

A special meeting of the Board of Education of the City of Vineland was held Wednesday, January 25, 2012 at 5:06 p.m., in the Board Room, 625 Plum Street, Vineland, New Jersey, pursuant to notice with Mr. Ulrich presiding and the following members present: Mr. DiGiorgio, Mr. English, Mr. Fanucci, Mr. Medio, Mr. Mercado and Ms. Rios. Absent: Dr. Mounier and Mrs. Phillips.

Also present: Dr. Banks, Superintendent, Dr. Gruccio Assistant Superintendent, Mr. Franchetta, Board Secretary and Mr. DeSanto, Board Solicitor. Absent: Dr. Shelly Schneider, Interim Assistant Superintendent and Ms. Greenfield, Executive Director of Personnel.

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:

Dr. Banks introduced Mr. Larry Merighi to give a presentation on the restructuring of the elementary schools for the next school year.

Dr. Mounier arrived at 5:13 p.m.

Mr. Merighi said he has been asked to look at the elementary school model and projections. He said the state projects that we will have 4,716 students in kindergarten through fifth grade not including special education and our projection for next year is that there will be 4,479 students. Mr. Merighi said our projects are less than what the state is projecting. In addition, the state projects that in 2013 we will have 142 self-contained special education students and we currently have 239 students. Mr. Merighi reviewed the district's current regular education kindergarten through fifth grade enrollment which totals 4,283 students. He said the district is anticipating 770 students coming in to kindergarten next year. Mr. Merighi said the existing capacity for elementary schools is over by 685 students or 18.1%. He said the question that administration asked him is what we can do. Mr. Merighi said this was discussed at a facilities meeting. He said the scenario agreed upon was making Max Leuchter School a kindergarten through fifth grade elementary school. Mr. Merighi said this would require a complete redistricting of all the elementary school students. He said we are trying to come up with the best solution and Max Leuchter School was already approved by the Department of Education as an elementary school. Mr. Merighi said the district really needs an additional elementary school to be in line with the state standards.

Mr. Merighi said at the Almond Road Preschool we have the ability to add nine additional preschool classrooms of the fifteen classrooms that are currently at Leuchter School. The other six classrooms would have to go to outside providers next September.

Mr. Medio asked if over the years classrooms in elementary schools have been converted to office space. Mr. Merighi said there is probably a couple in the elementary schools. Mr. Medio said if we can convert back one classroom at each school and put the office space in a trailer that would give us another six or seven classrooms. Mr. Merighi said yes one at each school would give us eight extra classrooms and that would help. Mr. Medio asked if we do not rent the Almond Road School next year all fifteen classrooms would have to be placed somewhere else. Mr. Merighi said yes but it would be twenty classrooms.

Mr. Ulrich asked if early childhood funding would be the funding source used to put the additional classrooms at Leuchter School. Mr. Franchetta said the ECPA lease pays the rent for that building and the district paid for getting the rooms ready. He said we had to modify the sinks in each of the classrooms. Mr. Ulrich asked how many year options we have on that lease.

Mr. DeSanto said the state has a requirement that any expenditure over five hundred thousand dollars requires legislature to be involved. He said we can only lease this for one year. Mr. DeSanto said the latest information is that they have awarded a contract to survey the property in order to subdivide the school and parking lot areas away from the remainder of the property. The next step is an appraisal of the subdivided piece and the building. Mr. DeSanto said one thing that the board was interested in was an option to buy or right of first refusal. Mr. DeSanto said with an option to buy you need to establish a price and with the survey and appraisal we will get closer. Mr. DeSanto said the email that he received from the Division of Property indicated that they are working toward a renewal for September with a lease with an option to buy, right of first refusal or an actual purchase contract. Mr. DeSanto said the state would like to do something with the Board of Education regarding that property. He said to answer Mr. Ulrich's question we have a one year lease.

Mr. Ulrich said the question is how we would come up with fifteen classrooms if Almond Road is not available.

Mr. Mercado asked if the Charter School is a one year lease. Dr. Banks said it is a three year lease. Mr. Mercado asked when that lease expires. Mr. Ulrich said we retained an option to get out of that lease anticipating that we may need the classroom space back. He requested for Mr. Franchetta to obtain the exact expiration date on the Charter School lease.

Public Comments: Valorie Francisci, Parent
Ms. Francisci spoke in support of returning to a 9/10 – 11/12 format at Vineland High School.

Recommendations:

B. Proposed by the Board President or any individual Board Members:

1. November Annual Election of School Board Members.
2. Budgetary Transfers (Intramurals).
3. Reconfiguration of Vineland High School 9-10/11-12.

Mr. Medio said he thought due to a time constraints the purpose of tonight's meeting was to vote on the elementary school restructuring. Mr. Ulrich said he does not know how this can be voted on tonight when it is the first time we heard about it. Mr. Medio asked why this was not done at next week's work session. Dr. Banks said we have several presentations scheduled for both February meetings and it was decided to give this presentation time this evening.

Mr. DiGiorgio asked if the board is being asked to vote on these items tonight. Mr. Ulrich said these are proposed board member recommendations that we will be asked to vote on. He said the budgetary transfer is to have the money in place for the intramurals if that is the way the district is going to move as far as the middle schools. Mr. DiGiorgio asked if it was imperative for the vote to take place on proposed by board member items #1 and #3 this evening. Dr. Banks said these items are on the agenda at the request of board members and she would not have advanced any of these items except for the November election issue.

Mr. Ulrich said each item will be opened up for discussion and there could always be a table on the vote.

Mr. DiGiorgio asked if the course selection books are already out for print would that affect the impact of the decision on item #3. Dr. Gruccio the course selection books are not out for print and changes can still be made. She said that Mr. Callavini, the transportation coordinator, is requesting for a decision to be made as soon as possible because this involves a great deal of redistricting students.

Mr. Ulrich said he would like to hear from all the elementary principals in regards to the status of their buildings. Dr. Gruccio said the elementary principals have attended the finance and curriculum meetings. She said one of their top priorities was overcrowding at the first grade level.

Mr. Medio said another option that could be looked at is taking some of the fourth graders and putting them in fifth grade in the intermediate schools.

Mr. Fanucci said the feedback that he heard in the past is that the maturity level of a fifth grader does not belong in middle school. Mr. Medio said he agrees and was in favor of the move but with all these problems sometimes you have to swallow a bitter pill. He said it is just a suggestion for the principals to look at.

Mr. Ulrich said the first item for discussion will be the movement of the annual school board member election to November. He said the legislature forwarded a bill to Governor Christy to authorize the changing of the school board elections to align with the general election in November. Mr. Ulrich said the Governor signed the bill into law and it offers three options. He said the first option is for the school boards to entertain a resolution to move the election to November. This would allow budgets that are under the 2% cap law to be forwarded and approved through the board process. Anything above the cap law would be subject to a Department of Education approval. Mr. Ulrich said if the board did not move the elections to November the second step could be that the municipal governing body would move the elections to November and override the board of education. The third step would involve the citizens forming a petition of 15% of registered voters to put on a voter referendum. Mr. Ulrich said these are the three options that have been signed into law. He requested for Dr. Banks to put a resolution on the agenda to move the elections to November. Mr. DeSanto said any one of the options can be taken. Mr. DeSanto said on the recommended resolution from the NJ School Boards Association he added the phrase to the last paragraph “and at November general elections thereafter.”

Mr. Ulrich said as of today 38 districts have already moved their elections to November.

Mr. DiGiorgio asked if there will be a savings to the district. Mr. Franchetta said the county was not sure yet how the cost would be divided up.

Dr. Mounier apologized for his tardiness at tonight’s meeting and said he was delayed due to a work matter. He asked if the public budget vote and the rescheduling of the election issues can be separated. Mr. Ulrich said they cannot be separated. Dr. Mounier feels that this amounts to a disenfranchisement of the public.

Mr. Medio said he has a problem with the school board and city council making this decision but no problem with the voters making this decision.

Mr. Medio said if 15% of the voters feel it is important enough to move the school election to November then he does not see a problem with them doing that. He said part of the reason that people vote in the school board elections is to vote for or against the budget. Mr. Medio said he believes if this decision is made in haste, according to the law, it cannot be changed for four years. Mr. DeSanto said there is a provision that if a decision is made it cannot be changed back for three, four or five years. Mr. Medio said he is in favor of allowing the public to handle this matter. He is not sure if it is a money savings and there will be an April election if you go above the cap. Mr. Fanucci said if you go above the cap there will be a vote on the budget. Mr. Medio asked how you would vote on the budget in November if the budget goes into effect July 1st. Mr. DeSanto said there is a mechanism in the statute. Mr. Medio said he would like to see a lot more definition on what this involves. He really has a problem with disenfranchising the voters.

Mr. Ulrich said our school board elections are terrible as far as voter turnout and in November there will be more people voting.

Mr. Mercado said his concern is that we need to hire a superintendent, assistant superintendent, business administrator and personnel director. He said it is his understanding that two of the three board members that are up for reelection have decided that they are not going to run again. Mr. Mercado said there are people who are interested in running for these seats and he thinks those people should be sitting on this board to make these difficult hiring decisions.

Mr. Fanucci said the point that Mr. Mercado brought up is well taken. He said many people have asked him how he can bail out now when we are losing everyone but one person in central office. Mr. Fanucci said that made him feel guilty and to rethink his thought process. He questioned if new board members would be experienced enough to handle what needs to be handled.

Mr. Mercado said he has spoken to a lot of people and has heard the opposite. He asked if everyone sitting on the board will be able to vote because some board members will be voting on extending their terms to November. Mr. DeSanto said that has been determined not to be a conflict.

Mr. English asked if this has to be voted on this evening without Mrs. Phillips present. Mr. Ulrich said he requested for this to be put on.

Mr. DiGiorgio asked what would happen if this was an even vote. Mr. DeSanto said it would not carry and can be reintroduced.

Motion: A motion was made by Mr. Fanucci, seconded by Mr. English, to move the November annual elections for School Board Members. All Members voted “yes” except Mr. Medio, Mr. Mercado and Dr. Mounier who voted “no” and Mrs. Phillips who was not present for the vote. The motion carried.

Mr. DiGiorgio said he looked at this as a pro and con approach. He thinks the pros outweigh the cons so he will be voting “yes.”

Mr. Ulrich asked for discussion on item #2 budgetary transfers for intramurals. He said this would transfer enough money to potentially fund 16 Schedule B positions.

Mr. Fanucci asked what other intramural sports we are going to have. Mr. Ulrich said that will be up to the principals.

Mr. Ulrich said that he received an email from a staff member with an interesting concept. The staff member asked if intramurals can be combined with the recreation department. Mr. Ulrich said he thinks it is a great idea but does not know how it would work out. He said we can have discussion with Mr. Elbeuf from the city on this because it is a good suggestion. Mr. Fanucci said it would be great to have a feeder type program at the city or county level. Mr. Ulrich said he will not be in attendance at the February 1st meeting and requested for the board to please consider some after school programs during the budget discussion.

Mr. English asked if the actual costs will be discussed at a later date. Mr. Ulrich said that will be approved through Schedule B appointments as the principals make the recommendations to the superintendent. Mr. English asked if any thought was given to make one middle school the intramural hub to control busing to one area. Mr. Ulrich said there may be some overlap with bus times. Mr. English asked if it will be a two hour after school program. Mr. Ulrich said he does not know because it is a Schedule B assignment.

Motion: A motion was made by Mr. Fanucci, seconded by Mr. English, to approve the budgetary transfers to provide sixteen intramural positions if the school district decides. All Members voted “yes” except for Mrs. Phillips who was not present for the vote.

Mr. Ulrich said for discussion on item #3 the proposed reconfiguration of Vineland High School to a 9-10/11-12 format.

Mr. English asked if he is able to ask direct questions to administrators. Mr. Ulrich said only if the administrators are willing to answer questions. Mr. English asked if the student movement between schools can be cleaned up with better scheduling versus a 9-10/11-12 format.

Dr. McCann thanked the board for allowing the discussion of this issue. He said what happened last year with the scheduling will never happen again. Dr. McCann said on Monday January 23rd he held a volunteer staff meeting for staff members to meet with him to discuss the configuration. He said after listening to all stake holders for the past three years he based his recommendations on the following reasons. According to Mr. Provenzano, the Director of Security, we have had 15 car accidents in our parking lot, which is unacceptable. Dr. McCann said student safety is his top priority and there are approximately 200 students per period going from the North to South campus, which is approximately 1,600 students per day. This is the number one concern of our parents. Due to the number of buses, cars, walkers and bike riders we have a serious safety concern, which is unacceptable. Dr. McCann said to address the safety concerns additional security guards are necessary in order to secure the parking during the increased movement. As a result of this movement between buildings students are six to eight minutes late daily to each class. Dr. McCann said CAPA recently visited Vineland High School and did a benchmark visit in November and identified that instructional time was 40 minutes short of the state average. We need to add instruction time to meet CAPA recommendations. Dr. McCann said in order to do our planned pilot program of the ninth-grade academy the ninth graders need to be housed together. He said a regular complaint from parents and students is that each grade level needs to be unified under one roof. Dr. McCann said while recommending this configuration our School Improvement Team (SIT) will continue to research additional reform models for formal implementation of our chosen model for the 2013-2014 school year. Dr. McCann said as the educational leader of Vineland High School he possesses the experience to make the reform work. He guarantees when this change is implemented the two main objectives that have been identified will be met. We will significantly decrease the number of students traveling between the two buildings and increase instructional time for all students as recommended by CAPA in their benchmark visit November 2011. Dr. McCann guarantees with our two objectives students will be more secure, there will be less traffic and an increase in instructional time.

Mr. Ulrich announced that a residency hearing was scheduled for 6:00 p.m. and at this time the board must take a short recess.

The board recessed the meeting at 6:14 p.m. to executive session.

The special meeting resumed at 7:12 p.m.

Mr. Ulrich said the discussion will continue on the reconfiguration of Vineland High School. He said Dr. McCann had a prior commitment and departed the meeting at 6:50 p.m.

Dr. Banks said for the record she did not initiate the request of Dr. McCann regarding the recommendation that he has presented this evening. She said on January 13th she received an email from Dr. McCann which stated “Dr. Banks in light of the extreme possibility that we are going to change the structure of our high school where all the ninth graders will be housed in one building it is recommended to change Vineland High School back to 9-10/11-12 configuration for the 2012-2013 school year. It should be noted that we will continue through our SIT committee to look at other models for the 2013-2014 school year.” Dr. Banks said on January 17th she forwarded a request to Dr. McCann that he replace the information she received in an email with a formal written memo. She said that is the memo that Dr. McCann is referring to. Dr. Banks said she did not initiate nor in any way ask Dr. McCann to circumvent the SIT committee’s recommendations. She places the sole responsibility on Dr. McCann for making a recommendation regarding reconfiguration of the high school. She said the recommendation regarding the restructuring of the high school should come from the SIT committee.

Mr. English asked if that was Dr. McCann’s recommendation. Dr. Banks said you would have to ask Dr. McCann. Mr. English asked if the board is supposed to vote on this tonight. Mr. Ulrich said there can be a vote on this or a motion to table. Mr. DeSanto said there is no need to table this because there is no motion.

Mr. Medio said point number one is that the SIT committee is not being circumvented or overwritten by this motion. He said the motion has very little to do with the SIT committee but will help them in their deliberations. Point number two the SIT committee is not the only group the board receives input from. Mr. Medio said he attended a Parent/Teacher/Student Organization (PTSO) meeting and everyone was overwhelmingly in favor of going back to the 9-10/11-12 configuration. He said there will be less movement between buildings and more time on task. Mr. English questioned how much movement this will cut down on. Mr. Ulrich said the high school was labeled as a school that needs improvement. He said we were forced to do a corrective action plan. The superintendent at that time, Mr. Chalky Ottinger, recommended the Small Learning Communities to address the secondary school initiative.

Mr. Ulrich said we are losing sight of how we got here. The high school configuration as it stood was not acceptable to federal standards. Mr. Ulrich said to go back to a failed model is irresponsible. Mr. English said he is questioning the recommendation because is it the best move to go backwards in order to go forward because it did not work. Mr. Medio said it did work. He said if you want an education in Vineland you can get one and go to the best colleges that we have. Mr. Medio said the only reason this is being debated is because the decision was made to go to Small Learning Communities and a mistake was made five years ago. Mr. English thinks the discipline piece needs to be corrected first before we say this is going to work. He feels if the decision is made tonight for a 9-10/11-12 configuration to be implemented in seven months it would be the wrong direction. Mr. English said he would rather wait the nineteen months to figure it out.

Dr. Mounier said we are currently running two high schools. If we return to the proposed configuration then we are operating one high school and it would improve safety with less movement between schools. Dr. Mounier said this change would promote unity within each class as a cohort. The cost associated with equitable distribution would be eliminated and this change does not conflict with the ninth-grade academy concept. Dr. Mounier said on the other side what has always been the complaint about having ninth graders in one building is discipline. He said if discipline is dealt with in sixth, seventh and eighth grades we would not have this problem with ninth graders.

Mr. Fanucci asked what the structure is of the ninth-grade academy and how will it differ. Dr. Mounier said the ninth graders will be together in one building with the tenth graders. Mr. Fanucci said before he feels comfortable about making this decision he needs to know a lot more.

Mr. Ulrich said ninth graders sometimes are suffering from maturity problems and socialization. He said from law enforcement prospective we have more problems with ninth graders because of those reasons. Mr. Ulrich said he would like to see fewer people moving between buildings even though this will not guarantee test grades increasing or discipline improving.

Mr. Fanucci asked if a ninth-grade academy would be a separate island of its own. Ms. Rios feels it would not work because you cannot put ninth graders in one building and tenth, eleventh and twelve graders in another. Mr. Fanucci said his question is what exactly is going to happen to the ninth graders and how does this affect the scheduling for the students and staff.

Ms. Rios said the ninth-grade academy plan should have already been presented to the board in order for a determination to be made.

Mr. Ulrich said we are losing sight on what we are trying to do, which is improve grades at the high school. He asked for any staff member who would like to be heard to please come to the podium.

Public Comments: William McDevitt, Chair of Data Committee for School Improvement Team
Mr. McDevitt said a survey was done the end of last year for faculty input in regards to the idea of block scheduling. He said 60% participation was received and some of the questions dealt with the 9-10/11-12 configuration, which some staff members never experienced. Mr. McDevitt said some of the input received from the teachers is in the direction of the 9-10/11-12 configuration.

Melanie Beck, Asst. Principal at Vineland High School North

Ms. Beck said she has some data in regards to discipline. She said from the beginning of September to January 5, 2012 there were 3,157 students who were suspended in and out of school. She said our ISS rooms are full every day and discipline is being addressed. Ms. Beck said during the 2008-2009 school year there were 9,919 total offenses, which could be one student with 30 offenses. She said 6,663 of those offenses were committed by ninth and tenth graders, which is 67%. Ms. Beck said since the 2008-2009 school year our discipline has decreased every year having administrative assistants, the Small Learning Communities and the nine through twelve structure. She said the ninth and tenth graders are the volatile population and need the most resources. Ms. Beck feels it would be irresponsible for us to put all of those students, who need the most care, in one place with one set of resources. She said there is a lot of movement this year because of the change in the order of science curriculum. Ms. Beck said there is going to be a huge movement of students for science. She said the safety issue was always a concern, however was never brought up by CAPA. Ms. Beck said she believes scheduling in any configuration can better address the movement. She said our goal needs to be instructional improvement, which can happen in either configuration.

Jamie Lapsley, Vineland High School North Teacher

Mr. Lapsley said there is a process so we need to identify why we are going to go to this ninth-grade academy. He said a ninth-grade academy is complete seclusion from tenth, eleventh and twelve graders. Mr. Lapsley said students would be housed upstairs at Vineland High School North without movement. He said that he is personally working on a survey that he would like to distribute to all high school teachers, eighth grade students and teachers.

Mr. Lapsley said if we do not have a buy in with this ninth-grade academy system it will fail, which is why he would like to survey the teachers. He suggested doing a test run of this program monitoring the progress and discipline. Mr. Lapsley feels there is a lot of research and data that still needs to be looked at before starting this. He said it is complete seclusion working with the same set of teachers that want to work with freshmen. Mr. Lapsley said he would ask for volunteers who want to be part of this pilot program to see if we can make it work. He said this is a seven year deal, which is when we may see change. Mr. Lapsley said too many times we want to see things happen overnight. The reason he thinks this is a good option is because he teaches freshmen and sees a lot of failures.

Mr. Fanucci said what Mr. Lapsley and Ms. Beck have stated are some of the most intelligent thoughts he has heard in a long time and he thanked both of them.

Mr. DiGiorgio thanked Mr. McDevitt, Ms. Beck and Mr. Lapsley for speaking tonight. He asked Mr. Lapsley if transition to a 9-10/11-12 configuration is part of the ninth-grade academy. Mr. Lapsley said the ninth-grade academy is a complete seclusion. Ms. Beck said it could work in either configuration. She said the Bridgeton School district currently has a ninth-grade academy and they feed into a ten through twelve academy situation. Mr. Fanucci asked if the configuration of our buildings would work with a ninth-grade academy. Ms. Beck said yes she could make it work.

Dr. Mounier questioned what the difference is between an eighth and ninth grader. He suggested devoting the resources, time and energy to sixth, seventh and eighth graders and eliminate the problem at the funnel. Mr. Lapsley said he thinks location is the difference between being an eighth and ninth grader. He thinks the ninth-grade academy could work hand in hand with the sixth, seventh and eighth graders if they could get into the middle schools. Dr. Mounier said the military analogy does not hold up here because the primary purpose of boot camp is to dehumanize the recruits to make them an ant instead of an individual person.

Mr. McDevitt said you need to be very careful about limiting access to electives. He said the buildings that students attend are based on where they live so you cannot deny access. Mr. Medio said he agrees with Mr. McDevitt.

Steven DeCredico, Science Teacher

Mr. DeCredico said he assumes that if we go forward with another form of structure at the high school we will also go forward with things that help various aspects of the education. He said from his understanding he does not think it is the intent that next year all ninth graders will be in the ninth-grade academy. Mr. DeCredico said his concern is that people are trying to deal in absolutes or guarantees. He said those words are demeaning to the process and there is no one that can absolutely guarantee anything when dealing with several thousand students whose minds are going to change at a moments notice. One of his concerns is that the all or nothing component of making a change. Mr. DeCredico said he thinks the concept of going to a ninth-grade academy lends itself better if there are ninth graders in one building. He said the concept is not seclusion but camaraderie. Mr. DeCredico said whatever decision goes forward does not have to be an all or nothing deal at this point in time.

Mr. Medio said some things by now should be in place. He said we should know if the ninth-grade academy will be held in one building with all the ninth graders or if they will be split up. Mr. Medio said splitting the ninth graders up does not make much sense if the idea is camaraderie or seclusion. He said the reason this was presented to the curriculum committee was to help ease the movement into whatever is implemented. Mr. Medio said you are supposed to come up with a proven successful model. He said administration came to the curriculum committee and said they would move this forward, which is why it is in the agenda tonight.

Mr. Lapsley said he thinks a lot of the teachers are looking for something they can hang their hat on that would improve some facet of the school system for next year. He said currently the teachers do not see a position being instilled by anyone on what is going forward. Mr. Lapsley said as long as we can get answers and are going forward in some direction it is a good thing.

Ms. Beck said CAPA charged us with developing a School Improvement Team committee and empowering them. She asked the board to consider allowing SIT to take a democratic vote and make a separate recommendation from Dr. McCann's.

Mr. Medio asked Ms. Beck for the numbers of how many socially promoted ninth graders we have at Vineland. He wants to bring up the elimination of social promotions at the February work session.

Dr. Mounier asked how long it would take the School Improvement Team to come up with a decision as to what their prospective is on this. Ms. Beck said knowing we are expected to make a recommendation we can convene in the next few days.

Ronald Walker, SIT Committee Member

Mr. Walker said over the summer when the SIT Committee was appointed there was supposed to be several meetings. He said when the Small Learning Communities were discontinued the SIT Committee was presented with block scheduling then the ninth-grade academy. Mr. Walker said going back to a 9-10/11-12 configuration was never mentioned. He said parents need to step up to the plate, get involved and know what is going on with their child. If a child wants to learn they will learn. Mr. Walker said we need to have clear direction and clarity with all administrators, staff and parents involved.

Mr. Ulrich said Mr. Walker is one of the few parents who attend the monthly board meetings along with Mr. Burke who is a taxpayer. He said that Mr. Walker is involved at the schools and is an exemplary parent. Mr. Ulrich said we are in a situation where our entire central administration with the exception of Dr. Gruccio is leaving. He asked if you would take a cruise ship out for a test run without your future administrative staff in place. Mr. Ulrich said we are going to have people in place at the high level that will be making the upper level educational decisions based upon recommendations of these committees that we are going to empower. He said by doing this we would be making decisions when our entire executive staff, with the exception of one, will be out of the district. Mr. Ulrich said we need to step back and breathe because we currently have a split board. He said the board has made the mistake thinking they are the educational leaders. Mr. Ulrich said we stuck our hands into a piece of pie that we really should not have done to begin with. He agrees with Dr. Mounier that it is time for action but we should hear from all board members. Mr. Ulrich said Mrs. Phillips should be a part of this conversation and he would like to hear her opinion.

Mr. English asked Mr. Medio who attended the Curriculum & Technology meeting. Mr. Medio said Dr. McCann and Mr. Panas were in attendance.

Motion: A motion was made by Mr. Fanucci, seconded by Mr. English, for the reconfiguration of Vineland High School to a 9-10/11-12 format in two separate buildings for the 2012-2013 school year.

Motion: A motion was made by Mr. Fanucci, seconded by Dr. Mounier to table this motion. All Members voted “yes” except Mr. Mercado and Ms. Rios who voted “no.”

Mr. DiGiorgio said he would like to hear from a collaborative group of administrators.

Mr. DeSanto said the board has scheduled the vote for February 8th but the reports and administrators can be heard at the work session.

Dr. Banks said the expectation is that the recommendation from the SIT committee will be presented on February 1st and the vote will be on February 8th.

Mr. Medio recommended for everyone who can to attend the PTSO meeting tomorrow night for input. Mr. Ulrich asked what the demographic breakdown was of the parents who attended that meeting. Mr. Medio said he has no idea.

Mr. DiGiorgio asked what the process was to engage the parents in the SIT committee. Mr. Walker said information was sent out to parents in regards to the SIT committee.

Mr. Ulrich said if everyone can attend we can have a special meeting to discuss the high school configuration on Tuesday, February 7th. Dr. Gruccio said there are a couple committee meetings scheduled for that night. Mr. Ulrich thanked everyone for being patient.

Public Comments: Lee Burke, Vineland Resident

Mr. Burke said this was one of the better sessions as far as the seriousness of the issues that has to be dealt with. He said the board's foremost job is the hiring of the new superintendent. Mr. Burke said he is pleased to see citizens stepping forward. He commended the board for the effort and time they are putting in. Mr. Burke said the most important issue that he was concerned about tonight was moving the board elections to November. He is conflicted on not having a say as a citizen on the budget. Mr. Burke said we are giving this up to a broader pull of citizens who will step up and want to serve on a board. He said the board needs to look beyond all the stuff going on in the district and look at what is going on in the community at the local and county level. Mr. Burke commended the board for their efforts and patience.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kevin J. Franchetta, CPA
Board Secretary

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