

NESHAMINY SCHOOL DISTRICT
Langhorne, Pennsylvania

PUBLIC BOARD MEETING MINUTES
NESHAMINY BOARD OF SCHOOL DIRECTORS
September 25, 2012

The Neshaminy Board of School Directors met in public session on September 25, 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 Boyle
Mr. Scott Congdon
Mrs. Susan Cummings
Mr. Mike Morris
Mr. Anthony Sposato

ADMINISTRATORS:

Dr. Jacqueline Rattigan
Mrs. Therese Hinterberger
Mr. Anthony Devlin
Mrs. Geeta A. Heble

BOARD MEMBER ABSENT:

Mr. William Oettinger
Mr. Mark Shubin

OTHERS: Approximately 75 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 and contract issues were discussed.

Call to Order

Mr. Webb called the meeting to order at 7:12 p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance

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

Announcements

Mr. Webb made a statement regarding the latest proposal to the NFT. He said the proposal would give teachers a "significant bump in salary." It would also bring savings to the district in the way of salary, administration, healthcare costs, and retirement benefits. He also stated that retirement benefits are the key to our savings. Mr. Webb said that Neshaminy currently pays \$4 million each year for retirement perks and benefits, yet the Council Rock CBA has no such benefits. This means that no new retiree would be eligible for those perks and as existing retirees migrate into Medicare over the next seven to ten years, they will be phased out. Eventually, this will mean an annual savings of \$4 million over our current costs. Mr. Webb said that the equal voice doctrine for teachers has hindered administrators and principals because they no longer have the authority in their own buildings. He stated that the elimination of the equal voice doctrine for teachers is as important, if not more important, to Neshaminy's next contract as is any financial issue. He also said that Neshaminy must build a process that allows teachers to voice their opinions freely, while maintaining ultimate and undeniable decision-making authority to our administrators. Mr. Webb concluded by saying that Neshaminy will never agree to a contract that forces them to cut programs.

Superintendent's Report

Dr. Rattigan advised the Board on the following:

- Commented on two successful Back-to-School Nights for the elementary and middle schools. Neshaminy High School Back-to-School Night will be held this Thursday, September 27th.
- Commended the students, teachers, and administrators for their efforts on the PSSA tests.

Kathy Christie, Director of the Technology Department, gave an update on the district's Information Technology Department, which provides the support and maintenance of our vast network of computer labs, classroom computers, laptops, VoIP phones, and peripherals to give students and staff the tools they need to succeed.

Public Comment

Larry Pastor, business executive, Middletown Township, remarked that he appreciates the resolve of the Board regarding the refusal to give "equal voice" to the NFT. Mr. Pastor said that a small group of self-motivated union leaders still remains the only voice that is heard from the NFT stating untruths and propaganda. He stated that although the Board has offered reasonable and affordable contracts, no agreement has been made. Mr. Pastor said that the Neshaminy teachers have been offered the same contract as the Council Rock District, yet the teachers in Council Rock have far out performed Neshaminy teachers.

Charles Alfonso, business executive, Middletown Township, refuted the claim that Neshaminy High School has made AYP. He said that Neshaminy High School only made enough AYP parameters to earn itself a "making progress" rating. Neshaminy High School must achieve AYP status this year or it will drop one level below the previous status. Mr. Alfonso said that Dr. McGee has made extraordinary accomplishments at the high school in a highly negative environment and he applauds Dr. McGee's efforts.

Approval of Minutes

Mrs. Burns presented the minutes of August 22, 2012, August 28, 2012 and September 11, 2012. Upon motion of Mr. Congdon and seconded by Ms. Boyle the Board unanimously approved the minutes of the August 22, 2012, August 28, 2012 and September 11, 2012 Board Meeting Minutes. (Mr. Oettinger and Mr. Shubin were not present.)

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

Dr. Rattigan presented the following for approval:

- August, 2012 Treasurer's Report, subject to audit
- Check Register – August, 2012
- Personal and per capita tax exonerations for August, 2012
- Investment Summary

Mr. Koutsouradis moved the August, 2012 Treasurer's Report be approved, subject to audit, Check Register for August, 2012, Investment Summary, and the Personal and Per Capita Tax Exonerations for August, 2012 be approved. Mr. Congdon seconded the motion.

The Board unanimously approved said report. (Mr. Oettinger and Mr. Shubin were not present.)

Certified and Support Personnel Actions

Dr. Rattigan presented the following for approval:

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

Dr. Rattigan recommended the approval of the personnel report for certified and support personnel and the Extra-Curricular Activities Report.

Mrs. Cummings moved that the Certified and Support Personnel Reports and the Extra-Curricular Activities Report be approved. Mr. Morris seconded the motion.

The Board unanimously approved said report. (Mr. Oettinger and Mr. Shubin were not present.)

Mr. Webb made a motion to approve the appointment of Dr. Jacqueline A. Rattigan, as Assistant Superintendent of Neshaminy School District effective October 1, 2012 for a term to expire on June 30, 2016. Compensation and benefits are as set forth in the assistant's superintendent's employment contract, which has been reviewed and has been hereby approved by the Board of School Directors.

Mr. Congdon seconded the motion.

The Board unanimously approved said report. (Mr. Oettinger and Mr. Shubin were not present.)

Federal Programs

Dr. Rattigan advised the Board that the total for Federal Programs and Grants are \$1,088,412.00.

Other Board Business

Mr. Webb stated that Act I index for the 2013 – 2014 budget is 1.7% or \$1.9 million dollars for the entire district.

Public Comment

Larry Pastor, business executive, Middletown Township, stated that it is absurd that the NFT members are currently compensated higher than the Council Rock teachers. He said that Neshaminy spends \$5.5 million dollars more per year on teachers than Council Rock or any other school district for that matter. Mr. Pastor said the public should think about what \$5.5 million per year would mean to the education of our children. He said if the NFT does not accept the latest offer that is based on the Council Rock CBA that would be a travesty.

Stephen Pirritano, self-employed, Feasterville, congratulated Dr. Rattigan on her promotion to Assistant School Superintendent. Mr. Pirritano asked Mr. Webb if Dr. Rattigan's dual responsibilities to the elementary and secondary schools will be divided into two separate positions, which would expand the Administration force. He also said that he is a spirited advocate for the Home Access Program and he asked Dr. Rattigan to explain why Home Access is not mandated as a professional responsibility of the teachers. Mr. Pirritano said it is an important tool that the district has spent a lot of money implementing and he does not understand why the teachers are not required to utilize it.

Almando Carrasquillo, retired State Trooper, Middletown Township, stated that Home Access is also important to him and he would like to see this become a directive for teachers. Mr. Carrasquillo asked why school nurses would be granted sabbatical leave. He further asked if the new proposed CBA would eliminate the nurses from being included in the teachers' contract. Mr. Carrasquillo asked if Kathy Christie would kindly list the dates of the monthly IT meetings.

Board Comment

Mr. Congdon asked what the top salary would be for teachers under the new proposed contract after the completion of all the steps. Mr. Webb replied that the top salary would be \$106 thousand per year. Mr. Congdon thanked Dr. Rattigan for an excellent job filling in as acting superintendent.

Mrs. Cummings asked if a presentation would be given regarding the PSSA's at a future Board Meeting. Dr. Rattigan said that a presentation is planned and most likely would be at the next board meeting.

Mr. Sposato stated that while the district is not yet where it wants to be regarding PSSA's, we are making progress and Neshaminy will continue to improve.

Mr. Congdon asked Dr. Rattigan if we would still be in the same ranking if the scores had been perfect across the board.

Dr. Rattigan explained that according to the state rules, Neshaminy would still be in the same ranking, because technically we are still in the “making progress” stage. She explained that the improvement must be made in steps and that is where Neshaminy is presently ranked; however, AYP has been made.

Dr. Rattigan also remarked that the administration is totally in favor of the Home Access Program and in the past has not addressed the issue of making it mandatory because of status quo. She said that she foresees that the district definitely will continue to use it going forward. Mr. Webb added that the Board is willing to look into making it mandatory.

Mr. Webb explained that Dr. Rattigan’s duties have not changed – she has now been given the title that she deserves. He said as far as the sabbatical for a school nurse, this is an entitlement that is covered under the contract just as it is for teachers.

Ms. Boyle thanked Dr. Rattigan for her versatility and dedication and to the district and to the students.

Adjournment

Mr. Morris moved the meeting be adjourned and Mr. Congdon seconded the motion. The Board unanimously approved the motion. Mr. Webb adjourned the meeting at 7:59 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Burns
Board Secretary