

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, December 5, 2007 at 7:02 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 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 Mr. Joseph Camardo, Principal of Adult Education Center, to present an update on the Adult Education Programs.

Mr. Camardo said he will be presenting a brief overview of the Vineland Adult Education Center Programs. He said many of the Adult Education Programs are grant funded and serve a population of about 2000 per year. Mr. Camardo said we currently have four funding sources for our Title II grant, which are ABE, ESL and ESL Civics. He said so far this year we have received outside funding of \$1,198,092. Mr. Camardo said in order to compete this year for our large Title II grant we linked with Salem County to provide ABE, ESL and ESL Civics Services. He said we plan to serve over 1,000 individuals between the two counties. Mrs. Gavigan asked if any of the Salem County students have to come to Vineland. Mr. Camardo said no we have two sites in Salem County. He said under the Adult Basic Skills we divide our adults into pre-GED and GED preparation classes. Mr. Camardo said we are one of four South Jersey testing centers for the GED tests. He said we offer the opportunity to take the GED test in English and Spanish. Mr. Camardo said our ESL Program is one of the largest in South Jersey. He said the Adult Education Program allows students seeking a Vineland High School diploma the opportunity. He said they will need to complete all the necessary credits that they would have received at Vineland High School, which also includes passing the HSPA test or SRA. Mr. Spinelli asked if everyone takes the HSPA test and then SRA out if they do not pass. Mr. Camardo said if they are special education they can go through the SRA process. Mr. Snyder asked if an adult education graduate would receive a standard Vineland High School diploma. Mr. Camardo responded yes.

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Mr. Camardo said that we offer a Job Search Program that services over 400 students per year. The 20 day course teaches the basics of how to obtain and keep a job. Mr. Camardo said the Workforce Learning Link is a program for students who are in need of improving their academic skills in order to secure or improve job prospects. He said our Licensed Practical Nursing Program has been continual operation for 40 years and highly successful in placing students in a medical career. Mr. Spinelli said he knows that this year we have not taken any new applicants. He asked what our position will be for next year. Mr. Camardo said currently we do not have an enrollment at the Adult Center for next year. He said we are exploring different scenarios. Mr. Camardo said if the other opportunities do not happen we could gear up for a class in February 2008. Mr. Spinelli asked if we have moved forward to try to have this place in case the other opportunities do not work. Mr. Camardo said as long as we can announce a test by February we should be alright. Mr. Spinelli asked Mr. Ottinger if we know what is going on as far as the other options. Mr. Ottinger said we would like to incorporate the LPN Program into one of the small learning communities at the high school. He said the bottom line is we will definitely have a program. Mr. Franceschini said he thought we were supposed to go into a partnership with the Cumberland County Vo-Tech. Mr. Ottinger said so far it has not panned out. Mr. Franceschini said if everything fails do we have the one year curriculum ready. Mr. Camardo responded yes and there is a process through the state we have to go through. Mr. Spinelli feels it is imperative that we have all that in place just in case. Mr. Ulrich asked how many full time staff members there are for this program. Mr. Camardo said there are currently three. Mr. Bernardini asked if the LPN Program was a small learning community would it only be for high school seniors not adults. Mr. Camardo said that would be an administrative decision. Mr. Camardo said we are currently in our twenty second year in Vineland with the New Jersey Youth Corp Program. He said it is a highly visible program, which is one of eleven throughout the state. Mr. Camardo said it gives youth, who have dropped out of high school, an opportunity to obtain their diploma and also combine a community service experience. Ms. Arroyo asked how many students actually become employed where they are doing their community service. Mr. Camardo said maybe one or two. Mr. Camardo said in the spring or summer of 2008 we are hoping to move to our new facility. He thanked central administration and the board for all the support shown throughout the years.

Mr. Ottinger introduced Mr. Ted Peters, Asst. Superintendent of Secondary Education, along with the high school administrative staff to give a presentation on small learning communities, student assignments and new courses.

Mr. Peters said tonight we are here to discuss two exciting happenings that are taking place with the advent of the small learning communities, which are courses and student placements. He said for September 2008 we are preparing for 29 new courses at the high school and 24 additional existing courses to have major revisions. Mr. Peters shared some of the courses that will be available to the students in September 2008. Mrs. Gavigan asked if these courses have been placed in the student course catalogue. Mr. Peters said yes that booklet is being produced now. Mrs. Gavigan asked if any current courses have been eliminated. Mr. Peters said we will actually let the students make that selection. Mrs. Gavigan asked if we will be offering the same AP courses. Mr. Peters said absolutely and there are plans for several more AP courses in the future. Mr. Bernardini asked if there were a minimum number of students needed for each class. Mr. Peters said we usually try to have no less than ten students. Mr. Peters said we have come close in giving students their first choice of themes. He reviewed all the student theme choices. Mr. Peters said out of the 2,964 total students 2,657 will be placed in their first choice themes. Mr. Spinelli asked if someone drops out of a learning community will another student be offered the chance to go into that community. Mr. Peters said yes if it happens early before the beginning of next year. Mr. Ulrich asked if there will be a policy so everything is done the same each year. Mr. Peters said we can certainly do that. Mr. Snyder requested that at the next small learning community presentation an example student schedule could be given out. Mrs. Gavigan congratulated Mr. Peters and the administrative assistant staff for this huge undertaking. Mr. Ottinger said the Board of Education deserves credit for putting this team in place. He said that he appreciates the hard work that everyone is doing on the small learning communities. Mr. Ottinger said the district and State of New Jersey is reaping tremendous rewards. He said when people call the state representatives with questions they are sent to Vineland, which is a tremendous compliment. Mr. Peters commented that today the Pleasantville School District came to see us and tomorrow Pemberton will be here. He said the state is making sure that other districts are coming here to see the good things that Vineland is doing.

Comments by
Board Solicitor:

None.

Items for Review:

A. Superintendent

1. **Personnel Items** – Mr. Snyder questioned why Mr. Gruszkowski is resigning as the weightlifting coach. Ms. Greenfield said she does not know.

Mr. Giordano asked for an explanation on the six amended start dates. Ms. Greenfield said one was due to an injury. She said the others are due to previous commitments. Mr. Giordano asked how this will affect payroll. Ms. Greenfield said payroll is contacted when there is a change in the start date. She explained that for every new employee a payroll authorization form is done, which she signs off on and then faxes to payroll. Mr. Giordano asked if we randomly give credit for previous experience or do we have chart. Ms. Greenfield said the individual has to submit proof of experience with documentation. Mr. Giordano asked if the scale goes by steps. Ms. Greenfield responded yes. Mr. Giordano asked for an explanation on the leave of absence that started September 18. She said that it was already approved but there was an addition to the leave added. Mr. Giordano questioned why the first approved leave dates were listed. Ms. Greenfield said it has always been done that way to show the progression.

Mr. Bernardini asked if the employment positions listed in the newspaper will be on next week's agenda if the interviews are held next week. Ms. Greenfield said she is not permitted. Mr. Bernardini asked if this means that these individuals will not be hired until the January meeting. Ms. Greenfield said that is correct it was requested that she is not to submit anything after the agenda setting meeting. Mr. Bernardini asked why. Mr. Giordano said we are getting back to the way the standard was that after the agenda setting meeting we are not going to keep adding. Mr. Bernardini expressed his concern that if these positions are needed they will not be hired until after the first of the year. He feels that sometimes when a situation arises we should have an open mind.

Mr. Ulrich asked if an employee comes over from another district are they always given credit for their years at the time of hire. Ms. Greenfield said it is discussed up front and she is very clear with everyone that it has to be verified, which they have 30 days to present that information.

2. **Placement of Special Education Students** – No discussion.
3. **Budgetary Transfers** – Mr. Spinelli asked if these are the normal monthly moves. Mr. Franchetta said that is correct.
4. **Submission of Grants** – Mr. Snyder commented that Mrs. Malatesta is unbelievable with her grant writing skills and we should be thankful.

5. **Acceptance of Funds** – No discussion.
6. **Bids** – Mr. Snyder asked if this home instruction is strictly an on-line process. Dr. Figgs explained that it is a combination of both. Mr. Snyder asked if there is a presentation the board can see on this. Dr. Figgs said when this is established the representatives can talk to the board about their procedures.

Mr. Spinelli asked if the students would have a certain amount of time to be on-line. Dr. Figgs said that is correct. Mr. Spinelli asked if someone from the company will monitor this. Dr. Figgs responded yes there is specific system in place. Mr. Spinelli asked if a general curriculum is in place. Dr. Figgs said it is based on the core curriculum content standards.

Mr. Snyder asked if we are providing the computer to the student. Dr. Figgs said the vendor is providing the computer.

7. **Travel** – Mr. Giordano questioned why one of the items has a zero cost. Mr. Franchetta explained that the regulations are clear that the cost is not a factor in whether or not it needs board approval. Mrs. Gavigan asked if this request is to transport the students back and forth to the casino for the school to career program. Mr. Franchetta said this is for a seminar.

Mr. Franceschini asked if we are paying for the hotel as well as the workshop for the overnight travel. Mr. Cox said yes this has always been approved in the past because there are night functions. Mr. Ottinger said Mr. Daplyn probably had to stay because he was a member of the NJSIA. He said Mr. Robbins is now Vice President of the Cape Atlantic League and is in a leadership position. Mrs. Gavigan mentioned that there are evening and early morning events.

8. **Modifications of Signatories for Athletic Dept. Petty Cash** - No discussion.
9. **ECPA Operational Budget 2008-2009** – Mr. Ottinger commented that Dan Smith in the Accounting department is responsible for this and he is sharp. Mr. Bernardini mentioned that when he asks Mr. Smith questions he always has the information.
10. **2006-2007 Comprehensive Annual Financial Report and Auditor's Management Report** – Mr. Spinelli said he would like to discuss, at a finance committee meeting, essential personnel and the need for a couple individuals to have vehicles. Mr. Giordano said that will be taken care of at the next finance committee meeting, which will be rescheduled tonight.

11. **Implementation of Recommendations from the 2006-2007 CAFR and Auditor's Management Report** – No discussion.
12. **Application Not to Serve Petway Elementary School with Title I Funds** – Mr. Giordano asked for an explanation on this item. Mr. Franchetta explained that because Petway is a new school an application was not filed to use Title I funds. Since there was no application filed we are not allowed to use the funds and we need a resolution stating that. Mr. Franchetta said the application has been filed for next year. Mr. Snyder asked how this will impact our general fund balance for the year. Mr. Franchetta said we will have to shift funds around. Mr. Snyder asked if this will affect us receiving Title I funds. Mr. Franchetta said the Title I funds will be reallocated and a budget modification will have to be done. Mrs. Gavigan asked how this will affect Wallace School. Mr. Franchetta said Wallace School was also an issue and we had to justify how this did not harm the federal government by not having this approval in place. Mr. Ottinger said the school codes are a problem. He said we have been requesting a school code since June for Vineland High School because they presently have two. Mr. Spinelli asked if we are making a paper path. Mr. Ottinger responded yes.
13. **Implementation of Recommendations for the Early Childhood Education Center Corrective Action Plan** – Mr. Ulrich asked how many of the preschools were chosen. Mr. Franchetta said two preschools were selected in this audit. He said this year we have three providers that are being audited, which completes a cycle. Mr. Franchetta said all of our providers have gone through this audit and probably next year the process will start again. Mr. Ulrich expressed his concern that in Little Lamb's audit there was over \$70,000 in surplus not detected. He would like to know what the district is doing to make sure procedures are being followed. Mr. Spinelli asked if the district is supposed to do an internal audit on the providers. Mr. Franchetta said about two months ago the board authorized an appeal of these audits. He said the judge was the boss of the auditor that was sent down. Mr. Franchetta said the appeal was denied and we disagreed with quite a few of their findings. He said after discussion the providers thought that it was not worth appealing any longer. Mr. DeSanto said in the appeal that was taken the providers projected that there would be a surplus based upon what they found as of October or November. He said you would have to look at the figures the end of the year because what you project may not necessarily come through. Mr. Ulrich asked if the preschool employees go through Vineland's personnel office. Mr. Franchetta said they are vendors to us. Mr. Ulrich said we are being reprimanded for something the vendor did. Mr. Ottinger said even though they are vendors the district has the responsibility to make sure everything is done correctly.

14. **Approval of Administrative/Supervisory Auxiliary Personnel Agreement 2007-2010** –Mr. Spinelli asked if this was the revised agreement. Mr. Ottinger said yes it is the second recommendation that was given.

Mrs. Gavigan asked if the substantially high increase in the administrative assistant salaries are due to them going from ten to twelve months. Mr. Ottinger said their salary is based on the teachers scale and if they hit the bubble it would cause the substantial increase. Mr. Giordano asked if the administrative assistants are only on for the one year. Mr. Ottinger said in negotiations VASA has accepted this group as part of their negotiating unit. He said the VEA has filed a complaint regarding that and PERC will have to decide where this group fits in. Mr. Ottinger said we can only make an agreement for one year. Mrs. Gavigan asked if they are currently paid as twelve month employees. Mr. Ottinger said that is correct.

Mr. Spinelli asked if the VEA wins the PERC agreement is it possible for the administrative assistants to evaluate people in their own unit. Mr. Ottinger responded yes.

Ms. Arroyo asked if BAE and BAA are degrees. Mr. Franchetta said in this group the people who are above classification #5 follow the VASA guidelines and the people below follow the secretarial guidelines.

Mr. Snyder questioned the employees listed who are not administrative assistants and receiving a large increase. Mr. Franchetta explained that when an individual goes from step #11 to step #12 there is a bubble and the employee will receive a significant increase. He said they will receive a cost of living increase in the subsequent year.

Mr. Giordano asked for an explanation on what the work index signifies. Mr. Ottinger said it would be extra money they are getting for working two extra months. Mr. Franchetta said it is a mathematical ratio.

Mr. Snyder expressed his concern in regards to the variations in salaries for the administrative assistants.

Mr. Ulrich said what you are ultimately dealing with is supervisory personnel dealing with a subordinate employee who could potentially be making more then their supervisor. He feels this should be addressed through the VASA contract negotiations.

15. **Class Action Law Suit** – Mrs. Gavigan asked if this was a revised list. Mr. Franchetta responded yes.

16. **2007-2008 VPS Nursing Plan** – Mr. Snyder asked how this plan effects the overall hours and pay. Mr. Ottinger said in last year’s budget we put money in for two full-time itinerant nurses. He said we have to see if we could hire additional itinerants.

Mr. Franceschini expressed his concern that when a school nurse goes to lunch there is no one to cover the building. Mr. Ottinger said we try our best to make sure everything is covered and that is a point well taken.

17. **Donation** – Mrs. Gavigan asked if we send an acknowledgement when a donation is received. Mr. Ottinger responded yes.

18. **First Reading of Revisions of Policy #7250** – Mr. Snyder asked why the policy does not address alternative names. Mr. DeSanto said this policy only applies in the event that it is contemplated to be named after an individual.

B. Board

1. **Naming of Center City Community School** – Mr. Giordano said he would like input from all board members. He said that we have the following three options:
- a) Carry the Cunningham name over.
 - b) Be named Vineland Community School with the future option to name the components after individuals.
 - c) Follow the same process used for naming Wallace and Petway Schools.

Ms. Arroyo would like to go with the third option to give the community a fair choice in the naming of the school. She also likes the second option naming the campus and different entities. Ms. Arroyo said she would like Cunningham School to keep its name.

Mr. Bernardini said there were funds received that were a community effort and he feels the school should be named the Vineland Center City Community School, with the option of naming the swimming pool or adult center after an individual. Mr. DeSanto wanted to clarify that the swimming pool belongs to the city.

Mr. Spinelli said he agrees with Mr. Bernardini and would like to name the school the Vineland Center City Community School, naming various portions of the building after individuals.

Mr. Franceschini agrees with Mr. Spinelli. He said that he would like the gymnasium named after someone from our center city communication.

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Mr. Ulrich said based upon the entire community, city and state effort he feels the word community should be in the label of the school. He said naming individual components of the school would make sense.

Mr. Snyder said believes there is a process for everything the board does as representatives of the public. As so many people have come together to make this school possible it is his opinion that the school should be name the Vineland Community School (VCS) with the option of naming certain facilities. Mr. Snyder suggested having family members make a contribution to purchase a memorial brick for the entry way of the school.

Mrs. Gavigan agrees that the school on East Avenue should remain Cunningham School. She also agrees with her colleagues that the entire complex at the Boulevard and Montrose is not just a school for elementary children but is many different things. Mrs. Gavigan said the intent of the entire complex was to be open to the community and agrees that the Vineland Community School would be an appropriate name. She said there will be many opportunities to recognize individuals who have made significant contributions to our school system as well our community.

Ms. Arroyo would still like to see the school given an individual name and reflect an identity.

Mr. Giordano agrees with his colleagues with the second option. He does not want to wait a lengthy time after those individuals are in the building. We need to put a plan together to name the other portions of the complex.

Mr. Ottinger asked Mr. Giordano if he wants this on next week's agenda for approval. Mr. Giordano said he does not know if it needs a vote. Mr. DeSanto said the designation needs a vote. Mr. Giordano said yes it can be put on the agenda.

2. **Extending Professional Courtesy to District Staff** – Mr. Snyder asked the board to consider extending a professional courtesy to staff members in allowing them to have their children at the school that they are employed. He said we are constantly asking staff members to go beyond the normal call of duty, which they are always doing as far as hours are concerned. What better way to have the staff members stay and assist in our schools while their children are there in the school with them.

Mrs. Gavigan said she agrees with Mr. Snyder and his comments. She feels it is appropriate and the right thing to do

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Mr. Franceschini said he agrees with Mrs. Gavigan and Mr. Snyder. He said there are several districts that have a common practice of allowing their employees to have their child in the school where they teach. Mr. Franceschini feels it should be a privilege even though it is something that will not always happen. Mr. Snyder asked why it would not always happen.

Mr. Spinelli said when this was brought up at the policy meeting the logistics were not very good because the schools were all full. He feels we have to put a control in place and time lines for the request.

Mr. Bernardini said he does not think there should be a policy on this but it should be left up to Dr. Figgs to make the decision. Mr. Franceschini feels the policy could help Dr. Figgs.

Mr. Ulrich said that we should give as many fringe benefits to our employees as possible but feels a policy would limit administration to do the jobs that they to do. He feels the placing of students should be left up to the discretion of Mr. Ottinger.

Mr. Snyder said if a policy were to be done the logistics would have to be worked out, which would make everyone happy. He said there are other districts that do this.

Mr. Spinelli suggested for the policy committee to discuss this and try to come up with possible options.

Mr. Ottinger said the district accepts requests and the worst thing that the board can do is get involved in this. He said currently anybody can request anything and he feels that making this so we have to do it is a bad thing.

Mr. Giordano agrees with Mr. Snyder that we need to look into doing this and have the committee review it.

Review of Bills: No discussion.

Committee Reports: Mr. Giordano said the district audit was the only item discussed at the finance committee meeting and next week Mr. Testa will give the audit report.

Mr. Bernardini said the buildings & grounds committee toured the Vineland Community School.

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Mr. Bernardini said there were concerns in regards to several things that were not complete for the ribbon cutting ceremony next Saturday. They were told by Gerald Harlacker; Project Manager, that everything will be done. Mr. Bernardini said over the holidays Cunningham School will be moving to the new school. He said the irrigation work on the athletic fields is complete. Mr. Bernardini said Donnie Robbins, Athletic Director, is obtaining quotes for upgrades to the girls' softball field. He said the trophy cases in the Vineland High School South A-wing corridor will be getting refurbished and rebuilt. Mr. Bernardini said because of the staff infection outbreak of MRSA in other districts Mr. Robbins will be having all the padding replaced in the weight room.

Mr. Snyder said because of the MRSA outbreak he asked if there has been any effort to put hand sanitizers in the hallways. Mr. Weaver said when we heard of the outbreaks we had our supplier go through additional training with our staff and review our product to make sure it had a high rating. He said we are currently using a foam product and mounting dispensers throughout the district.

Mr. Franceschini announced that the next Personnel & Policy Committee meeting will be held next Wednesday, December 12, 2007 at 5:30 p.m.

Mrs. Gavigan reminded the board that the mid-year retreat will be held on **Saturday, January 26, 2008**. She mentioned that another important date will be **Wednesday, January 30, 2008** to review the boards self evaluation. Mrs. Gavigan said that Cumberland County still does not have a field representative assigned. She said around February 1, 2008 the process will begin for the superintendent evaluation. Mrs. Gavigan said that Mr. Ottinger did provide the board with an update on his goals.

Mr. Giordano scheduled the next Finance Committee meeting for **Monday, January 7, 2008 at 6:30 p.m.** He announced that next week's board meeting will be held at Vineland High School North at 7:00 p.m. Mr. Giordano said a 30 day public hearing notice needs to be furnished for the assistant superintendents and business administrator's salaries. Mr. DeSanto said that the public hearing is a result of the new accountability statute, which has as number of provisions applicable to the district. He said the notice will be published and the meeting will held on January 16, 2008 to discuss the salaries.

Unfinished Business: None.

New Business: None.

Adjournment: The Board adjourned to executive session at 9:37 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kevin J. Franchetta, CPA
Board Secretary

KJF:df