

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 8, 1999 at 7:43 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, 1999. 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. Vincent Moscaritola, Mr. Steven P. Picciano, Mr. Alfred R. Restaino, Jr., Mrs. Agnes Roncaglio, Mrs. Maria Russo, Dr. Joseph P. Scarpelli and Mr. Joseph C. Pelaia.

1. Dr. Serafino passed out a letter received earlier today from Commissioner of Education Klagholz officially notifying the school district that the State Board had approved the district's monitoring efforts and also certifying the district for a period of seven years.

Dr. Serafino also made mention of the school-to-work initiative and the core team training that had been conducted recently.

2. Mr. Moscaritola asked Dr. Serafino what the outcome was of the recent meeting held at the high school concerning grading and transcripts, to which Dr. Serafino responded.

Mrs. Russo asked if she could receive a copy of the monitoring report which Dr. Serafino and Mr. Sincaglia said could be available tomorrow.

Mr. Moscaritola commented that he would support the decision of the Superintendent with respect to how grading and numerics would be handled.

Dr. Serafino reviewed her previous report of December, 1998 and the work done by the consultant, Dr. Cancelli. She noted that the school committee's consensus was that the idea of adding *minus* grades was positive as was the feeling about enhancing the value of the grade point average through the use of *minus* grades.

Based on survey results of approximately 50 colleges and universities, there was some concern about how our pupils are viewed and she stated that we may want to put a numeric value on the transcript's final grade only.

Mr. Pelaia wanted to know if this would begin in September, 1999. Dr. Serafino said that she had informed the high school principal that she wanted to see numeric/alpha grades at the end of this school year. Mr. Moscaritola said he felt this was the most honest answer he had heard in three years on the Board.

Mrs. Russo noted that every child is evaluated by numerics now as it is well known that the teachers have this information available on a numerical basis.

Mr. Pelaia stated he liked the idea of adding numerics to the transcript.

Mr. Restaino wanted to know how this might account for a senior who did not apply until mid year.

Mr. Pelaia commended the Superintendent in having an open mind on this issue and felt that she has brought the Board a long way in this matter which has been discussed for a very long time.

Dr. Casale asked if there was a recommendation being offered to put a number and letter on the transcript, to which Dr. Serafino stated yes.

Mr. Pelaia stated that Dr. Serafino would be reporting back to us with progress in this matter.

Mr. Picciano, after having had a chance to review guidance information that had been passed out earlier, noted that some New Jersey colleges seemed to indicate that they would have a problem with our grading system.

Mrs. Fleitell noted, however, that the concern she has heard over the years is that our students were not getting into good colleges and the report in front of the Board does not seem to reflect that at all.

Mrs. Russo stated that she would like to see the high school profile that accompanies transcripts that are sent out to various schools.

Mr. Picciano commended the guidance department for their efforts but also was concerned that the sample of approximately 50 schools was too small. He noted that Mrs. Kline and Mrs. Celli were indicating a sample of approximately 3,000. He also expressed concern over the grading system as a whole, in particular the fact that our low point was a grade of 62.

Mr. Picciano further stated that he was concerned about the average student as well as the fact that students who were not willing to expend effort were not required to work harder. Mr. Pelaia said he did not believe our children were abusing the system.

Mrs. Fleitell said that she thought we might be in danger of treading in the wrong areas as to what the Board's role was and she pointed out areas of parental responsibility and administrative responsibility. She also noted that a major concession has been made in that we would put numbers on transcripts.

Mr. Pelaia reminded everyone that this is a decision of the Superintendent unless the Board changes the current policy.

Mrs. Russo said she did not like the idea of the term *concession*, to which Mrs. Fleitell replied she did not really mean concession, she meant change.

Dr. Serafino said that the main concern was to help children with the support of the professional staff.

Mr. Picciano said that it was not his desire that our children look better but that they be on the same playing field as everyone else.

Mrs. Roncaglio thanked Dr. Serafino and the guidance staff for their efforts and noted that she had a child who she feels is somewhere in the middle and stated that in her opinion this is a wonderful step in helping those children.

3. Dr. Casale stated he would like to see closure on the issue of the crossing guards. He indicated he would like to have a resolution prepared to notify the Board of Commissioners of our intention to remove crossing guards from the 2000/2001 budget.

Mrs. Fleitell said she thought that we wanted to have time to talk to the Commissioners and could not understand what the reason was for taking this action right now. She felt it would be better left to the next Board after the Reorganization Meeting.

Dr. Casale noted that we had tried to negotiate this and had not gotten anywhere. Mrs. Fleitell stated she wanted this issue handled properly and it is important that the public know exactly what we are saying.

Mrs. Russo noted she wanted to put the accountability back to where it belongs with the municipality.

Mr. Picciano stated that he agreed with Mrs. Fleitell's comments about not rushing into this matter.

Dr. Casale said he wanted to communicate our feelings to the Commissioner and didn't feel we should wait.

Mrs. Fleitell said she felt we should make an approach to the Commissioners to discuss the matter.

Mr. Moscaritola said that while he was not in favor of seeing this item in the budget, he was concerned as to what was our ultimate responsibility.

Mrs. Russo said that if the Board does not put this item in the budget it is not for the Board to decide what the town might do or not do.

Dr. Casale asked if it would be possible to poll the Board to see if this item should come out of the school budget.

Mr. Pelaia asked each Board member to express an opinion.

Mr. Picciano said he thought that the money could be used for better purposes but would offer no opinion at this time.

Dr. Casale said the appropriation should not be in the budget.

Mr. Moscaritola said he also thought the appropriation should be taken from the budget but was not ready to make a decision on this.

Mrs. Fleitell noted she agreed with the position taken by Mr. Moscaritola.

Mrs. Russo said she felt this should be taken from the budget and spent on educational needs if that was necessary and she referred to her statement made at last week's meeting.

Dr. Scarpelli said that he felt the Board should work to see that this item could be removed from the budget.

Mr. Restaino said he was not objecting to sharing in the cost of this item with the municipality.

Mrs. Roncaglio said she would like to see the expenses shifted to the municipality so long as it was done properly with no loss of services.

Mr. Pelaia stated he liked "all of the above."

4. Mr. Picciano asked a question relating to the letter from Project Graduation. Mr. Pelaia indicated that he wanted to get more information about this matter and Dr. Serafino noted that the high school administration was already addressing this.

Mrs. Russo was concerned over the implication about the funding that was mentioned in the letter. Mr. Pelaia said that he personally would not be hemmed in because the Board hadn't done something before but wanted to look at this matter and, further, stated he had a real bias in favor of the concept of Project Graduation.

Mr. Picciano remarked on some other concerns that were mentioned in the letter.

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 matters of litigation 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 Dr. Casale, seconded by Mrs. Fleitell and unanimously approved by the Board.

ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting adjourned at 9:17 p.m.


Secretary

3/12/99
Date