

The Conference Meeting of the Board of Education of the Township of Nutley, New Jersey was held in the Board Room, 375 Bloomfield Avenue, on Monday, March 13, 1995 at 7:33 p.m. with Mr. Sam P. Battaglia, President, presiding.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF ADEQUATE NOTICE:

Mr. Battaglia read the following:

"According to the provisions of the 'Open Public Meetings Act' (Chapter 231, P.L. 1975), proper notice of this Conference Meeting was provided in the Annual Notice of May 2, 1994. Said Notice was:

1. Posted at the entrance of the Board Office.
2. Mailed to The Nutley Sun, the Star Ledger, the North Jersey Herald & News and the Nutley Journal.
3. Mailed to the Nutley Township Clerk."

CALL OF ROLL:

The members present at roll call were: Mr. Frank V. Hermo, Mrs. Aileen Hresko, Mr. Charles W. Kucinski, Jr., Mr. Joseph C. Pelaia, Mr. Robert J. Rusignuolo, Mrs. Maria Russo, Mrs. Rosalie C. Scheckel and Mr. Sam P. Battaglia. Absent: Mr. Charles J. Piro.

1. Dr. Votto introduced Ms. Dianne DeRosa, Language Arts Coordinator, who reported on the English III and English IV curricula. Ms. DeRosa highlighted the changes that were being made by noting additions and deletions to required and supplemental readings.

Mrs. Scheckel asked questions relating to the writing and speech requirements and further noted that as this was not the honors curriculum, it would be challenging to the general student population.

Mrs. Hresko wanted to know how the curriculum was incorporated into library skills, and Ms. DeRosa noted that library activity begins at grade 9 and teachers bring classes in on a regular basis and work together with the librarian.

Mr. Pelaia said he appreciated the way that the "changes" had been highlighted and suggested that this format be used for future presentations.

Mrs. Russo asked a question relating to the writing curriculum, and Ms. DeRosa responded that a committee had met some years ago to develop same.

Ms. DeRosa thanked the Board, Dr. Votto, Dr. Fadule and the members of her Committee.

Mrs. Hresko moved that this item be placed on the agenda at the next regular Board meeting, seconded by Mr. Kucinski and unanimously approved by the Board.

2. Dr. Fadule asked the Board to consider a request from the high school to have an early dismissal on Wednesday, March 15. He asked Mr. Jacone to explain the nature of the request.

Mr. Jacone noted that two meetings were needed so that the staff could respond to prior year Middle States recommendations. One of the meetings would be during the monthly department meetings but additional time was needed.

Mr. Kucinski moved that the Board approve the request of the high school, seconded by Mrs. Hresko and unanimously approved by the Board.

3. The rifle team has achieved the state championship, and it appears that the players want rings instead of jackets, and Mr. Jacone noted that this was actually a less costly item.

Mr. Kucinski moved that the Board approve this request, seconded by Mrs. Hresko and unanimously approved by the Board.

4. Mr. Jacone asked the Board to think about an option for this year's commencement - that we schedule the graduation for the morning with the idea that in case there is inclement weather, we may have a second opportunity to graduate in the evening so as to avoid any indoor graduation ceremony.

Dr. Fadule explained that he was not asking for any decision at this time but merely wanted the Board to think about this alternative plan.

5. Comments were made concerning how outstanding the quality was of the most recent issue of the high school Maroon and Gray newspaper.
6. Comments were also made about an item featuring one of our students in the Star Ledger, Patricia Cole.

7. Dr. Fadule and Mr. Sincaglia reviewed the upcoming elementary musicales and the role of the Board representative in explaining the 1995-96 budget.
8. Mr. Battaglia mentioned the upcoming high school PTA meeting on March 22 at which there would be discussions and a presentation regarding the gambling situation.
9. Mr. Sincaglia recommended that the reorganization meeting be held on May 1, 1995 due to the fact that the spring vacation occurred the week immediately following the election.

Mrs. Hresko moved that this item be placed on the agenda at the regular Board meeting, seconded by Mrs. Scheckel and unanimously approved by the Board.

10. The Academic Committee made a report of its meeting held earlier this evening. Mrs. Scheckel noted that the lower grade teachers wanted the current grading system to remain. The recent meeting of the grades 1, 2 and 3 teachers with the Superintendent was mentioned.

Mrs. Scheckel noted that the Committee had looked at prior reports that had been made in 1982 and 1987 which had recommended the current system, with the 1987 version adding the use of "+" marks.

An array of correspondence between Dr. McCarthy and various colleges showed that there was absolutely no problem with colleges understanding the Nutley grading system.

Mrs. Scheckel said that the Academic Committee was satisfied with the current system and did not recommend any changes at this time.

Mr. Pelaia noted that you cannot judge our grading system without looking at what it had replaced and that he had learned that there had been many problems with the old system. He also felt that the current system promoted greater teacher accountability in assigning a proper performance level.

Mr. Rusignuolo asked if a report will be made at the next public meeting. Mrs. Scheckel indicated that that was the intent.

Mr. Hermo stated that he disagreed with any grading system for grades K, 1 and 2. He said the important thing was are the teachers spending the necessary time with children to be sure that they are learning.

He further stated that many children are being affected by the stress of the grades and that grading was not important in and of itself. He also said that the Board should be listening to some of the things the parents have been saying.

Mrs. Scheckel said that people are always rated in some way or another and we can't change the way the world is.

Mrs. Hresko said that if this problem was wide spread, more parents would be coming to teachers complaining, and that does not seem to be happening except in isolated circumstances.

Mrs. Russo said that it was important that parents assist the children and talk to teachers if there were problems with self-esteem.

Mr. Kucinski said he talked to several teachers on his own and thinks that better communications may be needed and suggested working with the PTA's. He also said that the teachers do not see the so-called stress and also stated that the old grading system was not beneficial to the children.

Mr. Pelaia said that the old system may have caused children to not strive as hard as they might have because of the "S" grade.

Dr. Fadule said that the teachers definitely believe in the system and that in no way were they being intimidated to say things. He also said that the complaints all seem to be coming from the same group of people.

Mrs. Russo asked for the information that was given to the Academic Committee earlier this evening and also asked if there would be a written response to the concerns that had been raised at the last Board meeting. Mr. Battaglia said there would definitely be a response but did not necessarily see it being a written response.

Dr. Fadule passed out the information given to the Academic Committee to the other members of the Board.

Mr. Rusignuolo asked why had five Board members attended a committee meeting when he had been told that it had been only for the members of the committee.

RESOLUTION TO CLOSE MEETING TO THE PUBLIC:

Mr. Battaglia asked Mr. Sincaglia to read the following resolution:

WHEREAS, the Board of Education will be discussing matters exempt from public discussion pursuant to N.J.S.A. 10:4-12,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, That the Board of Education recess to closed executive session at this time, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the results of the discussions will be made public by inclusion on the agenda of a subsequent meeting of the Board of Education, or when the reasons for discussing such matters in closed session no longer exist.

The resolution was moved by Mr. Kucinski, seconded by Mrs. Hresko and unanimously approved by the Board.

ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting adjourned at 8:57 p.m.


Secretary

3/15/95
Date