

NESHAMINY SCHOOL DISTRICT
Langhorne, Pennsylvania

PUBLIC BOARD MEETING MINUTES
WORK SESSION
NESHAMINY BOARD OF SCHOOL DIRECTORS

May 6, 2008

The Neshaminy Board of School Directors met in public session on May 6, 2008, in the Board Room of 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 R. Blasch
Ms. Irene Boyle
Mrs. Susan Cummings
Mr. Kim Koutsouradis
Mr. William D. O'Connor
Dr. William H. Spitz

ADMINISTRATORS:

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

BOARD MEMBER NOT PRESENT:

Mr. Ritchie Webb

SOLICITOR:

Thomas Profy, III, Esquire

SECRETARY:

Mrs. Anita E. Walls

OTHERS: Approximately 125 persons from the public, staff and press

Prior to the meeting the Annual Neshaminy Employee Recognition Program took place in the Maple Point Middle School Auditorium beginning at 6:00 p.m. Vocal Music by the Neshaminy High School Chanticleers under the direction of Ms. Kristin Cloak was performed. The following awards were presented to Long Term Service Employees of Neshaminy School District at the awards reception:

15 years	Ceramic Box	80 Awardees
20 years	Gold Label Pin	37 Awardees
25 years	6 ½" Silver Bowl	12 Awardees
30 years	Brass Handbells	12 Awardees
35 years	9" Silver Bowl	13 Awardees
40 years	Crystal Apple	1 Awardee

1. **Call to Order**

Mr. Eccles called the meeting to order at 8:00 p.m.

2. **Pledge of Allegiance**

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

3. **Announcements**

None.

4. **Public Comment**

Mr. Chris Graham, Langhorne Borough, PA, thanked Mr. Paradise for having the meetings broadcast by Verizon. Verizon Channel 43 will broadcast the Neshaminy meetings. Mr. Chris Graham further stated that many of the Neshaminy residents have expressed concerns regarding the contract negotiations. Mr. Graham stated that provided the district can afford same he has no problem paying the educators \$80,000 per year or more. Mr. Graham is personal friends with many educators in the district with whom in Mr. Graham's opinion their service to the district is priceless. Is Neshaminy School District in a financial position to justify an increase in salaries? Everyone is feeling the effects of the national economic crisis. Oil hit \$122 a barrel and gas prices are increasing. Foreclosures are up substantially. Mr. Graham agrees that we are already in a recession. Unemployment is growing. The nation has lost \$232,000 in just three months. The economy is jolting dangerously into reverse. It is no longer a question of recession or not, but a question of how deep and how long. With these thoughts in mind both sides must come to a consensus regarding the current teacher contract negotiations at Neshaminy. Listen to the word on the street. The people cannot afford an increase. Unfortunately, until economic conditions improve, we all need to sacrifice. Holding the line on wages and sharing the cost on health

care are a necessity. This will not be popular with the educators. This is economic necessity. Mr. Graham hopes that the educators and the bargaining unit accept these words in a constructive manner. Mr. Graham hopes the educators and the school board will do the right thing.

Mr. Solis Basen, Villages of Flowers Mills, Langhorne, PA, requested that public comment take place before and after the public work sessions.

Mr. Walter Slivinski, Tawanka student, thanked the Board for not closing the Tawanka program and taking the opportunity away from the students. It has helped the students greatly in many different ways.

Mr. Joe McManus, Junior at Tawanka Learning Center, thanked the Board for not closing the program since it has helped a lot of students. Joe stated that he is now on track due to the many caring teachers at Tawanka.

Mr. Steve Rodos, Villages of Flowers Mills, Langhorne, PA, is concerned why there are so many buses on the street. Mr. Rodos feels that Neshaminy must dictate to the schools the estimated time of arrival rather than send out three buses when one bus could make the trips and would be more than sufficient. Mr. Rodos questioned whether the school district benefits from increased sales on the Domino's Pizza days or does the school receive a fee for advertising for Dominos. Mr. Rodos also stated that reducing wages is not in the best interest of the students. The cost of health care is the overriding issue both for current and retired employees.

Ms. Katie Colon, Senior at Tawanka School, personally thanked all the Board members for their time and effort which was put into the Tawanka situation. No one wants to see the program go, but if it necessary to move the program in order to keep the program, we would be willing to make that sacrifice. This week was staff appreciation week at Tawanka and Ms. Colon thanked all the staff members at Tawanka.

Mrs. Lisa Reiser, Langhorne, PA, thanked the people who were involved in the redistricting progress. The redistricting committee was made up of Administration, school board members and parent teacher leaders from the community. The committee met from late March through April. Mrs. Reiser thanked Mr. Koziol, Mr. Blasch, Mr. O'Connor, principals, Mr. Stoneback and Mr. Rosenblatt from Neshaminy Middle and Maple Point for their contributions. Mrs. Reiser thanked the parent representatives. Mrs. Reiser thanked all the Administration and Mr. Kadri for his experience, attention to detail and the countless hours of time and energy in formulating a plan that addresses the practical and logistical issues while not losing sight of the people involved. It is now time to start discussions regarding the elementary schools. The McKissick report was first presented on July 10, 2007. Further discussions regarding same have been tabled. These same issues will need to start again next year. We need to learn from the mistakes and start the discussions about elementary schools now. Sound reasons are necessary in order to close elementary schools. It will be necessary to demonstrate that plans are being made for the long term. Mrs. Reiser thanked Dr. Spitz for pointing out that the district does have a Strategic Plan which can be found on the district website. Mrs. Reiser questioned who is responsible for overseeing the plan and what is to be done if the school board is making decisions that are in direct conflict with the Strategic Plan. For example, the closing of the modular units. Mrs. Reiser is all about saving money, however, how are we providing a better learning environment for the students by teaching from carts. Mrs. Reiser urged school board members to visit schools, talk with principals and see the long term effects that decisions will have upon students.

Mr. Koutsouradis posed the following question to Mr. Profy. What is the proper procedure to end a debate and bring about a vote on items being discussed? Mr. Profy stated that if the Board is engaging in discussions on an agenda item and a specific board member wants to stop the process and cause a vote to be held on a specific matter which is before the board the procedure would be as follows: Call the question classified as a motion to end or limit demand, each Board member has the right to make the motion, the motion needs to be seconded and under the Roberts Rules of order a two-thirds vote will be necessary. The motion is also subject to Board discussion.

5. Items for Discussion

- a) High School Construction Update
 - Reynolds Construction Presentation – Mr. Damion Spahr
 - ATS&R – Mr. Paul Erickson

Mr. Paradise advised that the construction is now 96 weeks underway. Mr. Paradise advised that the F Wing will be turned over tomorrow and it is well ahead of schedule. Mr. Paradise introduced Mr. Spahr and Mr. Erickson. Mr. Paradise advised that it will be necessary to have Board approval on Plancon I.

The following comments were provided by Mr. Erickson and Mr. Spahr:

- Quality of the project is great/contractors are working well

- Unit F will be turned over
- Unit A - Gym is currently underway with completion by end of Summer
- Steel is arriving this week
- Library renovations will take place over the Summer
- Plan Con I - \$500,000 additional reimbursement from State
- Roadwork – Old Lincoln Highway – PennDot approval process is lengthy
- Cost for Roadwork will be approximately \$445,000 – Work will take place during the summer – PDE is considering same as unforeseen component to process
- Contingency - 10% unallocated

Board members posed questions regarding the above items. Dr. Spitz questioned the contingency figures and whether the project could be completed within budget. Mr. Spahr advised that the projects required by the Township which were never planned within this budget will push the contingency over. PennDot approval is complete and revisions are final.

Mr. O'Connor questioned the Band Room acoustics. Mr. Erickson stated that this is a temporary condition and panels have been obtained to help with the acoustic problems. Mr. Kadri advised that low-cost modifications have taken place to the temporary area.

Mrs. Cummings requested an update on the Gym 3 area and Unit H.

Mr. Eccles inquired regarding the HVAC systems in Unit G. Issues were experienced with the unit and air conditioners were provided for the area. The part is expected by Friday for installation. The entire team is pushing to get the issues resolved. Further discussion took place regarding the issues with the unit and technology design which needed to be resolved. Board concern is that the unit is repaired to satisfaction and will properly function in the future.

Dr. Spitz made a motion to approve PlanCon I and submit same to the state. Mr. Blasch seconded said motion.

The Board unanimously approved the motion. Mr. Webb was not present.

b) Update on Redistricting

Mr. Kadri provided the following update:

- Goal is to transition as few students as possible
- Staff placement is critical/Retirements will influence placements
- Budgetary impacts will be positive
- Parental notices will be provided regarding school location
- Census codes were studied/Grandfathering for students may be less desirable
- Counselors will meet with students regarding redistricting
- Success for upcoming year is imperative

Mrs. Cummings questioned the placement of students in the area of Neshaminy Creek and Bristol Road. Mr. Kadri advised that in this area students would possibly attend Poquessing or Maple Point. This area is presently the one in question amongst parents and students.

Capacity numbers were discussed for the Maple Point facility along with IU classes which would be located within the facility.

c) Final Tawanka Report and Recommendation

Mr. Kadri presented to the Board a power point presentation regarding the Tawanka facility. Attached hereto and made a part hereof is a true and correct copy of said presentation. (See Attachment A).

Mr. Kadri provided to Board members a Tawanka Learning Center Student Profile and Admissions Criteria.

Board discussion took place regarding the numbers of students serviced at the facility, classification of students as needing special education programs, existence of program in another building (each facility was discussed and considered), renovation of High School BELC area for Purchasing and Facilities (approx. cost of renovation \$700,000), use of available space to bring in more IU classes, pros and cons of K-8 program, housing of Tawanka program at the Eisenhower facility, and location of IU if Tawanka is rented out.

Mr. Kadri noted that Eisenhower would be very conducive to maintaining the program as it exists now at the Tawanka facility. Leaving the program where it currently exists or possibly moving to Sandburg are two other options. Is the program made by the facility or the staff and students? Where is the opportune place to house the program and most cost effective for the district?

Mr. Kadri reviewed the Tawanka Learning Center placement summary with Board members. Mr. Kadri believes that Eisenhower would be the most suitable component given that there is not a better use for the Eisenhower facility. A signal from the Board would be necessary very shortly in order to have the Eisenhower facility prepared.

Dr. Spitz raised the concern whether the Board can make that decision known independent of the decision to close the Tawanka facility/building. Mr. Profy stated that the decision the Board would make would be if the decision was made to close the Tawanka facility then it would be moved to whichever location the Board desired.

Mr. Koziol does not want to spend money on renovations if in a year space will become available in various middle schools to house the program. Mr. Kadri noted that renovation costs will also exist if the program is moved to a middle school. Structure of the program needs to be taken into consideration and costs savings may not be as great. Mr. Koziol would like to consolidate into an existing building and reduce administrative and staffing costs.

Mr. Eccles inquired whether swing space (i.e. Pennsbury) could be obtained for the program, until what facility would best suit the Neshaminy program is found. Current students served in the program could not benefit from a swing space option.

Mr. Kadri stated that the elementary consolidation decision should be made over the next few months, whether it be a K-8 option or elementary building consolidation.

Board members requested information on the BELC renovations, timeline on the K-8, purchasing department moving and possible location of Tawanka students.

Mrs. Cummings stated that part of the reason why the program works so well is because of its location. The middle school concept is not a good location for the students. Mrs. Cummings challenged Board members to meet with the students at Tawanka. The official closing vote will take place on June 16th. Mr. Kadri stated that the students could stay for another additional year dependent upon the renter selected. Mr. Kadri stated that he would obtain the information as quickly as possible.

No revenues have been placed into the proposed budget at this time from the Tawanka facility. Mr. Kadri is hopeful that same will be able to occur.

d) Proposed price increase in Food Services

Mr. Paradise provided a handout to Board members regarding student lunch price increase which is necessary for the 2008-2009 school year. Mr. Paradise advised that since 1997 Neshaminy has only raised prices once in 2004. Every school district is considering a significant lunch price increase based on the existing factors.

Mr. Paradise noted that Food Services is a profit making business in the middle of a governmental entity. It has never operated in the same way that "government" operates. It is driven by market and sales. Staff will go up and down.

Many factors are affecting lunch prices:

- Commodity processing costs continue to increase
- Dramatic increased food costs from vendors
- Receiving unprecedented bid addendums
- Available commodity products continue to be reduced
- Payroll costs
- Aging cafeteria equipment requires replacement
- Focus on nutrition and offering a variety of healthy choices
- Student enrollments continue to decline

Neshaminy has the lowest lunch prices in Bucks County. Ninety percent of the employees are part-time. If Neshaminy does not increase prices next year there is an estimated loss of \$163,695.

Mr. Paradise advised that the Food Service Fund Balance at the end of February, 2008 was \$120,000. This is a \$3.3M business. This is a relatively low fund balance to operate a business of this magnitude.

Marie Wallace was present to address any specific questions that the Board may have. Board discussion ensued regarding Workmen's Compensation costs, food price index, purchases of capital equipment, relationship between cash and fund balance, projections for next year's price increases, etc.

Mr. Webb was not in attendance at this meeting; however, several Board members would like his input regarding same. There was Board consensus.

The Food Service Department recommends the following price increase starting September, 2008 due to a shortfall in the proposed 2008-2009 budget. Lunch prices – Option B – Increase all lunch prices by 30 cents. Breakfast prices: No increase.

The Board will need to take a vote regarding same before the end of June.

6. Items for Approval

a) Overnight Trips

Dr. Heble presented the following trips for Board approval:

1. Neshaminy High School – Future Business Leaders of America – National Conference and Competition – Atlanta, GA – June 24-30, 2008
2. Neshaminy High School – International Competition for the Future Problem Solving Program, Senior Division – Michigan State Univ. East Lansing, MI – May 29-June 1, 2008

There was Board approval for said trips. Mr. Webb was not present.

Dr. Heble requested that the students be able to participate at a Board meeting after said competitions to receive their input and report on their experiences at these competitions.

b) Appointment of Treasurer

Mr. Paradise advised that by School Code the Board must appoint a Treasurer at the Public Meeting in May of each year. Presently, Mr. Paradise acts as Treasurer and the Board would like Mr. Paradise to remain as Treasurer for the 2008-2009 school year.

c) New and Revised Board Policies

- New Policy #554 – Student Code of Conduct and Rights
- Revised Policy #552 – Student Attendance
- Revised Policy #801 – Facilities Use and Scheduling

Dr. Rattigan presented the following Board policies to Board members which the Board Policy Committee is recommending for approval.

Dr. Rattigan advised that new Policy #554 is a required change in the Chapter 12 regulations. The policy consists of two parts i) highlights student responsibilities and ii) student likes (free expression, school newspapers and school sponsored publications; and confidential communications).

Dr. Rattigan noted that revised Policy #552 is due to changes in Chapter 12 also. Pupil Services Personnel will be made available to students in each building.

Dr. Rattigan noted that revised Policy #801 has a change to Section 4, Scheduling, to provide parameters for possible facilities use on Sundays.

d) Approval of the 2008-09 Proposed Final Budget

Mr. Kadri advised that the budget would be discussed next week.

e) Bids/Budget Transfers

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

Bid No. 09-01 General School Supplies

Bid Amount: \$182,497.54

The Bid is for various classroom and office supplies for use throughout the district for the school year 2008-2009.

Bid No. 09-02 Athletic & Physical Education Supplies

Bid Amount: \$86,814.84

The bid is for supplies for physical education programs and various team sports for the school year 2008-2009.

Bid No. 09-17 Poquessing Pool Renovations

Bid Amount: \$364,800

The bid is for pool renovations at Poquessing Middle School. Repairs to correct the pool deck that is cantilevered out over the crawl space and not supported on the pool wall, allowing water to enter the joint between the deck and pool wall. Also requires a new scupper system and piping, new filtration and chemical system, some deck replacement and regrouting of existing tile deck and pool.

Mr. Eccles inquired whether every vendor is required to have a bid bond or performance bond. Mr. Paradise advised that it was the case.

Mr. Koziol requested that Mr. Paradise provide information for the next meeting regarding the costs of closing said pool and what would be the costs for Neshaminy to rent an existing facility or use other pools for practices.

The three bids and Budget Transfer Report No. 08-6 (Working copy) will be presented for approval at the May 13, 2008 Public Meeting.

7. Superintendent's Report

Mr. Kadri announced that Neshaminy TV can be viewed on Channel 43 Verizon FiOS and Comcast Channel 28. Mr. Kadri advised that today students were honored for the following:

- Jennifer Lentine – Teen Volunteer of the Year – Bucks County YWCA
- Emma Robertson – PDE Women in the Arts Exhibition – Finalist "Pop Art Bottles"

Mr. Kadri advised that on Friday from 8-10 a.m. at the High School in the BELC area there will be a Classrooms for the Future – Flip the Switch Celebration.

SPIN group at the High School had a wonderful college planning presentation and will be hosting an orientation for 9th grade parents on Monday, May 19th at 7:00 p.m. at Neshaminy High School Auditorium.

Graduation Project deadline was April 29th.

8. Committee Reports

a) Board Policies

Ms. Boyle noted that a meeting will take place on May 13th. Topic to be discussed is the formation of a personnel committee or oversight committee.

b) Educational Development

Dr. Spitz advised that a meeting is scheduled for Monday, May 12th at 6:00 p.m.

c) Finance/Facilities

Mr. Webb was not present.

d) IU Board

Ms. Boyle advised that a meeting is scheduled for May 20th. On May 29th the Bucks County Legislators delegation will meet with Board members regarding local and state funding and the proposed Commonwealth budget.

e) Educational Foundation

Dr. Costanzo advised that the Scholarship and Grant program are available. 25 applications have been received.

f) Technical School

Mr. Koutsouradis advised that on April 28th the state winners were honored. Discussions took place regarding the current funding formula. Discussions will take place on May 20th at 8:00 p.m.

g) Technology

Mr. Blasch advised that the next meeting is scheduled for Monday, May 19th. A report was received from the operations manager. Mr. Blasch advised that he will be attending the Flip the Switch presentation at the high school.

9. Future Topics

Mr. O'Connor requested an update on the Tech Ed program at the high school.

Mr. Koziol requested for the third time a copy of the detailed budget for Technology.

10. Agenda Development for May 13, 2008 Public Meeting

11. Other Board Business

Mr. Solis Basen requested that a brief report be provided on the budget. Mr. Kadri explained that staff is being evaluated with regards to Neshaminy Middle School. Mr. Kadri announced that next week numbers will be more final and available.

12. Public Comment

Mrs. Carol Parssinen, Langhorne, PA, feels that Mr. Kadri needs to speak with every student from the neighborhood affected by the Neshaminy Middle closing and which school either Poquessing or Maple Point they prefer. All of the Tawanka student's files have been reviewed. These children's files need to be reviewed. Mrs. Parssinen is upset that the Tawanka facility is now not saving the district. Now the children are being redistricted again. It's not okay to just stick kids somewhere for a year. Mrs. Parssinen is upset. Discussion took place about closing the pool at Poquessing and that is where you want to stick my child. Mrs. Parssinen is upset. The same students are being moved again. The children are upset and emotional.

Mrs. Theresa Forum, Langhorne, PA, stated that her daughter attends Tawanka. Tawanka has been so successful with what they do. All expectations have been met. 100% of students have been saved. The students attending have physical, emotional and social problems. These students are hanging. These students need counseling and therapy. They are happy and successful where they are. Let us use Tawanka as a model. Services are necessary. Just keep bouncing them around is detrimental. Think about the impact.

Mr. Chris Graham, Langhorne, PA, stated that the estimated tax relief for the gambling proceeds from the state are \$3.6M. Tax relief is \$217.00.

Mr. Paradise advised that this is revenue neutral. It has no effect on the school district.

Mr. Graham advised that on June 2nd at 11:00 a.m. a Property Tax Elimination Forum/Rally in support of House Bill #1275. House Bill #1275 is an elimination of property tax and funding schools through the state sales tax.

13. Adjournment of Meeting

Dr. Spitz moved the meeting be adjourned and Mr. O'Connor seconded the motion. The Board unanimously approved the motion. Mr. Eccles adjourned the meeting at 11:15 p.m.

Respectively submitted,

Anita E. Walls
Board Secretary