

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 6, 2013 at 7:03 p.m., pursuant to notice with Mr. Medio presiding and the following members present: Mr. DiGiorgio, Mr. Jennings, Mr. Mercado, Ms. Morello, Dr. Mounier and Mr. Ulrich. Absent: Mr. English and Ms. Rios.

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 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 personnel actions involving three teachers and one paraprofessional. **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** 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. Ulrich, to approve the executive session resolution. All Members voted "yes."

Mr. English arrived at 7:14 p.m.

Special

Presentations: Dr. Guccio introduced Nancy Civiletto, Italian teacher and Mario Olsen Principal, of Vineland High School South, to present a proposal for a trip to Italy.

Mr. Olsen said Ms. Civiletto formulated a proposal for a trip to Italy, which he thinks is a great idea and opportunity for the students of Vineland High School. Ms. Civiletto said she is here tonight to propose a once in a lifetime opportunity for the Italian and Latin III and IV students. She requested a chance to extend our students world language lessons from the classroom into the full environment of Italy. Ms. Civiletto said her senior class of 2001 was one of the last Italian groups to travel to Italy. Ms. Civiletto said no classroom lesson could ever replace the lessons we learned abroad. She said educational experiences abroad can truly be magical components of our lives because you never know what opportunities await you when you can speak more than one language. Ms. Civiletto said she would like to propose an international tour with the Cultural Heritage Alliance (CHA). She said CHA is a nationally acclaimed tour company based in Philadelphia which has been organizing educational trips for 44 years. Ms. Civiletto said she has chosen the Gems of Italy tour and suggested traveling the end of March 2014. She said the tour will be for ten days and students will be visiting some of Italy's most famous cities. Ms. Civiletto said students will be responsible for the cost of their tour less fundraising activities organized throughout the year. She said the cost is \$3,593.00 which includes round trip airfare, three and four star hotels, breakfast and dinner daily, airport transfers when abroad, motor coach and ferry costs, guided sightseeing and walking tours, admissions to attractions and museums. Ms. Civiletto said the cost also includes liability insurance coverage for group leaders and participants. She thanked the board for their time and consideration.

Ms. Morello asked if there is a grade requirement to participate in this trip. Ms. Civiletto responded yes the student must maintain a C average or above. Ms. Morello asked if a restricted list will be followed. Ms. Civiletto responded yes. Ms. Morello feels that these trips are a great opportunity and a wonderful price for everything that is included.

Mr. Ulrich asked how many students are estimated to participate. Ms. Civiletto said we would like to have at least 35 students.

Dr. Mounier asked how the schedule coordinates with the high school instruction schedule. Ms. Civiletto said this will be on school days and she is looking at the end of March. She said our students know that they would have to make up any work that is missed.

Mr. Jennings asked if there is a minimum amount of students that are required for the trip. Ms. Civileto said we are not required but if we have a minimum of 30 students that will guarantee us having our own private bus when we arrive. Mr. Jennings asked if the price will stay the same no matter what. Ms. Civileto said unfortunately if we have a smaller group the price may increase.

Dr. Gruccio introduced Debbie Bechtel, Principal and Kristina Craig, Asst. Principal of Winslow Elementary School, to discuss the United Way and Go Red Campaigns that their school participated in.

Ms. Bechtel thanked her staff for all their hard work. She said they currently raised over \$700 for heart disease and over \$2,000 for the United Way. Ms. Bechtel also thanked Dr. Gruccio for acknowledging her staff.

Dr. Gruccio introduced Vlada Jackson to introduce the winners in the Russian Speaking Competition.

Ms. Jackson said she is very glad to have this opportunity to present the outstanding success of very special Vineland High School students. She said on November 1, 2012 these students participated in a National Russian essay competition. Ms. Jackson said she is very proud because every student won a medal at this competition. She introduced each of the medal winners.

**Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying (HIB Report), Suspension Report, Cunningham Alternative School Report/Average Daily Attendance** - Ms. Morello asked if these reports are compared year to year. Mrs. Polof responded yes at the end of the year there will be a report comparing each school month to month.

Comments by

Board Solicitor: None.

Public Comments

On Agenda Items: None.

Items for Review:

A. Superintendent

1. **PERSONNEL**

1.1 Personnel Items – Ms. Morello said she understands in the Finance Committee report we will have some major deficits and there will be some things that we will have to take a hard look at. She expressed her concern that we would fill a position that has been vacant for a while. Dr. Gruccio said the position was never vacant and feels this is a critical position because we should have a supervisor in each of the content areas. She said Mr. Frey has been helping since Mr. Dantine left and he is treading water trying to do this along with his job. Dr. Gruccio said she agreed to cut two positions in order to not jeopardize this position because she believes it is critical and directly impacts students. She said our supervisors are in the schools on a regular basis and write the curriculum, which is the hub of the district.

Mr. Frey said he believes this position is the vision and voice of science education in our district. He said the next generation of science standards are here and there is a new horizon there for us.

Ms. Morello said her fiscal responsibility is the voice of the board and she does not see at this moment in time that this is a fiscally responsible move. She said it is a \$96,000 position plus benefits with twenty days paid vacation.

Mr. Jennings asked what the chance is that this position will be put on hold or cut because it is a new hire. Dr. Gruccio said it is a replacement position that is critical and should not be cut now or ever. Mr. Jennings asked what position Ms. Daplyn-Skinner is coming from. Mr. Frey said she is a Kingsway biology teacher.

Mr. DiGiorgio asked who evaluates the supervisors in our district. Mr. Frey said he does.

Mr. Ulrich said Vineland is the 14<sup>th</sup> largest municipality in the state and the 12<sup>th</sup> largest school district. He said there is a misconception that we are supervisor heavy but when you look at the people we have in place we are not. Mr. Ulrich said the supervisors are stretched thin already and people need to be supervised. He thinks a subject matter expert should be doing the evaluations of that subject matter instead of a vice principal. Mr. Ulrich said salaries are contractual and set by the VASA guide.

Ms. Morello thinks everything needs to be looked at and something needs to be cut somewhere before we start adding in. She said we need to have a firm plan. Dr. Gruccio said the timing is critical for Mr. Frey because he is beginning to focus on final exams and lot of work needs to be done in order to go into that process.

Mr. Jennings asked if this position is put on hold will it always be there. Dr. Gruccio said she hopes so.

Mr. Medio asked how many supervisors we currently have in the district. Mr. Frey said nine. Mr. Medio asked if it would be reasonable to assign the duties to a couple of the supervisors we have for a few months. Mr. Frey said the longer you wait more things are accumulated and it is more difficult to move forward.

Mr. Medio said it is unfair to put someone in a position knowing that there is a chance that they will not have that job a year from now. He said there has to be a fundamental change in the attitude of both board members and administration as far as the budget is concerned. Mr. Medio said we are in a situation where something has got to go.

Mr. Ulrich said yes we have to be fiscally responsible and you cannot pick and choose. He said if you want to make hard decisions then look at athletics.

Ms. Morello said she agrees and maybe for the next contract negotiation Schedule B should be looked at.

Mr. English said he personally feels this position is needed and he will support the position. He said the Atlantic City and Camden School Districts have 10 to 12 supervisors with fewer students.

Mr. Jennings asked if it possible to wait and put this position on next month's agenda. Dr. Gruccio said no we need to move forward.

Mr. DiGiorgio said with the definition of supervisor he would like to see experience in excess of a certain amount of years. He said it is hard to accept that years of experience does not tip the scale in the decision making process.

Dr. Mounier said it is irrelevant what goes on in other districts. He said the fact that Camden has fewer students and more supervisors is not necessarily an accurate point for argumentation because having more supervisors does not appear to have done them any good.

Mr. English said he believes that science is an important course that needs to be supervised.

2. **PROCEDURES & OPERATIONS**

- 2.1 **Travel** – No discussion.
- 2.2 **Progress Targets Action Plan** –No discussion.
- 2.3 **Bus Evacuations February** – No discussion.
- 2.4 **Readoption of Board Policies and Bylaws** – No discussion.

3. **BUILDINGS & GROUNDS**

4. **FINANCE**

- 4.1 **Budgetary Transfers** – No discussion.
- 4.2 **Special Education Students** – No discussion.
- 4.3 **McRel School Leader Evaluation System** – Mr. Jennings asked if some of the wording on this can be changed. Dr. Gruccio said she is sure we can substitute words that mean the same thing.
- 4.4 **ASCD Danielson Teacher Evaluation Rubric** – Mr. Medio said he would like the wording changed on items 4.3 and 4.4 to reflect “in accordance with the state requirements.” He said if the state does not require this then we will not do this on our own.
- 4.5 **Early Childhood Revised 2013-2014 Budget** – No discussion.
- 4.6 **OFAC Audit** – No discussion.
- 4.7 **GovDeals Surplus/Auction** – Mr. English asked if these items are at one school. Dr. Zorzi responded to the question off of the microphone.
- 4.8 **Newfield Bank Donation** – Dr. Mounier asked how this came about. Dr. Gruccio said she would find out.
- 4.9 **Budget 2013-2014** – See vote sheet for discussion.

Recommendation:

Public Comments      Louis Russo  
Mr. Russo said the ideas that were brought up by the board on fiscal accountability were very important ones. He echoed the concerns brought up by Mr. Ulrich. Mr. Russo said Vineland has not budgeted up to its 2% cap and each year that we do this we are falling further and further behind with what the state deems the City of Vineland should be paying to educate its own children. He urged the board to consider budgeting up to cap.

4.10 **Glassboro Public Schools Transportation Agreement** – No discussion.

4.11 **Submission of Grants** – Mr. Jennings asked how we obtain these grants. Dr. Gruccio said the schools apply for them. Mr. Jennings asked if the district has a grant writer. Dr. Gruccio responded no. Mr. Jennings asked if there is any recognition when a person takes it upon themselves to apply for a grant. Dr. Gruccio said no.

Mr. DiGiorgio said there is a firm in town that does this type of work and maybe we can make an arrangement with them. Dr. Gruccio said she is going to put them back on the agenda as soon as we get through the budget.

Ms. Morello suggested a shared service arrangement through the county consortium.

4.12 **EnergyCAP License/Maintenance Agreement** – No discussion.

4.13 **Cenergistics Energy Contract** – No discussion.

## 2. ITEMS PROPOSED FOR REGULAR AGENDA:

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

b. **Monthly Bills Incurred** – Ms. Morello questioned the multiple payments to many people in the same amount. Ms. Ludy said it is the transportation aid in lieu. Ms. Morello asked when they are sent. Ms. Ludy said twice a year. Mr. DiGiorgio asked if there is a document that describes how this works and if so can he have a copy. Ms. Ludy responded yes. Ms. Morello asked if the payment is per child or per household. Mr. Callavini said it is \$884 per child annually.

c. **Discussion to waive the time requirements for review according to Policy #0131 “Bylaws and Policies” and adopt the following policies #2415, #2431, #2431.1, #2431.2, #6480 and #8505** – Mr. English expressed his concern in regards to Policy #2431 Athletic Competition. He said we work on the credit system and a student can have two failures and still participate in a sport.

Mr. English said he would like to revisit this issue and pursue maintaining a 2.0 Grade Point Average (GPA), which is a grade D. He feels if a student is failing they need more time in the classroom. Ms. Morello said she agrees with Mr. English and does not think it should just be athletics and feels employment should also be included. Mr. English said he would like to know how the tutoring program has progressed and was it charted like the board requested. Mr. Ulrich said he agrees with Mr. English because the argument was that mentoring was applied only for that time period. Mr. English asked if the special education students have different criteria to play a sport. Mrs. Polof said she does not believe there is different criteria but may have a statement in the IEP that allows them to participate in extra-curricular activities. Mr. English asked who would oversee that. Mrs. Polof said the child study team and case manager. Mr. English asked why a student is still playing sports when they are suspended five times in a season. Mr. Medio said that would be a question for the superintendent to look into. He said we need to do whatever we could at the intermediate school level to impress upon the students that they need to pass and do their homework to be involved in sports. Mr. Medio said when you are involved in a sport the biggest thing you learn are the intangibles of life. Mr. English said education is number one and sports, extra-curricular and clubs are secondary. Dr. Gruccio said Mr. Robbins will be attending the next Personnel & Policy Committee meeting and can answer these questions.

Mr. Medio said instead of the mandated change in policies being sent to the Personnel & Policy Committee he would like them sent to all board members and put on the agenda. Dr. Gruccio said we are leaving all of these policies on the agenda because of the mandated changes. She said after the Personnel & Policy Committee meeting if we choose to revise or add to Policy #2431 we will do it then.

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

1. **District Goals (Susanne Morello)** – Ms. Morello thanked Dr. Gruccio for providing the goals in advance. She expressed her concern that the benchmarks do not seem sufficiently clear in the plan to make a fair evaluation and things could be a little more detailed so the board knows exactly what they are looking for in terms of results. Ms. Morello said for the district's image she feels we do not need to change the logo because that involves a new expense such as all new stationary. Dr. Gruccio said the logo was discussed at the retreat that is why it is in there. She indicated in the goals that Mr. Merighi offered to do the logo with our students at no cost. Ms. Morello said she does not think we need a new logo only a new vision and attitude. Mr. Mercado said the students can design the logo and as far as new letterhead you can set the computers up to print the logo on the letterhead. Mr. Ulrich said he agrees with Ms. Morello but Mr. Mercado brings up an excellent point because this would be a great student project that could be phased in electronically. Mr. Mercado asked when the next board retreat follow-up is scheduled. Dr. Gruccio said nothing is scheduled yet.

Ms. Morello asked if we have to repair the infrastructure to maximize the current use of hardware so we do not have traffic jams and hubs that do not accommodate the flow of information. Dr. Gruccio said she thinks we are in the process of doing all of this. She said if any board members have specific concerns regarding the goals to please email her.

Mr. Ulrich said he has done a little research and there are some pros to recording our closed sessions so the minutes can be actually portrayed as to what was said. He said the American Civil Liberty Union (ACLU) has a position paper out on the Sunshine Law and the Open Public Records Act (OPRA). Mr. Ulrich read the proposed changes that he found in Bills 1451 and 1452 of the Open Public Records Act. The changes provide for the minutes of a meeting of a public body to include unedited audio or video recording of the meeting and made available to the public on the same basis of other meeting minutes. He said we can set the example of professionalism in something that state senators are discussing. Mr. Ulrich is proposing for this to go forward as a resolution to be adopted by the board in accordance to a manner that is acceptable with the board solicitor and voted upon.

Mr. DiGiorgio said he is all for openness but has some concerns. He said this could make redaction difficult if it has to be sent to the press and could expose the district to additional potential liabilities.

Mr. English said he would like to hear Mr. DeSanto's opinion on this.

Mr. DeSanto said he and Ms. Ludy have polled other districts and not one district in South Jersey does this. He said a few years ago Hamilton Township tried it and no longer do it. Mr. DeSanto said the NJ School Boards Association does not have a position paper on this but do have clear expression that they believe this process exposes the board to potential liability. He believes that the biggest drawback is that there is a tremendous amount of time and expense in the protocols of dealing with this. Mr. DeSanto does not understand the practicality of doing this. He said the Open Public Meetings Act does not require or prohibit the taping and the Bill that Mr. Ulrich referred to is attempting to address it. Mr. DeSanto said minutes do not have to indicate what everyone says they are supposed to be reasonable and comprehensible. He said the executive session notes are now being taken by Ms. Ludy and Dr. Rossi. Mr. DeSanto said the board is now approving the minutes before they are released.

Mr. English said this all transpired because of an article in the newspaper. Mr. Ulrich said what he learned most from the article in the newspaper is that the perception was that we are doing secretive things. He said in the effort to be open and show that we have nothing to hide this is something we should consider.

Ms. Morello said if board members are concerned about not staying focused then follow the agenda, listen, wait for your turn to speak and stay on topic. Her concern is that somehow we are going to be open to liabilities because something is going to get out that should not have been released.

Dr. Mounier said either we continue with meetings with a greater exercise of discipline or we can all take a vow of silence.

Mr. Medio said he does not care what is said in the back room and on tape as long as it does not hurt somebody else. He said when you tape something and it turns out you said something that was not true and it ends up in the public domain you have a problem. Mr. Medio said you should never base judgments and decisions on one occurrence and always look at what your track record is.

Committee Reports: Ms. Morello said the Early Childhood Committee met and through a mutual agreement the district will be placing 70% of the students and 30% will be parental choice of available slots. She said there was discussion on having the childhood centers promoted and to have Mr. Sbrana highlight the different aspects of each center to show what we offer. Ms. Morello said some of the registration process will be done at the childcare centers and it will take some of the stress at the registration office.

Mr. Ulrich asked with 30% parental choice how will it guarantee equitable distribution. Ms. Morello said because the number of parental choice spots will be limited.

Mr. Medio said he would like every student who has a peanut allergy to be sent to the same preschool so the problem is addressed in one building. Dr. Gruccio said a meeting was held about this with Ms. Williams, a doctor, school nurses and principals and she thinks we came to some good compromises to ease this situation and protect our students that have allergies. She said she hopes we would not be opening up ourselves to another situation if we put all of our students who have an allergy in one school. Dr. Gruccio said she would have to think about this. Mr. Medio said that he is looking out for the best interest of the student's health.

Mr. English asked for input on how High Scope is working. Ms. Morello said High Scope is a curriculum that works and is based on self-control, self-regulation and personal responsibility.

Mr. DiGiorgio said the Finance Committee met three times and he will have the minutes available at the next meeting. Mr. English said there were some questions at the Finance Committee meeting and asked if the principals could attend the next Finance meeting to answer questions. Mr. Medio said if the principals were going to give suggestions on what to cut he is more than happy to hear it.

Dr. Mounier said the Policy & Personnel Committee met and he sent a summary to the primary administrators who were there as well as the committee and board members.

Unfinished

Business: Mr. English said he is still pushing the upcoming school year idea for the Alternative School Program. He would like to focus attention on sixth, seventh and eighth grade. Dr. Gruccio said we will be working on a revised Alternative School Program but at this point in time we need to get through the budget first.

Mr. Ulrich asked if we have taken care of Almond Road versus the HVAC and Max Leuchter. Dr. Gruccio said yes we received permission to use ECPA money to do those renovations so the Leuchter Preschool can be moved into Almond Road and Leuchter School can be utilized for Elementary classrooms. Mr. Ulrich asked if we will need to hire additional teachers. Dr. Gruccio said at this point in time she does not believe so.

New Business: Mr. DiGiorgio said he noticed the flag out front is torn and asked if there are available funds for a new flag.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned by voice vote to executive session at 9:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Cherie Ludy  
Board Secretary



