

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 4, 2015 at 7:03 p.m., pursuant to notice with Mr. English presiding and the following members present: Ms. Acosta, Ms. Codispoti, Mr. DeWinne, Mr. DiGiorgio, Mr. Jennings, Ms. Morello, Mr. Pagano and Ms. Rios. Absent: None.

Also present: Dr. Gruccio, Superintendent, Mr. Frey and Mr. Frangipani, Assistant Superintendents, Mrs. Haley, Board Secretary, Dr. Rossi, Executive Director of Personnel, Mr. DeSanto, Board Solicitor, press and public. Absent: None.

Mr. English 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 to be sent to the following, announcing time and place thereof, agenda, etc.: The Daily Journal, the Atlantic City Press, Clerk - City of Vineland, and Administrative Office Public Bulletin Board.

Flag salute:

Resolution: None.

Special

Presentations: Dr. Gruccio introduced Ross Stanger, Supervisor of Instruction, to present information on the Advanced Placement Program.

Mr. Stanger said he will be discussing the Advanced Placement (AP) courses that are college level courses the students take while in high school. He said these courses are tested in May of each year and scored on a scale of one through five. Mr. Stanger said these courses are a tremendous opportunity for students because they allow the students to receive credit for courses they would normally take in college while still in high school. He said we offer 14 different AP courses at Vineland High School and the teachers who teach the courses have Master degrees in the content that they teach. Mr. Stanger said we are tremendously increasing the opportunity to our students, encouraging them to enroll in AP courses and take the test.

Mr. English asked if there is a way to chart how the students do after they graduate. Mr. Stanger said we could work that out through the guidance department. Mr. English requested for the Power Point on this to be sent to each Board member and asked if it will be on the district website. Mr. Stanger said yes it will be on the AP and LEAP website. Mr. English suggested promoting this on *Channel 9*.

Mr. DiGiorgio asked about the scoring of the AP classes. Mr. Stanger explained the scoring.

Ms. Morello thanked Mr. Stanger for the presentation and said it helped her daughter in college.

Mr. DeWinne asked if 90% of the classes count as college credits. Mr. Stanger said it depends on the college or university. Mr. DeWinne asked if it were possible that students can graduate with 24 to 30 college credits. Mr. Stanger said yes.

Mr. Jennings asked if the AP classes are free and the dual credit courses you pay for. Mr. Stanger said correct.

Mr. English asked if a student who wants to take a class can be denied. Mr. Stanger responded no.

Mr. Jennings asked if the students have an orientation before starting the classes. Mr. Stanger said we have entertained the idea of having a summer academy in August.

Mr. English asked if we have anything prior to the start of the school year to educate the parents on these classes. Mr. Stanger said he is planning to have a parent meeting in March or April but nothing is offered in the summer. Mr. English asked if we ever considered online courses for the classes that show low class size. Mr. Stanger said we are looking to offer all of the courses next year that we previously offered maintaining the enrollment for all courses.

Mr. DiGiorgio asked if there was a possibility of sharing staff with the county college. Mr. Stanger said he is not sure about that.

Ms. Acosta spoke about her experience with her son who is classified but in the Math/Science Academy. She commended the school district for giving her son the opportunity.

Dr. Gruccio introduced Mr. Ed Benish, Assistant Principal of Sabater Elementary School, to honor the 5th Grade American Legion Post #4 Contest winners.

Mr. Benish introduced and recognized Luz Bautista Cruz the 2nd place winner in the 5th Grade American Legion Post.

Mrs. Lisa Arena, Principal of Mennies Elementary School, announced the 5th Grade American Legion Post winners from her school. She said Amerie Guzman won 3rd place and Desiree Castro won 1st place.

Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying (HIB Report), Suspension Report, Cunningham Alternative School Report/Average Daily Attendance – Ms. Rios complimented and thanked Mr. Frangipani for taking her concerns and implementing them in the chart.

Comments by

Board Solicitor: Mr. DeSanto said at the beginning of each year the Board and Superintendent begin to consider the Superintendent’s evaluation process. He said tonight he is going to distribute to the Board and Dr. Guccio a compilation of various references that are used as criteria for the Board to do the evaluation. Mr. DeSanto said there are several sources of criteria to consider and he has a copy for the Board. He said a change has occurred in the code and the evaluation must be completed before July 1st which provides Dr. Guccio and the Board a little more time.

Mr. DeSanto said today he along with Mrs. Haley and Mr. Musterel attended a very informative workshop presented by the Department of Agriculture. He said we are in our fifth year of our existing food service contract and under code you are only allowed to award a one year contract with four one year renewals. Mr. DeSanto said the Department of Agriculture wants to give every Board of Education the ability to reconsider each year their food service vendor so there is no five year contract. He said we need to consider the Request for Proposal (RFP) to be circulated in terms of receiving proposals back.

Public Comments

on Agenda Items: None.

Items for Review:

A. Superintendent

1. **PERSONNEL**

1.1 **Personnel Items** – Dr. Guccio noted that the starting date for Robert Green, the newly hired Purchasing Agent, has been amended to February 9, 2015.

Ms. Morello said she is happy to see that we have someone who left our district and is returning as a supervisor. She asked if the professional development for technology is only being done at the intermediate school level. Mr. Frey said yes. Ms. Morello asked how that would work with the current technology people we have at that level. Mr. Frey said it is in addition to. Ms. Morello asked how the staff members sign up for this. Mr. Frey said it is advertised through email to staff members. Ms. Morello asked how the staff members are selected. Mr. Frey said everyone is chosen.

Mr. English asked where the purchasing agent will be housed. Mrs. Haley said at the warehouse and we would be in communication with him throughout the day.

1.2 Approval of following appointments:

- a. Custodian of School District Records – Helen Haley**
- b. Qualified Purchasing Agent – Helen Haley and Robert Green**
- c. Scott Musterel to fill the following positions in the absence of Helen Haley for the period of February 12, 2015 through June 30, 2015.**
 - 1. Board Secretary**
 - 2. Custodian of School District Records**
 - 3. Contracting Agent**
 - 4. Transfer/Investment of funds at authorized district depositories**

Mr. English asked if there is an emergency and something needs to be purchased do we have someone fourth in line. Mr. DeSanto said if it is truly an emergency the Superintendent would order the product and it would be ratified immediately.

2. PROCEDURES & OPERATIONS

- 2.1 **Travel** – Ms. Morello said she was happy to see the transition plan in place for students leaving preschool. She asked if we had this plan for the intermediate schools. Dr. Gruccio said that was one of the items discussed as part of the Strategic Plan. She said a meeting was held the other day with the middle and high schools to put a plan in place. Ms. Morello asked if parents would be transporting children in their own vehicles for crew. Dr. Gruccio responded yes. Mr. English asked if a trainer or nurse would go with the students on the crew trip. Dr. Gruccio said we have been sending nurses but Mr. Robbins, Athletic Director, is trying to find something in writing that states we must send a nurse only if a child has a medical condition. Mr. DeSanto said he provided materials on this that he would like shared with Mr. Robbins. He said the basic requirement is that you do not need to have a certified school nurse but you must have a nurse if the child has a 504 plan, IEP or is medically challenged in some way. Ms. Morello asked even if the child is with their parent. Mr. DeSanto said the code provides exceptions that explain if the parent is in attendance.

Mr. DiGiorgio asked if any progress has been made on getting our district vehicle wrapped for advertising. Mr. English said it was discussed to have students involved with the design.

Ms. Rios asked if all the preschools are involved with the kindergarten transition visits. Dr. Gruccio responded yes all preschools. Ms. Rios would like clarification to make sure that all our four year olds in our preschools will benefit from this visit. Dr. Gruccio said she would look into it.

2.2 **Bus Evacuation Drills** – No discussion.

2.3 **First Reading of Policy #2622 Student Assessment (revised)** – No discussion.

3. **BUILDINGS & GROUNDS** – None.

4. **FINANCE**

4.1 **Budgetary Transfers** – No discussion.

4.2 **Submission of Mennies Kohl's Grant** – No discussion.

4.3 **Salem County Vo-Tech Agreement** – Mr. DeSanto mentioned that the Salem County Contract does not have the rates on the contract. Mrs. Haley said the rates are on the attachments.

4.4 **Pupil Transportation Services Bus Bid** – Ms. Morello asked for clarification. Mr. Callavini said unfortunately this year we have had absenteeism with no substitutes for coverage. He said drivers have to do double runs and children are being dropped off late. Mr. Callavini said to offset this he would turn to whoever was awarded the bid to send us a driver. He said it is difficult to find drivers because our turnaround time takes too long and people cannot wait for a paycheck. Mr. Callavini said Sheppard Bus Service has a quicker hiring process.

Mr. DiGiorgio asked Mr. Callavini if he was able to quantify how much absenteeism we have experienced. Mr. Callavini said on an average day we run 25 to 28 percent absenteeism.

Ms. Acosta asked if it were possible to reach out to other school districts for a pool of substitute bus drivers. Mr. Callavini said Millville is fully contracted and Bridgeton is in worse shape than we are with substitutes. He said also you are fingerprinted for the district you work in.

Ms. Rios asked how long the fingerprinting process is. Mr. Callavini said around two to three weeks.

Dr. Rossi said we try to move them as fast as we can but if the substitute has not completed the paperwork they will not work. He said we call people and there is hand holding involved here.

Ms. Morello said that would qualify as a truly emergent item.

Dr. Rossi said the UAW leadership is very cooperative and on board with this. He said there is a culture that time is mine and I am going to use my time. Dr. Rossi said we are working to change the culture of the employee.

Mr. DiGiorgio suggested recruiting during the summer months to enhance the pool. He asked if our hourly rate is competitive. Mr. Callavini said we are.

Mr. Jennings said an Ad Hoc meeting was held and the bus drivers said they wanted us to work with them but it does not appear we are getting that back from our drivers.

Dr. Rossi addressed how we deal with the absenteeism.

Ms. Morello thinks we need to focus on the people who are dedicated employees who take pride in what they do.

Mr. DiGiorgio asked if there were a way to give incentives to the good employees. Mr. DeSanto said we can check the accountability regulations to see how to reward.

Mr. Pagano said he would like to know what the actual number is for people calling out sick and how many substitute bus drivers we have. Mr. Callavini said he would get that report together by the end of the week.

- 4.5 **Aetna Contract** – Ms. Morello thanked Mr. DeWinne for his diligence in making 16.5% become 12.8%. Mr. DeWinne said it was not him it was the broker who got it to that number.

- 4.6 **RFP for Alternate Education Program for At Risk Students** – Ms. Rios asked for clarification on this. Dr. Guccio explained that we have spoken to a couple of companies that are interested in running our Alternative Program. She said that we feel that we have to put an RFP out in order to get an actual proposal to see if it is beneficial. Ms. Morello asked if the RFP will only cover high school or will it have components. Dr. Guccio said it would only be the high school.

Ms. Rios asked if this has been done by other districts. Dr. Guccio said yes we are visiting some of the sites next week to see how it is done. Ms. Rios said she would be interested in going.

- 4.7 **RFP for Food Service Management Company** – Mr. English asked Mr. DeSanto if he is part of this process. Mr. DeSanto said his primary responsibility is the contract but he will see the RFP in its final stages.

- 4.8 **Federal Program Salaries** – Ms. Rios asked for clarification. Mrs. Haley said as part of the federal grant you are supposed to designate what employees are being funded by the grant. She said we have monitors coming the end of the month to review our grants and we want to make sure we are in compliance before they arrive.

2. ITEMS PROPOSED FOR REGULAR AGENDA:

- a. **Secretary's Report** – November/December 2014
- b. **Treasurer's Report**– November/December 2014

Mrs. Haley thanked her accounting and payroll staff for all their help with the reconciliations.

7.b. Proposed for review or discussion or adoption by Board Members:

- 1. **Superintendent's Evaluation** – Ms. Morello discussed the process of the Superintendents' evaluation. Mr. English said he wants to proceed very timely with this because this is two years plus in the making and our Superintendent deserves a fair evaluation. He said that he understands that he and Mr. DiGiorgio are the two conflicting Board members. Mr. DeSanto said that is correct. Ms. Morello said this should be started sooner rather than later. Mr. English asked if this needs a vote. Mr. DeSanto said if the consensus of the Board is to use the NJ School Boards Association for the evaluation then you would just need to contact them. Ms. Morello personally thinks Ms. Rios should spearhead the process of the Superintendent evaluation. Ms. Rios said she would do it.

2. Ad Hoc Committee's response on Dedication of Vineland High School South Facility

Mr. English said as he started to do research on Mr. Ottinger he realized that you have man who wore five different hats in this school district. He was a special education teacher, basketball coach, athletic director, principal and superintendent. Mr. English said he was always told if you have policies in place you cannot go wrong. He said he read the policy and understands what it states. Mr. English said when he received this letter he felt it had an emergent tone to it. He said the reference was made to name the Vineland High School gymnasium after Mr. Ottinger. Mr. English thanked everyone who reached out to him. He said that he spoke with past students, staff and community members. Mr. English said he contacted Mr. Weaver on Saturday and asked him if he would meet him at the high school. He said that he saw a lot of history in photographs hanging on the walls at the high school. Mr. English said that Mr. Ottinger had the least tenure of all the athletic directors. He said when naming something after someone he tries to associate the facility, bench, water cooler etc. to the person. Mr. English said after reaching out to members of the public what he learned was Mr. Ottinger was not just about the sports. He had a remarkable passion for special/regular education, the arts, and athletics. Mr. English said Mr. Ottinger's longest tenure in the district was as a twelve year Principal at Vineland High School South. He was an outstanding advocate for all students and their achievement. Mr. English said at the Ad Hoc Committee they conferenced in Mr. Petrosky to review the letter that he wrote. He said the Ad Hoc Committee agreed that the gym was not the proper place to name after Mr. Ottinger. Mr. English said his feeling was that Mr. Ottinger stood in the mushroom of the high school every day to greet students and the entry way/mushroom area would be a great representation of where Mr. Ottinger excelled. He said his feeling along with the Ad Hoc Committee was to name something at the VHS South building such as the entry way after Mr. Ottinger. Mr. English asked if this is something everyone wants to move forward on for a vote next week. He said that he would like to clean up the policy in the near future.

Mr. DiGiorgio asked if in the past we have ever received letters on recommending things to be named for anyone else. Mr. English said until recently this could only be done for people who were deceased for five years. He said recently we had a change that allowed us to go this route. This opens the door for many things that require a lot of legwork and are not school related for Board members. Dr. Gruccio said the only letter she received was the letter for Mr. Casadia. Mr. DiGiorgio said that he looks forward to a group collaborative discussion on this. He commended Mr. English on his efforts.

Ms. Acosta said that she is happy that the Board changed the policy to recognize people during their life. She said as elected officials we need to speak for the people. Ms. Acosta said that she would like to see the process happen as quickly as possible for Mr. Ottinger.

Mr. DeWinne said the building was built in the early sixties by taxpayers so taxpayer input is always welcome. He appreciates all the research that Mr. English did on this and he is fine with his recommendation.

Mr. Jennings said he concurred with everyone who spoke and agrees that something needs to be done soon.

Mr. English asked Mr. DeSanto if the letters that were received qualify as community input. Mr. DeSanto said the policy and policy revisions would go to the policy committee. He said the policy committee would receive input and come up with a recommendation with a revised policy submitted to the Board. Mr. DeSanto feels the Buildings & Grounds Committee could receive the letters from the public because that is their jurisdiction. He said the Buildings & Grounds Committee could submit a request to the Board.

Ms. Rios expressed her concern as to why we did not need public input to name the pool after John Casadia but now we need it. Mr. English said his feeling as Board President is that we should always follow policy and never stray from the path. Ms. Rios said we are not consistent. She said if the majority of the Board feels that we should move forward with this then that is what we must do.

Mr. DeSanto said Board members over the years have questioned things that have occurred because the process was not followed. He said when the naming of the pool came up his response was the Board is free to waive its policy but the waiver of a policy should be the exception not the rule. Mr. DeSanto said a policy gets put into effect so decisions do not get made on a reacting basis and there is deliberation involved. He said public input is there to protect the procedure. Mr. DeSanto said the prior Board waived the policy on two occasions and are free to do this. He said if the Board is going to waive the policy this time waive it because there is a reason not because it was previously done.

Ms. Rios said she thought that at the last meeting a majority of the Board favored having something named after Mr. Ottinger.

Dr. Gruccio left the meeting briefly from 8:59 p.m. to 9:07 p.m.

Mr. DeSanto said you may ask for written public input if you are going to vote on this next week and it could be put in the newspaper to get this accomplished.

Mr. English said he has something that he would like to propose for next Wednesday but he wanted to get the flavor from each Board member.

Mr. Pagano agreed with Mr. English's assessment. He also agreed with Ms. Rios and said we need to get feedback and then be expeditious with this.

Ms. Morello said the VHS Historical Committee made a proposal and Mr. English has a counter proposal. She feels it would be polite to give the Historical Committee any feedback received from the public and a counter proposal. Ms. Morello said she agrees with Mr. DeWinne that it is a public building. She said that she would like to see a little more time to add to the richness of the experience.

Ms. Codispoti thanked Mr. English, Ms. Rios and the committee for their work. She believes that this is a time sensitive matter and we need to move forward as quickly as possible.

Ms. Rios encouraged all those who want to support Mr. Ottinger to please speak on his behalf on the new recommendation.

Mr. English said we can put this on next week's meeting agenda for a vote with public input or we could have a special meeting to discuss this matter. He said that he will reach out to Mr. Petrosky tomorrow. Mr. English said he feels that Mr. Ottinger found a way to reach all students from what he heard.

Ms. Morello asked Mr. English to reach out to Mr. Petrosky with the counter proposal. She said the recommendation could be put on the agenda next week with public comments and would address everyone's concerns.

Mr. DeSanto said the policy indicates that one method the Board can use is to put this in the newspaper announcing that the Board Secretary will receive written public comments. He said if someone cannot come to the meeting they can address the Board in writing. Mr. DeSanto said you are not required to have a public hearing but since it is an agenda item the public comment will be there. He said you could have comments submitted by Monday so Mrs. Haley could provide it to the Board a couple days in advance. Mr. DeSanto thinks the Board needs to define for the vote specifically what will be dedicated.

Mr. English said he would like to call it the VHS Corridor/Entryway but he is sure that Dr. McCann has the correct name for it. Mr. Weaver said it is the "Foyer Entrance."

Review of Bills: Mr. English said that Mr. DiGiorgio does a great job reviewing the bills with a great response from Mrs. Haley.

Public Comments: Daina Karol, Petway Computer Teacher
Ms. Karol expressed her concern about the budget and the cuts that will have to be made. She urged the Board not to cut any teaching positions and elaborated on the effects of cutting teachers.

Lisa Arena, Parent & Principal of Mennies Elementary School
Ms. Arena addressed guidance counselors and their knowledge of NJ Stars and School Counts, which are specialized programs that allow our children to go on and attend any local County college within the State. She discussed her daughter who graduated with an Associate's Degree in three semesters and had to forfeit her scholarship because they did not consider her a full time student.

Ms. Morello left briefly from 9:17 p.m. to 9:23 p.m.

Carol Belawsky, UAW Local #2327
Ms. Belawsky said that Dr. Rossi is completely correct about the attendance issues and communicates with the union on a regular basis in regards to attendance. She mentioned the number of people who are on a leave of absence.

Ms. Acosta left briefly from 9:25 p.m. to 9:28 p.m.

Committee Reports: Ms. Morello said the Curriculum & Instruction Committee met on Monday and Mr. Frey presented information on the online language course. She said we discussed credit requirements, adjusting credits for PE, Health and Science. Ms. Morello said there was a proposed discussion on the eight period day, which will not be discussed until negotiations are complete. She said Mr. Frey presented a synopsis of course selection notes. Ms. Morello said the course selection guide for the high school is now available online. She announced that the Curriculum & Instruction Committee meetings will be held the fourth Monday of each month.

Mr. DeWinne said the Finance Committee met last week and discussed transportation, insurance and the budget. He said that the committee will meet again later this month.

Ms. Rios said the Policy & Personnel Committee meeting will be held February 24th at 5:00 p.m. She said if anyone has any ideas or suggestions they would like discussed to please feel free to contact her.

Mr. English requested a master list of committee meetings.

Ms. Morello requested a Google calendar for the events to be entered.

Mr. Jennings said the Buildings & Grounds Committee meeting will be held on February 23rd.

Unfinished Business: None.

New Business: Mr. DeWinne said the Claridge Hotel agreed to donate the facility for the Dennis Tanner Scholarship Fund Raiser being held on Saturday, February 21st from 7:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m. He said tickets are \$20 and can be purchased at the Reber Administration Building or at Vineland High School. Mr. DeWinne said all the proceeds will go to the Dennis Tanner Scholarship. He said Mr. Tanner an Assistant Principal went on a school trip to Puerto Rico with students and drowned while saving a student caught in a rip tide.

Ms. Acosta reflected on the incident in 1980.

Mr. DeWinne said his goal is for all the students to know who this man was.

Ms. Acosta thanked Mrs. Haley for the Vineland Education Foundation Bylaws.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned by voice vote at 9:38 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Helen G. Haley
Interim Board Secretary

HGH:df

