

NESHAMINY SCHOOL DISTRICT
Langhorne, Pennsylvania

PUBLIC BOARD MEETING MINUTES
NESHAMINY BOARD OF SCHOOL DIRECTORS
October 26, 2010

The Neshaminy Board of School Directors met in public session on October 26, 2010, 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 D. O'Connor
Mr. William Oettinger

ADMINISTRATORS:

Dr. Louis T. Muenker
Mr. Joseph V. Paradise
Mrs. Patricia Boylan
Dr. Geeta Heble
Mr. Kevin Kane
Dr. Jacqueline Rattigan

BOARD MEMBER ABSENT:

Mr. Richard M. Eccles

OTHERS: Approximately 80 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 legal 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

Public Comment

Richard Sypek, retired chemical engineer, Langhorne, voiced his support for the Board in their position regarding the contract. Mr. Sypek mentioned that he contacted S.A.G.E. (Senior Adults for Greater Education) to volunteer his services and he was surprised to learn that the S.A.G.E. program has been put on hold due to the "WTC." Mr. Sypek said it is wrong that the philosophy of the WTC is defined by the union. He noted that activities that teachers have always done routinely cannot suddenly be declared not part of the contract. Mr. Sypek stated that the precedent of performing these duties was set years ago and the teachers are now violating the contract. He asked the Board not to allow the union to dictate the terms of the contract. He declared that the teachers should be held accountable for violating the contract and the first offense should be a written warning, the second offense should be a week's suspension without pay, and the third offense should be termination. He recommended that the Board should have a hotline for parents to request aide for their children when teachers are failing to provide a quality education because of the union. Additionally, he suggested that the Board request help from the community and arrange to have older students help younger students who need assistance with learning. Mr. Sypek concluded with the suggestion that the Board meet with the heads of other school districts in the area to discuss common issues and solutions, because the problem is not going to go away.

Charles Alfonso, semi-retired sales executive, Langhorne, announced that during the last School Board meeting a presentation was made showing the PSSA results as compared to the target. Mr. Alfonso explained that a "target" is the acceptable minimum performance to qualify for whatever the completion is for. Mr. Alfonso said that past School Boards failed to require individual and measurable performance goals from Neshaminy teachers. Mr. Alfonso compared the Neshaminy PSSA test results with the results of other school districts throughout the state and county finding a significant number of school districts scored higher than Neshaminy. He concluded by asking the question "What will our scores look like next year after a full year of WTC?"

Stephen Pirritano, self-employed, Feasterville, mentioned that he is from a union household. He explained that his father and grandfather were lifelong union leaders. Mr. Pirritano said that he hopes what is going on with the NFT does not give a negative perception of all unions. He said that the NFT is misguided if they think the WTC is doing anything but hardening the public against them. Mr. Pirritano stated that these tactics are only hurting the children and he questioned if this is really what they want to accomplish. Mr. Pirritano urged the Board to consider the possibilities of reorganization. He said the teachers seem to have an attitude that they are untouchable. Mr. Pirritano ended by urging the public to vote in the upcoming election.

Matt Pileggi, computer programmer, Levittown, stated that he agrees with the first speaker that a policy does exist for such discipline currently in policy number 327, which is on the Neshaminy website. Mr. Pileggi noted that he is a representative for his family of six by attending the meetings as are many other attendees who are representing their families. Mr. Pileggi stated that parents can obtain valuable information from Professional Standards and Practice Commission. The Commission was created by the Pennsylvania Department of Education. He recommended that parents and teachers consult this information to get a perspective of duties and rights as outlined by the code of conduct. Mr. Pileggi asked the Board to define the term Master's Equivalency and how it relates to the salary schedule. Additionally, in relation to the steps in salary increases, he wanted to know what requirements and expectations are attached to the increase in compensation.

Steve Rodos, semi-tired, Villages of Flowers Mill, expressed his extreme disappointment, as one of the originators of S.A.G.E. in this area, with the current situation. Mr. Rodos noted that currently Neshaminy teachers are sixth or seventh in salary (only) in Lower Bucks County according to the Philadelphia Inquirer. Mr. Rodos explained that he conducted his own evaluation of Neshaminy's standing as compared to twelve other school districts and found Neshaminy to be second in math overall and fourth in reading overall out of the twelve schools. He said he does not understand the criticism of the administration and teachers in relation to the standing of Neshaminy schools and the quality of education being provided.

Andrea Bernek, Langhorne, spoke of an alleged incident during a recent Neshaminy football game involving a confrontation between her son and a current School Board member and his children. Ms. Bernek asked the School Board to evaluate the incident and the Board member.

Superintendent's Report

Dr. Muenker advised the Board on the following:

- Presented Barbara Markowitz with a certificate of excellence in financial reporting for 2009.
- Albert Schweitzer Elementary School thanks Sam's Club for their contribution of \$2,500 Box Tops to support our PTO fundraiser.
- Albert Schweitzer Elementary School held a "Pennies for Pink" fundraiser to support breast cancer research.
- Neshaminy School District presents Community Forum – Nov 2, 2010, and will be hosted by The Neshaminy Pupil Services Department and the Student Assistance Program.
- Presented a plaque from the Foundation Community Partnership for a \$3,000 grant, which will be used to support the Summer P.A.S.S. program, which is a program for at risk youth for middle school students.

Approval of Minutes

Mrs. Burns presented the minutes of September 28, 2010 Public Board Meeting. Upon motion of Mr. Congdon and seconded by Mr. Koutsouradis the Board unanimously approved the minutes of the September 28, 2010 Public Board Meeting.

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

Mr. Paradise presented the following for approval:

- September 2010 Treasurer's Report, subject to audit
- Check Register – September 2010
- Budget Transfer Report 11-1
- Two Investment Summaries
- Personal and per capita tax exonerations for July, August, and September, 2010

Mr. Koutsouradis moved the September 2010 Treasurer's Report be approved, subject to audit, Check Register for September 2010, Budget Transfer Report 11-1, Investment Summary, and the Personal and Per Capita Tax Exonerations for July, August, and September, 2010 be approved. Ms. Boyle seconded the motion.

The Board unanimously approved said reports. (Mr. Eccles was not present.)

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. O'Connor moved that the certified and support personnel reports be approved and Mrs. Cummings seconded the motion.

The Board unanimously approved said reports. (Mr. Eccles was not present.)

Neshaminy School District Salary Scale – Effective July 1, 2007

Mr. Sweet presented a slide show on the teacher's salary scale which was effective July 1, 2007. (See attachment A). Mr. Sweet explained that the salary scale is from 2007/2008 because they are presently in a status quo, which means the pay scale will remain the same as the expired contract until a new contract is settled. Mr. Sweet further explained that no advancement in steps is allowed under the Pennsylvania Labor Board ruling. Mr. Sweet noted that if the School Board agreed to the NFT's proposal of 8/25/2010, for retro pay increase going back to July, 2008, the cost would be \$11 million dollars, which the district does not have. Act 1 would prohibit an \$11 million dollar cost to the district. In response to a question, which was sent to Mr. Webb via email, how does the number get added to the cost of living raises proposed by both sides? Mr. Sweet responded they factor in where a teacher is on the schedule and step increase and across the board increase that is negotiated. In response to the second question, how additional credit raises are moving over a column get equated, Mr. Sweet said that the average for this five year period would be \$500,000 per year in credit raises, which is based on experience, number of credits taken, and historical experience with credit raises. Mr. Sweet explained that a Master's equivalency is a certificate given by the Department of Education if you earn 36 credits after your Bachelor's Degree. Additionally, Mr. Sweet explained that the only requirement is a Bachelor's Degree plus 24 credits, a Master's Degree is not required.

Motion: American Education Week

Mr. Congdon presented the following motion:

WHEREAS, public schools are the backbone of our democracy, providing young people with the tools they need to maintain our nation's precious values of freedom, civility, and equality; and

WHEREAS, by equipping young Americans with both practical skills and broader intellectual abilities, public schools give them hope for, and access to, a productive future; and

WHEREAS, public education employees, be they substitute educators, custodians, teachers, bus drivers or librarians, work tirelessly to serve our children and communities with care and professionalism; and,

WHEREAS, public schools are community catalysts, bringing together adults and children, educators and volunteers, business leaders and elected officials in a common enterprise;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Neshaminy Board of School Directors hereby proclaims November 14-20, 2010, as the 89th annual observance of American Education Week.

Mr. O'Connor seconded the motion.

The Board unanimously approved said motion. (Mr. Eccles was not present.)

Motion: Student Disciplinary Action

Mrs. Cummings presented the following motion:

WHEREAS, a disciplinary hearing of the Neshaminy board of School Directors was held on October 11, 2010.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Neshaminy Board of School Directors accepts the recommendation of the Neshaminy School District administration and hereby determines that the student be permanently expelled from Neshaminy School District and approves the adjudication as prepared by the solicitor.

Mr. Koutsouradis seconded the motion.

The Board unanimously approved said motion. (Mr. Eccles was not present.)

Federal Programs

Dr. Muenker noted that there were three additional awards in the month of October. The Federkeil Grant for \$2,500; E.L.E.C.T. Initiative, Teen Pregnancy and Moms Grant for \$224,981.00; and E.L.E.C.T. Teen Pregnancy Fatherhood Grant for \$70,006.00, which brings the total amount to \$2,076,795.00

Other Board Business

None

Public Comment

Steve Pirritano, self-employed, Feasterville, stated that raising revenue is an ongoing necessity. Mr. Pirritano asked if there is any update on outsourcing transportation and food services as a cost savings to the District.

Solis Basin, retired, Villages of Flowers Mill, Langhorne, thanked Mr. Sweet for the enlightening presentation on the salary schedule. Mr. Basin suggested that the information be posted, so the entire public is made aware of the complete information.

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Donato Gaspari, retired of Red Rose Gate, asked that if the contract is in status quo as Mr. Sweet said, then why the School Board isn't challenging the NFT with Article 9. He said Article 9 declares that the NFT cannot do anything do impede the education in the schools.

Charles Alfonso, semi-retired sales executive, Langhorne, stated that he obtained that his information regarding the PSSA test scores was from the Pennsylvania Department of Education master database. Mr. Alfonso said that seven other Bucks County Districts scored higher than Neshaminy in math. He further stated that nine other Bucks County School Districts scored higher than Neshaminy in science and reading. Mr. Alfonso concluded by stating that Neshaminy ranked 203 in overall scores in the entire state.

Steve Rodos, semi-retired, Villages of Flowers Mill, Langhorne, asked why the Board has not filed an action regarding work to contract. He mentioned that there is a section in the current contract that refers to a work slowdown and he suggested that this be reviewed by the Board. Mr. Rodos asked for an update on a statement made by insurance brokers that they could reduce expenses by at least one million dollars. Mr. Rodos questioned why the district continues to pay administration costs to health insurance while it is not called for in the contract, if the district is under a so-called WTC.

Joanne Emsley, parent of Neshaminy student, Levittown, asked who does the hiring and firing of employees in Neshaminy School District and if a criminal background check is conducted prior to hiring. Ms. Emsley inquired if parents are allowed to observe in the classroom during American Education Week. Additionally, Ms. Emsley wanted to know if there were any consequences for teachers who did not attend Back to School night.

Denise Banks, self-employed, Hulmeville, stated that she has recently started to attend meetings and she expressed her support for the School Board. Ms. Banks questioned why progress is not being made with negotiations. Ms. Banks suggested that perhaps something can be done legally to move forward and resolve the contract issues and the work to contract. Ms. Banks noted that the stalled negotiations are affecting the children's education.

Scott McIlvaine, 2009 Neshaminy graduate, stated that he is presently attending Drexel University. In response to the comment that Neshaminy's curriculum is excellent, Mr. McIlvaine disagreed. He declared that he attended the higher education classes that Neshaminy offers and found them to be below the standards of other schools. Mr. McIlvaine questioned why Neshaminy teachers are making more money than private school teachers, while private schools students are getting a much better education than Neshaminy students.

Beverly McKinney, parent of two Neshaminy students, Oakford, commented that everyone she knows contributes to their healthcare plan and she expressed to the Board her hopes that they stand firm and require teachers to contribute to healthcare in the new contract.

Board Comment

Mr. O'Connor advised the audience that any written materials or handouts that they want distributed to be placed at the back doors of the auditorium. Mr. O'Connor thanked Mr. Sweet for his presentation and agreed that the information, along with Mr. Minotti's presentation, should be kept on the website for the public to review. Mr. O'Connor acknowledged the importance of the issue of building conditions as it affects the safety of the students. Mr. O'Connor confirmed that the Board will continue to provide the public with all the facts regarding their position, so that the public can stay well informed and enlighten their friends and neighbors with accurate information.

Dr. Muenker affirmed that parents are welcome to observe in classrooms during American Education Week and the information regarding dates and times will be posted on the website. Dr. Muenker advised parents to notify the school if they planning to attend. Dr. Muenker stated that criminal background checks are mandatory for employment within the school district. He noted that if there is an incident in the interim, it is handled on a case by case basis. Dr. Muenker noted that the Board cannot discuss specific employees or incidents.

Mr. Webb stated that the Board will follow-up on the matter of S.A.G.E. In response to a question regarding outsourcing of transportation and food services, Mr. Webb advised the matter was resolved with the NESPA Union and the decision was made not to outsource these services. Mr. Webb said that health insurance is still on the negotiating table. He said that a proposal has been made to the NFT that would save the district an estimated 1 million dollars; however, due to the status quo the situation is in a state of limbo. In response to a question from the audience Mr. Webb reiterated that the District's attorneys have reviewed every aspect of the WTC and have found that no action can be taken by the Board.

Scott McIlvaine, 2009 Neshaminy graduate, asked the Board why they do not negotiate directly with the teachers, instead of through the union.

Mr. Webb replied that the Board must bargain with the union. Mr. Webb apologized for not enforcing the rule and allowing a speaker to publicly accuse a Board member and their family regarding an alleged incident. Mr. Webb reiterated that personal attacks are strictly prohibited.

Adjournment

Mr. O'Connor moved the meeting be adjourned and Mrs. Cummings seconded the motion. The Board unanimously approved the motion. Mr. Webb adjourned the meeting at 8:47 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Burns
Board Secretary

NESHAMINY SCHOOL DISTRICT
SALARY SCALE – Effective July 1, 2007

STEP	RANGE										
	B	B + 10	B + 20	B + 30	B + 40	M	M + 10	M + 20	M + 30	M + 40	
1	\$42,552	\$43,576	\$44,519	\$45,584	\$46,716	\$47,841	\$48,972	\$50,097	\$51,226	\$52,354	
2	\$44,428	\$45,489	\$46,526	\$47,653	\$48,783	\$49,907	\$51,043	\$52,165	\$53,293	\$54,424	
3	\$46,431	\$47,556	\$48,594	\$49,720	\$50,848	\$51,976	\$53,105	\$54,235	\$55,359	\$56,487	
4	\$48,497	\$49,629	\$50,660	\$51,787	\$52,918	\$54,045	\$55,172	\$56,304	\$57,432	\$58,559	
5	\$50,567	\$51,698	\$52,728	\$53,856	\$54,986	\$56,111	\$57,243	\$58,366	\$59,498	\$60,623	
6	\$52,444	\$53,575	\$54,609	\$55,737	\$56,866	\$57,992	\$59,121	\$60,249	\$61,375	\$62,502	
7	\$53,621	\$54,769	\$55,913	\$60,627	\$62,381	\$64,130	\$64,665	\$65,208	\$66,554	\$69,921	
8	\$58,328	\$59,575	\$60,820	\$65,949	\$67,853	\$69,759	\$70,342	\$70,931	\$72,397	\$76,421	
9	\$63,033	\$64,380	\$65,730	\$71,273	\$73,326	\$75,388	\$76,019	\$76,654	\$78,240	\$82,922	
10	\$67,741	\$69,189	\$70,639	\$76,594	\$78,802	\$81,017	\$81,699	\$82,377	\$84,081	\$89,424	
11	\$72,448	\$73,993	\$75,544	\$81,912	\$84,276	\$86,640	\$87,375	\$88,100	\$89,920	\$95,923	

SALARY SCHEDULE FOR 2010 – NFT PROPOSAL 8/25/2010

Step	B	B + 10	B + 20	B + 30	B + 40
1	44,925	46,006	47,001	48,125	49,320
2	46,905	48,026	49,121	50,310	51,503
3	49,019	50,207	51,304	52,493	53,683
4	51,201	52,396	53,485	54,674	55,869
5	53,387	54,580	55,668	56,859	58,052
6	55,369	56,562	57,654	58,845	60,037
7	56,611	57,823	59,030	64,007	65,859
8	61,580	62,897	64,211	69,626	71,636
9	66,547	67,970	69,395	75,247	77,414
10	71,518	73,047	74,578	80,865	83,196
11	76,488	78,118	79,756	86,479	88,975

SALARY SCHEDULE FOR 2010 – NFT PROPOSAL 8/25/2010

Step	M	M + 10	M + 20	M + 30	M + 40
1	50,508	51,703	52,890	54,082	55,273
2	52,689	53,888	55,073	56,264	57,459
3	54,874	56,066	57,259	58,445	59,636
4	57,058	58,249	59,443	60,634	61,825
5	59,240	60,434	61,621	62,816	64,003
6	61,226	62,418	63,608	64,797	65,987
7	67,706	68,271	68,844	70,265	73,820
8	73,649	74,264	74,886	76,433	80,682
9	79,592	80,258	80,928	82,602	87,546
10	85,534	86,254	86,970	88,769	94,409
11	91,470	92,246	93,012	94,934	101,272

SUMMARY OF NFT PROPOSAL 8/25/2010

Base Salaries + 2.75%, 2.75%, 3%, 3%, 3.5% Increase

YEAR	TOTAL SALARIES W/CREDITS	TOTAL SALARIES	\$ INCREASE SALARIES	% INCREASE SALARIES*	STARTING SALARY	MAXIMUM SALARY	AVERAGE SALARY
Base Year 2007-08		\$51,603,464					
Credits (3/15/2008-10/15/2010)	\$1500,000 (\$500,000 per year)						
2008-2009	\$55,957,007	\$55,457,007	\$4,353,543	8.44%	\$43,722	\$98,561	\$83,520
2009-2010	\$59,172,944	\$58,172,944	\$3,215,938	5.75%	\$44,925	\$101,272	\$87,610
2010-2011	\$62,566,744	\$61,066,744	\$3,393,800	5.74%	\$46,273	\$104,310	\$91,968
2011-2012	\$66,032,380	\$64,032,380	\$3,465,635	5.54%	\$47,661	\$107,439	\$96,434
2012-2013	\$69,823,374	\$67,323,374	\$3,790,994	5.74%	\$49,329	\$111,200	\$101,391
TOTAL	\$313,552,449	\$306,052,449	\$18,219,910	31.20% (Additive)			
				35.31% (As % of Salaries in Base Year)			