

## Nonunion janitors could save district millions

08 Dec 2009 — Bucks County Courier Times

### NESHAMINY SCHOOLS

The Neshaminy School District could save nearly \$9 million over three years by outsourcing janitorial services alone, officials said.

As the school district and the support staff union continue contract negotiations, Neshaminy's school board sought out bids for some of its 500-plus support jobs represented by Neshaminy Educational Support Professional Association to see how much cash it could be saving.

No final decisions have been made and officials are still waiting to get bids for other support services.

On the district's Web site dedicated to its contract negotiations, [nsdboard.blogspot.com](http://nsdboard.blogspot.com), Neshaminy schools officials have posted what is its "most attractive" bid for custodial work.

The proposal by Pritchard Industries for daytime and nighttime custodial services would save more than \$8.99 million over three years, the site says. Neshaminy anticipates that it will spend \$15.8 million in those three years on custodial services if it goes with the union. Pritchard Industries put in a bid for \$6.8 million for daytime and nighttime services over the same three years.

"I want to point out that the board will exhaust every effort to negotiate a fair and equitable contract for both sides before using the outside contractors," Neshaminy school board President Ritchie Webb said at the board's reorganization meeting Monday night. He also said that officials will continually update the site on the status of the negotiations.

Mindy Anderson, the union president, declined comment following that meeting.

Members of Neshaminy Educational Support Professional Association, which includes 270 full-time and 282 part-time positions for jobs ranging from bus drivers to janitors to food service workers, have been working off an expired contract since July. Its full-time employees receive benefits, unlike the part-timers. While school board directors have said Neshaminy can't keep paying for a top tier health insurance plan, union members have said they can't afford to contribute what the board is asking.

The board is proposing annual wage increases of 1 percent in the first year and three percent in the second and third years of a three-year contract. The union, though, wants a five-year deal with no wage increase in the first year - provided there's no employee contribution to health care premiums - a 3.5 percent wage increase for the middle three years and a 4 percent increase in the final year of a five-year contract, according to the site.

The board originally proposed to change the base medical plan to PC 20/30/70, calling for 15 to 17 percent employee contributions over the three years. Under the current Blue Cross PC-15 plan, there is no employee contribution to premiums. But the union wouldn't accept the offer.

The current offer to the union is to change the base medical plan to Blue Cross C3-F3-O1, with employee contributions of 10 percent, 11 percent and 12 percent over three years. The union wants to keep the PC-15 with contributions of 0 percent, 2 percent, 3 percent, 4 percent and 5 percent over five years.

"The Union's refusal to adequately address the above issues, related primarily to benefits for full-time workers, leaves us little choice but to continue to consider contracting with third parties as a partial solution to the financial challenges we face," the Web site says.

Danny Adler can be reached at 215-949-4205 or [dadler@phillyBurbs.com](mailto:dadler@phillyBurbs.com).

*"Nonunion janitors could save district millions" Bucks County Courier Times 08 Dec 2009: A1*

