

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, January 11, 2012 at 7:33 p.m., pursuant to notice with Mr. Ulrich presiding and the following members present: Mr. DiGiorgio, Mr. Medio, Mr. Mercado, Dr. Mounier, Mrs. Phillips and Ms. Rios. Absent: Mr. English and Mr. Fanucci.

Also present: Dr. Banks, Superintendent, Dr. Gruccio and Dr. Elliott, Assistant Superintendents, Mr. Franchetta, Board Secretary, Mr. DeSanto, Board Solicitor, Ms. Greenfield, Executive Director of Personnel, press and public. Absent: Mrs. Polof, Director of Special Education.

Mr. Ulrich 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:

Dr. Banks introduced Dr. Dina Elliott to present the Violence and Vandalism Report for 2010-2011.

Dr. Elliott said it is required that a public hearing be held during the school year whereby a report is given to the board on all acts of Violence and Vandalism for the previous year. She said there were changes in the Electronic Violence and Vandalism Reporting System (EVVRS) and the statistics were received later than usual. Dr. Elliott said all of this information has been verified by the state. She said the reporting categories are violence, vandalism, weapons possession (other than a firearm) and substance abuse. Dr. Elliott said for the 2010-2011 school year, Section C: Actions Taken, the police were notified 6 times with no complaints and 14 times complaints were filed. She said there were no expulsions and 3 of the incidents lead to in-school suspension and 344 led to out of school suspension. Dr. Elliott said Section D: Offender and Victims there was a total of 281 student offenders, 71 victims, 26 school personnel victims and zero student victims of violent criminal offense. She said there were 148 assignments, instruction and/or support services programs that were offered for disciplinary action. Dr. Elliott said this could include increased guidance time and outside crisis services. She said the report does contain individual schools with all of these areas broken down.

Dr. Mounier asked if the numbers represent events, people or a combination. Dr. Elliott said one event could have four offenders who may have been disciplined in different ways. Dr. Mounier asked if he would be able to know the number of actual people involved. Dr. Elliott said the number of people involved in a singular event yes as to who the actual student is no.

Dr. Elliott said the second report given to the board is the Harassment, Intimidation & Bullying (HIB) Report, which is part of the new anti-bullying bill of rights where statistics are reported during a public hearing. She reviewed each of the school reports and said there was a total of 450 reported cases for the 2011-2012 school year. Dr. Elliott said 210 cases were found to be bullying and 240 were non-bullying. She said this information will be forwarded to the county office. Dr. Elliott said the forms and structure on how this information will be reported has not been released by the state. She said these statistics will have to be reported again in six months and each of the districts will receive a grade based on the rubric that the state establishes in accordance with the law. Dr. Elliott said where the district falls will have to be posted to the web site within five days of receipt of the report from the state.

Dr. Mounier said he is assuming that the evaluations as to bullying/non-bullying are made according to standard criteria. Dr. Elliott explained that it has to be substantiated. Dr. Mounier asked what type of quality control we have as to the accuracy of the schools determination. Dr. Elliott said there are forms the district has created that each school utilizes in the process. She said these forms are reviewed by Dr. Banks and herself. Dr. Banks noted that this is very time consuming. She said after Dr. Elliott has reviewed the documents they come to her and she signs off that she is satisfied that appropriate action was taken. Dr. Banks said she has returned some to the principal for additional remediation or counseling to be taken. She said parents of the victim and offender receive a letter signed by her that this investigation has taken place and it has been determined that it was or was not a bullying incident. Dr. Mounier asked if you can evaluate the usefulness of this protocol relative to pre-law conditions. Dr. Banks said what has happened is we are so backlogged on the paperwork it takes days to read through the documents to make the determination. Dr. Mounier said it would be very interesting to know what it is costing us to do this. Mr. DiGiorgio questioned if it is outlined in the state regulations that administrative personnel have to be the ultimate reviewer. Dr. Banks said the superintendent must be the person who reviews these documents. Dr. Mounier asked why there are no reported cases at Success and Cunningham Schools. Dr. Elliott said being within the protected class may preclude some instances. Dr. Mounier asked what the protected class is. Dr. Elliott said gender, race, religion, physical characteristics and age.

Dr. Elliott reviewed each of the Harassment, Intimidation & Bullying (HIB) school reports for the month of December. She said a total of 31 students were sent to Cunningham and 13 were returned to their home schools, 3 denied transfer to Cunningham and 1 was rescinded by the sending school.

Dr. Elliott said she along with the middle/high school principals and Dr. Gruccio met yesterday to discuss the alternative school process and the current procedure that is in place. She said they felt collectively as a group that the process presently in place should stay. Dr. Elliott said only a few wordings were changed. She said it was felt that if a student is going to transition back from Cunningham Alternative School; Mr. Camardo should be present with the school principal they are returning to in addition to any support staff that the student may need. Dr. Elliott said Mr. Camardo created forms to be used when a student is sent to Cunningham outlining the procedures, timeframe and expectations for the student.

Dr. Elliott reported that there were 671 suspensions for the month of December.

Dr. Banks introduced Ms. Gina Cook, Director of Peer Challenge, a middle school health program.

Ms. Cook said Peer Challenge is an abstinence education program seeking approval to enter the middle schools. She said Peer Challenge began in 1998 in Cape May County out of a pregnancy center. Ms. Cook said over that period of time the pregnancy and sexually transmitted disease (STD) rates have dropped by 36%. She said Peer Challenge has been granted a four year grant to go into risk areas and Cumberland County is one of those risk areas. Ms. Cook said this program focuses on ten to fourteen year olds. She said they are looking to do this program for the 7th and 8th grade middle school students. Ms. Cook said if parents would like more information about the program they would be happy to have a parent meeting. She said there is also an after school session available where they serve pizza, play games and reinforce what was discussed in the classroom. Ms. Cook reviewed the various lessons in the program.

Comments by

Board Solicitor: None.

Items for Review:

A. Superintendent

1. **Personnel Items** - Mr. DiGiorgio asked what the word sweep means under transfers. Ms. Greenfield said they are the clerk typists who are eligible to be senior clerk typists because they have been employed by the district for more than one year. She said this was approved to be placed on the agenda at the Personnel & Policy Committee meeting.

Mr. DiGiorgio asked if this is based on the previous or new salary guide. Ms. Greenfield said the new salary guide.

Dr. Mounier asked how much authority goes with the ESL Supervisor position. Dr. Gruccio said the ESL Supervisor would oversee their area as far as curriculum, observe teachers in their department, offer support, mediation and workshops to make the teachers successful. Dr. Mounier asked what would happen if there was an unfavorable review and a deficiency is found. Dr. Gruccio it would be discussed with the teacher and opportunities would be provided to correct the deficiency. She said if there is no improvement then they would consult with the principal or vice principal. Mr. Ulrich asked if that was a written personal improvement plan. Dr. Gruccio said yes.

Mr. Medio expressed concern in regards to transferring a math teacher out of the classroom into the position of math coach. He feels it is more important to have teachers in the classroom than as a math coach.

Mr. DiGiorgio said math and science are areas that we have difficulty filling. He questioned moving a long time employee who is a science teacher to an ISS teacher. Ms. Greenfield said that person would not be transferred until a replacement is found.

Mr. Mercado asked why individuals are being hired on step 8. Ms. Greenfield said that individual was employed with the district in the past and has that many years salary credit. Mr. Mercado asked why no reference letters included with the resumes that were given to the board in their packets. Ms. Greenfield said three current letters of recommendation have to be submitted in order to be considered for an interview. Ms. Greenfield said she will provide them.

2. **Special Education Students** – No discussion.
3. **Budgetary Transfers** – No discussion.
4. **Travel** – Dr. Mounier commented that the trip to Great Adventure that the Vineland High School Junior class is going on is to promote class unity. He believes that a better way to promote class unity would be a different distribution of students in the high school such as a 9/10 11/12 format.

Mr. DiGiorgio noted that the Amish Market was left off as one of the travel destinations.

5. **Option 2 Program at VHS** – Dr. Mounier said to avoid any confusion later on if we offer a course in the high school it should be course that cannot be taken at a college for participation in this program. Dr. Guccio said to her knowledge nothing has changed and she will check with Dr. McCann in the morning. Mr. Ulrich said he thought the purpose of taking a class at the college would be for enrichment. Dr. Guccio said the way it is a student could request to take a course in lieu of what we offer if the description of the course is similar. Mr. Medio asked if this could be pulled off the agenda for next month. He asked if a student can take an English literature course at the college because the course offers extra reading. Dr. Guccio said no there have been courses approved that offer the same type of curriculum in lieu of a course. She said it does offer the opportunity for a student to take an extra course. Mr. Medio said it was to his understanding that if a student wanted to take a course at Cumberland County College it would be a course that was not offered at the high school. He thought the change was to make it enrichment. Dr. Banks said to pull this item from the agenda. Mr. Mercado asked if this document could be put on the internet as a draft for the public to review. Dr. Guccio said we previously had a draft on the internet for the public to review and we were asked to remove it until it was finalized. She said that we have had many public opportunities for public input on this. Dr. Guccio said she will review this with Dr. McCann and will bring it back in February.

6. **Early Childhood Five Year Preschool Plan** – Mr. Medio asked if at any time we can expand the preschool providers individual programs by application to the state. Mr. Franchetta said if the need arises and we cannot accommodate the students, we can seek providers to accommodate the students for us. Mr. Medio said with the discussions that we have been having about overcrowding in the elementary schools we cannot accommodate the students in September. Mr. Franchetta said we are currently exploring opportunities for September. Mr. Medio said he cannot imagine how we can increase our preschool classroom space in the district until we completely address this problem with elementary numbers.

Mr. Ulrich said he thought we had available space at the Almond Road facility. He said what threw the district off is that Middle School #2 should have already been built, which would have allowed Rossi Middle School to revert back to elementary and we would not be in this situation. He said we could discuss consolidating the middle schools. Dr. Guccio said she believes the facility committee is meeting to discuss this issue and the scenarios will be shared with the board.

7. **Ballot Position and School Election Workers Hourly Rate** – Mr. Ulrich said he forwarded correspondence to the board that he received today regarding the legislation that has been passed.

Mr. Ulrich said that Governor Christy has until January 17 to sign the legislation and the options provided to the board is to approve a recommendation moving the school board elections to November or a referendum on the ballot. He said if this is signed into law a special meeting will be convened to address this issue.

8. **Submission of Grants** – No discussion.
9. **Early Childhood ECPA Budget for 2012-2013** – No discussion.
10. **Donations** – No discussion.
11. **Cumberland County Technical Education Center Contract** – No discussion.
12. **Salem County Special Services School District Chapters 192/193 Contract**– No discussion.
13. **Salem County Special Services School District Non-Public Nursing Contract** – No discussion.
14. **Bus Evacuations December** – No discussion.
15. **NJ School Boards Association Insurance Group Resolution** – Mr. DiGiorgio asked what this was about. Mr. Franchetta explained that the NJSBAIG provides insurance to school districts in the state of New Jersey. He said they are asking for modifications to their bylaws and need two thirds of their membership to approve the changes.
16. **Creation of Supervisor for Student Personnel Services/Testing Coordinator/District Anti-Bullying Coordinator** – Mr. Mercado asked if a salary has been determined for this position. Dr. Banks said it is in the VASA guide. Mr. Ulrich said this position will combine positions that we already have. Dr. Mounier said this position will take some of the burden off administration. Mr. Medio asked if the testing coordinator position will be eliminated. Dr. Banks said the current person serving in that position will serve until retirement. She said the current individual does not have supervisory or directive authority over building administrators. Dr. Mounier asked if we are expecting a retirement soon. Dr. Banks said she does not think it is appropriate to comment on. Mr. DiGiorgio asked if this would involve supervising guidance. Dr. Banks said yes.
17. **Appointment of interim Assistant Superintendent for Administration and interim Business Administrator/Board Secretary** - No discussion.

18. **Appointment of Affirmative Action Officer** – No discussion.
19. **Appointment of Anti-Bullying Coordinator** – No discussion.
20. **Appointment of Title IX Coordinator** – No discussion.
21. **Approval of Working Papers Issuing Officer** – No discussion.
22. **Approval of Resolution appointing Kevin J. Franchetta, Daniel M. Smith and Mark T Zorzi as Contract agents for the 2011-2012 school year** – No discussion.
23. **Appointment of Mark T. Zorzi as public Agency Compliance Officer (P.A.C.O.)**
– No discussion.

B. Board

1. Mr. Medio asked if the board was going to discuss changing the configuration of the high school. Mr. Ulrich said that can be discussed as a proposal by the board president.

Mr. Mercado asked if the meeting agendas could be put online prior to the meeting. Dr. Banks said it should be online. Mr. Mercado asked if the meeting video could also be online. Mr. Medio said we could ask Mr. Sbrana if this was possible.

Mr. Medio asked if the board can vote on funding the dinners at the next meeting. Mr. Ulrich said he wanted to see the final numbers for the intramural costs. Mr. Franchetta said courtesy busing was part of the extra funding that we received, which was approved by Dr. Stepura and the board. Mr. Medio said the intramurals would be a portion of that busing cost.

Review of Bills: Mr. DiGiorgio asked what the checks to HM Receivables LLC are for. Mr. Franchetta said he will look into it.

Public

Comments: Mario Olsen, Principal of Veterans Memorial Middle School
Mr. Olsen said he is here on behalf of all the middle school principals in regards to the article in the newspaper about the middle school sports. He asked if the principals were kept out of the loop for a particular reason regarding the intramural sports. Mr. Olsen said there are many academic based items the middle schools need before intramurals.

Mr. Olsen said before intramurals are done we should look at safety aspects and academics, which is the goal of the four middle school principals. He said the middle school principals would love to be included in any discussions and it appears that next week the board is moving to pass the intramurals. Ms. Rios asked Mr. Olsen if he knows specifically what each middle school needs. Mr. Olsen said he could create a list of thirty to forty things that are needed such as more materials/supplies, student incentives, assemblies, school uniforms, security cameras and computers. Mr. Ulrich said the committee along with Dr. Banks could meet with the middle school principals to have wish list discussions. Mr. Olsen asked if the allocated money could be put on hold. Mr. Medio asked Dr. Gruccio if last week during a meeting with the middle school principals they expressed their concern about this. Dr. Gruccio said she did not think they knew. Mr. Olsen said they were not aware of this. Mr. Medio said there have been principals at every school board meeting and it was discussed. Mr. Olsen said it is being brought to the board's attention tonight. Mr. Medio said we are looking at something that has proven affect on student behavior, which is in the same line as to what Mr. Olsen is talking about. Mr. Olsen said he understands the importance of sports and how they are connected to student behavior but expectations are set in each school regardless of the intramurals and clubs every day through the classroom. He said the new regulations in college are that the scholarships are predicated to the student academics.

Committee Reports: Mrs. Phillips said at yesterday's Curriculum & Technology Committee an update was given on high school scheduling. She said the committee is continuing to meet and their goal is to come up with a reorganization plan for September 2013.

Mr. Medio said that he along with Mr. DiGiorgio attended a meeting and the concern of the Parent Teacher Organization is the movement between buildings. He said whatever configuration the committee comes up with would eliminate a major problem at the high school, which is the movement between buildings. Mr. Medio said the opinion of the parents is that there are too many students moving between buildings and they miss a lot of time on task.

Ms. Rios said at the January 4th Personnel & Policy Committee meeting the committee met Joanne Negrin the bilingual supervisor candidate and Carmella Heer the assistant principal preschool candidate. She said both candidates had extensive knowledge and experience for these positions.

Ms. Rios said if any board member has any question about either candidate to please contact her or any committee member. She said they also discussed items 18 through 21 on the agenda. Ms. Rios said Ms. Zoerb from the NJ School Board Association could not attend tonight due to illness so the interview process meeting will be rescheduled.

Mr. Ulrich said that Mr. English's Technology sub-committee met this week and a lot of issues are being discussed that will make important changes to the district.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned by voice vote at 9:13 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kevin J. Franchetta, CPA
Board Secretary

KJF:df

