

NESHAMINY SCHOOL DISTRICT  
Langhorne, Pennsylvania

PUBLIC BOARD MEETING  
PUBLIC WORK SESSION MINUTES  
NESHAMINY BOARD OF SCHOOL DIRECTORS  
November 10, 2009

The Neshaminy Board of School Directors met in public work session on November 10, 2009, in the Harry M. Dengler, Jr. Performing Arts Center of the Maple Point Middle School. The following persons were in attendance:

**BOARD MEMBERS:**

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

**ADMINISTRATORS:**

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

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

**OTHERS:** Approximately 75 persons from the public, staff and press

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

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**1. Call to Order**

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

**2. Pledge of Allegiance**

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

**3. Announcements**

No announcements.

**4. Public Comment**

Mr. Chuck Torpey, Feasterville, PA, stated that he is a bus driver for Neshaminy School District. Mr. Torpey has been employed by Neshaminy School District for approximately 19 years and in those 19 years Mr. Torpey has not taken one sick day. Mr. Torpey takes pride in his job and what he does, but lately he does not take pride in his union's inability to notice the tough times that everyone is experiencing and give a little in the negotiations. Mr. Torpey does not agree with double dipping and thinks same is ridiculous. The proposal on the table now is fine with Mr. Torpey. Mr. Torpey advised that there are plenty other drivers that are in agreement with same.

Mr. Phil Schieber, Villages of Flower Mill, Langhorne, PA, stated that the public has spoken and major changes are coming to the township and School Board. Mr. Schieber stated that this is a testament that we really need to stop spending. Mr. Schieber has been following the contract negotiations and he feels that the actions of the teacher's union have been irresponsible toward the Board and Mr. Schieber feels it is time to take the offer off the table.

Mr. Howard Lindner, Langhorne, PA, stated that five years ago Mr. Frank Koziol became part of the School Board and Mr. Lindner thanked him for his service and stated that he has been one of the best Board members due to his organization, and ability to question and challenge, and not accept the status quo has

been a beneficial asset to the Board. Mr. Lindner has always told all members to not just accept, but ask questions, challenge and ask why. Mr. Lindner thanked Mr. Koziol for a job well done. Mr. Lindner loves Neshaminy, all of Neshaminy. The local people who work for Neshaminy care about Neshaminy and they are voters. These are tough economic times and Mr. Lindner is asking the union leadership to start giving back. It is better to have a job, than not have a job. Mr. Lindner works for a race track and has been no contract for three years. No medical insurance is available through that job. These are different times and people are losing their jobs every day. Start giving back.

Mr. Steve Rodos, Villages of Flowers Mill, Langhorne, PA, thanked Mr. Blasch, Mr. Koziol and Dr. Spitz for their hard work on behalf of the students of Neshaminy School District. Mr. Rodos has always said that the Board acts too slowly. Since the current budget was enacted in June it will be six months until the three new members of the Board will be sworn in and an untold number of future months until they approach coming up to speed. In the last six months very little has been accomplished. Teacher bashing, support staff bashing and let's fire everyone and start over is what Mr. Rodos is hearing. Since none of this is legal, Mr. Rodos would like to know if the contract with the teachers ended a year and half ago, does the entire contract continue in force, part of the contract? Some of these issues relate to retirement bonuses. Why would that continue and not step increases? Does payment for courses and credits earned continue? If not, why not? What about retirees and their health care payments? Either you have a contract or do not. Mr. Koziol is concerned about the education of the over 8,000 students of Neshaminy School District. Why is there no computer education in the elementary schools? Why is there no foreign language in the elementary schools? Why is social studies not required throughout high school? Mr. Koziol believes that without a college degree a person will be unable to obtain a job in the near future. Mr. Koziol does not see the concern for the students that should be exhibited by the School Board. Mr. Koziol urges the Board not to fail to keep the education of the students first and foremost in your actions.

Mr. Marvin Dickler, Villages of Flowers Mill, Langhorne, PA, thanked Mr. Blasch, Mr. Koziol and Dr. Spitz for their incredible amount of time and effort they expended trying to keep this School Board on the right path. Mr. Dickler has not always been in agreement all the time, however, he certainly understands the amount of time the gentlemen have put in to try and keep Neshaminy where it belongs.

## **5. Items for Approval at the November 24, 1009 Public Board Meeting**

### **a) Contracted Transportation Services for 2009-2010**

Mr. Paradise advised the contract is with Lakeside Youth Services to transport six students and the expense is so great because the needs of those students are very expensive. The contract totals \$63,135.00 and approval will be sought at the public meeting. This cost is actually less than if Neshaminy were to provide the services for those six students.

### **b) School Improvement Plans**

Dr. Muenker advised that the plans are being offered for approval by the Board at the Public Meeting on November 24<sup>th</sup>. Dr. Muenker introduced Mrs. Kelly from Carl Sandburg and Dr. McGee from the high school who provided a brief presentation to Board members which is our due diligence to looking at doing better with the PSSA scores. Board members received documents entitled "Getting Results" which are part of the district's obligation to the Department of Education. The Administrators provided a brief overview of the documents and the Board approval will be sought at the public meeting and these documents need to be back to PDE with Board consensus and approval by the end of December.

Mrs. Kelly introduced her writing team. Mrs. Kelly stated that last year when she spoke with the Board it was because Carl Sandburg did not make AYP. With that came a two year improvement plan. Sandburg has three sub-groups which is forty or more students. Targets need to be met in each subgroup. Last year the school fell from the warning into school improvement. This year Sandburg made AYP and now the school is in Revision. The plan is reviewed and either continue same or make revisions. Sandburg is an extremely high performing school. Mrs. Kelly showed the Board through the power point presentation each grade levels and sub-groups performances and improvements.

Mrs. Kelly stated that the following occurred:

- Monitor implementation of existing co-teaching teams for effectiveness and give feedback for improvement. Add co-teaching teams in Math and English.
- Consistent inclusion of special education students in IOP classes across all teams.
- Before or after school and summer reading tutoring programs.
- Continue Professional Learning Communities with special education staff, reading specialist and literacy coach.
- Form collaborative teams across grade levels and within departments to design lessons.
- Implement ongoing data analysis within grade level teams and departments.
- Use data analysis to implement differentiated instruction.

Mrs. Kelly advised that this is where they will go from here:

- Continue co-teaching teams.
- Continue inclusion of special education students in IOP.
- Continue after school tutoring and homework help.
- Implement grade level Professional Learning Communities.
- Continue collaborative teams at and across grade levels.
- Develop a common language and reading strategies in all content areas so collaborative teams can design lessons and share folders.
- Continue data analysis.
- Implement progress monitoring system.

Mrs. Kelly advised this is what needs to be done to get there:

- Continue to train new and provide tools to enhance instructional practices of existing co-teaching teams for equitable access to curriculum and create co-teaching teams in grade levels where they currently do not exist.
- Investigate ways to create additional planning time for co-teaching teams.
- Continue to support staff with differentiated instructional strategies via the PLCs.
- Continue communication with parents concerning improvement efforts and Strategies to support their children.
- Provide small group reading apprenticeship workshops.
- Create a progress monitoring system to track student performance in the co-taught classes.
- Continue communication with parents concerning improvement efforts and strategies to support their children.
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Mrs. Kelly noted that Carl Sandburg was one of the few schools in the state whose plan was not returned for revisions. The I.U. loved the plan and the no new resources are being asked for from the district. Mrs. Kelly asked for the Board's approval on November 24<sup>th</sup>.

Dr. McGee noted that he is extremely impressed with the Carl Sandburg plan.

Dr. McGee advised that the AYP status for the high school last year was Corrective Action II (2<sup>nd</sup> Year). Neshaminy High School got to this level by missing AYP for a number of years prior to that, but last year specifically in 2008 the one target that the high school did not meet with the economically disadvantaged target in Reading. This year the 2009 results while we saw improvement, two other groups the IEP sub-group in Math and Reading were not able to make the target. That causes Neshaminy High School to stay at Corrective Action II and they add a year and say we are in the Third Year which requires the district to write a School Improvement Plan which has been done over the last month.

Dr. McGee reviewed the progress that the high school has made over the last several months. The School Improvement Plan looks into the future. Dr. McGee stated that Neshaminy High School has

been under construction for the past several years. This needs to be taken into consideration. The size of the high school needs to be taken into the consideration and it is one-third of Neshaminy School District. Improvements need to be linked to this context. The High School gained forty new staff members. Twenty percent of the staff is new to Neshaminy High School in September. Seventy staff members at Neshaminy High School have been teaching for five or less years. One Hundred Thirty staff members that are teaching ten or less years. School culture plays a part in the development of the school. Neshaminy High School needs to move forward and the new facilities are providing IPC so departments can get together and plan.

Dr. McGee is hoping that the High School structure will eventually be similar to the one that Mrs. Kelly has in place at Carl Sandburg. A school instructional leadership team was formed and they will solicit additional volunteer groups to foster staff cohesiveness and identify a core set of instructional strategies that as a school we can build upon.

Mr. Eccles questioned why is the high school plan so far behind Sandburg and seems to be strictly a theory at this point? Dr. McGee stated that is due to his presentation. High School improvement plans have been in place for the last five years which have specifics in place. Dr. McGee stated that Sandburg is where it is probably due to the size of Sandburg, experience of the staff to be able to go a step further. That structure needs to be put in place at the High School. Dr. McGee is optimistic in achieving the goals. The future of No Child Left Behind Dr. McGee cannot predict.

Mr. Koziol was concerned about the writing of the reports for Math and Reading and who prepared same. Dr. McGee stated that this is still in proof reading phase. Dr. McGee stated who the writing team was and who sat in on same. Specifics will come in the next phase. Mr. Koziol is disturbed by some of the supporting evidence. Mr. Koziol stated that he had concerns about pages 25 & 26. Mr. Koziol feels that not to pay closer attention to some of the components is a slap in the face to the taxpayers of the community. Mr. Koziol feels that the documents needs to be looked at more closely and asked whether the I.U. has approved the plan? Dr. Muenker advised that the district is very pleased with the documents that are in front of the Board today. Dr. Muenker advised that to be fair the teams were put together in order to get the district into a better place at the high school and Carl Sandburg. Dr. Muenker believes that this is in fact happening.

Dr. Muenker advised that approval will be sought of these two plans at the next Public Meeting on November 24<sup>th</sup>. If there are any questions in the interim, please feel free to contact Dr. McGee, Mrs. Kelly or myself.

**c) Revised Board Policies**

- #549 Search of Students and Seizure of Evidence
- #505 Discipline
- #535 Weapons
- #510 Alcohol and Other Drugs

Dr. Rattigan advised that these are all revised policies. Dr. Rattigan stated that the Search and Seizure of Evidence policy has one change which is the clarification of random search. It was recommended by the solicitor that this be added due to the fact that the district does conduct K-9 searches. Dr. Rattigan advised that the next three policies were reviewed by the Policy Violations Task Force. The Board policies committee has reviewed the suggested changes/additions. Policy #505 - Discipline has one change on page three where it is added "Threats made against a member of the staff or student body". "Study body" is added to same. Policy #535 has one change on page two "the term "firearm" includes, but is not limited to," "But is not limited to" is added to same. Policy #510 has name changes from "NEST" to "SAP" teams and also flexibility was added for the Administration to look at each case individually. Lastly, the section entitled "Employees" since this really a policy for students.

Dr. Rattigan advised that the #500 Policies are all related to students.

Mr. Eccles inquired whether the changes on Policy #505 "staff or student body" is worded correctly. Dr. Rattigan stated that if the student has a major breach of disciplines it could be for one of the following reasons. This could apply to a member of the staff or student body.

Mr. Profy advised that this is correctly worded.

**d) Bids/Budget Transfers**

Mr. Paradise advised that there are no bids and no budget transfers.

**6. Superintendents Report**

Dr. Muenker advised that the Veteran's Day celebrations which were held throughout the district were tremendous. Throughout the week students participated in programs and awareness was raised. Representative Frank Ferry spoke to students at Carl Sandburg and it was well received by the students and staff. Albert Schweitzer also had a Flag Ceremony and the Rolling Thunder Motorcycle group participated. Many veterans were also honored at that ceremony. The Neshaminy Learning Center also had requirements for a service learning project. Students have been making week visits to Delaware Valley Veterans Home of Philadelphia. The home serves 171 veterans and their eligible spouses and students have honored the veterans with special activities.

Dr. Muenker advised that the Neshaminy High School drama department will present "Night of Living Beauty Pageant" which is a spoof on the teenage beauty pageant and this drama will be held from November 12-14<sup>th</sup>. Tickets are \$5.00 and will be held at the new Black Box Theater at the high school.

Dr. Muenker advised that the H1N1 vaccinations will take place on November 24<sup>th</sup> at high school from 3:00 - 9:00 p.m. Families will be receiving a letter regarding the time schedule to be enacted for said vaccinations. This initiative has been sponsored by the Bucks County Department of Health. The district has been working very closely with the Department of Health in attempt to provide said inoculations.

Dr. Muenker further advised that the district has done everything in a timely manner regarding the receiving of said vaccinations. Any updates will be provided on the district website.

Dr. Muenker advised that eligibility of said vaccinations was determined by the district based on attendance at the eight elementary schools, three middle schools and high school. Also, included were the schools that the school nurses serve which would be Newtown Friends, Assumption, Our Lady of Grace and Queen of the Universe.

Dr. Muenker advised that the Charter Schools, Private schools, and home schooled students are not included in the first date. Hopefully, on the second administration date additional parties will be included. Numerous day schools, nursery schools, etc. within the borders of Neshaminy School District are also seeking the vaccinations.

Ms. Boyle confirmed that home schooled students will not be eligible at this time to receive the vaccination. Dr. Muenker advised that 52 students are registered in the district as home schooled.

Dr. Muenker advised that those students who completed the form will be receiving the vaccine. Dr. Muenker advised that if any parent is interested in their child receiving a vaccine and did not complete said form to complete same as soon as possible. Elementary and middle school aged students should have a parent accompanying them. High School should also have same; however, technically, as long as the consent form is complete, a parent is not required.

Ms. Boyle asked whether consent forms were sent to the home schooled students and Dr. Muenker advised that they were not, since the County did not include them within the initiative. If the opportunity arises forms are available on the website.

Mr. Koutsouradis inquired whether it is shot or nasal spray form. Survey forms included the option to check. Dr. Muenker advised that all answers are in place for each student.

Mr. Webb advised that the County is in charge of this vaccination plan and some misinformation has been distributed regarding same. Dr. Muenker advised that the healthy adults have been asked to wait until the second administration in order that the vaccines get to the group that requires same the most.

Mr. O'Connor stated that in regards to home schooled students the County just did not mention them specifically one way or the other and, therefore, some districts may have included them and other districts may have taken same as it is an option.

## **7. Committee Reports**

### **a) Board Policies**

Ms. Boyle stated that the next meeting is set for December 9<sup>th</sup> and an agenda is being developed.

### **b) Educational Development**

Dr. Spitz advised that the next meeting is scheduled for Monday, November 16<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 p.m. Agenda includes the review of PSSA scores and costs of I.U. services.

### **c) Finance/Facilities**

Mr. Webb advised that a meeting took place on October 28<sup>th</sup> and conversation took place regarding budgetary concerns and capital improvement needs. Buildings should not be able to deteriorate and discussions took place as to how in the future to fund improvements.

### **d) IU Board**

Dr. Spitz advised that a meeting will take place on Tuesday, November 17<sup>th</sup> at Tawanka. Tour of the Facility will take place at 6:00 p.m. and meeting will start at 7:00 p.m. Dr. Spitz advised that the I.U. Board meetings are virtually paperless. All members of the board sit in front of laptop and the entire agenda book is on-line. Notes can be taken and possibly this could be considered by this Board.

### **e) Educational Foundation**

Dr. Muenker advised that the foundation will be holding a fundraiser this fall which will be a "Flyers Basket" with a value of approximately \$700. See any building representative or contact Dr. Muenker's office for tickets. Also, a Murder Mystery Dinner fundraiser will take place on January 23, 2010 at the Knights of Columbus. Advertisements will be on the website. The next formal meeting will take place on December 14<sup>th</sup>.

### **f) Technical School**

Mr. Koutsouradis stated that the Principal Rinker provided a report on the Quarterly Foresight tests which showed many positives, but also areas where improvement was necessary. Keystone exams will be administered in the upcoming weeks. Next meeting will be held on November 23<sup>rd</sup> at 7:30 p.m.

### **g) Technology**

Mr. Blasch advised that a meeting has been unable to be scheduled at this time and hopefully one can be scheduled by the end of the month.

## **8. Public Comment**

Mr. Howard Lindner, Langhorne, PA, congratulated Ms. Boyle for her re-election. Mr. Lindner advised that new school board members will take office on December 7, 2009 and the community should know that both are outstanding and both will contribute to the school board. Mr. Lindner was pleased that

this auditorium was named in honor of Harry Dengler. Mr. Lindner knew him as a teacher and board member. Mr. Lindner stated that he has a tremendous family and the Neshaminy family has always been blessed with great music teachers, Dengler and Kloos, two of the best in the country.

**9. Future Topics**

None.

**10. Agenda Development for the November 24, 2009 Public Meeting.**

**11. Other Board Business**

Mr. O'Connor stated that changes have occurred regarding our budget restraints. Mr. O'Connor pointed out that numerous people have stated that elementary computer classes are not taking place. Mr. O'Connor would like to have a meeting of elementary building principals to see how that is being enforced and if those classes are being held. Mr. O'Connor is concerned about the library hours before and after school. Should more hours be made available for student's use? Mr. O'Connor is also concerned about the public communications position which has now been absorbed into Dr. Muenker and Ms. Debby Spadaccino handling said questions and communications. Mr. O'Connor has noticed there are a number of people who have indicated that they have tried to contact the district and have not heard back. Since September, Mr. O'Connor has received several e-mails stating that people have not gotten a response. Mr. O'Connor is aware that this does not mean that Dr. Muenker or his staff is not being diligent in responding to individuals, however, has the public communications which used to be handled by the public communications director is something that the district is feeling the effects of.

Dr. Muenker advised that the computer class issue will be taken into consideration by Curriculum and Instruction. Regarding the high school library, Dr. Muenker will follow-up with a conversation with Dr. McGee regarding utilization. Dr. Muenker further advised that he would welcome additional help with communications and we are trying to be timely with responses, however, when the Courier reaches out for a response, the public does not always see when the question is posed and Dr. Muenker attempts to get a response to the Courier in a timely manner to all parties, including the Courier.

Mrs. Cummings requested information on the Ad Hoc Facilities Meetings which were scheduled. Mr. O'Connor stated that a meeting was held and discussions were held on how to proceed and it was decided to have Mr. McKissick come back for a second meeting and the meeting needed to be rescheduled due to scheduling conflicts, and at this time it is best served to go past the December Reorganization Meeting and allow new board members to be appointed. It is important to note that it is not the committee's intention to close a school, but it is beyond the point where a decision could be made for this year to be effective for next year.

**12. Adjournment**

Mr. O'Connor moved that the meeting be adjourned and Mr. Koziol seconded same. Mr. Webb adjourned the meeting at 8:25 p.m.

Respectively submitted,

Anita E. Walls  
Board Secretary