

NESHAMINY SCHOOL DISTRICT
Langhorne, Pennsylvania

PUBLIC WORK SESSION MINUTES
NESHAMINY BOARD OF SCHOOL DIRECTORS
September 11, 2012

The Neshaminy Board of School Directors met in public work session on September 11, 2012 in the Harry M. Dengler, Jr. Performing Arts Center at the Maple Point Middle School. The following persons were in attendance:

BOARD MEMBERS:

Mr. Ritchie Webb, President
Mr. Kim Koutsouradis, Vice President
Ms. Irene Boyle
Mr. Scott E. Congdon
Mrs. Susan Cummings
Mr. Mike Morris
Mr. William Oettinger
Mr. Mr. Mark Shubin
Mr. Anthony Sposato

ADMINISTRATORS:

Dr. Jacqueline A. Rattigan
Mrs. Barbara Markowitz
Dr. Geeta Heble
Mr. Anthony Devlin
Mrs. Theresa Hinterberger

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:

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

SECRETARY: Mrs. Jennifer Burns

SOLICITOR: Thomas J. Profy, III, Esquire

Mr. Webb announced that prior to the meeting an Executive Session was held regarding personnel issues.

1. Call to Order

Mr. Webb called the meeting to order at 7:10 p.m.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

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

3. Announcements

Mr. Webb informed the public of the latest contract offer from the Board to the NFT. He said the Board proposed to the NFT that the new contract be based on the Council Rock CBA. He said some may consider this to be controversial, while others have been very supportive. Mr. Webb added that he has not received any remarks indicating that the proposal is not generous enough or that the certified staff should be offered more. Mr. Webb said that the offer to the NFT is affordable, assuming that they agree to the contract as is. He said that this proposal offers salary increases to all of the teachers no matter where they are on the salary matrix. It also provides the district with much needed relief in healthcare contributions and retirement incentives. Mr. Webb noted that Council Rock is a highly respected teacher's union in this area and they have constantly out performed Neshaminy in the areas of PSSA scores. Mr. Webb said that this offer will provide a resolution to a long impasse and of course, the children will benefit the most from this resolution. Mr. Webb announced to the NFT that he sincerely hopes that they will give this offer serious consideration and allow their members to vote on this proposal. Mr. Webb said this is the best offer the NFT will receive from this Board or any other Neshaminy School Board and they have two choices, which are, to accept this fair and generous offer or to continue to fight a losing battle.

4. Superintendent's Report

Dr. Rattigan advised the Board on the following:

- Thanked all the employees who worked to help prepare the schools for the upcoming school year.
- Announced that this Friday is National Constitution Day and several schools including Carl Sandburg will be participating presenting a program called Destination White House.

Josh Elliot, lead teacher and department head for technology education and engineering, gave an update on the Elementary Stem Academy Program in Neshaminy.

5. Public Comment

Angie Manning, teacher in New Jersey, Langhorne, voiced her concern about the continuity of education for the elementary and special education students in the event of another strike. Ms. Manning said that a teacher's place is in the classroom and halting the education of the children is wrong.

Charles Alfonso, semi-retired, Middletown, asked the Board to address the question about what plans would be made for any school buildings that may be closed should the mega school proposal be accepted.

Ed Sauer, machine shop owner, Levittown, agreed that the teachers place is in the classroom and not on the picket line. Mr. Sauer said he speaks for himself and other parents and taxpayers in voicing his support for the Board and said he thinks the teachers' demands are untimely and unrealistic.

Holly Madison, Bucks County Community College Audio-Visual Director, Levittown, voiced her concerns over the problem of driving, parking and picking children up at Miller Elementary School. Ms. Madison asked for alternative solutions to the ongoing problem.

Almando Carrasquillo, retired State Trooper, Middletown Township, expressed concern about the Board passing Policy 811, Acceptable Use of Computers, Internet, Network, Electronic Communications and Technical Services. Mr. Carrasquillo wants the removal of any reference to incidental personal use of computers in the workplace clause. He wants to insure that district computers are not used for union propaganda.

Stephen Pirritano, self-employed, Feasterville, thanked Mr. Elliot for speaking at the meeting. Mr. Pirritano stated that he has reservations about the Board's recent proposal to the NFT, which is similar to the Council Rock CBA. He said that we must keep in mind the expenses such as PSERS and salary increases and he questioned if this contract will be affordable 10 years into the future. Mr. Pirritano said he has attended the Ad Hoc Committee meetings and he is in support of the consolidation of schools and feels it will benefit the school district greatly.

Steve Rodos, semi-retired, Villages of Flowers Mill, commended the Board for offering the NFT the contract similar to the Council Rock contract. He agrees that it would be affordable to the district and would provide a savings to the district. Mr. Rodos asked if a teacher is currently on step one with a Bachelor's Degree where would they be placed with this new contract and what would happen with any educational credits that have been earned within the last four years. He concluded by informing the Board that the New York Times was having a learning session the following day at www.NewYorkTimes.com/learning, which is the second annual Schools for Tomorrow Conference, which explores how government, the private sector and parents can develop the best teachers possible.

6. Items for Approval tonight

Mr. Oettinger reiterated that the only issue being voted on tonight is to submit the application in order to receive state reimbursement.

a) Motion: District – wide Feasibility Study Update

Mrs. Cummings presented the following motion:

WHEREAS, McKissick Associates conducted an updated Facilities study to assess the several options of consolidation of elementary schools and building closures; and

WHEREAS, in order to receive state reimbursement, the filing of PlanCon A and PlanCon B with the Pennsylvania Department of Education is required by October 1, 2012.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Neshaminy Board of School Directors accepts the Feasibility Study Addendum dated September 10, 2012 as prepared by McKissick Associates Architects to the 2007 and 2009 District-wide feasibility studies. The Board further selects Option One (the former option 4 from the original 2007 study) for further study, refinement, and implementation.

Mr. Oettinger seconded the motion.

The Board unanimously approved said motion by a vote of nine ayes and zero nays.

b) **Motion: Facility Construction – PlanCon A and B**

Mr. Webb presented the following motion:

WHEREAS, McKissick Associates conducted an updated Facilities study to assess the several options of consolidation of elementary schools and building closures; and

WHEREAS, in order to receive state reimbursement, the filing of PlanCon A and PlanCon B with the Pennsylvania Department of Education is required by October 1, 2012.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Neshaminy Board of School Directors approves the submission of PlanCon A/B for the construction of a new Tawanka Elementary School as outlined in Option 1 of the feasibility study and further authorizes McKissick Associates Architects PC to work in conjunction with District Administration to prepare and submit any revisions necessary to obtain PA Dept of Education approval.

Mr. Congdon seconded the motion.

The Board unanimously approved said motion by a vote of nine ayes and zero nays.

c) **Motion: Elementary Educational Specifications – PlanCon A**

Mr. Morris presented the following motion:

WHEREAS, McKissick Associates conducted an updated Facilities study to assess the several options of consolidation of elementary schools and building closures; and

WHEREAS, in order to receive state reimbursement, the filing of PlanCon A and PlanCon B with the Pennsylvania Department of Education is required by October 1, 2012.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Neshaminy Board of School Directors hereby accepts the educational specifications and the proposed classroom schedule as contained on PlanCon pages A11, A12, and A-18 for the proposed new 1,200 pupil regular education/175 pupil special educational grade K through 5 Tawanka Elementary school and further authorizes McKissick Associates Architects PC to work in conjunction with District Administration to prepare any revisions necessary subject to Administration approval.

Mr. Koutsouradis seconded the motion:

The Board unanimously approved said motion by a vote of nine ayes and zero nays.

d) **Motion: Authorization PlanCon A and B**

Mr. Congdon presented the following motion:

WHEREAS, McKissick Associates conducted an updated Facilities study to assess the several options of consolidation of elementary schools and building closures; and

WHEREAS, in order to receive state reimbursement, the filing of PlanCon A and PlanCon B with the Pennsylvania Department of Education is required by October 1, 2012.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Neshaminy Board of School Directors hereby authorizes McKissick Associates Architects PC to work in conjunction with District Administration to undertake all tasks associated with the preparation of documents associated with the construction of a new school on the Tawanka site, as outlined in its proposal of August 20, 2012 for the revised fee limit of \$78,500.

Mrs. Cummings seconded the motion.

The Board unanimously approved said motion by a vote of nine ayes and zero nays.

e) **Motion: High School improvement Plan**

Ms. Boyle presented the following motion:

WHEREAS, Neshaminy High School is required to submit a School Improvement Plan to the Pennsylvania Department of Education as a result of being a school in Corrective Action II, Year 4, as designated by the Pennsylvania School System of Assessment; and

WHEREAS, a team of professionals from Neshaminy High School met over a period of ten months, from September 2011 to June 2012, to develop a comprehensive framework and strategies for a plan for Corrective Action; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Neshaminy Board of School Directors approve the Neshaminy High School Improvement Plan and authorize the Administration to submit the plan to the Pennsylvania Department of Education.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the implementation of the financial components will be dependent upon School Board approval of the annual operating budgets of the Neshaminy School District.

Mr. Morris seconded the motion.

Mr. Congdon asked if there are further requirement needed to pass this obligation.

Dr. Heble responded that there will be no further obligations.

Mr. Shubin asked Dr. Heble to highlight the improvement plan.

Dr. Heble highlighted the four goals for the improvement plan.

- Establish a system within the school that fully ensures the consistent implementation of effective instructional practices across all classrooms.
- A system exists within the school that fully ensures that each member of the school community promotes, enhances and sustains a shared vision of positive school climate.

- Establish a system within the school that fully ensures students who are academically at risk are identified early and are supported by a process that provides interventions based upon student needs and includes procedures for monitoring effectiveness.
- Establish system within the school that fully ensures teachers and administrators meet on a regular basis to use multiple data sources to reflect on the progress of student learning as it relates to the effectiveness of professional practice.

Mr. Morris asked who wrote the final draft.

Dr. Heble responded that Dr. McGee, along with other representatives from each department, wrote the final draft.

Mr. Congdon asked if certified staff will be available to participate in the after school daily help program.

Dr. Rattigan responded that there is a flex schedule that allows teachers who come in late to stay after for tutoring classes.

The Board unanimously approved said motion by a vote of nine ayes and zero nays.

f) **Overnight Trips**

Dr. Rattigan advised the Board on the following trip:

- Neshaminy High School Cheerleading – national competition at the Walt Disney Resort in Orlando, Florida – March 14 – 18, 2013

Mr. Webb made a motion to approve the Neshaminy High School Cheerleading trip to Walt Disney Resort in Orlando, Florida – March 14 – 18, 2013.

Mr. Shubin seconded the motion.

The Board unanimously approved said motion by a vote of nine ayes and zero nays.

Mr. Webb made a motion to reinstate the Extra-Curricular positions that were removed at the last Board meeting.

Mr. Congdon seconded the motion.

The Board unanimously approved said motion by a vote of nine ayes and zero nays.

7. **Committee Reports**

a) **Board Policies**

Ms. Boyle advised the Board that the next meeting is scheduled for October 10th, at 6:00 p.m. Topics will include policy 811.

b) **Educational Development**

Mr. Shubin informed the Board that the next meeting is scheduled for September 24th, at 6:30 p.m. The agenda will consist of student achievement and the Keystone Exams.

c) **Finance/Facilities**

Mr. Webb advised the Board that no date has been set for the next meeting as of yet.

d) **IU Board**

Mrs. Cummings informed the Board that the next meeting is scheduled for September 18th, at 7:00 p.m.

e) **Technical School**

Mr. Koutsouradis advised the Board that at the last meeting the Board approved the school improvement plan, the Act 93 Administration Agreement, and the Non-union Confidential Supervisors Contract. The next meeting is scheduled for September 24th, at 7:30 p.m.

f) **Technology**

Mr. Congdon advised the Board that the date of the next technology meeting has not yet been scheduled.

h) **Ad Hoc Facility Use Update**

Mr. Oettinger announced to the Board that the meeting was held last night and the McKissick Associates did a review of the entire report on the possibility of building a new school and possible school closings, Mr. Minotti discussed the \$40 million dollar repairs and updates to the schools, Dr. Rattigan reviewed the pros and cons of the McKissick Study, Mr. Profy went over the legal process on closing schools and the procedures that apply to PlanCon, and Mrs. Markowitz went over the financial impact of the entire building of the new school and fitting in some repairs to existing schools. The next meeting is scheduled for October 3rd.

8. Public Comment

Stephen Pirritano, self-employed, Feasterville, asked if a calendar of scheduled committee meeting dates has been implemented on the Home page of the Neshaminy website. Mr. Pirritano thanked Ms. Boyle for changing the meeting time from 5 p.m. to 6 p.m. He also asked if the plan that Dr. Heble spoke of will be on the website. Mr. Pirritano asked the Board if they are looking into eliminating or revising some of the past practices that are still being observed. He mentioned plans such as Home Access should be mandatory for teachers and not simply an option.

Note: Dr. Heble said that once PDE approves the plan it will be put on the website.

Almando Carrasquillo, retired State Trooper, Middletown Township, asked the Board to find out what real estate impact the closing of elementary schools and the building of a new school will have on the residences in the vicinity of these buildings. He also said he would like to see an estimate on rising fuel costs to the district because of busing brought about by the school consolidation plan.

Mandy Leap, homemaker, Langhorne, spoke on behalf of Mr. Charles Alfonso stating that more thought and concern needs to be employed when considering the young children who would be bused to a mega-school and would be lost among the school population. She said that kindergarten children should not be in the same school building or on the same bus with eighth grade children. Mr. Alfonso is also concerned with the disposition of the empty buildings that would result in school closings. He asked if all this is worth a \$3.9 million savings over 30 years, which calculates to \$130 thousand per year savings.

Ben Schuhardt, Sales/Marketing Manager, Middletown thanked the Board for the generous offer that was recently made to the NFT. Mr. Schuhardt said the Board has made an outstanding effort to bring this impasse to an end and he hopes the NFT will also make every effort to resolve the contract.

9. Future Topics

None

10. Agenda Development for the September 25, 2012 Public Board Meeting

None

11. Board Comment

Mrs. Cummings asked Mr. Shubin when the sub-committee for the Ad Hoc will be meeting.

Mr. Shubin said the Board needs to take action at the next meeting to determine the selection criteria suggesting that each Board member select a representative from their area and 5 or 6 alternates also are selected.

Mr. Morris clarified why he made the motion to separate some line items from the Extra-Curricular Staff and Salary Report. He said his intention is to prevent certified staff from getting compensated for extracurricular duties while not fulfilling their responsibilities for teaching a full day. He said the administration has assured the Board that these practices will be monitored and discontinued.

Mr. Oettinger stated that some of Mr. Alfonso's information is inaccurate and that the McKissick Study with the true facts can be viewed on the website.

Mr. Congdon said that the consolidation offers a substantial savings to the school district while also providing improved schools and he encouraged the public to come to the Ad Hoc Committee meetings to get the accurate facts.

Mr. Sposato added that all aspects are being taken into consideration and they will make every attempt to do the right thing by everyone. He said the Board certainly will not put the wrong age groups together.

Mr. Shubin said he has been asked about student enrollment in the district and the data suggests that enrollment is not down as some may think. Mr. Shubin asked everyone to reflect on the date of September 11th and remember the significance of this day.

Dr. Rattigan affirmed that the data is correct that there is not a mass decline in enrollment.

Mr. Koutsouradis said the consolidation is a needed action and the Board has the best interest of the students and the taxpayers in mind.

Mr. Webb said it is his hope that the NFT will share the Board's offer with their membership, but he cannot address questions about the offer until it is confirmed that the offer has been taken seriously. He did promise the public that before the Board votes on anything, it will be shared with the community in its entirety. He added that the Council Rock CBA is posted on the website and any answers to questions should be found in the details of the CBA.

12. Adjournment of Meeting

Mr. Webb moved the meeting be adjourned and Mr. Shubin seconded the motion. The Board unanimously approved the motion. Mr. Webb adjourned the meeting at 9:18 p.m.

Respectively submitted,

Jennifer Burns
Board Secretary