

An open work session of the Board of Education of the City of Vineland was held in the Board Room, 625 Plum Street, Vineland, New Jersey, Wednesday, February 6, 2013 at 7:03 p.m., pursuant to notice with Mr. Medio presiding and the following members present: Mr. DiGiorgio, Mr. English, Mr. Jennings, Mr. Mercado, Ms. Morello, Dr. Mounier and Ms. Rios. Absent: Mr. Ulrich.

Mr. Medio said Mr. Ulrich is not present tonight because of an appointment he has in North Jersey on Police business.

Also present: Dr. Guccio, Superintendent, Mr. Frey, Assistant Superintendent, Mrs. Polof, Assistant Superintendent, Ms. Ludy, Board Secretary, Mr. DeSanto, Board Solicitor, press and public. Absent: None.

Mr. Medio 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: Ms. Ludy read a resolution to convene into executive session for the following reasons as outlined in N.J.S.A. 10-4-12. Any pending or anticipated litigation or contract negotiation in which the public body is or may become a party. Any matters falling within the attorney-client privilege, to the extent that confidentiality is required in order for the attorney to exercise his ethical duties as a lawyer. If contract negotiation the nature of the contract and interested party is: Discussion of terms and conditions of proposed agreement with Cynergistics, Inc. for energy cost savings. Discussion of status of negotiations with Vineland Administrators & Supervisors Association. **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Board of Education hereby declares that its discussion of the aforementioned subject(s) may be made public at a time when the Board Attorney advises the Board of Education that the disclosure of the discussion will not detrimentally affect any right, interest or duty of the School District or any other entity or person with respect to said discussion.

Motion: A motion was made by Mr. Mercado, seconded by Mr. Jennings, the resolution passed. All Members voted "yes."

Special

Presentations: Dr. Guccio introduced Ms. Christine Lewis and Mr. Christopher Mohan, Vineland High School teachers, to present a senior class trip proposal for 2014.

Ms. Lewis said she along with Mr. Mohan are the class of 2014 advisors and they will be presenting a proposal in regards to a possible senior class trip for next year. Ms. Lewis said next year they would like to participate in a senior class trip to Orlando, Florida. She said the areas they would visit are Disneyworld, Universal Studios and Medieval Times. Ms. Lewis reviewed the research basis and proposal with the board. She said Bruce Bevan who is a travel agent from World Class Vacations and the senior class trip representative for South Jersey is present tonight to answer any questions the board may have.

Mr. English asked if the chaperones are all district staff. Ms. Lewis responded yes. Mr. English asked if the cost is based on the number of students going on the trip. Mr. Bevan said the cost remains the same and does not matter how many students will be going. Mr. English asked if it is a non-stop flight. Mr. Bevan responded yes.

Mr. Mercado said before the end of this year he would like to see the students sign a contract that will monitor their discipline and school attendance. He said this will give them something to look forward to and may improve some of the problems at the high school. Ms. Lewis said absolutely this is quite an incentive as far as discipline and attendance concerning seniors. She said the districts that we spoke with do have a contract for the students.

Mrs. Morello asked Ms. Lewis if when she spoke with the other districts she was given a percentage of the graduating class that actually participated in the trip. Ms. Lewis said Cherry Hill East and Washington Township had approximately 60 to 65% of their students attending.

Dr. Mounier asked if the costs are prepaid by the students. Ms. Lewis responded yes. Dr. Mounier asked what would happen if a student can make 85% of the required deposit but not the remaining 15%. Ms. Lewis said the districts that she spoke with said they never had that happen. She said if it was a case where the student was really close to the amount we would try to work with the parent. Ms. Lewis said there is a \$29.00 initial fee for trip insurance if the parents would like to purchase it.

Mrs. Morello said this seems to be very well thought out and it is good to see various people at the high school complex working together.

Mr. DiGiorgio asked if in the past we have ever had senior class trips. Ms. Lewis said not since 1955.

Mr. DiGiorgio thinks this is an exciting concept and is glad it is being pursued.

Ms. Rios asked if the discipline policy for the class trip will be presented to the board. Ms. Lewis said absolutely. Ms. Rios asked if this will be replacing Project Graduation. Ms. Lewis said no.

Mr. Mercado asked Mr. Bevan if there are any districts that do not allow the students at the water park. Mr. Bevan said the only district that does not allow water parks is the Camden School District because there was an incident years ago. Mr. Mercado asked if any of the districts make the insurance mandatory. Mr. Bevan said some do and add it to the cost of the trip.

Dr. Mounier asked Ms. Lewis how many students she expects would go on the trip. Ms. Lewis said based on the percentages from Millville somewhere between 300 to 350 students. Dr. Mounier asked if fundraising could be done to cover the insurance cost so everyone is protected. Ms. Lewis said she has no problem including the \$29.00 in the cost. Dr. Mounier asked how the proceeds of fundraising are distributed and does it relate to participation. Ms. Lewis said currently all of the fundraiser profits are going to the class fund. She said as far as the trip we would set up individual fundraisers where each student can individually fundraise towards their trip. Dr. Mounier asked if it would be possible for a few energetic students to accumulate the bulk of the group fundraising and the proceeds distributed to those that did not fundraise. Ms. Lewis said no the individual student would receive 100% of the individual profit they made.

Mr. Jennings asked if everyone has to pay the \$29.00 insurance fee can the \$5.00 miscellaneous amount be deducted. Ms. Lewis said she would not recommend it.

Dr. Mounier asked if the chaperones pay nothing. Ms. Lewis said that is correct. Dr. Mounier asked if there is any protection that the cost will not change. Mr. Bevan said we have been operating this program for 33 years and have never had to change the cost. He said it would only be in the case where there is a burden that they could not cover the increase and he does not foresee that happening.

**HIB Report (Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying), Suspension Report and Cunningham Alternative School Report/Cunningham Alternative ADA (Average Daily Attendance Report** - Mrs. Polof said it is a requirement once a year to present the results of the Violence & Vandalism Report for the district. She said the report that she is presenting is for the 2011-2012 school year, which is part of the monitoring requirements under QSAC. Mrs. Polof reviewed the results of the report with the board.

Ms. Morello asked how many students we have district wide. Mrs. Polof said 10,903 students. Ms. Morello asked how we went from 148 program provided upon disciplinary actions in 2010-2011 to 13 in 2011-2012. Mrs. Polof said it could be because the incidents were down. Ms. Morello noted that we have approximately 11,000 students with a small number of events.

Mr. Mercado said he agrees with the comments made by Ms. Morello. He said a few weeks ago he requested for the superintendent to look into the reasons why we have so many students being arrested and getting into trouble. Mr. Mercado said his concern is why these students are acting up.

Ms. Rios suggested reviewing the current discipline policy with the new school administrators. Dr. Gruccio said the discipline policy has just recently been reviewed. She said Mrs. Polof scheduled a meeting to review the policies and to make sure that everyone understands and follows them.

Mr. English asked why central administration is listed on line six under sanction of the HIB Report. Mrs. Polof said she does not know and will look into it.

Mr. English said during the presentation part of the board meeting the board promoted the positives of student awards. He asked if this has been discontinued. Dr. Gruccio said when the information is brought to her she has it placed on the agenda.

Comments by

Board Solicitor:

Mr. DeSanto reminded the board and public that next Wednesday a hearing/presentation will be held on the school uniform policy.

Public Comments:

Ted Sisco, VHN Teacher

Mr. Sisco said it has come to his attention that there will be a vote next week on the spring coaches. He wanted to present his background before the board votes for the lacrosse coach position.

Joe Tamanini

Mr. Tamanini spoke in support of Ted Sisco as the lacrosse coach.

Ruben Gomez Jr.

Mr. Gomez expressed his concern in regards to the 48 arrests in the Vineland School District. He commends the Vineland Police Department for putting the incidents online.

Terra Dower

Ms. Dower expressed her concern that her son now has a police record for disorderly conduct because he was arrested for a fight that never happened.

Mr. English asked if he can have an interpretation of disorderly conduct because it seems to be the common arrest in the district.

Dr. Gruccio said she along with Mrs. Polof have scheduled a meeting with the police and high school administration to discuss and review these issues.

Mr. English said his daughter and son attend Vineland High School and are receiving a good education. He knows there are discipline problems at the high school but that happens in everyday life.

Ms. Morello said it is time to make parents accountable for the behavior of their children. She said there is a small percentage causing the problems and they need to be called to task.

Ms. Rios said we need to be consistent and apply the correct codes to each individual incident.

Mr. Medio said the Personnel & Policy Committee will be reviewing this.

Mr. DeSanto explained that the criminal system in New Jersey is defined in degrees. The crimes are divided first, second, third and fourth degree. Less serious offenses are called disorderly persons. Mr. DeSanto said he believes what happens is someone contacts the police and gives them an explanation as to what transpired. The police determine that the particular act is disorderly if proven. Mr. DeSanto said if it becomes obvious that the student did not commit the particular act complained of charges can be dropped. He said as far as the arrest the good news is that juvenile charges are confidential and no employer will ever know about the charges. Mr. DeSanto said if someone has been falsely charged there is a procedure to have the arrest expunged like it never happened.

Mr. Jennings asked if we have video cameras in the school hallways. Mr. Medio responded yes. Mr. Jennings asked if we can refer to the videos before any action is taken. Ms. Rios said we should really look into what took place before making any calls.

Ms. Dower said when she was trying to get this resolved she requested to see the video tape and was told no. Mr. Medio said it is confidential.

Colleen Forcinito, Rossi School Teacher

Ms. Forcinito said she has worked at Rossi School for 28 years under 10 different administrators and they all disciplined differently. She said teachers are frustrated and angry because they are questioned heavily about incidents and are the victims as the educators. Ms. Forcinito said board members need to go to the schools and speak with the teachers to find out what is happening in the schools.

Dorothy Burke, VHS Assistant Principal

Ms. Burke said with regards to discipline you have to be fair and consistent. She said you have to put your expectations out there early enough so every student knows what is expected and what the consequences are. Ms. Burke said at Vineland High School they have a tiered discipline policy with first, second and third offense. She said you need to take the time, listen to both sides of the story and review the cameras. Ms. Burke said she believes strongly that there are no bad children only children that make bad decisions. Ms. Burke said she can proudly say that she has adopted one of our dysfunctional students. She said that student is now on her way to getting her CNA and going on to LPN. Ms. Burke believes it only takes one person in a child's life to turn that child around.

Luis Rafael Cucaro

Mr. Cucaro commended the board for the job that they do. He said today's problems in schools are guns, pregnancy and drugs. Mr. Cucaro said as a minister his heart goes out to the children, parents and people who are trying to do the right things. He is glad to see how tonight's meeting is conducted with all the interaction and input. Mr. Cucaro hopes this nation moves forward for the betterment of the future society because we are sinking very fast.

Items for Review:

A. Proposed by Superintendent

**1. Items Proposed for Consent Agenda**

**PERSONNEL**

- 1.1 a. **Personnel Items** - Dr. Gruccio said on page 4 position control number #09120-14-012 has declined the position and will not be on next week's agenda. Mr. Medio asked if anyone can do this job. Dr. Rossi said anyone can apply for this job.

**PROCEDURES & OPERATIONS**

- 2.1 **2012 -2013 Revised School Calendar** – Dr. Gruccio said this revision reflects the two days that we have to make up due to the hurricane. Mr. DiGiorgio asked how the parents will know about the calendar changes. Dr. Gruccio said the revised calendar will be sent out to the parents.
- 2.2 **Field Trip to Wheaton Arts and Cultural Center** – No discussion.
- 2.3 **Travel** – No discussion.
- 2.4 **Winter Sports Schedules** - This is an error and should be Spring Sports Schedules

**BUILDINGS & GROUNDS**

- 3.1 **Submission of Sabater Annex Project to the NJDOE** – Ms. Morello asked for an explanation on this project. Mr. Weaver said this is the building that was the Adult Education Building. When the lease expires on June 30<sup>th</sup> the district is going to create an elementary school. This approval is for the modification and to obtain the Department of Education's approval for the elementary school. Dr. Gruccio said it will be an extension of the elementary school which is currently there. Ms. Morello asked if this is an extensive project. Mr. Weaver said it is not.
- 3.2 **Amendment to Long Range Facilities Plan** - Mr. English asked if anything was removed from this plan during the last five years. Mr. Weaver explained that it will be an extensive review of the plan with a full inventory. Mr. English asked if there was a timeline on this. Mr. Weaver said we are currently working on it and would like to have done as soon as possible. Dr. Gruccio said the Department of Education requested for this to plan to be updated to reflect the number of students we have, which will show why we are overcrowded. She said our hope is that the Department of Education will reconsider moving our new middle school up on the list. Ms. Morello asked if the schools that are in need of repair will be done so all students have the same educational atmosphere. Mr. Weaver said absolutely.

## **FINANCE**

- 4.1 **Approval of Transfers** – No discussion
  - a. General Transfers
  - b. School Based Budget Transfers
- 4.2 **Placement of Special Education Students** – No discussion
- 4.3 **Bids**
  - a. Transportation of All Kids First School Route - Ms. Morello asked if the transportation bid is because students have been added to this community provider and the bus route needs expanded. Mr. Callavini said yes it was expanded one bus route because of a classroom being added. Ms. Morello asked if the ride is shorter for the other children. Mr. Callavini responded yes.
  - b. Contracts on file that are Bid by the State of NJ, Cumberland County and/or Ed Data for Local Entities for materials and supplies – No discussion.
- 4.4 **Little Smiles, P.C. Agreement** – Ms. Morello questioned why this is on for approval so late and are the services occurring. Dr. Gruccio said she would look into it.
- 4.5 **Catapult 2012-2013 Evaluation and Determination of Eligibility Contract** - Ms. Morello also questioned why the Catapult contracts are being approved late and would like to see the start date accurately reflected.
- 4.6 **Catapult 2012-2013 Chapters 192/193 Contract** – No discussion.
- 4.7 **Catapult 2012-2013 IDEIA Part B Services Contract** – No discussion.
- 4.8 **Salem County Vocation Technical Schools for Dance/Visual Arts 2012-2013** – Mr. DiGiorgio asked if this was School Choice. Mr. Medio said no it is a dance and arts school.
- 4.9 **Cumberland County Tech Center Tuition Contract 2012-2013** - No discussion.
- 4.10 **Salem County Special Services Non-Public Agreement 2012-2013** – No discussion.
- 4.11 **Educere Education Services Agreement for Online Summer 2013** – No discussion.
- 4.12 **Vendors in excess of \$17,500 & \$36,000** – No discussion.
- 4.13 **Blackboard Connect Agreement** – No discussion.

- 4.14 **Implementation of District-Wide Website** - Mr. Medio said there are some questions in regards to this and he would like to send this to the Curriculum & Technology Committee. Dr. Gruccio asked Mr. Medio if he would like this pulled from next week's agenda. Mr. Medio responded yes. Mr. English asked if this is to get our district web-site up to where it needs to be. Mr. Frey responded yes.

## **2. Items Proposed for Regular Agenda**

- a. Report by the Secretary of the Board of Education – No discussion.
- b. Bills incurred – No discussion.

### **Proposed for review or discussion or adoption by Board Members**

1. Discussion regarding the approval of proposed changes to the preschool model contract for the 2013-2014 school year to permit parental choice for up to 70% of enrollment at provider sites, subject to NJDOE approval.

Mr. Medio said it is to his understanding that we have new information on this. He said the contracts for next year have not been signed and Mr. DeSanto along with Dr. Gruccio will be looking into whether or not we need approval from the state to make this change. Mr. DeSanto said we will need approval from the state. He said we originally thought the contracts were in place for September and therefore a formal amendment would have to be done. Mr. DeSanto said now that we know the preschool contracts are not in place for the next year this is an opportunity for the board to make a proposed change and adopt a resolution to provide parental choice in the upcoming contract. Mr. DeSanto said he provided the board with the current and past contract language along with the proposed language. He asked the board if they were satisfied with the contract change of language and terms. If the board is satisfied he will have a resolution for next week's meeting. Ms. Rios said she would like input from the principal of the program, transportation department, and all the providers involved. Mr. Medio said no problem we do not have to vote on this next week. He said the reason for parental choice up to 70% is so that 30% could be for equitable distribution. Ms. Morello thinks that 70% is a little excessive and would like to see 70% district and 30% parental choice. She said that would give you a better chance for equitable distribution. Mr. Medio asked why. Ms. Morello said because of when this was originally in place in the past. Ms. Rios said we should work as a team to find out what is best for the preschools and district as well. Mr. Medio said the reason he brought this in at 70% so that 30% would be enough to address the equitable distribution. He said if the input comes to a different number it is not a problem. Mr. Mercado asked if a parent chooses what school their child will attend do they have to provider their own transportation. Mr. Callavini said if a parent requests a preschool and is granted the preschool it is without transportation.

Ms. Morello asked if most students who register are assigned to their home school area. Mr. Callavini said that is correct. Dr. Mounier said he thinks parents should be able to take their children where they please. Mr. English asked if there is a problem with the way this is being done currently. Ms. Morello responded yes because some children are attending preschools that are not convenient for their family.

Committee Reports: Mr. DiGiorgio said discussed at the January Finance Committee meeting was medical insurance cost increase and update, the audit, district owned property, the budget, current year expenditures update, accounting/payroll system update, rental fees and the athletic budget.

Ms. Rios complimented Mr. DiGiorgio on the informative Finance Committee agenda.

Mr. Medio announced the following committees:

**Curriculum & Technology:** Ms. Morello, Chair, Mr. Jennings and Mr. Ulrich.

**Personnel & Policy:** Dr. Mounier, Chair, Ms. Rios and Mr. DiGiorgio.

**Early Childhood:** Ms. Rios and Ms. Morello.

Unfinished

Business:

Mr. English said he does not want the following three issues overlooked: The Alternative School for September, the possibility of redistricting and addressing the overcrowding in the elementary schools. Mr. Medio said as far as redistricting we have 300 openings at Sabater School and we still do not know what we are doing with the Almond Road Preschool. Ms. Morello asked how big of an impact the twelve classrooms will make. Dr. Gruccio said we are hoping to hear from the state shortly, which will enable us to use ECPA funding to finish the Almond Road Preschool and the HVAC project. She said if that takes place without a cost to the district we will be able to open Leuchter School and the Sabater Annex, which will provide us with 24 elementary classrooms.

New Business: Mr. English asked what we are currently doing to promote the positives in the district. Dr. Gruccio said we have formed a committee which consists of teachers, administrators, and Mr. Sbrana. She said this committee will come up with ideas on what we can do to recognize students. Ms. Morello suggested sending a letter to the parents on all of the details when their child is being recognized at a board meeting. She asked if someone can take a digital picture to give to the parents. Ms. Morello said what parent would not like a letter inviting them to celebrate the achievement of their child. She said instead of once a year Teacher of the Year Awards we should find out what kind of innovative programs are going on in the schools. Ms. Morello said there are many wonderful things going on that we never hear about. Dr. Gruccio said she would love to do that if she is notified of these things. Mr. Mercado said we should also have additional categories when we honor our staff. He asked if we are looking to put people from the public on the new committees that are being formed. Dr. Gruccio said absolutely.

Mr. DiGiorgio mentioned that the supervisor that handles the AVID Program is retiring. He said some of the high school teachers had concern that when we lose this supervisor there may not be someone to oversee this program. Mr. DiGiorgio asked if it were possible to stipend someone in the district to do this. Mr. Medio said this could be discussed at the Personnel & Policy Committee meeting.

Mr. Medio said in terms of accentuating the positives he would like to have a television program with administrators, board members and members of the public. Dr. Gruccio said at her last meeting administrators signed up for a television spot and she welcomes any community member who would like to also be involved in this.

Dr. Mounier said there was an event that happened where the mailing/folding machines broke down. He said there were some employees who put in a great deal of time when this happened and he wanted to recognize them. Ms. Ludy thanked Dr. Mounier. She said last Thursday our sealer and mail machine broke. Ms. Ludy said everyone at Coney Avenue in the accounts payable, accounting and computer operations department pulled together and hand folded and ironed 3,800 W2's that had to be mailed out by January 31<sup>st</sup> along with the payroll checks. Ms. Rios said kudos to that department and it is always good to hear the positives.

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

Respectfully submitted,

Cherie Ludy  
Board Secretary

CL:df

