

Board of Education
Nutley, New Jersey

July 6, 1998

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, July 6, 1998 at 7:30 p.m. with Mr. Vincent Moscaritola, Vice-President, presiding.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF ADEQUATE NOTICE:

Mr. Moscaritola 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 Notice of June 29, 1998. 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: Mrs. Michele Fleitell, Mr. Steven P. Picciano, Mrs. Maria Russo, Mr. Louis F. Williams and Mr. Vincent Moscaritola. Late: Dr. Philip T. Casale (7:38 p.m.) and Mr. Alfred R. Restaino, Jr. (7:42 p.m.). Absent: Mr. Joseph C. Pelaia and Mr. Robert J. Rusignuolo.

1. Dr. Serafino noted that the report made in June by the special committee appointed by Dr. Votto was found to be inconclusive. This matter was then referred to the Academic Committee which made comments on this subject.

Mrs. Fleitell asked if the charge of the Academic Committee could be to continue to keep meeting to see what might develop that would be best for the pupils.

Mr. Williams wanted to know if we were not broadening the scope of what the Transcript Committee was supposed to do in the first place. Mrs. Fleitell said that the Transcript Committee had stated they thought it would be inconsistent for there not to be numerical grades on the report cards as well as the transcript.

Dr. Serafino reminded everyone that the original charge to the Transcript Committee was to look at including numerical grades on the transcript and not anything else.

Mrs. Russo recited a number of her concerns dating back to August, 1995. She noted that some enhancements had been made with respect to the transcript.

Dr. Casale entered

Mrs. Russo noted that the teachers are already able to justify the alpha grade with the numerical equivalent.

Mr. Restaino entered

Mrs. Russo continued to recite some of her concerns and said she did not see any reason why we had to look at the entire grade spectrum in the district but just the high school. She said that it was time to move on and make a decision and that seeing a 93 on a report card was better than seeing a B+.

Mrs. Fleitell said she thought that the important thing was that we wanted to be sure that our children were being compared similarly with other pupils from other districts. She further stated that for many parents the bottom line is they want to see a 3.0 GPA if the student had achieved a grade of 80.

Mrs. Russo felt that students struggle for extra points and that the numerics would be an incentive. Mrs. Russo reminded the Board that, according to previous discussions, it is not the Board who will make this decision, it is the Superintendent. She further said that the Board should address the shortcomings of our grading system and resolve them.

Mrs. Fleitell said we are looking for the Superintendent to tell us what is the best method that will represent our students on the transcripts and report cards in grades 7-12.

Mr. Picciano said we must be consistent about what we do. Mr. Restaino said he thought that some college-bound students may be suffering by what our current practice is and that we should not take too long to decide what it is we are going to do.

Dr. Serafino said that the original charge to the Transcript Committee should be the starting point and that we should address at least three items: (1) Do we put numerics on the transcript. (2) Do we leave alpha grades or (3) Do we do both.

Mr. Picciano noted that if numerics were used on the transcripts only it could be confusing to colleges which often want to look at mid-year report cards for comparison.

Dr. Serafino said that she had some very strong concerns as a teacher which she did not want to make comment on at this time but, rather, wanted to go back and review the information from the Committee before making an official response to the Board.

There was additional discussion about what it is the Board was asking for between Mrs. Russo and Mrs. Fleitell. Mr. Moscaritola said that Dr. Serafino should get back to the Academic Committee and then back to the Board as a whole.

There was a brief mention of what would happen if we changed the system with respect to alpha grades that were already in place for current students. Mrs. Russo felt that a committee must provide answers to all the "how to's."

Dr. Serafino stated she needed to go back and spend more time with this before anything further should be done.

2. It was noted that the regularly scheduled meeting of July 27 would be held on July 20. Mr. Restaino noted that he would be unable to attend.
3. Dr. Serafino explained the scope of the IASA grant for FY 99.
4. Dr. Serafino indicated that she was recommending that the Board establish a second preschool handicapped class which would result in a significant savings in tuition costs to the Board. It would be staffed by a current teacher and aide who would work 3/4 time instead of full time; however, it would also necessitate changing a part-time special position to full time.

After a brief discussion, it was indicated that the administration should move forward on this.

5. Mr. Sincaglia advised the Board that the bid for milk would be received on July 8 and reported to the Board at the next meeting.
6. Mr. Sincaglia noted that the Board would be voting on lunch prices for 1998-99 which would reflect a 5¢ increase in the main lunch and increases in a number of a la carte items.
7. Mr. Moscaritola mentioned that there would need to be meetings of the Personnel and Athletic Committees on July 14.
8. Mr. Picciano brought up the subject of the ITT development and his concern over the Board's providing input to the Planning Board with the idea that some accommodation could be made for the impact on the schools.

Mr. Williams questioned exactly what is it that the Board would be doing and what recourse the Board had as far as this project was concerned. After some discussion it was indicated that Mr. Sincaglia would try to contact a professional educational planner to get more information as to actual impact of the development and, further, that the Board might consider the resolution suggested by the New Jersey School Boards Association concerning impact fees on development.

9. There was discussion of the vacancy on the Board as a result of the letter from Mr. Rusignuolo indicating his resignation as of July 1, 1998. The discussion centered on the possible ways that the Board might choose to select a member.

Mr. Sincaglia noted that the Board had 65 days in which to take its action and that it would take a majority of the remaining members to seat a new Board member.

Mr. Picciano stated that he thought that the Board might be better served by allowing the County Superintendent to select the new member.

Mr. Restaino commented that he strongly felt that it was the Board's obligation to represent the community and make a decision in this matter.

After additional discussion Mr. Moscaritola took an informal poll to see what the feeling was about whether or not the Board should go forward in selecting a new member. All were in favor with the exception of Mr. Picciano. It was then agreed that Mr. Sincaglia should speak to Mr. Pelaia about calling a special meeting for July 23 for the purpose of considering the vacancy.

10. Mrs. Fleitell raised a question about the proposed policy on student residency, "Eligibility of Resident/Nonresident Pupils," and wanted to know why policy language would permit outside persons other than school staff and those placed by other boards of education to enroll in the district.

Mr. Sincaglia noted that that section of the policy was unchanged from the previous policy which went back at least 18 years so there was no attempt to insert any new concept. After some additional discussion it was agreed that there should be a change made in this language to only permit staff members and those placed by other boards of education as tuition students. The only exceptions to that would be for those people moving into or out of Nutley which is permitted by other language in the policy.

RESOLUTION TO CLOSE MEETING TO THE PUBLIC:

Mr. Moscaritola 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 adjourn to closed executive session at this time to discuss personnel matters and negotiations, 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 Mrs. Russo, seconded by Dr. Casale and unanimously approved by the Board.

ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting adjourned at 9:38 p.m.


Secretary

7/28/98
Date