

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, March 13, 2013 at 7:05 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, Ms. Rios and Mr. Ulrich. Absent: None.

Also present: Dr. Guccio, Superintendent, Mr. Frey, Assistant Superintendent, Mrs. Polof, Assistant Superintendent, Ms. Beatty, Acting School Business Administrator, Mr. DeSanto, Solicitor, press and public. Absent: Ms. Ludy, Board Secretary.

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: Milana Avdeeva, Gabrielle Carbonara, Alexandr Gordeyev, Kyra Hall and Luis Perez, students from Winslow Elementary School, led the Board in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Resolution: Ms. Beatty 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. Discussion with Vineland Police Department regarding student incidents. Any tactics and techniques utilized in protecting the safety and property of the public provided and their disclosure could impair such protection; discussion with Vineland Police Department regarding school safety and security. Any matter involving the employment, appointment, termination 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 issues involving two teachers. **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 Mr. Mercado, seconded by Mr. English, the executive session resolution was passed. All Members voted “yes”.

Special

Presentation (s): Mr. Medio introduced Mr. Dan Greco, Principal of Durand Elementary School, to present the winner of the Polar Bear 5k Run for Autism.

Mr. Greco introduced Jayden Hoff the Durand Polar Bear 5k Run for Autism winner. Jayden thanked the Vineland Fire Department for helping him raise the funds needed to compete in Sea Isle City and the *Daily Journal* for the great story that was written.

Dr. Gruccio congratulated Jayden and thanked Mr. Greco, Principal, Ms. Braxton, Asst. Principal and Ms. Lauren Gruccio, Jayden’s teacher for being here tonight.

Mr. Medio introduced Dr. Karwowski, Principal of Johnstone Elementary School, along with teachers Melissa Morgan, Maria Negrón, Lindsey McCaron and Lucia Marone to present the National Association for Exemplary Professional Development School Achievement (NAPDS) Awards.

Dr. Karwowski said through the National Professional Development Schools teachers at Johnstone Elementary School received an award that focused on the children learning, work that was done to help future teachers, on-going professional development on current educational issues along with our relationship with the college and the work that we do with them. Dr. Karwowski said we are very proud of what we do and thankful for the recognition. She said the entire staff deserves the award.

Mr. Ulrich thanked Dr. Karwowski and Mr. Poma for welcoming Chief Codispoti and him into their school to have lunch with the students.

Mr. Medio introduced Mr. Don Robbins, Athletic Director, to present a student athlete.

Mr. Robbins thanked the board for honoring one of our student athletes, Toure Douglas, who is a varsity member of the school football team and a great ambassador to our school and community for the last four years. He said Mr. Douglas was honored by the National Football Foundation as a scholar athlete and earned a full football scholarship to Columbia University.

Mr. Douglas thanked the board for honoring him tonight. He encouraged the board to keep the music programs in the budget because they help the students achieve and have programs outside of academics.

Dr. Guccio introduced Mr. Ross Stanger, to present the Geography Bee winner.

Mr. Stanger introduced Trista Lamkin a seventh grade student at Landis Middle School and the winner of the Vineland Public Schools Geography Bee.

Dr. Guccio congratulated all students who were honored tonight along with their families.

Mr. Mercado thanked Mr. Medio for putting the executive session minutes on the board agenda for approval.

Approval of Minutes: Upon motion by Mr. Mercado, seconded by Mr. English, the minutes were approved from February 6, 2013, February 13, 2013 and February 27, 2013. All Members voted “yes” except Mr. Ulrich who voted “yes” on all minutes except he “abstained” on the February 6, 2013 and February 27, 2013 minutes.

Report of the Secretary/
Correspondence: No discussion.

Solicitor’s Report: No discussion.

Public Comment on
Agenda Items: Gavin Loper, student
Mr. Loper spoke in support of music education in the district.

Julie Crespo, student
Ms. Crespo spoke in support of music education in the district.

Charles Pinotti, parent
Mr. Pinotti spoke in support of music education in the district.

Yolanda Garcia, parent
Ms. Garcia spoke in support of music education in the district.

Ian Parr, student

Mr. Parr spoke in support of the German and Russian Language Programs at Vineland High School.

Jamie Remley, student

Ms. Remley spoke in support of the German Language Program at Vineland High School.

James Firn, VHS German Teacher

Mr. Firn spoke in support of the German Language Program at Vineland High School.

Ashley Gonzalez, student

Ms. Gonzalez spoke in support of the German Language Program at Vineland High School.

Virginia Mayr Freeman, parent

Ms. Mayr Freeman spoke in support of the Language and Music Programs in the district.

Mark Novatorsky, student

Mr. Novatorsky spoke in support of the Russian Language Program at Vineland High School.

Liliya Bondarenko, student

Ms. Bondarenko spoke in support of the Russian Language Program at Vineland High School.

Brandon Jones, student

Mr. Jones spoke in support of the German Language Program at Vineland High School.

Sally Jessie, parent

Ms. Jessie spoke in support of music education in the district.

Brandon Lopez, student

Mr. Lopez spoke in support of the German Language Program at Vineland High School.

Briana Peters, student

Ms. Peters spoke in support of the Latin Language Program at Vineland High School.

Mr. Medio thanked the public for their input. He said it is ridiculous to hear someone say that a student had to make a choice between LEAP and band. Mr. Medio said the schedules should be prepared so a student can take both. He said another Finance Committee meeting will be held to discuss areas to make cuts and where to transfer money from to restore these language programs. Mr. Ulrich said he thought there was going to be a committee as a whole meeting of the board regarding the budget so everyone can participate in the discussion. Mr. Medio said Dr. Gruccio can schedule a date for that meeting. Mr. Mercado asked if board members who cannot attend can call in to the meeting. Mr. Medio said yes board members can call in since there will be no voting. Ms. Rios said she does not have a copy of the cuts that the principals made. Mr. English said they were given out at last week's meeting. Mr. DiGiorgio said he can distribute the Finance Committee meeting minutes in advance of the next work session. Mr. Medio said yes they can be emailed or sent out by courier. Mr. Ulrich noted that Dr. Gruccio has been responsive and supplying answers to his requests in an extremely timely manner.

Mr. Olsen, Principal of VHN

Mr. Olsen said he is appalled that the principals were thrown under the bus in a public setting when there have been different options presented to this board that the board refused to accept. He said they had no choice but to make these cuts. Mr. Olsen said as Mr. Ulrich stated this should be discussed in an open setting so the people hear exactly what is going on as to what the principals and board wants to do.

Mr. Medio said he was told that the process was that there were cuts from the school based budgets that the principals gave the superintendent. He said those cuts were given to the Finance Committee and were all tentative cuts.

Mr. Olsen said the principals do not want to cut these staff members. He urged the board not to cut the academics, programs, teachers and staff. Mr. Olsen said there are other options that can be exercised to acquire the funds.

Mr. Medio said he has every intention of making recommendations to the Finance Committee to restore the languages. He said the instrumental portion has already been restored.

Mr. Olsen said every year the principals submit school based budgets and every year what was submitted is never accepted. He said it was always changed to fit the needs of the board. Mr. Olsen expressed his concern that the process is not a clean process where the principals present it and it is accepted.

Ms. Morello said this is not the time and place for this. She asked if we can have the open meeting and have all the constituents here who have something to bring to the table.

Mr. Olsen said at any point in time the Board Solicitor and Board President can take control of the meeting.

Recommendations:

2.a. Board Secretary's

Report: Item was on the agenda but no vote was taken.

b. Approval of Bills: Upon motion by Mr. Mercado, seconded by Mr. English, the bills were approved and warrants issued for same. All Members voted "yes" except Ms. Morello who voted "yes" on all bills except #250389 and #250533 she "abstained." (\$4,475,995.13).

c. Waive the time requirements for review according to Policy #0131 "Bylaws and Policies" and adopt the following policies: (mandated changes to Policy/Regulations)

Policy #2415 No Child Left Behind Programs (revised)

Policy #2431 Athletic Competition (revised)

Policy #2431.1 Emergency Procedures for Athletic Practices (revised). This regulation is required by statute law or administrative code to be adopted by the Board of Education.

Policy #2431.2 Medical Examination to Determine Fitness for participation in Athletics (revised). This regulation is required by statute law or administrative code to be adopted by the Board of Education.

Policy #6480 Purchase of Food Supplies (revised)

Policy #8505 School Nutrition (revised)

Mr. Ulrich said he would like to see the request made by Mr. English for the 2.0 Grade Point Average (GPA) eligibility for sporting activities fast tracked. Mr. English asked if were possible to vote this evening on instilling a 2.0 GPA policy and having the Policy & Personnel Committee clean up the language. Mr. Medio said no because we already had a reading on this last week.

Motion: Upon motion by Mr. Mercado, seconded by Mr. English, the policies were revised. All Members voted "yes."

Proposed for review or discussion or adoption by Board Members

A motion was entertained for the conditional approval of electronic recording of executive sessions subject to the adoption of a board policy on procedures and protocols for recording and release of recordings. (Thomas Ulrich)

Mr. Ulrich said he knows that this is not popular and our board solicitor is against it. He said there are some pitfalls to electronic recording but there are also benefits that will come out later as points of interest and point of views. Mr. Ulrich said it was affirmed last week that *Roberts Rules* do apply to executive sessions. He asked for each board member to vote their conscience and if you violate *Roberts Rules* you will be sanctioned and that sanction will be noted in the minutes.

Mr. DiGiorgio respects Mr. Ulrich's opinion and thinks that he is implying that something took place that was not professional. Mr. Ulrich said if an unprofessional comment is made in executive session he will ask the solicitor and board secretary to note the fact that there is a violation.

Dr. Mounier thinks the board could profit by having people stick to the subject at hand.

Mr. Medio said he will be voting "no" because he is worried about protecting the individual who is being discussed. He said closed session is to accommodate the person you are discussing and not to accommodate board members or the public.

Motion:

A motion was made by Mr. Mercado, seconded by Mr. English, to approve the electronic recording of executive sessions subject to the adoption of a board policy on procedures and protocols for recording and release of recordings. All Members voted "yes" except Mr. DiGiorgio, Mr. Jennings, Dr. Mounier, Ms. Morello and Mr. Medio. **The motion did not pass.**

Public Comments:

Lee Burke, Vineland Resident

Mr. Burke said there has been a series of prolonged executive sessions away from the public over the last year or so. He expressed his concern that the decorum at the meetings has been less than what he would expect as a member of the public and others. Mr. Burke said the board is supposed to be planning, analyzing, and evaluating things regarding the fiduciary responsibility they have. He said trying to evaluate someone's resume in an open forum was not appropriate. Mr. Burke said the board does not hire the employees and they should allow the superintendent to do the job.

Carol Deola, All Kids First

Ms. Deola said the music programs begin in preschool and every year they have one in the winter and in June. She said a meeting was held last week on parental choice and during the meeting it was decided that the providers can have 30% parental choice. Ms. Deola said that after their employee's children and siblings were counted there was no longer a 30% parental choice left to be given out. She expressed her concern that we are going backwards with having 30% parental choice and requested for the matter to be addressed.

Heather Johnson, Parent

Ms. Johnson spoke in support of music education in the district. She expressed concern in regards to the process involved to change a home address. Ms. Johnson also expressed her concern regarding the allergy policy and feels it needs to be reevaluated to address the needs of all the students. She feels when a teacher's contract is terminated in the middle of the school year the parents need to be notified. Ms. Johnson said the district is being so tight with security that they are pushing parents away.

Board Member
Remarks:

Mr. Ulrich thanked all the students who expressed their concerns tonight. He said the budget is a very difficult process and after the last meeting he cannot be part of a system that is going to pick and choose an employee's livelihood when there are other options. He said the reason we are in this situation, having to layoff teachers, is because our tax rate has been stable for twelve years and we have not kept up with inflation. Mr. Ulrich feels we could look at other options such as student dinners, project graduation and freshman sports. He said that he will not vote for any budget that is not going to look seriously at not saving our programs and cutting our staff.

Dr. Mounier applauded the people who came forward and spoke. He said the last thing that he wants to see cut is arts, language and cultural things. Dr. Mounier said he does not want people who teach those subjects to lose their jobs when we have a lot of expenditures in this district that we really do not need to have.

Ms. Rios congratulated everyone who received awards and scholarships tonight. She thanked the Winslow School students for the flag salute. Ms. Rios said that she supports additional language courses as well as the music programs. She congratulated the preschools for having Food for Thought.

Mr. DiGiorgio requested an opinion from Mr. DeSanto as to whether the experience of a proposed hire is an acceptable discussion topic at a work session. He said with respect to the budget the board refers to the cuts and he is at the point of referring to redirecting resources. Mr. DiGiorgio said cuts are difficult and the board tries not to impact the students as much as possible. He thanked and congratulated all the teachers and students on their awards and scholarships.

Mr. Jennings said his votes and decisions are never personal but all business. He said the district is not a never ending money pit and there are limitations to what can be spent. Mr. Jennings feels we need to look at what we do every day as employees and residents of the city.

Mr. English said he has a son who attends Vineland High School South who is very involved in the performing arts and he is a stage dad who supports that program. He said his daughter is an athlete and it gives him a chance to sit back and look at the total process. Mr. English said he knows that athletics, clubs and extra-curricular activities are very important but it is what the students are doing when the day is done that really counts. He said we cannot make everybody happy. Mr. English feels the big focus should be on the elementary school students because if we lose them it is too late. He said we have some tough decisions that are going to affect employees and he will fight for the educational side. Mr. English announced that on March 21st a Pops concert will be held in the Vineland High School gym and on March 14, 15 and 16 the *Wedding Singer* play will be performed. Mr. English appreciates everyone who remained through tonight's meeting.

Mr. Mercado congratulated all the students who attended tonight's meeting. He urged everyone to friend the district on Facebook to see all the good things that happen in the district. Mr. Mercado reminded everyone that the preschool registration is open and spots are filling up quickly. He thanked the members of the public who attended the board meeting.

Ms. Morello feels language, the arts and sports are part of the total education package. She said that we really need to get a handle on the money issues and take a good hard look to see what can be tightened up and redirected. Ms. Morello said we have to start to focus on the students who want to learn and keep helping them.

Report/Remarks by
Board President

Mr. Medio said from now on issues will be discussed in executive session after the meeting. He said the board is responsible for making the cuts in the end and they followed the process. Mr. Medio welcomes public comments, board member comments and different points of view. He said that he has come up with over two million dollars that we can cut and it is up to the board if they want to make those cuts or do something different. Mr. Medio said you can never underestimate the impact of discipline in sports or how important it is to have accelerated programs like LEAP and music combined. He wants to improve things for the students who want to learn and what is left over can go to the students who refuse to try.

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

The board recessed to executive session at 9:41 p.m.

The meeting resumed at 10:30 p.m.

Motion: A motion was made by Dr. Mounier, seconded by Mr. Jennings, to transfer two teachers whose names are on file with the Secretary of the Board from Winslow Elementary School to Barse Elementary School and Vineland High School South. All Members voted “yes” except Mr. English, Mr. Mercado, Mr. Ulrich and Ms. Morello who were recused from the vote.

Adjournment: The Board adjourned the meeting by voice vote at 10:31 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lisa Beatty
Acting Board Secretary

LB:df

