

NESHAMINY SCHOOL DISTRICT  
Langhorne, Pennsylvania

PUBLIC BOARD MEETING  
WORK SESSION MINUTES/PUBLIC BOARD MEETING MINUTES  
NESHAMINY BOARD OF SCHOOL DIRECTORS  
February 26, 2008

The Neshaminy Board of School Directors met in combined public work session/public meeting on February 26, 2008, in the District Offices Board Room in the Maple Point Middle School. The following persons were in attendance:

**BOARD MEMBERS:**

Mr. Richard M. Eccles, President  
Mr. Frank Koziol, Vice President  
Mr. Joseph Blasch  
Ms. Irene Boyle  
Mrs. Susan Cummings  
Mr. Kim Koutsouradis  
Mr. William D. O'Connor  
Dr. William H. Spitz  
Mr. Ritchie Webb

**ADMINISTRATORS:**

Mr. Paul J. Kadri  
Dr. Louis T. Muenker  
Dr. Sandra Costanzo  
Dr. Geeta Heble  
Mr. Joseph V. Paradise  
Dr. Jacqueline Rattigan

**OTHERS:** Approximately 150 persons from the public, staff and press

**SECRETARY:** Mrs. Anita E. Walls

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

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**1. Call to Order**

Mr. Eccles called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

**2. Pledge of Allegiance**

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

**3. Announcements**

Mr. Kadri apologized for not being able to attend the last meeting due to a family vacation which was previously scheduled. Further discussion will take place this evening regarding the potential consolidation of facilities. In order to have this option in the future the district must follow very strict state guidelines. Discussions regarding budget and personnel will be ongoing. Mr. Kadri recommended to the Board that the Resolution presented this evening be approved to begin the process of closing Neshaminy Middle and Tawanka. Closing a building could be in the best interest of the students and staff.

Mr. Kadri apologized publicly for the circumstances surrounding his recent job search. The State of Michigan has an open process whereby the press has the ability to sit in on the interview process. Mr. Kadri reiterated that although he applied for the position he will remain and is always committed to the Neshaminy School District and its continued success. Mr. Kadri continues to move forward with his initiatives for the District.

Mr. Paradise reviewed the budget process with Board members and public. Mr. Paradise stated:

“The School District is faced with a declining enrollment and rising costs. In addition, the national economy seems to be turning south as a result of the sub-prime mortgage crisis, the declining real estate values, and the declining revenues from tax collections due to major interest rate reductions over recent months. Indeed, economic fears seem to be increasing of late which is causing concern over our budget.

The Preliminary Budget paints a continued picture of financial challenges for the District for the years ahead. Most importantly, our woes will not be resolved by whittling around the edges, or by reducing the amount of money available for operating costs each year. Neshaminy has a significant over capacity of facilities due to declining enrollments over recent years. The District will also be experiencing a large number of anticipated retirements this coming year. This may be the logical time to consider consolidating facilities without hurting people. The reduction of excess capacity in any organization is a very positive thing in that it allows the organization to focus the limited funds on the core mission.

In the case of a public school system, we wither use limited taxpayer funds to keep schools open that are not needed, or we use those funds to keep student programs going that are needed. It simply is not financially feasible or responsible to do both. If we fail to face the issue of excess capacity and inefficient facility usage, we will find ourselves reducing or eliminating educational programs in the very near future.”

Mr. Paradise noted that the middle school capacity can handle 4600 students. The present enrollment in the middle schools is 2900. There is significant over capacity. The projected budget gap for this coming year is \$12.7M or 16.4 mils which would be an 11 1/2% tax increase. That is significant and it is over the amount of money that the district can legally increase taxes.

Mr. Kadri stated the following:

“The decisions of the Board over this year are extensive and very important to the future of the district. Budget, potential building closures, instruction and negotiations are just a few of the issues. Under any circumstances these type of issues call on those to conduct business with the best type of process to move the business forward and resolve disagreements appropriately. This affects not only students and staff, but the entire community. Many of you are aware that there have not only been disagreements among Board members, but some that have reached the level of frustration that has strained the cohesiveness of the Board. This puts at risk the ability to deal with the important issues mentioned above. As a matter of fact, many of you may later on tonight stress the concern related to an issue. Although, in some cases disagreement is a healthy part of deliberation in this case there is concern that we may be distracted from effectively resolving issues. With that in mind the Administration is suggesting to the Board that a Workshop/Retreat take place in the very near future to get everyone in place where the business of the district can get done with the best chance of success. Such a meeting would not focus on issues but a process of appropriately working together. With a nine/zero support the Board has agreed that such an effort is in the best interest of the district. Having such a meeting does not guarantee success, but does give the opportunity to address lingering concerns. As an entire community we should be encouraged by this agreement of effort. Differences of opinion will never go away, but it is encouraging to try to build trust. There is a lot of emotion within the District and I would respectfully add that those that speak tonight encourage this immediate effort of cooperation. We are here for the students and community. I am thankful for the Board’s willingness to try to become stronger by addressing how it works together. If successful we will be in a better position to address all of our issues. “

Mr. Webb suggested that Public comment take place after the discussion of Consolidation of Facilities. There was Board consensus to have public comment after Items for Discussion.

#### **4. Student Representative Report**

The Student Council Treasurer, Mr. Mike Hanley, provided the following report:

- Gym Night will take place on Friday evening
- Boy’s Diving has students competing at states
- Wrestling Team is doing well

- High School Musical was very successful

5. **Items for Discussion**

a) **Consolidation of Facilities**

- **Neshaminy Middle School**
- **Tawanka**

Mr. Kadri advised that the Alternative Program at Tawanka is highly effective and the Board wishes to maintain such a program for the students. Mr. Kadri has had conversations with those who have designed the program and those who actively are implementing the program to students. Whether the program remains at Tawanka, moves to Eisenhower or some other facility serious discussions are taking place as to where the program has come from and where it is going. Mr. Kadri advised that the facility of Tawanka is presently occupied by the Alternative Program and the Bucks County IU preschool program/and special education programs. The Board is looking at possible other uses for the building. Mr. Kadri advised that over the past month two educational type institutions have come in to look at the facility and see if there is a level of interest. The Solicitor has suggested that if in the future the Board wishes to possibly lease the building to another organization and give the flexibility in the future should we find a suitable use the Board should follow through with the Resolution presented this evening.

Dr. Spitz requested if any additional information was received from Lower Southampton expressing an interest in the Tawanka facility. Mr. Kadri advised that a meeting has not been scheduled at present; however, such a meeting could take place in the future as an option.

Dr. Spitz requested that the Administration present several options that could be implemented for the Tawanka facility and a recommendation from the Administration that could be acted upon by the end of the school year. Mr. Kadri advised that possible options should be made available to the Board in the near future.

Mr. Kadri advised that the retirees are an issue which will need to be considered in the process. The district anticipates a much higher number of retirees this year than in any other year. Two reasons are that most of the schools in the area experienced larger enrollments and many of the teachers began their careers around the 1970's and many are reaching the point in which it is financially desirable to retire. Also, the contract with the teacher's union has some advantages that may lead teachers to want to retire. Negotiations are presently taking place for a new contract. Someone at the retirement age may want to take advantage of any opportunities that exist now. If the district is considering building consolidation in the future, and the district is experiencing large number of retirees, it needs to be examined whether same would be beneficial to the district.

Mr. Kadri advised that even if a facility were closed, a level of up-grade would need to take place before being leased.

Dr. Spitz clarified that the Resolutions this evening are due to timing requirements, and will not have any final decisions regarding any closures. If the motions are not passed this evening the Board will lose its ability to even consider any facility for closure this coming year.

Mr. Paradise advised that the motions will give the Board the opportunity to consider same and the public the opportunity to be heard.

Mr. Profy advised that the school code requires that a public hearing take place before any facility is closed and also that the hearing be advertised 15 days in advance of the hearing date. Also, the Board cannot make a decision until 90 days (3 calendar months) after the date of the public hearing.

Tonight, February 26<sup>th</sup>, is the last night that the Board can initiate the process which includes deeming that a public hearing will take place and authorizing the advertisement of same. Mr. Profy stressed that the Board cannot act during the 90 day period.

Mr. Profy advised that closing a school facility does not mean locking the doors to the building. It means that the District is no longer using the building for educational purposes.

Mr. Paradise advised that there can be a short term resolution and a long term resolution that can occur concurrently. This does not preclude the district from looking at other McKissick resolutions or options that could be executed over the next several years to consolidate facilities.

Mr. Koziol stated that time is critical. Mr. Koziol wished the Board to consider closing of the Tawanka facility, closing of a middle school and closing of an elementary school. Closing of a middle school could have savings of \$1.9M and the elementary school could yield savings of \$1.2M. This should be a viable option on the table.

Mr. Blasch stated that at the last meeting on January 30<sup>th</sup> he was one of the six votes that voted against closing any schools this year. Mr. Blasch attended the Finance and Facilities meeting the next night and the picture was painted very bleak. Mr. Blasch noted that \$1.5M reduction in investments will occur this year. Mr. Blasch noted that the K-8, Option 11 is not very popular; however, that option should be reviewed further. Mr. Blasch noted that a serious look needs to be taken at the McKissick study and the district will be able to save the taxpayers a lot of money.

Mr. Profy noted the code specifically describes that when you have your advertisement and notice the district must designate the specific facility that is being considered for closure.

Mr. Koziol stated that Hoover has been closed in the past, has saleable ground, accidents have occurred around the Hoover facility, and it would present itself as a good rental property since it is along the major highway.

Mr. Webb stressed that a more "definitive" answer is necessary. Words like "potentially", "consider" and "maybe" are unfair.

Mr. O'Connor stated that he would not like to jeopardize any other options presented in the McKissick plan if one or another option is selected. The Board should not preclude any of the other options.

Ms. Boyle commented that any school which would be chosen for closure is as much a neighborhood school for its individual community as the next.

Mr. Kadri noted that students and staff exist in all buildings and this poses a level of anxiety with any decisions that occurs regarding any specific buildings. These details are not being overlooked. Closure of buildings causes a heightened level of concern. Mr. Kadri thanked the PTO's from the various buildings for good dialogue.

Mrs. Cummings asked whether each resolution would be separate. Mr. Profy advised that each resolution would be considered separately. Mr. Profy advised that the public hearings for each facility could be held on the same evening.

Dr. Spitz commented that he felt it was premature to consider an elementary school closing for this year. The McKissick report should have been reviewed at greater lengths. Redistricting effects will need to be considered.

Mr. Koziol stressed that an elementary school should also be chosen for closure. There would be 90 days to discuss same and the Board could decide not to follow through with said elementary closure.

Mr. O'Connor noted that the school impacts everyone. Mr. O'Connor would not like to select one elementary school and then have the Board be precluded from other options provided by McKissick.

Mrs. Cummings indicated that the Board had a plan to hold off on closing Neshaminy Middle until the 9<sup>th</sup> grade was moved into the new high school.

Dr. Muenker expressed concern with the tasks that may result from such closures. Redistricting the district is a very daunting task that will occupy the time of Administrators, even before a final decision is made by the Board on June 24<sup>th</sup>. Challenges lie ahead; community census codes exist and are assigned to specific schools. This mission should be embarked upon once by the District. Dr. Muenker stated that the Board is having a great meeting with good dialogue. However, timing is critical and should another school be added for consideration that will pull the district in many ways. In 2009-10 all 9<sup>th</sup> graders will move to the high school. Dr. Muenker noted that numbers need to be equitable, programs need to be sound, teaching and learning environments need to be at their best and this all needs to be done in a fiscally responsible way. The district will need to solicit help from the community and schools to look at these very questions. Staffing issues are huge, transportation issues are huge, and at the present time vacancies are not yet known. Children will make the transition. A plan needs to be developed to fit all the needs of the community. People love their schools. Adjustments will be necessary; however, they are attainable. Dr. Muenker stated that he will be reaching out to the public to help in the process.

Mr. Koziol noted that he was able to select the Hoover facility for closing because he read the McKissick report, listened to people, drove around to each facility and evaluated same and came to the conclusion. Information was provided and the district has been putting off these hard decisions.

## **6. Public Comment**

Mr. Solis Basen, Villages of Flowers Mill, Langhorne, PA, thanked Mr. Kadri for the Board retreat. Mr. Basen stated that the following words are for the Administration, School Board, Business Manager, employees and all citizens of Neshaminy School District: "Accountability, Blinders, Broke, Broken, Children, Community, Cooperation, Efficiency, Flexible, Inflation, Politics, Priorities, Recession, Seniors, and Spineless."

Mr. Marvin Dickler, Villages of Flowers Mill, Langhorne, PA, thought that it was noted that possibly the best plan would be closing one middle school and one elementary school. Why are we waiting for next year. Stop playing politics, and let's put the children and community first and mean it. Put a proposal and give yourselves the 90 days to consider same and make a proper decision and not a political one.

Mrs. Karen Gatewood stated that her mind was put at ease that the Board was going to go on retreat to work out issues. Mrs. Gatewood feels the Board throughout the years has become less political. Mrs. Gatewood stated that before making a decision she would hope the Board would listen to the professionals hired. They have the experience, they have done the research, give the information to the public and make a decision. Mrs. Gatewood does not want to see her taxes go up. Listen to the people.

Mrs. Aimee O'Neill is a Neshaminy graduate, Neshaminy educator, Neshaminy taxpayer and parent. She has been part of the Neshaminy community for 35 years. Until recently she has always felt that education is a priority with Neshaminy School District. Mrs. O'Neill turned down several offers to work. Mrs. O'Neill does not disagree with school closure. Mrs. O'Neill understands that the district needs to be fiscally responsible. This problem has not taken one year to create. This generation of students does not need to pay the price for this problem. Mrs. O'Neill feels the reports are misleading. Building closures need to be based on practical facts and not just percentages. Mrs. O'Neill spoke regarding Ferderbar in particular

and the modulars at that location and room usage. Educators need to be part of the decision making process. The district is hiring outside non-educational individuals to make building decisions. Mr. O'Neill is in favor of redistricting. Educators need to be consulted, and let's make decisions based on education and not on impulse. PSSA scores should be addressed.

Mrs. Lisa Reiser, Langhorne, PA, stated that she only started coming to board meetings this fall. According to the PA School Board Association Code of Conduct it is her responsibility to participate in the process in the spirit of team work and community involvement. Mrs. Reiser is committed for the long haul. Most of her experience has been at Oliver Heckman. Students are learning and shining. The teachers are highly qualified and regularly participate in continuing education opportunities. Mrs. Reiser stated that support is received from the Administration and lead teachers are present in the school. Mr. Kadri, Dr. Rattigan, Dr. Costanzo are active participants at Heckman. Mrs. Reiser has read the mission statement and quoted the mission statement found on the internet. Further Mrs. Reiser discussed the eight questions. Mrs. Reiser is disappointed with the Board. Children and academics should come first. Mrs. Reiser is in favor of full day kindergarten. Proper preparation needs to be made before closing schools and redistricting. Mrs. Reiser would like the Board to go back to the drawing board in pursuit of academic excellence, talk to the teachers, examine the programs, etc. Mrs. Reiser hopes the Board will do the right thing and fulfill the vision with the help of a great community. Mrs. Reiser feels the financial impact is a burden on the seniors. Mrs. Reiser would like to find a way to move forward that is beneficial to everyone.

Mr. David Berkowitz is a 20 year resident of Neshaminy School District feels that incompetence exists from the top level to the bottom. Mr. Berkowitz was in the district when Maple Point was closed. Mr. Berkowitz would like to see the renter of a specific building pay for the improvements rather than the district. Why are other districts not increasing their taxes? Interest rates are going down for all districts. Mr. Berkowitz questioned who is doing the contract negotiations with the teachers.

Mr. Charles Lauble, Langhorne Manor, PA stated that he would like the School Board to be role models for the students. Mr. Lauble stated that years ago he had 34 students per class when he attended Neshaminy, and the teachers did a great job. Teachers were role models for efficiency, effectiveness, excellence, and high moral character. In the school system back then Mr. Lauble feels he received a better education than his three children who graduated from Neshaminy and his grandchildren who attend Neshaminy. The district back then was not a burden on the parents or grandparents. The only burden was the family farm that existed where Neshaminy Middle School stands was driven off his property. Back then there were no drugs, just chewing gum. Efficiency would be optimizing the use of the facilities and at the same time control factors for expenditures. Effectiveness means coaching the children who are not doing too well and not calling them "Stupid." Mr. Lauble stated that his daughter came home from high school one day crying because a teacher called her "Stupid." Mr. Lauble attended the system for 12 years and no teacher ever called a student "Stupid." Excellence is the result of cost effective management and we should be rewarding teachers who are performing at a high efficiency. We should be setting high expectations for all the performance in the whole system. Mr. Lauble stated that if two or three schools are closed for efficiency, that is fine, however, he would also like to see the flexibility of taking care of the schools that are closed in case the population increases in future years. Provide the taxpayers with efficiency, effectiveness, excellence, cost affectivity, but still maintain flexibility so that things can be changed if the variables change.

Mr. Chris Graham, Langhorne, PA, is concerned on the impact on the seniors. Mr. Graham works exclusively with seniors and he stated that there are many seniors who are one tax increase away from losing their homes. Mr. Paradise stated that there will be a tax increase. Mr. Graham stated that his heating costs have gone up. Sacrifice inflation for the economy. Interest rates will go down, but inflation will go up. Seniors will be hit the hardest. Seniors are on a fixed income. Mr. Graham stated that this is the greatest generation in the country. These are the people who built the country. Mr. Graham stated to look at the Property Assistance Tax Program because it is out dated. Please revisit the tax program. Mr.

Graham noted that Erie School District is having a problem with their bond swap and they are bankrupt. Ultimately, the Board needs to make some difficult decisions which need to be made.

Mr. Phil Scheiber, Villages of Flowers Mill, Langhorne, PA, stated that he is well aware of the importance of public education. Property tax reform is necessary for the future of education and the long range future of the Commonwealth. Some of our friends and neighbors are on a fixed income and are financially challenged by constant increases in taxes. Many of the original residents of Flowers Mills have already moved to states with more sustainable tax rates. This past June the Board voted not to increase millage more than 4.6 mils. Mr. Paradise is reporting that the anticipated earnings on projected surplus has not been recognized nor will be because of interest reductions in the investment portfolio. Now possibly a 14 mil increase will be forthcoming. This increase for the Flowers Mill community would mean approximately a \$600 increase depending on which model home. The only way to avoid this is to cut costs. Just like the District is loosing money on investments so are the people. People are experiencing rising gasoline costs, utilities, Township and County taxes are rising. It has been reported by the State that the assessment value of Bucks County homes has been reduced for the first time in eight years. This Board continues to spend. Next year we will be in worst shape. The only way to avoid this is to cut costs. The upcoming teacher negotiations are an opportunity and a challenge for both sides. Both sides must strive to seek more equitable tax solutions from the state. This Board and others in the Commonwealth will be faced with no choice but to cut programs. Each member of the school board was elected to represent all the taxpayers of Neshaminy School District, not just the children and their parents. Trying to find ways to make the district more effective more taxpayer money is being spent. Neshaminy ranks 189<sup>th</sup> in state wide scores. Costs are the problem. Costs must be cut. Several weeks ago the Board voted down an independent consultant report. The Board is aware of the need to close schools. The Board is aware of declining enrollment. Recently, there was a legal opinion that precluded two members of the board from participating in teacher negotiations. If a conflict exists for the teacher negotiations, a conflict should exist for the school closure issue. Those two directors should not participate in this decision since both have family members who are teachers within the district. Mr. Scheiber feels these Board members should recluse themselves from this particular discussion. In closing Mr. Scheiber stated that you have lost public trust.

Mr. Bob Mintzes stated that he is a former Director of Buildings and Facilities at Temple University and the school board has recognized the fact that the district owns and operates too many facilities. A study has been commissioned to identify which schools could be closed. The time has come. The Board in order to be fiscally responsible must make a decision as to what facilities will be closed. Extra personnel will exist, but this is the time to let them fade off through attrition and retirements. Today a vote must be taken. Teaching staff negotiations are upon us and teachers in the state of Pennsylvania have participated in more strikes then all the other states in the union combined. Mr. Mintzes feels that they have abused the negotiating process and have held school boards hostage. Neshaminy has the 7<sup>th</sup> highest teacher salary in the union and some of the lowest scores. The teaching staff is not as great as everyone thinks. Statistics don't lie. A study was commissioned by the Board, and recommendations were given, now they need to be followed. Corporations throughout the country close facilities. Not everyone can be pleased in this situation.

Mr. Bob Tull stated that with the closure of schools it will allow the district to have the greatest opportunity to accept retirement resignations and not be put into a position wherein you would need to let staff go due to school closures. Also, the highest salary people would be the people retiring and the most senior teachers. Mr. Tull was also concerned that the particular elementary school which was discussed for closure had already experienced redistricting numerous times over the years. Utilization of the buildings is critical and some of the issues have already been discussed by previous Boards.

Mr. Brian McLendon stated that he is concerned regarding theft at the high school during gym classes in the locker rooms. This is a serious concern and it is a repeated issue and Mr. McLendon feels that he is not getting the feedback from the Administration and teachers. The most recent incident occurred

yesterday with multiple phones, cash, etc. during 7<sup>th</sup> period gym. Doors were locked, lockers are capable of being locked, and gym room doors were locked by the teachers to protect the student's items during that period. The incident was not reported to the police. Mr. McLendon contacted the Middletown Police Department and they also expressed concern that the incident was not reported. They felt it was a serious incident and amounted to thousands of dollars in personal items. Mr. McLendon feels an investigation should be made and who has access to the room and who entered the room. The school has an obligation to provide secure facilities to the students and they should not have to be concerned about losing clothing, textbooks, cell phones, etc. Mr. McLendon stated that if students are not to bring those types of items, should his son also not bring his \$2,000 trumpet which is required for jazz band. Mr. McLendon requested the Board to look into the issue.

## 7. Items for Approval

### a. **Overnight Trips**

Dr. Heble presented the following trips for Board approval:

- i. Maple Point Middle School to Future Business Leaders of America State Leadership Conference – March 30 – April 1, 2008, Hershey, PA
- ii. Neshaminy High School to FLBA State Conference – March 31 to April 2, 2008 - Hershey Lodge and Convention Center, Hershey, PA
- iii. Neshaminy Middle School to Washington, D.C. – Healthy School Program Leadership Training – April 20 – 22, 2008
- iv. Neshaminy High School to the Model United Nations – May 15 – 20, 2008 - New York City

There was Board consensus for the above trips.

### b) **Acceptance of the 2006-07 Audit**

Mr. Paradise advised that the Board is asked to accept the Audit Report as prepared by Maillie, Falconiero & Company, LLP, Certified Public Accountants for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2007.

### c) **BCIU #22 - 2008-09 Programs & Services and Instructional Materials and Research Budget**

Mr. Kadri advised that the Board will consider the funding approval for the Intermediate unit for the new fiscal year.

### d) **Election of Board Member to the Intermediate Unit Board**

Mr. Kadri advised that the Board will be asked to elect a board member to participate on the Intermediate Unit Board. Ms. Boyle is the current Board member serving on the IU Board and her term expires on June 30, 2008.

### e) **Approval of Revised Board Policies**

- **Polices #231, 331, 431 - Drug Free Workplace**
- **Policy #510**
- **Policy #539**

Mrs. Rattigan advised that the Board will be asked to consider adopting revision to the above policies regarding drug free workplace, alcohol and other drugs and control of lice infestation.

### f) **Bids/Budget Transfers**

Mr. Paradise presented the following bid:

**BID: 09-13 Buy-Back of 21 School Buses**

**Bid Amount: \$ 340,100**

The bid is for 20 – 78 passenger buses and 1 – 30 passenger bus under a 2 year Buy-Back Agreement.

Mr. Paradise presented Budget Transfer Report No. 08-03 (Working Copy) which will be presented along with Bid 09-13 for approval later this evening.

**8. Superintendent's Report**

Mr. Kadri advised of the following:

- High School Musical and Poquessing Middle School performance was absolutely fantastic. This weekend performances will take place at the other middle schools. Mr. Kadri urged the public to attend the performances.
- Graduation Project – 30 students are still in need of completing the project.
- Classrooms for the Future Grant – 600 Laptops were provided to the Science Classroom. Implementation of the laptops was a huge undertaking. The district has the opportunity to provide additional laptops to 3 core areas of Social Studies, English and math. This will be brought for Board discussion in the future.

**9. Committee Reports**

**a) Board Policies**

Ms. Boyle stated that the board met prior to this evenings meeting.

**b) Educational Development**

Dr. Spitz advised that the committee met on January 24<sup>th</sup>. A brief presentation was provided regarding the Life Line Suicide Prevention Program. Discussion took place regarding the PSSA scores and improvement on the part of the students. The next meeting is scheduled for March 4<sup>th</sup>.

**c) Finance/Facilities**

Mr. Webb advised that there was no report this evening. A meeting will be scheduled in the near future.

**d) IU Board**

Ms. Boyle advised that a meeting took place on February 19<sup>th</sup> and budget discussions took place. The next meeting is scheduled for March 18, 2008.

**e) Educational Foundation**

Representative is needed.

**f) Technical School**

Mr. Koutsouradis advised that the Tech School honored school board recognition month and the next meeting is scheduled for March 24<sup>th</sup>.

Mr. Koziol read a Citation from the House of Representatives.

**g) Technology**

Mr. Blasch advised that meeting took place on February 25<sup>th</sup> regarding Classroom for the Future Grant which provided 600 laptops and an additional 1800 laptops in the upcoming school year. This would give the district 6,000 computers within the school district.

**10. Future Topics**

None.

**11. Agenda Development for the February 26, 2008 Public Meeting**

**12. Other Board Business**

None.

### **13. Adjournment**

Ms. Boyle moved that the meeting be adjourned and Mrs. Cummings seconded same. Mr. Eccles adjourned the meeting at 9:30 pm.

### **PUBLIC BOARD MEETING**

Mr. Eccles reconvened the public board meeting at 9:40 p.m.

### **Public Comment**

Mrs. Marianne O'Connor, Langhorne, PA, stated that she is not opposed to a school being closed if it is in the best interest of the district, however, she feels a school closure should not occur until all the research is done. Rushing the situation may not be in the best interest of the district. The proper time needs to be taken. Mrs. O'Connor stated that the meeting date of the public hearing should not be planned during the week of March 17<sup>th</sup> which is Spring Break. Let's make sure we give the public the opportunity to come and speak regarding the issue.

Mr. Chris Graham, Langhorne, PA, stated that he would like an update on the Verizon Fios for Langhorne Boro and the teacher contract negotiations. In this day and age companies are laying off individuals. Health care should be considered and the educators in the district may have to look at giving back regarding health care.

Mrs. Dawn Abbomondi, Langhorne Boro, PA, stated that she has children in Oliver Heckman and another child who will attend in two years. Mrs. Abbomondi requested the Board to take their time and research the McKissick Report and not make any decisions regarding the elementary schools in 2008-2009. Outline the deficit to the public. Please research the declining performance of the school district regarding PSSA scores.

### **Approval of Minutes**

Mrs. Walls presented the minutes of the January 8, January 22, and January 30, 2008 public meetings for Board approval. Upon motion of Mr. Webb and seconded by Ms. Boyle the Board unanimously approved the minutes of the January 8, January 22 and January 30, 2008 Public Meetings.

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

Mr. Paradise presented the following for approval:

January, 2008 Treasurer's Report, subject to audit  
Check Register – January, 2008  
Investment Summary  
Personal and Per Capita Tax Exonerations – January, 2008

Ms. Boyle moved the January, 2008 Treasurer's Report, subject to audit, check register, investments and exonerations of personal and per capita tax be approved. Mr. Koziol seconded the motion.

Mr. Koziol and Ms. Boyle questioned Mr. Paradise regarding specific checks and Mr. Paradise responded to same.

The Board unanimously approved the Treasurer's Report, subject to audit, check registers, investments and personal and per capita tax exonerations.

### **Bids/Budget Transfers:**

Information distributed prior to the meeting. Mr. Paradise presented the following bid for Board approval:

### **Bid No. 09-13 - Buy Back of 21 School Buses**

**Bid Amount: \$340,100**

The Bid is for 20 -78 passenger Buses and 1 – 30 passenger Bus under a 2 year Buy-Back program.

**Bid No. 09-14 - 4 New School Buses**

**Bid Amount: \$210,688**

The bid is for the purchase of (4) four 30-passenger Type A School Buses

Mr. Paradise presented Budget Transfer Report 08-03 (Working Copy) for approval.

The Board unanimously approved Bids No. 09-13 and 09-14 and Budget Transfer Report No. 08-03 (Working Copy).

**Certified and Support Personnel Reports:**

Dr. Muenker presented the following for approval:

- Elections of Certified Personnel
- Resignations/Leaves of Certified Personnel
- Elections of Support Personnel
- Resignations/Leaves of Support Personnel
- Sabbatical Leaves of Certified Personnel
- 2007-08 Recommended Extra-Curricular Staff and Salaries

Dr. Muenker requested the Board to table the first page of the report (Elections of Certified Personnel –Items 1 thru 5).

Mr. Blasch moved the certified and support personnel reports be accepted. Mr. O'Connor seconded the motion.

Dr. Spitz made a motion to table the Certified Personnel report Items 1 thru 5, page 71 and 72. Mr. O'Connor seconded the motion. The Board unanimously approved the motion.

The Board unanimously approved the certified and support personnel report as amended.

**Motion: Acceptance of the 2006-07 Audit**

Mrs. Cummings presented the following motion:

WHEREAS, the audit for the Neshaminy School District for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2007, has been prepared by Maillie, Falconiero & Company, LLP.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Audit Report for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2007, be accepted in accordance with Section 24-2408 of the School Code.

Dr. Spitz seconded the motion.

The Board unanimously approved the motion.

**Motion: Approval of the BCIU #22 2008-09 Programs & Services and Instructional Materials And Research Budget**

Mr. Koutsouradis presented the following motion:

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

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

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

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Neshaminy Board of School Directors approves the Bucks County Intermediate Unit Program and Services and Instructional Materials Budget for 2008-2009 in the amount of \$2,013,345 with our district share to be \$106,779.

Mr. O'Connor seconded the motion.

The Board unanimously approved the motion.

**Motion: Approval of Revised Board Policies #231, 331, 431, 510, 539**

Mr. Koziol presented the following motion:

WHEREAS, in order to keep District Board Policies updated and current, new policies and revisions 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 Policies 231, 331 and 431 – Drug Free Workplace  
Revised Policy 510 – Alcohol and Other Drugs  
Revised Policy 539 – Control of Lice Infestation

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that said policies be revised and approved by the Neshaminy Board of School Directors.

Ms. Boyle seconded the motion.

The Board unanimously approved the motion.

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

Mr. O'Connor 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 received notice from the Intermediate Unit that Irene Boyle's term on the Intermediate Unit Board expires on June 30, 2008, 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 Irene Boyle to serve as the representative to the Bucks County Intermediate Unit Board of Directors.

Mrs. Cummings seconded the motion.

The Board unanimously approved the motion.

**Resolution: Public Hearing Regarding School Closure**

Mr. Webb presented the following Resolution:

Resolution of Neshaminy Board of School Directors of Neshaminy School District to hold a public hearing of the Board to consider permanent closure of Tawanka Learning Center. The Board of Directors of Neshaminy School District do pursuant to Article 7, Section 7E, Pennsylvania Public School Code of 1949, as amended, resolve that the public hearing of the Board will be held in the Auditorium of Maple Point Middle School, 2250 Langhorne-Yardley Road, Langhorne, PA 19047 on March 14, 2008 at 6:30 p.m. upon the question as to whether or not to permanently close Tawanka Learning Center located at 2055 Brownsville Road, Langhorne, Lower Southampton Township, Bucks County, PA at the end of the 2007-08 school year.

The Administration of the School District and the Solicitor are hereby authorized and directed to advertise the public hearing and to take all action required by law to be taken in conjunction with the holding of the public hearing. The public is invited to attend and participate in the hearing as permitted by law.

Mr. Koziol seconded the resolution.

A roll call vote was requested. The roll call tally indicated that the resolution passed by a unanimous vote of the Board.

**Resolution: Public Hearing Regarding School Closure**

Mr. Webb presented the following Resolution:

Resolution of Neshaminy Board of School Directors of Neshaminy School District to hold a public hearing of the Board to consider permanent closure of Neshaminy Middle School. The Board of Directors of Neshaminy School District do pursuant to Article 7, Section 7E, Pennsylvania Public School Code of 1949, as amended, resolve that the public hearing of the Board will be held in the Auditorium of Maple Point Middle School, 2250 Langhorne-Yardley Road, Langhorne, PA 19047 on March 14, 2008 at 7:30 p.m. upon the question as to whether or not to permanently close Neshaminy Middle School located at 1200 Langhorne-Newtown Road, Langhorne, Middletown Township, Bucks County, PA, at the end of the 2007-08 school year.

The Administration of the School District and the Solicitor are hereby authorized and directed to advertise the public hearing and to take all action required by law to be taken in conjunction with the holding of the public hearing. The public is invited to attend and participate in the hearing as permitted by law.

Mr. Koziol seconded the resolution.

A roll call vote was requested. The roll call tally indicated the resolution passed by a vote of eight ayes (Mr. Blasch, Ms. Boyle, Mr. Eccles, Mr. Koutsouradis, Mr. Koziol, Mr. O'Connor, Dr. Spitz and Mr. Webb) and one nay (Mrs. Cummings).

Mr. Koziol made a motion that the Board consider the closure of Hoover Elementary School and the hearing shall take place on March 14, 2008 at 8:30 p.m.. Mr. Webb seconded the motion.

**Resolution: Public Hearing Regarding School Closure**

Mr. Webb presented the following Resolution:

Resolution of Neshaminy Board of School Directors of Neshaminy School District to hold a public hearing of the Board to consider permanent closure of Hoover Elementary School. The Board of Directors of Neshaminy School District do pursuant to Article 7, Section 7E, Pennsylvania Public School Code, 1949, as amended, resolve that a public hearing of the Board will be held in the Auditorium of Maple Point Middle School, 2250 Langhorne-Yardley Road, Langhorne, PA 19047 on March 14, 2008 at 8:30 p.m. upon the question of whether or not to permanently close Hoover Elementary School located at 501 Trenton Road, Langhorne, Middletown Township, Bucks County, PA at the end of the 2007-08 school year.

The Administration of the School District and Solicitor are hereby authorized and directed to advertise the public hearing and to take all actions required by law to be taken in conjunction with the holding of a public hearing. The public is invited to attend and participate in the hearing as permitted by law.

Mr. Koziol seconded the Resolution.

A roll call vote was requested. The roll call tally indicated the resolution failed by a vote of six nays (Mr. Blasch, Ms. Boyle, Mrs. Cummings, Mr. Eccles, Mr. O'Connor, Dr. Spitz) and three ayes (Mr. Koutsouradis, Mr. Koziol and Mr. Webb).

#### **Federal Programs**

Mr. Kadri provided an update on the grant program.

#### **Other Board Business**

None.

#### **Correspondence**

Mrs. Walls read a letter from Gerald L. Zahorchak, D.Ed., Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Department of Education, regarding the graduation requirements regulations being considered by the Board of Education. The true and correct copy of the letter is attached hereto and made a part hereof. (See Attachment A).

#### **Public Comment**

Mrs. Martha Lindner, Langhorne, PA, stated that she is upset that an elementary school has not be chosen for closure this year and that only consideration is being given at the present time. This will only result in a high amount of increase for Nesahminy taxpayers since enough schools are not being closed. This should not have been left till the very last day. The Board has failed here today. A large increase of taxes will occur. This is a shame for the young adults with children and the seniors of the district.

Mr. Roy Cressler spoke regarding the possible conflict of two board members regarding the teacher negotiations.

Mr. Phil Schieber, Langhorne, PA, stated two out of three ain't bad. However, will this action eliminate the \$12.7M deficit. Eventually, programs will need to be cut. Mr. Schieber complimented those who voted yes and hopes that those who voted no can sleep tonight.

A gentlemen from Langhorne Gables asked the Board who pays school taxes. The gentlemen stated that the Board does not care what happens to the people's money.

Mr. Chris Graham, Langhorne, PA stated the Board needs to make the hard decisions and not everyone will be happy. Closing schools, negotiating a new contract, etc. in order to take care of the deficit will all be hard decisions. Make the decisions and move on.

Mrs. Marianne O'Connor, Langhorne, PA, noted that the McKissick report was tabled by the previous board. Everyone needs to stay involved at all times. Decisions need to be made and you cannot move forward until same occurs. A decision needs to be made with all the information or else it is irresponsible. Do not be disappointed if it did not go the way you wanted it to go. Be mad at the fact that it was not done in a continuous effort as it should have been done. The school district should not be forced to make a decision that will effect the children of this district until they graduate without the sufficient information. Students cannot be interrupted over and over.

Mrs. Betty Schieber, Villages of Flowers Mill, Langhorne, PA, suggested taking advice from Governor Corzine. Mrs. Schieber stated that she is glad she sent her children to Catholic schools. Parents are complaining about classrooms being overcrowded with twenty students. In Northeast Philadelphia schools had classrooms with 96 children and taught by one teacher and no aide or counselor available. Mrs. Schieber's daughters were honor students and eventually graduated college with magnum cum laude. The public school system has a lot to learn from the Catholic school system.

Mr. Paradise thanked all Board members for making the difficult decisions tonight in a responsible and respectful, professional manner.

**Board Comment**

Mr. O'Connor noted that the Arts/Fine Arts at Neshaminy are wonderful. Mr. O'Connor urged the public to go out and support the local schools with their programs, musicals and shows. Support the Arts at Neshaminy.

**Adjournment**

Mr. Webb moved that the meeting be adjourned and Mrs. Cummings seconded same. Mr. Eccles adjourned the meeting at 10:45 p.m.

Respectively submitted,

Anita E. Walls  
Board Secretary