

An open work session of the Board of Education of the City of Vineland was held in the Board Room, 625 Plum Street, Vineland, New Jersey, Wednesday, February 6, 2008 at 7:05 p.m., pursuant to notice with Mr. Giordano presiding and the following members present: Ms. Arroyo, Mr. Bernardini, Mr. Fanucci, Mr. Franceschini, Mrs. Gavigan, Mr. Snyder, Mr. Spinelli and Mr. Ulrich. Absent: None.

Also present: Mr. Ottinger, Superintendent, Dr. Figgs, Dr. Gruccio, and Mr. Peters, Assistant Superintendents, Mr. Franchetta, Board Secretary, Mr. DeSanto, Board Solicitor, Mrs. Polof, Director of Special Education, Ms. Greenfield, Executive Director of Personnel, press and public. Absent: None.

Mr. Giordano opened the meeting with a moment of silence for Sharon Bortle an elementary teacher at Durand School who past away this week.

Mr. Giordano announced that in compliance with the New Jersey meeting law commonly referred to as "The Sunshine Law," the Vineland Board of Education has caused notice of this meeting.

Flag salute:

Special

Presentations:

Mr. Ottinger introduced Ms. Karen Buonocore to present an overview on the Alliance for a Healthier Generation Program.

Ms. Buonocore said she is the New Jersey Relationship Manager for the Alliance for Healthier Generation Healthy Schools Program and this program can be installed into the school district at no cost. The specific goal of the Alliance for a Healthier Generation is to stop the increase of childhood obesity by 2010. In order to do this there are four different initiatives which are, Healthy Schools Program, Industry Program, "Go Healthy Challenge" Kids Movement and Healthcare Initiative. Ms. Buonocore said one of the reasons we are working with schools is that our students represent the first generation that may not out live their parents. Research shows that physical activity and good nutrition all relate to lower absenteeism, better academic performance and improved student behavior. Ms. Buonocore said our mission is to create a healthy school environment as the norm and not the exception.

Mr. Snyder asked if this is targeting all schools. Ms. Buonocore said all schools. Mr. Snyder asked if this is through the foods program. Ms. Buonocore said it can go however you think it would best work. Mr. Snyder asked if there was a cost to the district. Ms. Buonocore said there is no cost.

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Mr. Snyder asked if there is a video that markets this program. Ms. Buonocore said she believes there is a video. Mr. Snyder asked how often she would be in Vineland. Ms. Buonocore said in the beginning as often as needed. Mr. Snyder questioned who would be responsible for the grant. Ms. Buonocore said she will present the district with the grant opportunity and review what is written but they do not write the grants. Mr. Snyder asked if there is money within the grant for the physical education side. Ms. Buonocore said yes they partnered with IDEA Fitness Organization and they will volunteer at all the schools. Mr. Snyder asked how they know if they are successful. Ms. Buonocore said we have evaluators in charge of that piece.

Mr. Ulrich asked if all the supplemental materials are funded by this foundation. Ms. Buonocore responded yes. Mr. Ulrich asked how long the foundation funds this. Ms. Buonocore said four years from point of installation. Mr. Ulrich asked Ms. Buonocore how many districts in the state she currently service. Ms. Buonocore said four.

Mr. Franceschini asked when the students are evaluated is BMI looked at. Ms. Buonocore responded yes. Mr. Franceschini asked how the aerobic index is measured. Ms. Buonocore said there are several ways to do that and it would vary. Mr. Franceschini asked if there is measurement of flexibility. Ms. Buonocore said we do not do anything like that. Mr. Franceschini asked if this program provides education/certification for key personnel. Ms. Buonocore said that is not established yet.

Mrs. Gavigan asked if our district has decided to go with this program. Mr. Ottinger said this is the presentation for the board to decide. Mrs. Gavigan asked if this is provided in the curriculum for classroom teacher. Ms. Buonocore responded yes. Mrs. Gavigan asked if this program also provides information and links to community health centers for our staff. Ms. Buonocore said absolutely.

Mr. Giordano thanked Ms. Buonocore for an extremely informative presentation.

Mr. Ottinger introduced Mr. Stephen Dantine to present a brief presentation on the E-rate Program.

Mr. Dantine said the E-rate Program was created in 1996 by the Telecom Act by congress and is \$2.25 billion annually from interstate phone revenue.

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Mr. Dantine said E-rate eligible applicants are K-12 public and private schools, CESA's and Head Starts. The discount range is from 20% to 90% based on free/reduced lunch eligibility. Mr. Dantine said the district must have a Technology Plan that is approved by the state. He said the E-rate applications are prepared a year and a half in advance and if everything is done correctly you receive a funding commitment letter. Mr. Dantine said this is a federal program and you must comply with their timelines or you will lose the funding.

Mr. Snyder asked why we are hiring someone to do this. Mr. Dantine explained that one year we had to demonstrate through a Public Integrity Assurance (PIA) Review that we can pay all our bills. He went to Mr. Franchetta and came up with many forms trying to explain that we can pay the bills. Mr. Dantine said that year they said we did not do this and our funding was denied. We appealed but did not get the funding back. Mr. Dantine said after six years he received a call from the FCC. We were told by the FCC that the decision has been remanded, nothing was done wrong and we can have the money. Mr. Dantine said the problem is that many of these vendors are gone and we are having trouble getting that money back. He said with all the other duties he was doing it was decided, at that time, that a consultant would be hired.

Mr. Ulrich said the question is why we would spend extra money when this could be done in-house. Mr. Dantine said in the past his department was larger and he had the secretarial help to take care of the deadlines. He said over the period of years we have reduced. Mr. Dantine said when the PIA calls you have to respond immediately. He said so much of this is clerical and Mr. Cox has some work to do on this also. Mr. Fanucci asked if Mr. Cox and Mr. Dantine have clerical staff to assist with this. Mr. Dantine said he has a secretary.

Mr. Spinelli asked who the PIA currently calls. Mr. Dantine said they call the consultant who then has to call him.

Mr. Fanucci questioned the possibility of implementing an internship position for students or those who are looking to advance to assist with some of this clerical work. Mr. Ottinger said Mr. Dantine will present the Technology Plan that may shed some light on this issue and the availability of personnel to help with these matters.

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Mr. Giordano asked if we are committed this year to this contract. Mr. Dantine said yes. Mr. Giordano said we really need to take a closer look at this before the year is done.

Mr. Ottinger said a few years ago a study was done of the technology program. He asked Mr. Dantine to make a tentative proposal for the reorganization of the entire technology program in the district.

Mr. Dantine said he had a couple meetings with Mr. Ottinger and the assistant superintendents for input on the technology plan. He also took the recommendations that were done on the 2005 technology study to try to revise it and make it work today. Mr. Dantine said staff interviews were done and Vineland's key data points were compared with relevant research. He said a review was done on existing structure and status of various technology initiatives in the district. Mr. Dantine said our infrastructure is in good shape but our organizational structure needs work, which is what Mr. Ottinger is asking him to do. He said we have card access and video surveillance cameras.

Mr. Franceschini asked if all of our cameras work. Mr. Dantine responded no.

Mr. Dantine said there is a new proposed technology department organizational chart so one person reports to another person in some fashion. He said other proposed suggestions were to have a server and network technician, computer clerk and help desk administrator. Mr. Dantine said the Millville School District rotates the technicians around as the help desk administrator.

Mr. Snyder asked if the help desk person would be a dispatcher. Mr. Dantine responded yes.

Mr. Ulrich asked if we outsource any of these services. Mr. Dantine said sometimes. Mr. Ulrich asked if the adding of these new positions would out way the benefit of outsourcing. Mr. Dantine said there are advantages to both. He said many of our technicians are very skilled and capable. This would offer a career ladder to them that they have not had in the past. Mr. Ottinger asked if it would be more cost effective to add these positions or outsource. Mr. Dantine said it is more cost effective for us to do it ourselves.

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Mr. Franceschini said he would be very interested in knowing how much outsourcing would cost.

Mr. Bernardini said he feels the technology department needs to be reorganized now to see if it is operating properly.

Mr. Snyder feels that accountability has been an issue within the technology department for quite some time. He asked if adding these three managers would increase accountability for all of these things. Mr. Dantine said yes and the Keynet Work Order System.

Mrs. Gavigan asked if these positions are Civil Service positions. Mr. Dantine responded yes. Mrs. Gavigan asked if the new plan addresses the E-rate situation. Mr. Dantine said the computer clerk position would.

Mr. Dantine pointed out some of the servers the district has and why the server technician is important. He said out internet access expands to the City of Vineland, public library and police cruisers. Mr. Dantine said it is very important to have access available especially for the police cruisers. He explained the Representative Technology Action Plan and flow diagram for new site technologies installation.

Mr. Snyder said he likes the organizational chart but does not know if at this time the positions could be fulfilled. He said he would like to see how the help desk person would change the whole process. Mrs. Gavigan asked if this would be put in the budget. Mr. Ottinger said he has not discussed putting this in the budget yet it is just in the initial stages. He is worried about the lack of access students and families have because at times there are many things that are non-operational. Mr. Ottinger said we are going to work really hard to get some type of organization so the equipment we have can be operational.

Mr. Dantine mentioned that the industry standard for businesses is for every fifty computers one technician.

Comments by
Board Solicitor:

None.

Items for Review:

A. Superintendent

1. **Personnel Items** - Mr. Spinelli requested for Ms. Greenfield to explain the reclassification position they discussed. Ms. Greenfield explained that based on a job audit that was done this position is being reclassified into an existing position we already have. She said this individual will be working for Mr. Weaver on a flex schedule that will be determined based on what is needed. Mr. Ottinger said this is a district wide position and there will be no overtime. Ms. Arroyo asked if no overtime is written in the contract. Ms. Greenfield said Mr. Erlich is well aware of the overtime. Mr. Giordano asked if Mr. Erlich will be replaced in his security guard position. Mr. Ottinger said so far we are not advertising for the position.

Mr. Franceschini asked what the turn around time is for background checks. Ms. Greenfield said about a week for the paperwork. She said the turn around time after we receive their clearance is an average of six to eight weeks depending on the time of the year.

Mr. Snyder asked what a student/parent family advocacy is. Mr. Peters explained that it is the advisory program that we will be implementing next year in grades six through twelve as part of the secondary initiative. We are developing an open type program with suggested topics that each teacher would cover and these teachers are working with Linda Santagata to cover that program. Mr. Snyder asked if this is to help the parents understand what the curriculum and programs are. Mr. Peters said in a sense yes. Mr. Snyder asked if this is a year round position. Mr. Peters said they are curriculum writing positions.

2. **Placement of Special Education Students** – No discussion.
3. **Budgetary Transfers** – Mr. Ulrich asked what blended resource fund is. Mr. Franchetta said that is the school based budgets.
4. **Submission of Grants** – Mr. Giordano mentioned that the General Mills Grant is different from the program that was discussed in the presentation.

Mr. Snyder asked what “Eat your Dots” means. Mrs. Holt explained that Eat your Dots is the system we are training our students on, which are colored dots based on the food guide pyramid.

Mr. Ottinger asked if the U.S. Department of Education Smaller Learning Communities Program Partners Group Agreement Grant, which Mr. Peters is working on can be put on next weeks agenda as an emergent item. Mr. Giordano responded yes under the submission of grants.

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Mr. Peters said because of the size of our district we have the possibility of receiving 1.5 million dollars over five years from this grant.

5. **Bids** – Mr. Bernardini asked what the problem was with a vendor for the diesel fuel oil bid. Mr. Cox said the price was higher.

Mr. Snyder asked what pay to play is. Mr. Cox explained that as an Abbott district we have to have the vendor sign a form that describes how much money they have given to elected officials. The form has to be submitted before a contract is issued. Mr. Snyder asked if that has any bearing as to if they are chosen for a contract. Mr. Cox said we only collect the data. Mr. Snyder asked what the state does with this data. Mr. Cox said they have not asked for it.

Mr. Fanucci asked if we only had one bidder for the trash services. Mr. Cox said a couple of people inquired but could not get the price that Waste Management can get. Mr. Fanucci asked if we have a firm number with them or is this just an estimate. Mr. Cox said the price is firm for each of the containers but it allows for changes. Mr. Fanucci asked if we put a new school on line is there a set figure in the contract. Mr. Cox responded yes.

6. **Travel** – No discussion.
7. **Joint Transportation Agreement** – Mr. Spinelli asked what this is for. Mr. Franchetta explained that Cumberland County has a consortium that works out of the vo-tech and they do most of the special education routes for all the districts in Cumberland County. In this case, we are their vendor to transport students to Creative Achievement. Mr. Spinelli asked if we make a profit on this. Mr. Franchetta said we probably break even.
8. **No Child Left Behind Amended Application** – No discussion.
9. **Establishment of Hourly Rate for Election Workers** – Mr. Giordano asked if we are responsible for this. Mr. Franchetta said we are responsible for the bill.

Mr. Franceschini asked if this was a new rate. Mr. Franchetta said it is the same rate as last year.

10. **Class Action Law Suit Payment** – Mr. Franchetta noted that this should not have said revised list. He said in December there was a list computed and presented to the board for approval. Mr. Franchetta said he found out that the calculations were incorrect and the same list was presented at the January meeting with the corrected amounts.

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Mr. Franchetta said this list is batch #2 as we pay more people come forward. He said next month he will have a batch #3.

Mr. Ulrich asked when this will end. Mr. DeSanto explained that the people in the law suit are current employees. The people who have left the district since the law suit will not be part of that law suit settlement. Mr. DeSanto said this could continue to go on but can not go beyond six years from the date that the claim is put in.

Mr. Giordano asked if all those who have retired or left are being paid in full. Mr. DeSanto responded yes.

11. **New and Revised Curricula** – Mrs. Gavigan said she is glad to see we have all four years of American Sign Language available to our students. She asked if the bilingual curriculum is something new. Mr. Ottinger said no it has just been updated and revised.
12. **Bayada Nurse Contract** – Mr. Giordano asked Mr. DeSanto if he has seen this contract. Mr. Franchetta said this is the standard contract that we have used for other students.

Mr. Franceschini asked what the cost is for an LPN for a year. Mr. Franchetta said \$40.00 per hour. Mr. Franceschini asked for how many hours. Mr. Franchetta said six hours a day for one hundred and three days.

13. **Spring Season Athletic Schedule** – Mrs. Gavigan asked if softball will be played in the back of the new field. Mr. Ottinger responded yes.
14. **First Reading for New and Revised Policies – a. Policy #5512.1, b. Policy #5755, c. Policy #7650** – Mr. Snyder asked if Policy #7650 Staff Members Use of Vehicles is new. Mr. Franceschini responded yes. Mr. Snyder asked if the superintendent can designate individuals to have vehicles if there is a need to bring them home. Mr. Franceschini said yes it is flexible and he recommended for the board to read the policy.

Ms. Arroyo asked if we are going to mail information to parents about the new Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying policy. Mr. Ottinger said we will make an effort and do what we can.

B. Proposed by Board President or any individual Board Member: None.

Review of Bills: No discussion.

Committee Reports: Mr. Giordano said the Finance Committee did not meet this week because there were not any pressing issues to discuss in light of the fact that the budget is being prepared.

Mr. Spinelli asked if the board can have a list on what is being cut. Mr. Ottinger said we are not anywhere near there yet and when we are the board will receive the proposal for any cuts.

Mr. Bernardini commented on an article in the *Atlantic City Press* regarding the Vineland High School Skills USA Team capturing a gold medal again. He said they are going to the second round on May 2nd and 3rd at the NJ Skills USA Championship in Somerset, which is quite an accomplishment. Mrs. Gavigan mentioned that at the same competition Mr. Snyder's group won a silver medal.

Mr. Spinelli congratulated Mrs. Holt for winning the Food Safety Award in several of her school kitchens.

Mr. Bernardini said discussed at the Early Childhood Committee meeting was a letter received from Little Lamb signed by several of the providers explaining their concerns in regards to not being paid for wrap-around during the summer months. He said they are asking for the district to fund them during the summer. Mr. Bernardini said Mr. Franchetta would have to speak with someone in Trenton. Mr. Ulrich said it seems like their battle is with the state not us. Mr. Bernardini said they also discussed additional immunizations children will need beginning September 2008. He said for next year's registration 50% of the slots are available for the provider to fill until July 1, 2008 and after that parental choice will be honored by the district. Mrs. Gavigan asked if we will anticipate using more buses next year to transport. Mr. Franchetta said that previously the providers recruited students and guaranteed placement for those students at their center. He said there is a recommendation from the state that the parents need to have parental choice, which is made when the child is registered. Mrs. Gavigan said the parent will be able to make a request and we will guarantee the transportation. Mr. Franchetta said it depends where they live.

Mr. Bernardini said discussed at the Buildings & Grounds Committee meeting was the renting of Fels School. He said Mr. Weaver will perform a feasibility assessment of the building to see if it is in good enough shape to rent. Mr. Bernardini said Mr. Weaver should be a member of the committee when rentals are considered because he knows what maintenance the buildings need. He said also discussed was the improvements to the girls softball field and track resurfacing. Mr. Spinelli asked what fund is the money in for this. Mr. Ottinger said it is in an athletic account. Mr. Bernardini said when he questioned Mr. Weaver about this Mr. Weaver told him that the purchase orders have been done but not signed. Mr. Snyder said in his opinion it is not fair if we do not have the same exact services as one for the other. He said if we have the funding we should duplicate the same press box that is on the boys' baseball field in lieu of relocating the existing wooden structure. Mr. Ottinger feels press boxes are an extravagant thing. Mr. Bernardini feels we should look in the budget to see if there is \$20,000 to construct a press box. Mr. Ottinger said he is not recommending that we spend \$20,000 for a press box that is not necessary. Mr. Bernardini said when we won the law suit for \$300,000 he asked where the money is going and if we would be able to use some of it; our solicitor thought it was possible. He said that was not done the money was put into a fund balance and it was gone. Mr. Bernardini said Mr. Ottinger told him not to worry when the time comes to do this for the softball field we will find the money for the things you want to do. Mr. Ottinger said everything was done or is going to be done. Mr. Bernardini said he checked and none of these purchase orders are done. He said that he does not want to be called a liar. Mr. Ottinger told Mr. Bernardini that no one called him a liar. Mr. Bernardini said Mr. Weaver is working on the punch list and items are continuing to be addressed at the Vineland Community Learning Complex. He said the Adult Education Building should be finished either in March or April and the plans are to move in June. Mr. Bernardini said the State of New Jersey is moving forward with Middle School #2 and a meeting was scheduled during the week of January 14, 2008. He said the projected project cost is twenty seven million dollars, which will be revised when the project receives plan approval from the DCA. Mr. Bernardini said if funding becomes available it is anticipated that the project will be ready for bidding by May 2008. He apologized to Chalky and said the athletic fields are a passion with him and he will continue to do this as long as he is chairman of the Buildings & Grounds Committee.

Mr. Franceschini said discussed at the Personnel & Policy Committee meeting was the three policies that were reviewed. He said hopefully soon Mr. Peters will be presenting the merging of the alternative and second chance program. Mr. Snyder asked what the status is of our Courtesy to Staff Members policy. Mr. Franceschini said administration is still working on it. Mr. Giordano asked for an update on this policy at the next meeting.

Ms. Arroyo said discussed at the Curriculum Committee meeting was the American Sign Language courses.

Mr. Fanucci mentioned that DECA hosted a Miracle Minute Drive for the Cancer Society. He said the drive ran for one minute and they collected \$700.00 for the Cancer Society. Mr. Fanucci said the Key Club has received many donations for their coat drive, which is still continuing. Mrs. Terry's English class at Vineland High School South collected more than 70 cans of soup last week for a "Soup-er Bowl" donation to the Vineland Food Pantry. Mr. Fanucci said that Mrs. Jackson's Russian class entered an essay contest and eleven of the eighteen students placed and received three gold medals and eight bronze.

Mr. Spinelli said the media tends to find a lot of negative that is going on in society but 99% of students in our schools are doing good things.

Unfinished Business: None.

New Business: Mrs. Gavigan said she is going to type up a justification for a part-time secretary to be assigned to the board. She said the reason is to take minutes for the retreat, annual goal setting session, committee meetings as well as the minutes for the work session and regular meeting. Mrs. Gavigan said they tried to acquire such a position a couple of years ago but it never came about. She said with more responsibilities on the board a person is needed to provide clerical assistance to the board members whether the board as a whole or to the specific committees. Mrs. Gavigan said this will be sent to the Personnel & Policy Committee. Mr. Giordano said this responsibility would entail quite a bit.

Mr. Giordano announced that **Wednesday, February 20, 2008** has been scheduled to hold two student disciplinary hearings.

Mr. Giordano said the submission of the budget to the Department of Education will be prior to the March meeting. He said on the night of the March work session a special meeting will be held to pass the budget so it can be submitted to the Department of Education.

Mrs. Gavigan asked if we have a date for the budget hearing. Mr. Franchetta said **Thursday, March 27, 2008**.

Adjournment: The Board adjourned to executive session 9:26 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kevin J. Franchetta, CPA
Board Secretary