

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 12, 2014 at 7:01 p.m., pursuant to notice with Mr. Medio presiding and the following members present: Mr. Baruffi, Mr. DeWinne, Mr. DiGiorgio, Mr. English, Mr. Jennings, Ms. Morello and Ms. Rios. Absent: Mr. Ulrich.

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

Mr. Medio said Mr. Ulrich is absent due to police business.

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.

Resolution: None.

Flag Salute: Students from Wallace Middle School led the Board in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Special Presentation (s): Dr. Gruccio introduced Mr. Ross Stanger, Supervisor of Curriculum & Instruction, to honor the top three winners of the Geography Bee Contest.

Mr. Stanger said he is here tonight to honor three very impressive young men who recently participated in and scored very well in the annual geography bee for grades four through eight. He said the geography is named after the late Mrs. Dorothy Galberth who passed away in 2010. Mr. Stanger said Mrs. Galberth thought geography and civic knowledge were very important and always carried that through to her students. He acknowledged and thanked Mr. Adam DiDomenico, a Wallace Middle School teacher for all his efforts. Mr. Stanger introduced third place winner Joseph Scagnelli from Veterans Memorial School, second place winner Shallah Harris from Veterans Memorial School and first place winner Isaac Morales from Wallace Middle School. He congratulated each of the winners on their accomplishment and wished them all the best in the years ahead.

Dr. Gruccio thanked the students and said we are very proud of their accomplishments.

Dr. Gruccio introduced Mrs. Vanessa Rasmussen, Vineland High School South English Department Chairperson, to honor the Poetry Out Loud winners.

Mrs. Rasmussen thanked the Board for honoring her wonderful students Angela Doulis and Morgan DeWinne who have demonstrated exceptional poetry recitation skill and acumen. She said Angela and Morgan were the winners of the school wide Poetry Out Loud competition in which thirteen students from various classes competed over the course of two rounds for the title of school champion. She said Poetry Out Loud is a national poetry recitation competition that encourages students to get to know their way around poetry through memorization and performance.

Miss Doulis and Miss DeWinne each recited a poem.

Mr. DeWinne congratulated Miss Doulis on being selected Miss Vineland. He asked Miss Doulis what this experience has done for her confidence. Ms. Doulis said it taught her that she has the ability to recite before a group of people, which has helped her gain confidence.

Mr. English asked Miss DeWinne who and what influenced her to enter the competition. Miss DeWinne said her friends Emily and Jessica along with Mrs. Rasmussen encouraged her to enter.

Dr. Gruccio introduced Mrs. Polof to present an overview in regards to discipline.

Mrs. Polof reviewed what the district's discipline policy/regulations and guide are based on. She said the district's policies and regulations are built on remedial and discipline measures. Mrs. Polof said the Educational Law Center worked diligently to have districts focus on individual needs, circumstances and intent when considering discipline. She said we need to make sure that all reasonable intervention and prevention measures have failed for inappropriate behavior before suspensions and exclusions from school take place. She said the Education Law Center is focused on helping districts to be remedial in dealing with discipline problems.

Mrs. Polof said the discipline guide is part of nineteen pages of regulations. She said our present policy states if permission is granted by the principal for a student to have a cell phone than they can use the cell phone and there can be conditions on how they use it.

Ms. Morello asked if the permission to have a cell phone supersedes the board policy that states you do not use the cell phone during school. Mrs. Polof said that would be inferred because our policy does not make that distinction. Ms. Morello said she thinks our policy very clearly makes that distinction. Mrs. Polof said principals were told if they do give written permission to make sure they have conditions on it. Mr. English asked if cell phones and electronic devices are both in the policy. She said our cell phone policy only deals with cell phones and pagers. Mrs. Polof said there is another policy that discusses the inappropriate use of electronics but not personal electronics only school related materials. Ms. Morello said this will be addressed soon in a Personnel & Policy Committee meeting.

Mr. English asked if administrative action supersedes the regulations. Mrs. Polof said throughout the NJ Administrative Code and in our policies/regulations it discusses making decisions case by case based on a child's prior history, severity of offense and unique circumstances that may have an effect on what happened. She said an administrator has the ability to make a decision as to if they want to do something different then what is mandated.

Ms. Morello asked if everything from vandalism down are governed by a memorandum of agreement or federal mandates. She asked if infractions have administrative discretion. Mrs. Polof responded yes.

Mr. English asked if the regulation will be revised this evening. Mrs. Polof said it was just revised. Mr. English asked if the schools are aware of these revisions. Mrs. Polof said elementary and middle schools have not been revised. Mr. English asked when the regulation will be implemented. Mrs. Polof said immediately at the high school.

Ms. Morello asked if electronic devices will be added at the elementary level. Mrs. Polof said whatever is decided at the Personnel & Policy meeting.

Approval of Minutes: Upon motion by Ms. Morello, seconded by Mr. DeWinne, the executive session and work session minutes were approved from January 15, 2014. All Members voted “yes” except Mr. Jennings who voted “yes” for all everything except the decision by the majority of the Board concerning Dr. Rossi’s recommendation to withhold the salary increment from a teacher whose name is on file with the Board Secretary and Ms. Rios who “abstained.”

Report of the
Secretary/Custodian
Of School Monies:

Upon motion by Ms. Morello, seconded by Mr. DeWinne, the reports of the Secretary and Custodian of School Monies for the months of September, October and November of 2013, 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.”

Mr. DeWinne asked if the January closing went smoothly. Mr. Schectman responded yes.

Solicitor’s Report:

Mr. DeSanto said he followed up on Ms. Morello’s request that we obtain from each Board member the identity of any relatives working in the district and their position. He said that he has received responses from everyone and would like to know if there is any objection to sending a letter to the School Ethics Commission requesting an advisory opinion regarding the ability of all of those potentially conflicted Board members from participating in the superintendent’s evaluation. There were no objections from the Board. Mr. DeSanto said he will provide the Board a copy of the letter and response when received.

Public Comment on
Agenda Items:

None

Recommendations:

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

Mr. Medio said at next month's Board meeting he would like to discuss making it mandatory for all high school students to take lunch.

Approval of Bills: Upon motion by Ms. Morello, seconded by Mr. Jennings, the bills were approved and warrants issued for same \$4,150,832.67 for December 2013 and \$5,051,293.65 for January 2014. All Members voted "yes" except Mr. DiGiorgio who voted "yes" on all bills except Buzz's Bookworm and Grainger he voted "no" and Mr. English who voted "yes" on all bills except Grainger he voted "no" and Mr. Medio who voted "yes" on all bills except Buzz's Bookworm he voted "no."

Mr. Jennings asked for an explanation on the payment to Austino's Karate. Mr. Schectman said he believes it is a karate academy that was brought in as a demonstration for the students. He said that he will get the exact information on it.

Mr. DiGiorgio asked for an explanation on the following payments: Singing Telegrams by Jeff, Partners in Pediatrics and Perfect Move. Ms. Morello said Singing Telegrams by Jeff do assemblies and performances.

Emergent Item(s)
(with prior approval) None.

Public: John Morris, Attorney for Shorter family
Mr. Morris thanked Mr. Medio for his suggestion last week as to mediation, which occurred earlier today and was successful. He said the family appreciated Mr. Medio's suggestion and the assistance provided by John Morris the transportation coordinator. He asked if a code of student conduct has been implemented in the district.

Dr. Gruccio said we have a code of student conduct based on each level, which is the guide Mrs. Polof spoke about this evening.

Mr. Morris said in reviewing Policy #5512 if there is not something made available to parents and students then you could have recurring problems.

Board Member

Remarks:

Mr. Jennings said he has not heard anything about Cenergistics. Dr. Gruccio said she will have Mr. Weaver give an update at the next meeting. Mr. Jennings said he believes that we all need to do self-evaluations on a consistent basis. He said none of us are perfect and not always right. Mr. Jennings said we need to make sure that decisions we are making here are in the best interest of all of our stakeholders and not for our own gain or gain of someone else. He congratulated everyone who was honored tonight along with the flag salute students.

Mr. Baruffi thanked Mr. Medio for suggesting mediation last week and hopefully the healing process will begin.

Mr. DeWinne said he distributed the Finance Committee minutes to each Board member. He said discussed at the meeting was health insurance and a change in providers was recommended. Mr. DeWinne said Mr. Schectman along Mrs. Haley have been working on bringing our books up to date. He said also discussed going out for Request for Proposals (RFP).

Ms. Morello asked what the problem is in getting a local vendor presentation. Mr. Medio said they have been told this is being worked and something is in the pipeline. He said he has been hearing this for at least a year and a half. Mr. Medio announced that the local vendor presentation will be on March 13th. Mr. DeWinne said the finance committee needs to look at how the bid process works. He said hopefully the local vendors could take part in this.

Mr. DeWinne said he enjoyed the presentation tonight. He announced that there will be a pasta dinner held for the girls field hockey and boys wrestling team this Sunday at the Moose Hall from 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Ms. Rios thanked Mrs. Polof and Administration for updating the discipline guide and providing the Board with the information. She hopes the Board and Administration can work together to move this district forward on the strategic planning process. Ms. Rios wished everyone a Happy Friendship Day.

Mr. DiGiorgio thanked everyone who attended tonight's meeting along with the students for the good job they did. He said sometimes schools have to deal with problems that should be dealt with outside of school and he is sure that everyone will get to the desired outcome at some point. Mr. DiGiorgio cautioned everyone to be safe with the weather conditions that may be coming.

Mr. English thanked everyone that was involved with the mediation process at Wallace Middle School along with Mr. Medio for suggesting the mediation. Mr. English acknowledged Tanaisa Russell for scoring 1000 points for the Vineland High School basketball team. He congratulated the entire Vineland High School boys' basketball program along with the coaches for sweeping the Atlantic City boys' basketball team on Monday. He thanked the cheerleaders for supporting the team at each game. Mr. English congratulated the boys and girls swim teams and coaches for qualifying for the NJ State playoffs and competitions. He said our wrestling program continues to battle in the tough Cape Atlantic American division. Mr. English said he hopes the winter track program is doing well and continues to improve. He urged everyone to support the Vineland High School Cap 'N Dagger club as they perform *Thoroughly Modern Millie* on March 13, 14 and 15 in the Vineland High School South auditorium. Mr. English thanked Mr. Sbrana and everyone involved in the Vineland Public Schools facebook page.

Report/Remarks by
Board President:

Mr. Medio said the transportation committee will consist of Mr. Ulrich, Mr. Jennings, Ms. Rios and Mr. English. He asked what the objective of this committee will be. Mr. English said to address safety issues regarding transportation, to make sure transportation is running efficient, and to be in contact with some of the stakeholders who have knowledge. He feels it is a chance to see how the transportation department works. Ms. Morello asked if this is purely for transportation or transportation/registration. Mr. English said transportation questions are always referred to registration. Mr. Medio said this is an Ad Hoc committee with two meetings and a report will be ready for the May Board meeting. Ms. Morello said if this is going to involve registration then you may want to think about the yearly early childhood registration issues. Ms. Rios said whomever the early childhood liaison is they should bring the transportation issues to the committee. Mr. Medio asked Ms. Morello to be the liaison. Ms. Rios feels that more than two meetings are needed for this Ad Hoc Committee. Mr. Medio said no problem there can be three meetings.

Mr. Jennings congratulated his son on winning the Mr. Vineland competition at Vineland High School.

Adjournment: The Board adjourned the meeting by voice vote at 8:35 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Herbert G. Schectman
Board Secretary

HGS:df

