

The regular meeting of the Board of Education of the City of Vineland was held in the Vineland High School South Auditorium, 2880 E. Chestnut Avenue, Vineland, New Jersey, Wednesday, April 8, 2009 at 7:01 p.m., pursuant to notice with Mr. Giordano presiding and the following members present: Mr. Bernardini, Mr. DeWinne, Mr. Evans, Mr. Fanucci, Mr. Franceschini, Ms. Rios, Mr. Spinelli and Mr. Ulrich. Absent: None.

Also present: Mr. Ottinger, Superintendent, Dr. Figgs and Dr. Gruccio, Assistant Superintendents, Mr. Franchetta, Board Secretary, Mr. DeSanto, Solicitor, Ms. Greenfield, Executive Director of Personnel, press and public. Absent: Mrs. Polof, Director of Special Education.

Mr. Giordano 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.

Flag Salute:

Janice Martinez, Ajay Puri, Steffen Rodriguez and Nadya Sotnychuk students from Veterans Memorial School lead the Board in the Pledge of Allegiance, Mr. Rusty Phillips, Principal was in attendance.

Special

Presentation (s):

Mr. Ottinger introduced Mr. Joseph Marcello the Cap 'N Dagger director.

Mr. Marcello thanked the Board Members and Mr. Ottinger for recognizing this talented group of students who put on a magnificent show this year. He said in the fall the students performed *Noises Off* and *Once Upon a Mattress* in March. Mr. Marcello introduced each of the cast members and presented them with certificates.

Mr. Giordano thanked Mr. Marcello and the entire staff for all of their hard work in putting the play together.

Mr. Ottinger introduced Mrs. Karla Holt, the Supervisor of Food Service, to present the Vineland Health Department's Five Star Awards.

Mrs. Holt said she is very proud of the people who work in her department. She said the ladies and gentlemen who work in the food service department spend a great deal of making sure that everything is safe and sanitary. Mrs. Holt said every year the Vineland Health Department presents awards to businesses and schools who meet very high criteria for food safety and sanitation. She said this year the district received thirteen awards. Mrs. Holt introduced each employee and presented them with certificates.

Mr. Giordano commented about the negative publicity that has been in the *Daily Journal* the past couple of weeks. He said this board has had a variety of feelings from outrage to disappointment, frustration, anger and feeling cheated in regards to everything that has been in the newspaper. Mr. Giordano said you can never offer excuses for any kind of unacceptable or reprehensible behavior because there are none to offer. He said our main concern is how this is affecting the students that we serve. Mr. Giordano said the board must follow the law with the hope that justice will prevail and those that should be accountable will face the consequences. He said criminal background checks are done on everyone who applies for a position in the district. Mr. Giordano said questions have been asked as to why an individual is suspended with pay. He said that is the law but in some instances the board can take the next step and pursue filing tenure charges. Mr. Giordano said when the tenure charges are filed with the Department of Education the employee can then be suspended with pay. He said this board has to make sure through policy and personnel that we address a policy that provides complete oversight and accountability implementing a system of checks and balances. Mr. Giordano would like the public to know that the board is addressing these concerns as quickly as they can while staying within the limits of what the law allows.

Approval of Minutes: Upon motion by Mr. Spinelli, seconded by Mr. Fanucci, the Board approved the minutes from March 4, 2009, March 11, 2009 and March 17, 2009. All Members voted “yes.”

Report of the
Secretary/Custodian
Of School Monies:

Upon motion by Mr. Spinelli, seconded by Mr. Fanucci, the reports of the Secretary and Custodian of School Monies for the month of February 2009, 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."

Motion:

Upon motion by Mr. Spinelli, seconded by Mr. Fanucci, the Board approved the investment of excess funds in a Money Market Account with Susquehanna Bank for the period of March 23, 2009 to June 22, 2009. All Members voted "yes."

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Solicitor's Report: None.

Public Comment on
Agenda Items: None.

Recommendations: Page 4

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RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

1. The Board approve the following personnel items in accordance with the lists provided and on file with the Secretary of the Board:
 - a. List of retirements
 - b. List of resignations/terminations
 - c. List of leaves of absence
 - d. List of employment of personnel
 - e. List of transfers, assignments and/or promotions
 - f. List of student assistants and New Jersey Youth Corps
 - g. List of substitute personnel
 - h. List of extracurricular assignments
 - i. List of summer hours

All Members voted “yes” except for Mr. Ulrich who voted “yes” on all items but “abstained” on bus attendants. (9-0-0)

2. The Board authorize the assignments of the pupils, whose names are provided and on file with the Secretary of the Board, to special education programs outside the district with tuition costs to be borne by the Board.

All Members voted “yes.” (9-0-0)

Further, the Board approve the acceptance of the tuition pupil(s), whose names are on file with the Secretary of the Board, for placement in special education programs offered in Vineland with tuition costs to be borne by the sending district(s).

(Tuition payment and assignments shall be regulated by Chapter 46, Laws of 1966, as amended, and the rules and regulations of the State Department of Education.)

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3. The Board approve budgetary transfers in accordance with the list provided and on file with the Secretary of the Board:

- a. General Fund
- b. School-Based Budgets
- c. Early Childhood Program Aid (ECPA)

All Members
 voted "yes."
 (9-0-0)

4. The Board approve submission of the following grant(s) as provided and on file with the Secretary of the Board:

- a. City of Vineland Recreation
 Opportunities for Individuals with
 Disabilities Grant
 Special Olympics Program
 January 1, 2009 – December 31, 2009
 In the amount of ----- \$ 6,400.00
- b. 21st Century
 Community Learning Center Program
 Landis Middle School
 In the amount of ----- \$ 65,572.00
- c. Cumberland County Collaborative for
 Improving Literacy through School Libraries
 In the amount of ----- \$ 840,272.00
 (This grant is in collaboration with four county school
 districts involving 32 school libraries.)
- d. IDEIA (Amended Application)
 September 1, 2008 to August 31, 2009
 Basic ----- \$3,171,367.00
 (Revised amount with carry over)
 Preschool ----- \$ 108,148.00
 (Revised amount with carry over)

All Members
 voted "yes."
 (9-0-0)

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5. The Board accept funding in the following amount(s):

- a. Young Audiences in New Jersey
 21st Century Community Learning Center
 Artists-in-Education After School Residency Program
 (20 days April – June 2009)
 Landis Middle School
 In the amount of ----- \$ 8,955.00

(The Artist-in-Education Residency Program is through the Young Audiences in New Jersey which is a partner organization of the 21st Century Community Learning Center.)

- b. New Jersey Department of Education
 Three-Year Mentoring Pilot Cooperative Grant
 February 1, 2009 – June 30, 2009
 In the amount of ----- \$20,000.00

6. Bids:

- a. The Board acknowledge receipt of bids as provided and on file with the Secretary of the Board and award as follows:

School Buses

- 1) 54-Passenger Buses
 Award:
 Wolfington Body Company, Inc.
 Mt. Holly, New Jersey
 In the amount of ----- \$75,925.00
 (per bus)

- 2) 24 Ambulatory Passenger and/or
 9 Wheelchair Buses
 Award:
 Wolfington Body Company, Inc.
 Mt. Holly, New Jersey
 In the amount of \$92,773.00
 (per bus)

All Members
 voted "yes."
 (9-0-0)

All Members
 voted "yes."
 (9-0-0)

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6. Bids (Continued)

- b. The Board approve an Extraordinary Unspecified Service (EUS) contract to Children’s Literacy Initiative, of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania to train teachers in the amount to exceed \$29,000.00 in accordance with 18A-18A-5.a.
- c. The Board approve the installation, licensing, training and integration of Sapphire Teacher Gradebook and Sapphire Parent Web Portal Systems supplied by K12 Systems, Inc., of Allentown, Pennsylvania in the amount of \$100,340.00 in accordance with 18A:18A-5(19).

7. The Board approve travel for district members as required by NJAC 6A:10A-8.3 and school field trips as per lists provided and on file with the Secretary of the Board.

Mr. Ulrich requested information on the Grantmanship Training Program same day travel. Dr. Gruccio said that Mr. Savage submitted a justification, which she does not have with her. She said that she knows it is related to what he does. Mr. Spinelli asked if this is something that Mr. Savage needs to have in regards to his job. Dr. Gruccio responded yes it has to do with his position. Mr. Franceschini asked if this is an annual conference. Dr. Gruccio responded yes. She said often there are times when we are notified by the state about workshops and people cannot attend because sufficient time was not given for board approval. Mr. Spinelli asked if this travel was for grant writing for No Child Left Behind. Dr. Gruccio responded yes this is a workshop for that. Mr. Evans asked if there was an option for local people to go to Atlantic City over night. Dr. Gruccio said no we do not send people over night to Atlantic City.

All Members voted “yes” except Mr. DeWinne, Mr. Evans, Mr. Fanucci, Ms. Rios, Mr. Spinelli Mr. Ulrich, and Mr. Giordano who voted “yes’ on all travel except A.7 name #2 Rosolyn Williams they voted “no.” (9-0-0)

A.7 name #2 did not pass.

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Continued

Mr. Franceschini asked where the funds are coming from for the student trip to Philadelphia to Ride the Ducks. Mr. Ottinger said it will be paid from special education's IEP, which mandates field trips.

Mr. Spinelli congratulated Odyssey of the Mind for being in the World Finals.

Mr. Ulrich expressed his concern in regards to the \$4,000 expenditure for Odyssey of the Mind that was added to the agenda prior to being discussed at the work session. Mr. Ottinger said it is in their budget and was board approved. Mr. Spinelli said he believes it was in the budget if they got to the finals.

Mr. Giordano said it would be a good idea if travel was added to the agenda the last minute for the individuals to be present at the board meeting for questions.

Mr. Franceschini said because of the Accountability Act the board is scrutinized on what they approve for travel.

- 8. The Board approve the Joint Transportation Agreement for the 2008 – 2009 school year with the Cumberland County Educational Cooperative for Route #59103.

All Members voted "yes."
(9-0-0)

- 9. The Board agree to participate with the Cumberland County Educational Cooperative from July 1, 2009 to June 30, 2010 for the purpose of coordinating and managing county-wide transportation services for the purpose of deducting districts' costs and facilitating said services.

All Members voted "yes."
(9-0-0)

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10. The Board approve the adoption of the Spotlight on Reading textbooks for ESL students K – 5. This textbook incorporates beginning, intermediate and advanced levels.

All Members
 voted “yes.”
 (9-0-0)

11. The Board approve Numbers Plus (High Scope), a comprehensive preschool mathematics curriculum.

All Members
 voted “yes.”
 (9-0-0)

12. The Board, in accordance with Board Policy #7250, “School and Facility Names,” initiate the process for the naming of the athletic fields on the eastern side of the Vineland High School Campus.

All Members
 voted “yes.”
 (9-0-0)

13. The Board accept the donations from Pastor Preston Centuolo, Dixon Dance and Ed’s bike Shop to Cunningham Alternative School in accordance with Board Policy #7230, “Gifts, Grants and Donations.”

All Members
 voted “yes.”
 (9-0-0)

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14. The Board suspend, without pay, the employee whose name is provided and on file with the Secretary of the Board.

All Members
 voted "yes."
 (9-0-0)

15. The Board authorize a transfer of a 2000 Dodge Ram 2500, VIN 2B5WB25YXYK165622, to the State of New Jersey, Department of Labor, the original grantor, for the sum of one dollar (\$1.00).

All Members
 voted "yes."
 (9-0-0)

16. The Board approve the submission of the educational specifications/schematic design for the Vineland High School science lab renovations. New Jersey Department of Education Project #5390-053-09-1000.

All Members
 voted "yes."
 (9-0-0)

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

Approval of Bills: Upon motion by Mr. Spinelli, seconded by Mr. Fanucci, the bills were approved and warrants issued for same. All Members voted “yes” (\$6,271,566.10).

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

Public: Peter Coccaro, Security Officer at Vineland High School North
Mr. Coccaro said he is here tonight as a concerned parent and employee. He expressed his concern in regards to the violence and increased altercations due to gang problems at the middle and high school levels. Mr. Coccaro feels a task force should be started to help staff and security at the school combat the violence. He said the district has over a hundred years of experience from police officers that were hired who should be used because of their training.

Gene Mercoli, Vineland Resident

Mr. Mercoli said he would like to see some of the out-of-district special education placements brought back into the district. He said the reason is because the state will fund 95% of the in-district education as opposed to 65% for out-of-district. Mr. Mercoli also suggested putting the agenda on the web site.

Josie Spinelli, Vineland Resident

Mrs. Spinelli wanted to take this opportunity to show her appreciation to Mr. Paul Spinelli and Mr. Anthony Fanucci for their dedication to the Vineland Board of Education, staff and students. She said the City of Vineland has been fortunate to have both Mr. Spinelli and Mr. Fanucci in these most critical positions guiding the Vineland Public Schools with their experience, insight and uncompromising character. She is extremely proud of her husband, Paul Spinelli, for the job that he has done over the past three years.

Rahim Caldwell, Vineland Resident

Mr. Caldwell feels proper procedure was not followed when his child was removed from the Vineland School District.

Dr. Thomas McCann, Principal Vineland High School South

Dr. McCann thanked the board for helping with the school stores. He said the students did a great deal of work on this project along with Mr. John Snyder, Ms. Melanie Lovisone and Mr. Jim Smith. Dr. McCann said the school store is an outstanding opportunity for our students and teachers. He said one of our advisors, Ms. Meredith Fiore, suggested for the school store proceeds to go towards Project Graduation each year, which is a fantastic idea. Dr. McCann thanked Mr. Bernardini for his leadership on the facilities committee and making this work.

Mr. Giordano said he spoke with Mr. Ottinger and his colleagues in regards to reinstating a school safety committee. He thanked Mr. Mercoli for bringing up two excellent points one of which we are already doing in regards to the special education students. Mr. Giordano said the board does not host closed sessions for parents. He said parents, citizens and taxpayers address their concerns before the board in a public forum. Mr. Giordano asked his colleagues what date would be good for the board retreat. The board decided to hold the retreat on Saturday, June 20, 2009 from 9:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Mr. Giordano mentioned that tonight is Mr. Evan's last board meeting. He said Mr. Evan's is extremely committed and dedicated to the welfare of the students in the district. He thanked Mr. Evan's for his contributions and efforts.

Board Member

Remarks:

Mr. Evan's said it was an honor to serve on the board and he respects each and every board member for the job that they do

Mr. Spinelli said the Finance Committee meeting was held on Monday. He said discussed was athletic maintenance and whether or not it should stay under the supervision of Mr. Don Robbins, Athletic Director or move to Mr. Wayne Weaver, Executive Director of Physical Facilities. After discussion with Mr. Robbins it was the consensus of the committee to leave athletic maintenance under Mr. Robbins. Mr. Spinelli said they also discussed the overtime analysis and whether or not it would be more cost effective to hire a fourth person to alleviate the overtime. He said at this point in the year overtime is in the vicinity of \$70,000. Mr. Spinelli said in two months Mr. Robbins will present a report on the results of the overtime analysis.

Continued

Mr. Spinelli said during the last three years the athletic budget has been cut \$347,000. He said that the county reviewed our budget and requested for some items to be moved to other line items. Mr. Spinelli said only five Abbott districts are appealing to the Supreme Court for supplemental funding. He said the accounting department is completing an audit of the hours that were kept in regards to a personnel issue. The bidding of professional services for the 2009-2010 school year was discussed and because of time constraints it will be done as in the past. Mr. Spinelli said in June the committee will discuss the possibility of bidding out. He said also discussed was the state offered pension payment deferment. The consensus of the committee was that we would pay about two and a half times what we needed if we waited the two years. It was decided to pay the pension as we normally would. Mr. Spinelli said the committee also discussed some of the court cases and their outcomes. He said the enforcement of policies was discussed along with ethics training at the administrative level. Mr. Spinelli announced that the next Finance Committee meeting is scheduled for May 18, 2009.

Mr. Franceschini commented on what a great job Mr. Spinelli did this year on the Finance Committee. He said discussed at the Policy & Personnel Committee meeting was Policy #6520 Payroll Deduction, which needs to be revised. Mr. Franceschini said they also discussed the proposed Policy #8635 Pupil Transportation Vehicles and School Buses. He said at the next meeting the committee will review the policy on Loan of Equipment and Home Instruction.

Mr. Spinelli said he hopes the public understands that the board takes people like Mr. Coccaro very seriously. He said he is an educator and understands what the problems are. Mr. Spinelli feels the safety committee is prudent and hopefully we will receive input from our staff and police department. He said that he will continue working until the public decides that he does not belong here.

Mr. DeWinne said choosing the K12 software was almost a year long process and it is up to the administrators to guide the staff to make this work.

Continued

Mr. DeWinne said the K12 software has received great reviews. He said in regards to the issues that Mr. Coccaro expressed concern about at the high school we need to use all the resources possible to rid this behavior.

Mr. Ulrich thanked Mr. Evans for being a very ethical board member and congratulated him for his public service. He wished Ms. Meyers the best of luck in her future endeavors at Schalick High School. Mr. Ulrich congratulated the Cap 'N Dagger students for presenting an excellent performance. He said in regards to Mr. Coccaro's comments he has a vested interest in the safety of our community and schools. Mr. Ulrich said it would be fair to note that the school district and police department have been proactive in this measure. He personally meets with Ms. Meyers and staff throughout the district on a monthly basis to discuss the violence and gang issues. Mr. Ulrich said Ms. Ruth Polof, the Director of Special Education, has been on a vigil to bring special needs students back to the district. He said that he loves the idea that Mr. Mercoli brought up about posting the agenda on the website.

Mr. Franceschini wished Mr. Evans good luck. He also wished all the board candidates good luck with the election. Mr. Franceschini said there is always danger lurking behind every easy going atmosphere. He would like to be part of the safety committee and feels it is very important that we stay on this.

Mr. Evans encouraged everyone to attend Dance for a Cure hosted by the Educators 4 Autism and Winslow School Elementary School on Friday, May 15, 2009 at the North Italy Club.

Ms. Rios thanked the public and staff members for their emails. She also thanked Mr. Coccaro for addressing the board with the safety concerns. Ms. Rios said she would like to be a part of the safety committee. She encouraged the public to contribute any positive ideas or suggestions they may have to make our schools a safer place. Ms. Rios said Mr. Evans had a lot of ideas and has been a great asset to the board.

Mr. Fanucci said the Cap 'N Dagger members did a fantastic job. He commented on how amazing the art is that is displayed in the building. Mr. Fanucci wished Ms. Meyers well and commended her for service to Vineland.

Continued

Mr. Fanucci said safety is paramount and he is glad to see that the professionals in the City of Vineland are taking an active role in addressing these issues. He thanked Mr. Ottinger, district security staff, the police department and the security director for taking care of these issues. Mr. Fanucci said it is amazing when someone from the community steps forward and offers their ideas and concerns. Mr. Fanucci announced that on Sunday, May 3, 2009 the Crew Team will be holding a Poker Tournament at the Trump Taj Mahal at 3:00 p.m. Mr. Fanucci said it was an absolute pleasure having Mr. Evans on the board and he will be missed.

Mr. Bernardini thanked Mr. Evans for the expertise he brought to the board. He said the special education issue that Mr. Mercoli mentioned has always been a passion of his. Mr. Bernardini said Ms. Polof has been bringing students back to the district, which is saving millions of dollars. He thanked Mr. Fanucci and Mr. Spinelli for their service on the board and wished them the best in the election. Mr. Bernardini said we cannot control what goes on in the city but can try to correct it in the schools. He thanked Mr. Coccaro for his comments.

Mr. Ottinger thanked Mr. Evans for his service on the board. He commented on the loss of Donna Meyers and said she was one of our best administrators. Mr. Ottinger said Ms. Meyers has compassion and concern for the difficult students that we handle at Vineland High School. He congratulated and wished her the best. Mr. Ottinger said he spoke to Mr. Giordano about the safety committee and supports any committee where the district can receive help. He assured the community that we have an excellent security staff at Vineland High School led by Mr. John Provenzano a retired police officer. Mr. Ottinger said we are very fortunate to have an outstanding juvenile unit from the Vineland Police Department that spends their entire day in our school district. Mr. Ottinger said as Mr. Ulrich mentioned we meet with the Vineland Police Department twice a month strictly related to gang activity discussions. He said the people handling security in the district along with the administration are not novices to these types of activities. Mr. Ottinger said we are looking forward to having the safety committee. He said input is needed on how we can get more help in the community from people who are not in law enforcement to get to the families of these children. He assured the public that we have an outstanding security staff and police department who are on constant vigil regarding what is taking place in this community.

Report/Remarks by
Board President:

Mr. Giordano echoed everything that his colleagues have stated about Donna Meyers and wished her the very best. He announced that the school board election will be held on Tuesday, April 21, 2009 from 1:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

Resolution:

Mr. Franchetta read a resolution to recess into executive session on **Wednesday April 8, 2009**, regarding personnel matters, **Wednesday, April 22, 2009** regarding residency issues and personnel matters and **Wednesday, May 6, 2009** regarding budget issues, personnel matters and anticipated or pending litigation.

Motion:

Upon motion by Mr. Spinelli, seconded by Mr. Fanucci, the resolution was passed. All Members voted “yes”.

Adjournment:

The Board adjourned to executive session by voice vote at 8:47 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kevin J. Franchetta, CPA
Board Secretary

KJF:df