

## Union: 'Yet another wasted evening'

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By Christian Menno

Staff writer

Tuesday's negotiation session between the Neshaminy Federation of Teachers and the Neshaminy school board was "yet another wasted evening," according to the union president.

"Having received a significant sweeping proposal from the NFT on Nov. 1, 2011, the board had no response (Tuesday) to any aspect of our offer - except complete silence," said NFT President Louise Boyd in an email to the newspaper after Tuesday's talks.

"Despite its very public protestations proclaiming its efforts to 'bargain in good faith,' the board's position at the table has remained virtually unmoved since the day we began this process four years ago," Boyd added.

Board President Ritchie Webb, however, said in an email that "the most serious discussions (Tuesday) took place in separate rooms with the (state) mediator and not across the bargaining table (from the NFT)."

The meeting lasted more than two hours, Webb said, with the two sides coming face-to-face for only about 30 minutes. The rest of the time was spent with just the mediator, he added.

Boyd, in her email, described board members as "disinterested" as union officials Tuesday gave an "extensive, fact-laden" presentation that showed "ready sources of money (in the district) on which to begin closure of many issues" still hindering negotiations.

Webb made his own presentation at the last school board meeting in an effort to show that the district cannot afford many of the union's demands.

According to Boyd, when questioned about some of the information in his presentation by union officials Tuesday, Webb explained he manipulated PSSA data to establish a ranking system of Pennsylvania's 504 school districts. Boyd said that the district superintendent informed her that the state does not rank the districts.

In his presentation, Webb stated that since the last teachers contract took effect in 2001, the Neshaminy's PSSA ranking among other districts fell from 153 to 245.

When pressed further about the board's presentation, Boyd said that board negotiators "terminated" the meeting.

The next meeting is set for Dec. 14.

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