

If they can substantiate remarks we will go public  
otherwise we will quietly let them know.

Anti-defamation League  
American Jewish Committee  
July 15, 1985

Joyce Jalspers  
ADL Howard Ross

Dear Arnie,

It was good talking to you the other day. As you recall several years ago, we met and expressed our deep concern about the campaign and ethnic slurs about one of the candidates that had a Jewish name (her husband is Jewish). The perpetrator of these slurs is now herself a board candidate. My husband has personally experienced her anti-semitic venom. We must do everything we can to defeat her and her venomous co-candidates. We would be glad to meet with you to develop a strategy to elect the right candidates.

YES

Ron Giallonardo  
Dr. Bill Kofmehl  
Raymond LaPorte  
David Kaule

NO

Joan O'Brien  
Joyce Contouris  
Ken Judson

Looking forward to talking with you around August 11 so that you can tell us when we can meet with your Board.

Sincerely yours,

*Rose Geller*

Rose Geller

366-4204

P.S. Enclosed is an article that appeared in the Post Gazette North. Please note Mr. LaPorte's comments.

8/11. Wants us to make phone calls - wants volunteers  
Wants us to have a candidates night ->

# North Hills gives Geller 5-year contract 7/11/85

By Lynda Guydon

Post-Gazette Staff Writer

In an action one director compared to "reliving a bad dream," the North Hills school board has renewed the contract of Superintendent Josh Geller for five years.

After 3½ hours of sometimes heated discussion, the board on Tuesday voted 5-4 for renewal, a year before Geller's current contract expires in June, 1986. Directors Alice Harvey, Raymond LaPorte, William Kofmehl, Charlotte Kowalski and Louis Cynkar voted for renewal. Joan O'Brien, Gary Milliken, Patricia Hasek and Carole Nowark opposed it.

The decision drew sharply divided lines between Geller's supporters and detractors in a packed board room of about 60 people.

Some carried signs reading "Geller Gotta Go" and "Have a Responsible Chief in North Hills." The latter sign referred to a group whose stated aim was to keep Geller from getting his contract renewed.

Although Geller is paid \$63,202, salary was not discussed. Nor were the contents of the contract, which some board members and the solicitor said they never saw.

The hastily called special meeting also was criticized for being a repeat performance of one five years ago in which Geller's contract was renewed a year before its expiration.

Solicitor Michael Witherel also advised the board of a ruling in a similar case in Clearfield Area School District in Clearfield County.

In that case, the Clearfield board voted to renew the contract of then

Superintendent Daniel M. Freeman in August, 1983, although his contract was not scheduled to expire until July, 1984. (Freeman is now superintendent of Fox Chapel Area School District).

Witherel said the Common Pleas Court "felt it was an abuse of power and the board was not acting in the public interest."

The judge, Witherel said, had based his decision on the fact that an outgoing board had bound an incoming board to a decision it had no part in making.

Furthermore, according to the decision, "most of the unchallenged candidates for election to the board campaigned on a promise to give serious and thorough consideration to the matter of renewing the superintendent's contract. . . ."

Parties to the case decided not to appeal, however, and therefore the decision is not considered a precedent, Witherel said.

Such a ruling is called a case of first impression, but an Allegheny County judge could be guided by the Clearfield case, the solicitor said.

In spite of the Clearfield ruling, Witherel said, the Pennsylvania Public School Code gives the current North Hills board the right to make the decision.

The only thing the code requires is that the board meet on the contract a minimum of 150 days before its expiration. That would mean the board would have to decide between July 1, 1985, and Jan. 31, 1986. Otherwise, the contract would be renewed automatically.

But still Milliken, Nowark, Hasek

## "A vote of confidence in the man as our leader."

and O'Brien questioned the propriety of appointing Geller when a new board is set to take office in January, 1986.

Four seats are up for election in November, and one board member, Cynkar, decided not to run, which could change the contract vote of the new board.

Were the new board to decide Geller's fate, it would have to do so by Jan. 31, 1986, however.

"The outgoing board should not be responsible for making this decision. It should be the new board," Milliken said.

The board is approving a contract with a superintendent that may not be compatible with the incoming board, Milliken said.

Milliken also characterized Geller as a superintendent fearful of making recommendations until he knows whether he has the support.

Because the vote could be challenged, O'Brien called it "divisive, expensive and counterproductive."

Nowark voted no because "I have no idea what salary we're even talking about" and because she had never seen the contract.

Harvey disputed that, saying Nowark chose to leave early from a meeting at which the contract was

discussed.

Raymond LaPorte said Nowark simply did not do her homework.

LaPorte said renewal of Geller's contract at this time was necessary to give him a vote of confidence because he is expected to make some administrative changes in August.

LaPorte decried Geller's detractors who, he said, would like to make appointments on the basis of political affiliation.

"There's no place for this kind of attitude. The whole issue is, they did not say one thing positive about our district . . . they hate him and dislike him. There's no place in our society for this type of bigotry," LaPorte said.

He characterized the decision as "a vote of confidence in the man as our leader."

Before the vote, Geller himself outlined the following programs he has begun or encouraged as superintendent:

- Sixteen contracts settled without a strike during his tenure.
- Retention of the Gifted and Talented Education program when other districts were getting rid of it.
- Principal-for-a-day program where he visits a different school once a month to get to know students on a more personal basis.
- A special program that allows seniors to take college credit courses at reduced rates. The program was expanded this past school year to include average as well as above-average students. This program, Geller said, "has become a model not just in the North Hills but statewide."