

The regular meeting of the Board of Education of the City of Vineland was held in the Board Room, 625 Plum Street, Vineland, New Jersey, Wednesday, February 11, 2015 at 7:04 p.m., pursuant to notice with Mr. English presiding and the following members present: Ms. Codispoti, Mr. DeWinne, Mr. DiGiorgio, Mr. Jennings, Ms. Morello, Mr. Pagano and Ms. Rios. Absent: Ms. Acosta who is not present due to being ill.

Also present: Dr. Guccio, Superintendent, Mr. Frey and Mr. Frangipani, Assistant Superintendents, Mrs. Haley, Board Secretary, Dr. Rossi, Executive Director of Personnel, Mr. DeSanto, 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: Students from Veterans Memorial Middle School led the Board in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Resolution: None.

Special Presentation (s): Dr. Guccio introduced Ms. Brenda Smaniotto, Director of Vineland School Based Programs (RAFT), to honor students who participated in the Sticker Shock Program in collaboration with Southwest Council.

Ms. Smaniotto said the Sticker Shock Event is coordinated with the Cumberland County Healthy Communities Coalition, which is sponsored by Southwest Council. She said the purpose of the event is to educate adults on the consequences of providing or purchasing alcohol for minors. She introduced the leaders of the club from RAFT and the students.

Approval of Minutes: Upon motion by Ms. Morello, seconded by Mr. DiGiorgio, the minutes were approved from December 10, 2014 executive session and January 14, 2015 special meeting. All Members voted "yes" except Ms. Codispoti and Mr. Pagano who voted "yes" on January 14, 2015 but "abstained" on December 10, 2014.

Report of the  
Secretary/Custodian  
Of School Monies:

Upon motion by, seconded by, the reports of the Secretary and Custodian of School Monies for the months November and December 2014, which are in agreement were approved as submitted and on file in the Minute Book, and the Board approved its monthly certification of budgetary major account fund status and the Board Secretary's monthly certification as on file with the Secretary. All Members voted "yes" except Ms. Codispoti who "abstained."

Public Comment on  
Agenda Items:

Charles Ellis  
Mr. Ellis spoke on behalf of Mr. Ottinger.

James Geraci  
Mr. Geraci read a letter on behalf of Mr. Ottinger from John Scarpa who is presently residing in Florida.

Recommendations:

B. Proposed for review or discussion or adoption by Board Members: None.

Approval of Bills: Upon motion by Ms. Morello, seconded by Mr. DiGiorgio, the bills were approved and warrants issued for same. All Members voted “yes” except Ms. Codispoti who voted “yes” for all bills except any payments made to vendor #2363 she “abstained” (\$6,447,377.88).

Mr. English thanked Mr. DiGiorgio for breaking down the bill questions.

Emergent Item(s)

(with prior approval) Dr. Rossi addressed the emergent hires for Durand Elementary School.

Motion: A motion was made by Ms. Morello, seconded by Ms. Codispoti, to approve the emergent Durand School personnel items. All Members voted “yes” except Mr. DiGiorgio who “abstained.”

Ms. Morello thanked Dr. Rossi for making sure that the student’s needs are met by bringing these things forward and moving quickly.

Mr. DiGiorgio asked if this creates any issues with our arrangement with the unions or Insight. Dr. Rossi explained that it is a union position. Mr. DiGiorgio asked if this person will be a full time employee in the UAW union. Dr. Rossi responded yes.

Public:

Celeste Maloney

Ms. Maloney expressed her concern as to the way children are being taught today. She suggested abolishing computers for one month to see if children know basic skills such as reading, writing and arithmetic.

Elaine Greenberg

Ms. Greenberg spoke on behalf of Mr. Ottinger. She expressed her concern in regards to emergent items based on emotions. Ms. Greenberg discussed the district policy on naming the schools and interior space. She suggested developing an annual dedication request policy to review requests one month out of the school year.

Brian Wallace

Mr. Wallace thanked the Board for all of their efforts. He spoke in favor of a nine period day versus an eight period day. Mr. Wallace discussed the PARCC testing and his child not being able to opt out of it.

Board Solicitor

Comments:

Mr. DeSanto did a presentation on the Roles & Responsibilities of the Superintendent and Board members. He said he is providing this presentation for informational purposes to assist the Superintendent and the Board.

Mr. English mentioned the situation where Mr. Wallace informed the Board of what was told to him by the high school in regards to opting out of the PARCC Testing. He asked Mr. DeSanto how this would get addressed and should Mr. Wallace be reaching out to Dr. Gruccio. Mr. DeSanto said the public session is public comment and the Board does not engage in discussion or answer questions. He said the appropriate response from the chair is thank you for the information. The matter will be referred to the Superintendent and administration will get back to you with an answer.

Mr. DiGiorgio asked as a Board member/parent during his comment time can he reference the comment from the parent in the public. Mr. DeSanto said you do not lose your rights as a parent however, when you are sitting up here you are a Board member. He said any action you take as a parent has to be made outside of the Board room. Mr. DiGiorgio asked is it not a concern of the Board if a student is going to be negatively impacted because they are being removed from their classes for the PARCC testing. Mr. DeSanto said if that is your concern as a Board member and parent you can direct that question to the Superintendent.

Ms. Morello mentioned how Mr. Giordano, former Board President, went to the microphone as a member of the public to speak. She asked how does that occur if a Board member wants to do what Mr. Giordano did. Mr. DeSanto said he believes Mr. Giordano did that once and he had a discussion with him after he did it. He advises that Board members do not speak at Board meetings on personal matters or as a parent. Mr. DeSanto said that is inappropriate. He said if there is a concern as a parent it should be handled administratively outside of the public meeting.

Ms. Rios expressed her concern as to what you would do if the topic was not addressed by administration. Mr. DeSanto said it depends what the matter is. He said if the matter involves a Board members child then that is not something for the public anyway.

Mr. DeSanto said a Board member who has an issue regarding their child takes the issue through the chain of command. In the event that it reaches a point at which there is no administrative resolution he suggested for it to be taken to the county superintendent.

Ms. Morello asked if it would be fair to say that Board members should receive follow up when parents discuss their concerns at a Board meeting. Mr. DeSanto responded yes.

Mr. Frey distributed Mr. DeSanto's Power Point presentation.

Mr. English said on behalf of his colleagues at the Vineland Board of Education he congratulated Mr. DeSanto on being named the NJ Top Lawyer for 2015 awarded by the *NJ Monthly Magazine*. He presented Mr. DeSanto with a certificate.

Board Member

Remarks:

Mr. Jennings said he is extremely happy to be part of the Board's decision to name the entrance of Vineland High School after Chalky Ottinger. He said he was also happy to be part of the crew's banquet last year along with what Mr. DeWinne has done for the Dennis Tanner Scholarship.

Mr. Pagano thanked the Veterans Memorial School students for their participation tonight. He commended the members of the RAFT Program as well as the Southwest Council of the Vineland Police Department and Mr. Bottino. Mr. Pagano said it is great to see our community come together and our students participate. He welcomed Ms. Rivera and said she will be an asset to the district. Mr. Pagano thanked Mr. English for all his work on getting the entranceway named after Mr. Ottinger. He also thanked Mr. DeWinne on the project he has going.

Ms. Morello recognized various students who placed in competitions. She also recognized the schools who were awarded the food safety award by the City of Vineland Health Department. She said that she along with Mr. Jennings attended the African American Read In at Vineland High School North. Ms. Morello said the students were attentive, polite and supportive of their peers. She said we have great things going on in our schools and tonight we voted to honor one of our

Ms. Codispoti said she is very happy with the naming of the Vineland High School entranceway after Mr. Ottinger who is a very deserving man. She welcomed and congratulated Ms. Rivera on her new position. Ms. Codispoti thanked the Veterans Memorial School students along with the RAFT students for attending the meeting. She said there are so many positive things that involve our schools and students. Ms. Codispoti congratulated all the students who take the time to participate. She said it is important to be involved in things in the school. Ms. Codispoti also thanked the people who support our students.

Mr. DiGiorgio asked Mr. DeSanto if he can retract a vote. Mr. DeSanto said yes the meeting has not been adjourned. Mr. DiGiorgio said in regards to emergent item #12 he “abstained.”

Mr. DiGiorgio said he agrees with what Ms. Greenberg said in regards to emotions comment. He said there are many emotional decisions that are made, which is difficult. Mr. DiGiorgio said emergent items sometimes play on those emotions. He tries to make the best decisions possible without letting them impact or influence his decision making. Mr. DiGiorgio said as a Board member he has a concern regarding PARCC. He said students all over the district will be missing valuable classroom and instruction time to take this exam. Mr. DiGiorgio said some students will be missing AP and Honors courses at the high school. He asked if students will be impacted negatively as a result of taking these exams and will they have the opportunity to make up what they have missed in the AP/Honors courses. Mr. DiGiorgio thanked the students who came out tonight along with the community members who spoke.

Mr. DeWinne thanked everyone who spoke tonight. He asked Dr. Gruccio or Mr. Frey to address Mr. Wallace’s questions as soon as possible. Mr. DeWinne said he considers Mr. Ottinger a friend and congratulated him on the honor. He said that he appreciated the comments made by Ms. Greenberg. Mr. DeWinne discussed the Dennis Tanner Scholarship event.

Ms. Rios thanked the Veterans Memorial School students for the flag salute and RAFT Program volunteers. She thanked everyone who spoke in regards to the Chalky Ottinger dedication. Ms. Rios also thanked Mr. DeSanto for his presentation and congratulated him on his

recognition.

Ms. Rios thanked Ms. Greenberg for speaking and would like for her to attend the Policy & Personnel Committee meeting to discuss her idea.

Dr. Guccio thanked the Veterans Memorial and RAFT students. She welcomed Ms. Rivera back to our district. She congratulated Mr. DeSanto on his award and thanked him for tonight's presentation. Dr. Guccio thanked everyone who spoke on Mr. Ottinger's behalf tonight. She said we try very hard to recognize our students at each Board meeting. Dr. Guccio said the guidelines for PARCC are not Vineland Public Schools guidelines but legislative and state guidelines that are directed to us. She said there is no such thing as opting out of the PARCC exam. Dr. Guccio said on the day of the test if a student refuses to take the test it will be marked as such. She said that student will have to remain in the testing situation and read a book during the testing. Dr. Guccio said if a child does not come to school during the testing they will be marked as an unexcused absence. She said for many years we have always had a state exam in place and this is nothing new or different. Dr. Guccio said the test is two and a half days and is no different than taking the HSPA. She said change is frightening for students but we are well prepared for the PARCC testing and it is best if we try to embrace it has an opportunity for our students. Dr. Guccio urged any parent who has a question or concern to not hesitate to contact her.

Report/Remarks by  
Board President:

Mr. English echoed the sentiments of his fellow Board members. He thanked them for embracing the communication, collaboration and transparency piece because he senses a good feeling with this Board. Mr. English thanked Ms. Morello and Mr. Jennings for taking the time out of their day to attend the African American Read In at the high school. He addressed the facility naming policy and the process. Mr. English said it is the positive things that we have to embrace. He said we have a shot in getting this train to roll in the right direction. Mr. English thanked the public for coming out and speaking.

Mr. Pagano said on Tuesday night 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. Petway students will be hosting a Pennies for Puppies at Wendy's on Main Road. He said they are raising money to support the Vineland Police Canine Unit.

Mr. Jennings said Leuchter School will be having an event at Chick-fil-A on February 18, 2015.

Mr. English announced that the Board retreat will be held on February 17, 2015 from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. in the Reber Administration Building.

Adjournment: A motion was made by Ms. Morello, seconded by Mr. DiGiorgio, to adjourn the meeting at 9:00 p.m. All Members voted “yes.”

Respectfully Submitted,

Helen G. Haley  
Board Secretary

HGH:df



