

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, March 5, 2014 at 7:09 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, Ms. Rios and Mr. Ulrich. Absent: None.

Also present: Dr. Gruccio, Superintendent, Mr. Frey, Assistant Superintendent, Mrs. Polof, Assistant Superintendent, Mr. Schectman, Board Secretary, Dr. Rossi, Executive Director of Personnel, 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:

Mr. Schectman read a resolution to convene into executive session for the following reasons as outlined in N.J.S.A. 10-4-12. Any matter which, by express provision of Federal Law, State Statute or Rule of Court shall be rendered confidential or excluded from discussion in public provision relied upon is bullying incident at Wallace Middle School. Any collective bargaining agreement, or the terms and conditions of which are proposed for inclusion in any collective bargaining agreement, including the negotiation of terms and conditions with employees or representatives of employees of the public body. Specified contract is VASA grievances, Administrative/Supervisory/Auxiliary Personnel Memorandum. Any pending or anticipated litigation or contract negotiation in which the public body is or may be a party. If pending/anticipated litigation the matter is John Sammons. If contract negotiation the nature of the contract and interested party is the 21st Century Five Year Grant. 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. Any matter involving the employment, appointment, termination of employment, terms and conditions of employment, evaluation of the performance, promotion or disciplining of any specific prospective public officer or employee or current public officer or employee employed or appointed by the public body, unless all individual employees or appointees whose rights could be adversely affected request in writing that such matter or matters be discussed at a public meeting. The nature of discussion is donated sick leave for a teacher.

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: Upon motion by Ms. Morello, seconded by Mr. DeWinne, the resolution was passed. All Members voted “yes”.

Special

Presentations: Dr. Guccio introduced Jacqueline Huster, Wallace Middle School Librarian, to honor students who participated in the African American History Month Read In Program.

Ms. Huster said this was our sixth annual African American Read In, which is part of our black history celebration. She commended the students for getting up in front of the entire class and speaking with dignity, grace and poise. Ms. Huster introduced and recognized Bianca Morgan, Izaiah Jones along with Ferdinand Moscat who could not attend tonight’s meeting.

Dr. Guccio introduced Ms. Ruth Shropshire who is present tonight on behalf of the Vineland Historical Society.

Ms. Patricia Martinelli, the curator of the Vineland Historical Society said she along with Ms. Shrophire and Reverend Hand of the Historical Society Education Committee are here to request for the Board to make changes in its current policy with regards to students visiting the Historical Society. She said the Vineland Historical Society has a lot to offer the students.

Mr. DeWinne asked what needs to be changed in the policy. Ms. Shropshire explained that it was a practice in the past to visit the Historical Society and it was discontinued because there was no physical way we could get the volunteers that we had in the past. She said now that she is retired she has been able to get people to volunteer and we are prepared for any grade level to visit.

Dr. Guccio said we will do our best to get the information out and encourage our schools to visit.

Dr. Gruccio introduced Mr. Wayne Weaver, Executive Director of Maintenance, to introduce the Cenergistic Team Members.

Mr. Weaver introduced Mr. Tom Diliberti, Mr. Matt Stellar and Mr. Ivan Escobar, to present the Cenergistic results and savings.

Mr. Diliberti said the primary goal of the program is to save money on the utility budget for years to come. The Cenergistic results and savings were presented.

Mr. Ulrich asked what the cost of this is. Mr. Schectman said 50% of the savings that accrues in the district will be paid to Cenergistics on a monthly basis.

Mr. DeWinne asked if meters are being read. Mr. Diliberti said the information is taken from the utility bills. Mr. Weaver said we have real time data on our demand response program for the schools that are connected. He said it would be nice to get the entire district on the program so we can see what is going on.

Ms. Morello asked if on a regular basis Mr. Escobar can let the Board know who the energy stars are so they can be recognized. Mr. Diliberti said they can supply reports that would show usage or performance.

Dr. Gruccio introduced Mrs. Ruth Polof to present the 2012-2013 Violence and Vandalism Report.

Mrs. Polof said it is required that a public hearing be held during the school year whereby a report is given to the Board on all acts of Violence & Vandalism for the previous year. She said the verification of this report is part of the monitoring requirements under QSAC. Mrs. Polof reviewed the results of the report with the Board.

Ms. Morello asked what you attribute to the increase in police notifications. Mrs. Polof said staff has been more cognizant that they are allowed to file complaints on disorderly conduct incidents. Ms. Morello requested the breakdown of the grade levels of the 75 students. She asked if substance abuse reporting is due to a higher level of consciousness or staff knowing what to look for. Mrs. Polof said she thinks it is a little bit of both. Ms. Morello asked how you identify what the causes of these numbers are especially when they escalate. Mrs. Polof said we keep a monthly tab as to the arrests and what is happening.

Mr. Ulrich said there are certain things that occur in the schools that have to be reported by State law such as cds and weapons offenses. He expressed his concern that the numbers on the report are very difficult to look at and he would like to see the data broken down.

Ms. Morello said she would like to know as a Board Member and member of the community what we can do to identify trends and how we address them.

Mr. Ulrich expressed his concern that the 2011-2012 data does not make sense.

Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying (HIB Report), Suspension Report, Cunningham Alternative School Report/Average Daily Attendance - Mrs. Polof presented the report.

Comments by

Board Solicitor: None.

Public Comments on

Agenda Items: None.

Items for Review:

A. Superintendent

1. **PERSONNEL**

1.1 **Personnel Items** – Mr. DiGiorgio asked if we are making progress on the food service hiring. Dr. Rossi said the higher level positions are district employees and our progress is from the bottom. Mr. DiGiorgio asked if the salary amendment is based on new experience. Dr. Rossi said it is verification on what the employee claims they have.

Mr. English asked if the assistant cook position was offered to an in-house person who refused it what would happen. Dr. Rossi said it would be an external hire.

2. **PROCEDURES & OPERATIONS**

2.1 **Travel – a. Field Trips, b. District Travel** – Mr. DiGiorgio asked if the cost to go to Rider University for NJ Model Congress was almost eight thousand dollars. Dr. Gruccio said she believes the group goes for more than one day and stay in the dorms.

Mr. English said a trip to Morey's Pier could be a big savings in the future for the safety patrol to consider. Dr. Guccio said a meeting was held and some new guidelines were set up for next year that will be very helpful. Mr. English said he would like to know how much the trip costs. Dr. Guccio said she will get him that information.

Mr. Ulrich asked for clarification as to why some trips are funded through the school PTO and others from district funds. Mr. Schectman said he would get him that information. Mr. Ulrich said we need to be consistent across the board with the funding of these trips.

2.2 **Petway Elementary School Walt Disney Trip** – No discussion.

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

2.4 **Re-adoption of By-Laws and Policies from April 1, 2014 to June 30, 2014** – Mr. Medio said one change that will be made involves the cell phone policy. Ms. Morello said if any board member has a particular area of concern in the policy manual to forward it to the policy committee.

Mr. English asked if there is a company that looks at our policies. Dr. Guccio said no they provide the policy and any updates to the mandated policies that we must have. Mr. English asked if we pay them yearly. Mr. DeWinne responded yes. Mr. English asked if this is something we can do in-house. Dr. Guccio said the amount is minimal and we have found them to be a good company.

3. **BUILDINGS & GROUNDS** – None.

4. **FINANCE**

4.1 **Budgetary Transfers** – Ms. Morello expressed her concern as to why all this money is in the wrong accounts.

Mr. DiGiorgio asked why we had budgeted line items in the Success account for a building that we did not have. Mr. Schectman said we still have the Success Program and there was money budgeted for the Success Program building. He said the accounting staff are cleaning up the budget line items as we move in to the budget process for the 2014-2015 school year. Mr. DeWinne said Mr. Schectman was not part of last year's budget process. Mr. Schectman said no one on the accounting staff was part of last year's budget process.

Ms. Morello asked if we do not have staff that have been here for a very long time and have awareness as to what the programs and numbers are and what should or should not be in the line items. Mr. Schectman said yes but since he was not here it is difficult for him to comment on this. He said it was to his understanding that we had a new system last year and not everyone on the entire accounting staff participated in loading the budget.

Ms. Rios asked if the transportation department gave up funding. Mr. Schectman said there was an insurance that was double budgeted in this year's budget. He said when it was brought to Mr. Callavini's attention he agreed to give the funds up out of his budget because it was paid out of another budget. Ms. Rios said she does not understand why certain departments complain that they need certain funding yet when it is available to them it is given up. Mr. Schectman said it was not a question of giving up funds but moving the money out of Mr. Callavini's budget into where it had been paid from.

Mr. Medio asked if the vo-tech shortfall money was short budgeted. Mr. Schectman said he will get him that information.

Mr. DiGiorgio asked if the various departments are involved with their budget. Mr. Schectman said every department has access to their budget in Systems 3000.

- 4.2 **Placement of Special Education Students** – No discussion.
- 4.3 **Acceptance of the General Mills Foundations Grant Funds for Barse/Leuchter School** – No discussion.
- 4.4 **Acceptance of Young Citizens Scholarship Grant Funds for Barse School** – Ms. Morello asked what the actual cost of the trip is. Dr. Guccio said she will get that information.
- 4.5 **Cumberland County Educational Cooperative Joint Transportation Contract** – No discussion.
- 4.6 **Benecard Services, Inc. July 1, 2014 – June 30, 2015** – No discussion.
- 4.7 **Submission of the Gannett Foundation Grant for D'Ippolito School** – Ms. Morello asked what this grant is for. Dr. Guccio said it is for a parent appreciation night. Ms. Morello asked if an explanation could be added with all grant approvals. Dr. Guccio said it is in the back up material. Ms. Morello said she dislikes the set up.
- 4.8 **Buena Regional School District Joint Transportation Contract** – No discussion.

4.9 **Donation from Italian-American Benevolent Association** – No discussion.

4.10 **Acceptance of Family Friendly Center Grant Funds for Sabater School** – No discussion.

4.11 **Vineland Non-Certificated Supervisors Association (VNCSA) Contract** – No discussion.

4.12 **Submission of Amended No Child Left Behind (NCLB) for 2014** – No discussion.

4.13 **SimplexGrinnell Proposal** – No discussion.

2. ITEMS PROPOSED FOR REGULAR AGENDA:

a. **Report by the Secretary of the Board of Education** – No discussion.

B. Proposed for review or discussion or adoption by Board Members:

Mr. Medio said since he proposed mandatory lunch for students at Vineland High School he has received information and plans to have a meeting at the high school with any students and board members who are interested. Ms. Morello asked when taking a mandatory lunch changed. Mr. Medio said he does not know but will find out. Dr. Gruccio said there are a total of 310 students who do not take lunch in grades nine through twelve.

Mr. English said the first sentence of the cell phone policy states “pupils are not permitted to bring or possess cellular telephones on to school district property at any times when school is in session” he has received feedback from six board members that do not agree with that and feel students should be able to bring cell phones on to the property. He feels that students should be allowed to bring their cell phones to school. Ms. Morello said to have a cell phone on you but not on or in use would be the perfect solution until we can make this policy appropriate. Mr. English does not think we should be confiscating, suspending or punishing students for the 21st Century technology piece. Ms. Morello said this needs to be well thought out. Mr. Ulrich said he is proposing that this policy is relaxed immediately because it is a safety issue. Mr. Medio said the issue at hand is the cell phone policy which is not acceptable to the Board. He said the policy has to be uniform across the board and administration has to enforce it. Mr. Ulrich said this is about an overall plan to allow devices to come into the district. Ms. Morello requested that if this is going to be amended to make it electronic communications and recording devices because then your umbrella is larger over the short term.

Mr. English asked if the regulations are currently in line with the policy. Mrs. Polof said there are no regulations. Mr. DeSanto suggested that what the Board will be voting on next week should be in writing so all Board members can see what they are voting on. He said if this policy is changed next week the superintendent should send a letter to the high school directing them to suspend any further penalties or punishments with respect to the former policy. Dr. Gruccio said we are bouncing back and forth and this will have an impact on students who were already suspended such as not being able to attend the prom. Mr. DeSanto said unfortunately this is what happens in the legal system all the time because many times laws are changed to correct past sins but you cannot unring the bell. Mr. Jennings said he is in favor of a policy that allows the students to have a device. Ms. Morello said a policy should be put in place to promote and support education. Mr. Ulrich feels this comes down to classroom management which is the message we should be sending. Ms. Rios asked if district personnel are allowed to have cell phones. Dr. Gruccio said yes but they do not use them during class time. Mr. DeWinne feels the phones could be on, silenced and out of the sight of the instructor. He said there should be some repercussions but to lose the benefit of attending the prom is tough and maybe there should be a three strike type policy. Mr. Medio asked what discipline occurred as far as cell phones in the last three weeks. Mrs. Polof said administrative detention, confiscation of phones and suspensions. Mr. Medio asked Mr. DeWinne to read his observations again. Mr. DeWinne said the policy should read phones on, phones silenced and out of sight of the instruction with three strikes. Ms. Morello asked what about in the hallway. Mr. Medio asked for administration to write the policy up tomorrow and email it to the Board. Mr. DeSanto said the only issue he sees is if a teacher wants to use it for educational purposes that teacher is encouraging violation of the policy. He said you may want to add “unless utilized by the teacher for educational purposes” or you will have another dilemma. Mr. Medio said next Wednesday the Board will vote to allow cell phones in some manner in the schools.

Review of Bills: Mr. Schectman said there are no bills to approve this month because the December 2013 and January 2014 bills were approved at the last Board meeting.

Mr. DeWinne said he has heard from a few vendors that it takes 60 to 90 days to get paid for work they have done. Mr. Schectman said 60 days is normal and he receives very few complaints. Mr. DeWinne asked if something could be processed in 30 days. Mr. Schectman said under the NJ State guidelines we have to wait until all the required paperwork is received. He said sometimes central office needs to hunt paperwork down. Mr. Ulrich asked if the checks are cut before they are approved. Mr. Schectman said we pay the bills and present them to the Board. Mrs. Morello asked if there is an electronic way to speed things up. Mr. Schectman said it can be done and there are some vendors who are paid electronically but very few.

Public

Comments: Lisa Arena

Ms. Arena expressed her concern that there are no pay phones at the high school and as a parent of a child in the high school there is no way for her child to contact her if an after school activity is changed if cell phones are not allowed. She said that she along with her siblings, while attending the high school, never took a lunch. Ms. Arena said the only way they could fit Select Choir in to their day was to not take it during their lunch period. She said many students love music and the arts and the only way they can pick up that period is to give up their lunch period. Ms. Arena feels it would be very unfortunate to take the opportunity away from students to participate in the things that they love most.

Committee

Reports: None.

Unfinished

Business: None.

New Business:

Mr. English said snow days should be built into the snow calendar for the future. Dr. Gruccio said we used to do that. Mr. English said there should be a copy of the bell schedule when there is a two hour delay. Dr. Gruccio said we have never done a two hour delay and we plan on updating the bell schedule. Mr. English asked if his daughter, who will be receiving her license soon, will be able to drive as a junior. Dr. Gruccio said they are looking at putting it back into place with guidelines such as GPA, attendance etc.

Mr. Ulrich asked if there was consideration given to take a day from Easter break to make up a snow day. Dr. Gruccio said currently we are okay. She said teachers in the preschools still have an additional day, which they would like to make up on a Saturday. Mr. Ulrich asked what the last day is for the school calendar. Dr. Gruccio said she believes the 30th for teachers. Mr. Medio asked who makes up the calendar. Dr. Gruccio said the county superintendent meets with all the superintendents and requests for us to have a uniform calendar. She said we bring our unions in and put a calendar in place. Mr. DiGiorgio asked if spring break is an entire week off. Dr. Gruccio responded yes. Mr. DeWinne said he does not know the benefit in having an entire week off. Mr. DiGiorgio asked if the schools in the county have similar breaks for spring break. Mr. Medio said he remembers a time when the Board put the school calendar together with input from a few staff members. Dr. Gruccio said as long as she can remember we have had an in-house committee with the unions and principals. Mr. Medio said this will be looked at for next year.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned by voice vote at 10:02 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Herbert G. Schectman
Board Secretary

HGS:df

