



For Immediate Release

Bob Schiers
856.905.7851
Bob.Schiers@raspr.com

Dennis Boyle
856.905.7852
dennis.boyle@raspr.com

As Contract Talks Resume Tonight, Neshaminy Teachers Outline Their Stand for a Fair Agreement and a Voice in What's Best for Students

December 2, 2010 - LANGHORNE, PA—As they prepare to join school officials in a contract negotiation session later today, Neshaminy teachers said they will continue to fight for an agreement that advances student achievement and is fair to educators in the classroom.

“We are seeking an equitable contract that recognizes the commitment and dedication of Neshaminy’s teachers and continues to give us a voice in programs and policies that bear directly on our students’ educational achievement,” said Louise Boyd, president of the Neshaminy Federation of Teachers.

While teachers and the school district have differed over economic concerns in the negotiations, Boyd pointed out that teachers have moved toward the middle on these issues—reducing district costs by \$3 million to \$7 million by revising their salary proposal and offering to contribute more toward healthcare expenses. Meanwhile, the district negotiating team has not offered a new proposal since June – unless one takes into account the language the Board inserted in September that would require certified staff to work up to three nights per year with no additional compensation – hardly a step in the right direction as far as the NFT is concerned.

“Teachers have lived two-and-one-half years with the uncertainty of not having a contract,” Boyd said. “Over that time, we have been in the classroom every day making a difference for the children we teach.”

It is also crucial, Boyd said, that a new contract must continue to recognize teachers’ role in school improvement efforts and in developing educational policies and programs. Contracts between teachers and school districts are about much more than compensation and benefits, she added.

“Any new agreement must accommodate collaboration between teachers and administrators on these important issues,” Boyd said. “That has been our position from the beginning of these talks, and we will continue to fight for that approach.”

Over the years, Neshaminy teachers have been indispensable members of school improvement teams—along with administrators and other stakeholders—that have generated evidence-based ideas to resolve problems at individual schools. Teachers’ voices have also been critical in curriculum design, student grading and disciplinary policies.

“Teachers know what works in the classroom and what is best for their students,” Boyd said. “So we want to be sure that we have an equal role in school improvement efforts—and that our voices from the classroom are heard.”

Negotiators for teachers and the Neshaminy School District are scheduled to sit down together at 6 p.m. today for their first bargaining session in two months.

With talks resuming, the Neshaminy teachers are launching a new website to expand opportunities for community discussion and involvement in local education issues.

The new Neshaminy Federation of Teachers website—www.NFTcommunity.com—will keep community residents informed on the progress of negotiations and help give them a voice in issues affecting their public school system.

Visitors to the new website will be able to view videos of teachers, parents and students discussing the importance of high-quality education for children and our community. Local community members will have a chance to make their voices heard through online petitions, e-mails, and links to school and state officials.

###