

## Board seeks ideas for trimming budget

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Neshaminy

Letters will be sent to staff member seeking input and advice on the budget.

Neshaminy certified and support staff - you've got mail. Or, at least, you will soon.

The Neshaminy school board Tuesday night unanimously approved a motion to send letters to the district's certified and support staff members seeking their input and advice on how to trim the 2010-11 projected \$7.6 million budget deficit.

Board member Richard Eccles suggested the motion after a discussion over almost 30 items from last year that could be eliminated or reduced.

Those items include: eliminating the middle school opportunity period, middle school sports, elementary guidance, reading specialists and librarians, and sophomore year physical education, according to business administrator Joseph Paradise.

The recommendation list also includes sharing middle school librarians, using traveling art, music and/or physical education specialists, closing the remaining two middle school pools and the alternative school, charging an activity fee, and increasing the facility usage fee, said Paradise.

"These are very challenging, difficult subjects, but the stark reality is we must balance the budget," he said. "We have no choice but to reduce expenditures."

For example, outsourcing alternative services, which costs the district almost \$1 million to run, at \$10,000 per pupil would save the district \$500,000. Establishing an activity fee could create \$250,000 in revenue, Paradise said.

Superintendent Lou Muenker said the district is already trying to save money by putting most of its publications online, and being selective about training and conferences. Paradise said he would be providing more information on the items discussed at future meetings.

Board President Ritchie Webb also encouraged community members to submit their suggestions on how to trim the budget. He emphasized that what the board discussed were just recommendations, not done deals.

"Most of these (ideas) we all find distasteful, but the realities are that we have to make tough decisions," said Webb. "We're forced into a situation where we have to look at things that we wouldn't normally."

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