

NESHAMINY SCHOOL DISTRICT  
Langhorne, Pennsylvania

PUBLIC BOARD MEETING MINUTES  
NESHAMINY BOARD OF SCHOOL DIRECTORS  
(PUBLIC MEETING)  
September 25, 2007

The Neshaminy Board of School Directors met in public session on September 25, 2007, in the Board Room of the Maple Point Middle School. The following persons were in attendance:

BOARD MEMBERS:

Mr. Richard M. Eccles, President  
Mrs. Sue C. Barrett, Vice President  
Mr. Joseph R. Blasch  
Mr. Jason Bowman  
Mrs. Susan Cummings  
Mr. Frank J. Koziol  
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

BOARD MEMBER NOT PRESENT:

Ms. Irene M. Boyle

SOLICITOR:

Thomas Profy, III, Esquire

SECRETARY:

Mrs. Anita E. Walls

OTHERS: Approximately 12 persons from the public, staff and press

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Call to Order

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

Pledge of Allegiance

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

Announcements

No announcements.

Public Comment

Mrs. Cheryl Bradbeck, Langhorne, PA, stated that pre-K and full day kindergarten is needed for various reasons. Growing population in which English is not the primary language could benefit from these programs. The increases in the number of children with disabilities require more teaching than a half day allows. Mrs. Bradbeck is in favor of keeping schools open. Eliminate pre-first because the children would be evaluated in the pre-K program. House the pre-k at the Tawanka Learning Center and keep the IU at the center. Money is available from Harrisburg. Closing of schools will decrease our property values. It is very important to keep open Neshaminy Middle which was one of the first schools to receive the National Blue Ribbon. From Carol the Secretary to Ms. Wychock the Principal, you feel like you are part of the family. Each teacher and counselor cared when Mrs. Bradbeck found out that her son had MD. The band is one of the most outstanding. Bring the ship forward, full speed ahead and keep up with the surrounding districts which already have these programs.

Mr. Steve Rodos, Villages of Flowers Mill, Langhorne, PA, stated that he is pleased that someone else is in favor of full day kindergarten. Mr. Rodos believes that there are currently 449 students in kindergarten and 102 in pre-K which requires approximately 18 teachers. Mr. Rodos is not certain with all these figures. Mr. Rodos

feels that it would require an additional 13 to 14 teachers at a base salary of approximately \$50,000 with benefits of approximately \$16,000 for a total of \$70,000 per additional teacher. This would cost the district about \$1.25M. In a total budget of \$165M it is not asking for a lot of money for the education of the children. Full day kindergarten makes great sense. Budget constraints will exist forever. Mr. Rodos would like the community to get some feedback regarding the Pennswood Village request for tax exemption status. Mr. Rodos is a judge for the debate league which includes Neshaminy School District. Due to the construction at Neshaminy High School Mr. Rodos requested that one of the upcoming debates be held at Maple Point Middle School.

#### Student Representative Report

Miss Heather Pine and Mr. Matt Miller provided the following report:

- Football team is undefeated
- School sports teams have winning records
- October 4<sup>th</sup> – Back to School Night
- October 20<sup>th</sup> – Homecoming
- October 24<sup>th</sup> – Presentation in the Auditorium on Gangs and School Violence

#### Superintendent's Report

Mr. Kadri advised the Board that the Graduation Project Committee was designed to implement the Graduation Project and assure that the state mandates are met. The Committee is in the process of changing some of the requirements of the project. The Educational Development Committee will meet on October 9<sup>th</sup>.

Dr. Heble advised that the project was well crafted, however, over the years has grown into an enormous task and parents, students, teachers, etc. feel that changes would be beneficial. Last year 350 seniors had not finished the project in January. Dr. Heble distributed a handout to Board members for their review which includes the PA State mandates. Dr. Heble reviewed the current project overview. The Committee was to examine and stream line the project. The new project will contain three components just as the old project: Research, Writing, and Presentation. The Research portion of the project will use the Coyne Career Library (software program which students have access to in the school library). Home access will also become available in the future. The Writing component will require students to write a paper which is 3-4 pages in length using the information gathered from their research. Students who chose to do Community Service could write about that experience. The Presentation portion would require a 5-7 minute presentation which was reflective and centered upon three basic ideas: who you are, where you want to go, and how you will get there. A Portfolio would be presented to the evaluators. The Committee is preparing the student directions, mentoring piece and time lines. Dr. Heble advised that she would have that information available at the Educational Development meeting scheduled for October 9<sup>th</sup>.

Dr. Heble advised that students will begin the project in November and have until April to complete during their senior year. Dr. Heble noted that any seniors that have completed their project or started a project will be grandfathered. Anyone who has not yet begun will need to follow the new guidelines. Hopefully, with the mentoring process that has been put into place, everyone will be able to finish the project in a timely fashion.

Board discussion ensued and Dr. Heble advised that more definite answers would be provided after further meetings of the Committee.

Mr. Kadri advised that the improvements being made to the project are currently being explored and these improvements may not be the final resting spot for the project.

Mrs. Cummings presented concerns regarding the time frame of the project.

Mr. Kadri noted that classroom time will be regained for more instructional time.

Dr. Heble advised that Community Service will need to link to the Career choice. Mrs. Cummings raised a question as to why the Community Service needed to be linked to the Career Choice. Community Service is a wonderful thing for students to perform. Mr. Kadri noted that the premise for the project is to help students gain focus and skills necessary to be as competitive as possible when they leave Neshaminy. A level of focus as it relates to going forward is essential.

Mr. Eccles noted that changes being explored seem to be changes which will be in the right direction for the students.

#### Approval of Minutes

Mrs. Walls presented the minutes of the August 28, 2007 public meeting. Upon motion of Dr. Spitz and seconded by Mr. Blasch, the Board unanimously approved the minutes of the August 28, 2007 Public Meeting.

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

Mr. Paradise presented the following for approval:

- August, 2007 Treasurer's Reports, subject to audit
- Check Register - August, 2007
- Investment Summary
- Personal and Per Capita Tax Exonerations - July, 2007 and August, 2007

Mr. Paradise advised that there were no bids or budget transfers during this period.

Mr. Webb moved the treasurer's report, check register, investments, and exonerations of personal and per capita tax be approved. Mr. Bowman seconded the motion.

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

#### 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

Dr. Muenker brought to the Board's attention the hiring of the day-to-day substitutes. 42 new substitutes are being added to the certified staff list. Most applicants are elementary certified.

Dr. Muenker welcomed new applications from the public for the day to day substitutes for the support staff. Dr. Muenker advised that the assistant principal position at the High School was posted internally on this date. An external posting will also take place for that position in order to get the best qualified person.

Mrs. Cummings questioned a position listed on page 70 of the report.

Dr. Muenker advised that the district is having a great deal of difficulty finding special education teachers that have content certification.

Mr. Bowman moved the certified and support personnel reports be accepted. Mrs. Barrett seconded the motion.

The Board unanimously approved the personnel reports.

#### Federal Programs

Mr. Kadri advised that the Classrooms for the Future grant is approximately \$30,000 less. Notice was received from the Department of Education that an error in the formula was discovered.

#### Other Board Business

Mrs. Cummings reminded everyone regarding the Neshaminy Education Foundation fundraiser.

Mr. Koziol inquired regarding the incident which occurred with a student at an athletic event involving drugs/alcohol. Mr. Kadri advised that the student was removed for medical assistance. The student's safety and health are foremost and the student is at the present time being shepherded through the Drug/Alcohol Policy process for the infraction which occurred. Mr. Kadri has met with the Athletic Director and discussions have taken place regarding same.

Mr. Koziol questioned what occurs with a student that is found with the possession of alcohol or controlled substance. Mr. Kadri advised that there is a Board policy which addresses this type of violation. Mr. Kadri would like to see this Board entertain creating a Board policy which would allow adults, administrators, and/or teachers, if they suspect that a student is under the influence, whether during the school day or at an event, be able to test for that. This is however not under state code; however, this type of early intervention could be performed.

Mrs. Barrett noted that at the Board policy meeting it was suggested that the Drug/Alcohol Policy be reviewed before the next public meeting.

Mr. Koziol wished to address the formation of a Personnel Committee or Human Resource Committee. There was Board consensus to have it listed as an agenda item for the Work Session scheduled for October 9<sup>th</sup>.

Mr. Koziol inquired whether there was a study being performed regarding lead teachers, closing of Tawanka, and removal of modular classrooms.

Mr. Webb advised that the next Finance meeting is scheduled for October 4<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Webb inquired regarding the per pupil spending and securing the accurate data to review the cost analysis. Mr. Webb advised that budget time is February and not May.

Mr. Webb noted that seniors need help and a committee should be formed to study the possibility of when seniors hit the age of 65 their taxes be reduced or cut. Mr. Eccles noted that same could be discussed at the Finance and Facilities meeting, however, this is more a legislative type decision, rather than a Board decision.

Dr. Spitz advised that he has some questions for the Construction Manager regarding the high school project.

Mr. Paradise advised that the air conditioning situation for Poquessing will be addressed at the Finance and Facilities meeting on October 4<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Paradise advised that approximately \$170,000 additional funds remain from the Poquessing project.

#### Public Comment

Mr. William O'Connor, Langhorne, PA, advised that bi-partisan legislation will be proposed within the next 30 days by State Representatives Sam Rohr and Keith McCall called the School Property Tax Elimination Act. With modest changes to the state income tax and sales tax it will look to eliminate school property taxes forever. Mr. O'Connor encouraged everyone to pay attention.

Mr. Koziol read a letter which was forwarded to the Board from Mrs. Elizabeth Mahoney of Feasterville, PA regarding rising taxes and the burden same has on the seniors of the district.

Board Comment

Mr. Eccles advised that a question and answer session will take place after the meeting.

Adjournment of Meeting

Mr. Bowman moved the meeting be adjourned and Mrs. Cummings seconded the motion. The Board unanimously approved the motion. Mr. Eccles adjourned the meeting at 8:14 p.m.

Respectively submitted,

Anita E. Walls  
Board Secretary