open letter to taxpayers providing important facts is available to view on the Taxpayers For a Fair Neshaminy website. Mr. Pirratano said this Board has acted responsibly and has done what is right for the taxpayers in the community. He said there can be no new contract that includes the early retirement package. Mr. Pirratano said that package has cost the district \$35 million; money, which has not been spent on education for the students. He said that is why the public has gotten so involved in the contract dispute. If they had been as involved in 2002, these luxury deals would not have been made.

Michele Fay, Langhorne, part-time worker and homemaker, asked if any notice is given prior to a "Work to Contract" action, and if so, if parents can be allowed to go into the classrooms to help decorate for the students. Ms. Fay asked the teachers to think about what they are teaching the children when they walk out

on them, refuse to decorate classrooms and treat them uncaringly. Ms. Fay admonished a teacher in the audience for jeering when she was speaking of her family's hardships.

Joan Thomas, Langhorne, retired, commented that teachers say they want respect yet they were chanting "negotiate" during the Pledge of Allegiance at the last meeting. Ms. Thomas declared that those teachers were disrespecting our country. She said that when speakers state their opinions about teachers that is freedom of speech and everyone has the right to speak their own truth.

Dawn Lynch, Middletown Township, voiced her concern over the PSSA graduation requirement for children who struggle with testing. She asked what provisions will be made for overcrowding in the schools, due to children failing and not graduating. Ms. Lynch said she wants to know how this will impact the IEP students and she implored the Board not to let the futures of these children be disrupted.

Steve Rodos, Villages of Flowers Mill, retired, said he is sorry that Dr. Muenker is leaving the district and he has always found him to be helpful and accommodating. Mr. Rodos asked the Board to explain to the public, in legal terms, why it is not possible to fire all teachers in the district. He remarked that although both the NFT and the Neshaminy School Board both say they have the best interest of the children in mind, this is not true. Mr. Rodos said the Board has done nothing for the past two years except preside over the status quo situation. He stated that no new programs have been introduced and nothing has been done for the children over the past two years. Mr. Rodos added that the NFT also is not thinking of the children. He acknowledged that teachers are valuable and deserve to be compensated for their abilities, but the retirement package has no place in Neshaminy's budget. Mr. Rodos concluded by stating that both sides must sit and negotiate and work out the issues at hand.

Marianne Finney, Langhorne, Neshaminy parent, said that her son is an autistic kindergarten student. She commended the teachers for doing a great job with her son, but added that the recent strike has been very harmful to him. She said being off his schedule has been very disruptive and she does not know how long it will take to correct this. Ms. Finney suggested that the district put certain issues on a ballot and let the taxpayers vote on whether or not the issue will be implemented.

Gail Longdon, Langhorne, Neshaminy parent stated that she has received numerous text messages from people stating that they are receiving calls from Louise Boyd soliciting support for the NFT during the meeting. Ms. Longdon said the people who received the calls are wondering how Ms. Boyd has gotten their numbers, some of which are unlisted. Ms. Longdon remarked that the Board members have been listening intently during the meeting, while the NFT president is not listening, but instead is making random phone calls.

Anthony Perez, Langhorne, Neshaminy student, stated that unions were formed to insure better working conditions for employees. He said the purpose of the union is not to protect jobs and acquire higher pay, but rather to make sure there is a safe working environment. Mr. Perez said that if the teachers care about the students as they claim, then why they have left the meeting before hearing comments from the Board. He said if the Board can stay for the entire meeting while everyone has a chance to have their say, then the teachers should show the proper respect and do the same.

#### **Board Comment**

Mr. Shubin clarified that there will be alternatives for students who do not pass the PSSA's. He said the objective is to make students accountable, but this is not a penalizing situation. Mr. Shubin stated that he wants to be clear that he respects the teaching profession; on the other hand, several years ago the NFT ran an ad that called the Board members liars. He said this was the beginning of the unpleasantness. Mr. Shubin asked how negotiations can occur when the NFT refuses to acknowledge the financial realities that the Board has presented. He said the NFT simply dismisses the audited financial realities and until they come to the table ready to deal with the truth a deal will not be completed. Mr. Shubin said both sides should tone down the unpleasant rhetoric.

Mr. Oettinger said he voted no for the PSSA graduation requirement because he does not think this is the right time. He said that program cuts may be on the horizon with the 2012 – 2013 budget. Mr. Oettinger said he does not see any end in sight to the nasty rhetoric and it does not affect any decisions that he may make. He said a date for the Ad Hoc committee meeting will be posted on the school website when it is known.

Mr. Congdon expressed his outrage over the comment that the Board has done nothing for the children and declared that he vehemently disagrees. He said that the Board members do not get paid for their services; they spend time away from their families and incur expenses all to help the community and the children of Neshaminy. Mr. Congdon said it is time for everyone to stop pointing fingers because this just continues the cycle.

Ms. Boyle thanked Dr. Muenker for his extraordinary service to the community and said that in these trying times his leadership will be missed.

Ms. Cummings said that three terms were repeated in comments, which are work ethic, disrespect and anger. She said this made her think about how these expressions relate to actions by the teachers, such as work ethic to “Work to Contract,” disrespect relating to not showing up for graduation or “Back to School Night” and how anger relates to the parents feeling angry about the strike. She said she hopes that these actions will cease and everyone will work together to heal the community.

Mr. Morris said that all teachers cannot be combined into one category and all of the Board members have respect for the teaching profession. Mr. Morris said the district cannot afford free healthcare and negotiations must start at a 15% contribution by teachers. He said the “Work to Contract” must stop now. Mr. Morris said the Board has always been fighting for the taxpayers and the students.

Mr. Koutsouradis thanked all the teachers who are not following the “Work to Contract.” He said that contrary to what the NFT has claimed, the community is not supporting the NFT more. Mr. Koutsouradis added that the Board is not falling apart or becoming divided. He advised the NFT if the intention of the strike was to inform the public of their demands, then they have succeeded in that intent.

Mr. Sposato thanked Dr. Muenker for his service and said it has been a privilege to be associated with him.

Mr. Webb remarked that everyone is saddened by Dr. Muenker’s retirement, but we are fortunate to have his presence until the end of June. In reply to a teacher’s comment that none of the surrounding school districts have been asked to give back what the NFT is being asked, Mr. Webb declared this statement is correct because none of the districts ever had what Neshaminy teachers have had in the past. Mr. Webb said that all the Board is trying to do is bring the NFT into the norm. He said that the Board is ready at any time to compare the benefits of any of the surrounding school districts with the luxurious package that Neshaminy teachers have enjoyed. Mr. Webb declared that he is very pro-union, but what he is against is a contract that will cancel programs or hurt the students of Neshaminy. He said that this is all about money, whether the union will admit it or not. Mr. Webb stated that the PSSA graduation requirement is about improvement and he feels there is enough of a failsafe to offset any problems; however, if needed, changes can be made.

### **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 9:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Burns  
Board Secretary