

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, December 7, 1998 at 7:15 p.m. with Mr. Joseph C. Pelaia, President, presiding.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF ADEQUATE NOTICE:

Mr. Pelaia 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 August 31, 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: Dr. Philip T. Casale, Mrs. Michele Fleitell, Mr. Steven P. Picciano, Mr. Alfred R. Restaino, Jr., Mrs. Agnes Roncaglio, Mrs. Maria Russo and Mr. Joseph C. Pelaia. Late: Mr. Vincent Moscaritola (7:20 p.m.). Absent: Dr. Joseph P. Scarpelli.

1. Dr. Serafino introduced Mrs. Kehayes, Chairperson of the Business Department, and Mrs. Kehayes presented a proposed course titled *Business Systems and Technology* for consideration by the Board.

Mrs. Kehayes noted that the prerequisite for the course would be students having taken the mandated computer applications course.

Mrs. Russo asked several questions relating to the computer applications prerequisite and comments were also made by Mrs. Fleitell.

Mr. Moscaritola entered during this presentation

2. Mr. Violante, Coordinator of the World Languages Department, made a presentation recommending the institution of AP Spanish V for the 1999/2000 school year.

Mr. Pelaia wanted to know what could be done to increase the number of students who take the AP tests. Dr. Serafino noted that she had asked Mr. Cocchiola how many students were currently taking AP courses, and there are approximately 192. She noted that some school districts required students taking AP courses to take the test as a part of the course and in those cases those districts pay for the cost of the test. She noted that if this were done by Nutley the additional cost would be approximately \$13,000.

Mrs. Russo asked a question relating to materials used in the proposed course.

Mr. Picciano wanted to know about computer use in the course and software. He also wanted to know what Mr. Violante's thoughts were about interactive television in a situation like this. Mr. Violante said that the interactive television would be a good thing for enhancing the course but not as a substitute for the course.

Mrs. Russo wanted to know if we do not have a Spanish V course now and Mr. Violante said it is a Spanish V honors course, not an AP course. There was also a question if it was possible to consider an AP Italian course but Mr. Violante noted that, at present, there is no AP test for Italian. Mr. Violante further noted that we also want to consider a possible French AP course and thanked the Superintendent for being so supportive in this endeavor.

3. Dr. Serafino then introduced Mr. O'Dell, Coordinator of the Social Studies Department, and teacher Andrew Linfante who presented a proposal for an AP course in economics entitled *Advance Placement Economics: Macroeconomics*.

Mr. O'Dell noted that the macroeconomics course was coupled with the idea of moving U.S. History I and II from grades 11 and 12 to 10 and 11. Mr. Linfante pointed out that the economics proposal would be of great benefit in preparing students as informed citizens in the workplace as well as society in general.

Mr. Pelaia noted that there would seem to be tremendous opportunities for guest lecturers. Mrs. Russo wanted to know about student access to computers. Mr. Picciano also commented on the possibility of guest speakers, especially people who were former students from Nutley who have been involved in these areas. A comment was also made by Mrs. Fleitell.

Mr. Pelaia thanked all the professional staff members for their presentations and asked if the Board was willing to take a straw vote so that these courses could be voted on at the next regular Board meeting.

Mrs. Russo indicated she had no objections to adding the courses, however, her mind was not made up about the business education proposal since it hinges on the prerequisite of computer applications which she feels may be inappropriate for many of our students.

Mrs. Kehayes pointed out that the computer applications course has undergone considerable modification since it was first introduced and there is much more to it at this time and she invited Mrs. Russo to visit and see for herself what the students were taking part in.

No other Board member expressed any disapproval with any of the proposals.

4. Dr. Serafino introduced high school principal Mario Cocchiola who proposed that the Board implement the concept of a "zero" period which would help alleviate a problem with students in music and band classes with respect to their keyboarding course requirement. He noted that "zero" period would involve school beginning at 7:25 a.m. and then allowing the students time to get their affairs in order before beginning

the regular school day with homeroom at 8:15 a.m. He noted that this would be on a voluntary basis for participants and that a teacher had already volunteered and the teacher would be able to leave her assignment at the conclusion of 7<sup>th</sup> period; however, the teacher would still be expected to attend all after-school meetings.

Mrs. Russo noted that the whole proposal seemed to be addressing the course which she feels is in question.

Mr. Picciano asked several questions relating to number of sections and possible consideration of a nine-period day. Mr. Cocchiola noted that this proposal would at least solve the problem for those people who currently have the problem.

Mr. Moscaritola left the meeting at 8:12 p.m.

Mrs. Russo felt that the proposal was simply a band aid. Mr. Cocchiola responded that he did not feel this was a band aid but a sound solution that would solve a current problem. Dr. Serafino said that this was a pilot idea which possibly could be expanded into the music area and she thinks the Board should approve it.

Mr. Moscaritola returned at 8:18 p.m.

Mr. Pelaia asked Dr. Serafino to get back to the Board of Education with further information and said that the Board would be willing to consider this in the future.

5. Dr. Serafino then presented a report on grading that had been previously provided to the Board members. She went through the report in its entirety and reviewed the recommendations that were listed therein.

Dr. Casale left at 8:31 p.m. during this presentation

Dr. Serafino concluded that there was no perfect system but that she believed her proposal would help market our students better for higher education opportunities.

Mr. Restaino wanted to know how this might relate to reporting to colleges large and small and noted he was not opposed to some of the costs that might be associated with changes if it helped our children.

Dr. Serafino noted that the implementation of this could not begin until the beginning of September, 1999 and we still had to adjust the process of who this would apply to with respect to current students at Nutley High School. She felt, however, that it should apply across the Board (K-12) eventually.

Mr. Picciano said he hoped that our teachers were not applying "relative" standards and wanted to know why numerics could not be used instead of alpha grades. Dr. Serafino said she felt numerics was not a sound concept for evaluating pupil performance.

Mrs. Russo said her initial thrust years ago was wanting to put numbers on transcripts. Dr. Serafino said that numbers at the high school level would inevitably lead to a system-wide use of numbers and she felt this was too finite and that we should be grading children in a more holistic manner.

Mr. Picciano said he felt that report cards could show letter grades and numbers but that transcripts should show numbers only. Mr. Moscaritola felt that Dr. Serafino had explained this matter in the clearest, most concise and honest way it had ever been presented. Mr. Picciano noted that colleges should see the numerical values.

Mr. Pelaia noted that there obviously were questions about Dr. Serafino's recommendations but cautioned the Board that we should not lose the moment and that we should be able to work through these other issues.

Mrs. Russo asked questions relating to class rank and Mr. Picciano asked questions relating to the weight of final exams.

Mr. Pelaia asked Dr. Serafino to obtain some additional information relative to the recommendation concerning colleges and universities and report back to the Board.

RESOLUTION TO CLOSE MEETING TO THE PUBLIC:

Mr. Pelaia 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 and legal matters, 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 Mr. Restaino and unanimously approved by the Board.

ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting adjourned at 9:20 p.m.

  
Secretary

12 / 14 / 98  
Date