



For Immediate Release

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Neshaminy Teachers Say Board’s Stance in Talks Shows That District’s Priority Is Power, Not Savings

(March 18, 2011) LANGHORNE, PA— The Neshaminy Federation of Teachers said their most recent contract proposal should have brought them and the Neshaminy School District closer to a new agreement by now, but that can’t happen unless the District comes to the bargaining table ready to address contract issues.

In talks that have continued for nearly three years, the NFT has proposed two counteroffers. Teachers most recently offered concessions to healthcare plans that will save the District \$2.8 million annually—based on figures and budget information that the NFT and the Neshaminy School Board exchanged during two meetings earlier this year between Neshaminy Federation of Teachers President Louise Boyd and Board President Ritchie Webb.

“Our latest counteroffer does in fact produce \$2.8 million in direct healthcare savings to the District for each year of the contract. Unfortunately, the Board has shown no interest in these savings. Instead, it wants to destroy the teaching profession,” Boyd said.

“How do we know that they are more interested in undermining teachers than in saving money?” Boyd continued. “Based on discreet conversations, we’ve learned that offering any percentage toward healthcare will not result in a contract. The Board wants every one of their 55 contract demands—no negotiation, rather they say ‘take it or leave it.’”

“That includes rolling back class size limits to 1997 levels. It would silence the voices of professional educators on policies and practices that are crucial to the quality of education our children receive,” Boyd said. “In other words, the Board wants to take the professionalism out of our profession. We cannot allow that to happen and risk sacrificing all the educational gains we have made in the last decade.”

The last formal contract proposal put on the table was from the NFT in August 2010. A copy of that proposal is on the District’s website for anyone to review. Neshaminy

teachers have worked for the last two and one-half years under the terms of the contract that expired in July 2008.

“School District officials have publicly reported to Pennsylvania education officials that they have a balanced budget. The Board has been unwilling to explain why their current budget documents show a \$0 deficit when they claim there is a \$9 million deficit. So it is time to stop talking about a deficit that prevents a new agreement with teachers, because it doesn’t exist,” Boyd said. “It appears the resources are available, and a lot of that came from money saved because there have been no raises over the past three years.”

She urged District negotiators to rejoin teachers at the bargaining table, where there is an opportunity to reach a final settlement that is economically neutral and educationally positive.

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