

NESHAMINY

## District leases Tawanka Learning Center

*The board agreed to find a real estate agent to handle the middle school.*

By **RACHEL CANELLI**  
STAFF WRITER

With two approvals Tuesday night, the Neshaminy School District now has plans in place for two of its properties.

The Neshaminy school board voted 8-0 to lease the Tawanka Learning Center and to assign a real estate agent to rent or sell Neshaminy Middle School.

The district negotiated a multiyear lease with the Bucks County Intermediate Unit No. 22 to rent the Tawanka building on Brownsville Road in Lower Southampton for more than \$7 per square foot beginning July 1, according to business administrator Joseph Paradise.

While officials described the IU as an ideal tenant in an unstable economy, a few board members continue to express concern that the IU isn't agreeing to keep the building open at night for community events.

"I'm still concerned that we're losing a facility for children," board member Richard Eccles said. "I hope the IU will open it up to the community."

IU administrators have said they won't have staff at the school at night. Paradise pointed out that when Neshaminy closed buildings including Neshaminy Middle, evening use ended at those facilities.

The board is expected to continue its conversation on relocating Tawanka's alternative program students during a strategic action committee meeting Monday night in Neshaminy High School's performing arts center, administrators said.

Moving the students to Eisenhower Elementary could cost \$116,000, while putting them in an unused wing of the high school would cost \$62,000, officials said.

Alternative-program students, parents and teachers expressed concern that the program wouldn't be isolated from the rest of the high school, something they say has made it successful.

Meanwhile, the school directors also agreed to contract with Binswanger of Pennsylvania to help sell or rent Neshaminy Middle School on Langhorne-Newtown Road.

An 8,000-square-foot portion of the Middletown facility is being rented through June by St. Mary Medical Center for \$7,500 a month for education and training, administrators said. Rachel Canelli can be reached at 215-949-4191 or .