



For Immediate Release

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Neshaminy Federation of Teachers Negotiations Update

March 5, 2011 - LANGHORNE, PA— The members of the Neshaminy Federation of Teachers are concerned about the School Board's practice of providing extremely divergent views of their finances, depending on the audience they are addressing. It is important to the families who send their children to Neshaminy schools that the District accurately portrays its finances while avoiding shrill rhetoric. It is equally important to the staff who serve Neshaminy's students to be given accurate information about the status of district finances. As recently as this week, the Neshaminy School District circulated a memo to staff stating that an \$11 million deficit is looming in 2011-12, and it needs to begin to freeze spending immediately to prepare for the worst-case scenario. This is a very different scenario from what the District reported to the state of Pennsylvania.

On January 5, 2011 the Neshaminy School District announced the completion of its preliminary 2011-2012 budget, which forecasted an \$11 million deficit.

We have found another estimate, posted on their site and dated two weeks later, that shows no deficit.

On the District's website, <http://www.neshaminy.k12.pa.us>, a revised budget provided to the state is posted with no deficit, but rather with revenue sources equaling expenditures at \$166,418,111 each (pages A-1 & F-1). In other words, their revised budget of January 19, 2011 anticipates no deficit! Moreover, the District expects its fund balance to grow to \$13,535,952 (page J-1). To our dismay, Ms. Barbara Markowitz sent a memo to staff this week repeating the claim of a looming deficit and cutting off spending on students and staff for the year, denying this year's class of students the materials and supplies they need to have a fair opportunity to learn and the staff the resources needed to meet their students' needs.

On Tuesday, March 1, School Board Member William O'Connor posed this question on his blog in defense of the board's practice:

Can the union for once, really JUST ONCE, actually prove their numbers on paper for everyone to see?

Board Member O'Connor, the proof is on your website, in your own report.

To be clear, we are not suggesting the District ignore its planned long-range capital improvement projects. Nor do we advocate short-changing the educational programs that directly affect the lives of our students. What we are saying is that it is disingenuous of the Board to assert that it literally cannot afford to meet us at the bargaining table without depleting its reserves, raising taxes beyond Act 1 limits or cutting educational programs. It simply is not true!

Please call school district officials at 215-809-6000 or email rwebb@neshaminy.k12.pa.us to tell them that it is time for an end to "take it or leave it." The students, staff and residents of our school district deserve an end to this protracted impasse.

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