

The combined regular meeting and 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, April 10, 2013 at 6:04 p.m., pursuant to notice with Mr. Medio presiding and the following members present: Mr. DiGiorgio, Mr. English, Mr. Jennings, Mr. Dr. Mounier, Ms. Rios and Mr. Ulrich. Absent: Mr. Mercado and Ms. Morello.

Also present: Dr. Gruccio, Superintendent, Mr. Frey, Assistant Superintendent, Mrs. Polof, Assistant Superintendent, Ms. Ludy, Board Secretary, Mr. DeSanto, 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.

Resolution:

Ms. Ludy read a resolution to convene into executive session for the following reasons as outlined in N.J.S.A. 10-4-1. Any Tactics and techniques utilized in protecting the safety and property of the public provided that their disclosure could impair such protection; Any pending or anticipated litigation or contract negotiation in which the public body is or may be a party. If contract negotiation the nature of the contract and interested party is discussion of VEA contract terms. 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 resignation/disability retirement of 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 Mr. English, seconded by Ms. Rios, the resolution was passed. All Members voted “yes”.

The board recessed to executive session at 6:06 p.m.

The meeting resumed at 7:10 p.m.

Mr. Mercado and Ms. Morello arrived at the executive session and are in attendance.

Flag Salute: Bobby Dickenson, Chris Abreu, Daija Livingston, Daisy McCleary, Princess Cortes, Christina Carlo, Laleshka Rivera and Vanessa Ortiz, students from Veterans Memorial School, led the Board in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Special Presentation (s): Dr. Guccio introduced Mrs. Lauren DeBello to present the Math 24 awards.

Mrs. DeBello thanked all the coaches, students and parents for their dedication along with the volunteers for their assistance the day of the tournament. She also thanked Mrs. Frederico for allowing them to use her school to host the tournament. Mrs. DeBello introduced Zara Elahi, Jack Levari, Matt Bispo and Robert Burgess the fourth grade winners and James Virtucio, Lorenzo Mejia, David Lopez, and Emily Jones the fifth grade winners.

Dr. Guccio congratulated all the winners.

Dr. Guccio introduced Deana Ridolfo to recognize the Giraffe Heroes.

Ms. Ridolfo said she has had the honor of coordinating and hosting the Giraffe Heroes Program for the last few years. She said the Giraffe Heroes Program is a character education program that is taught by the counselors at the elementary level. Ms. Ridolfo said the program focuses on being courageous, sticking your neck out for the common good, being kind and helpful. She introduced the students that were chosen by their schools for exhibiting these characteristics on a daily basis: Geovanni Perez, Jeremiah McRae, Rodny Mauras, Janessa Terron, Anthony Jiminez, Catie Giuliani, Reyna Cruz and Alexandr Gordeyev.

Dr. Guccio congratulated the students and said they make us all very proud.

Dr. Guccio introduced Carol Deola from All Kids First.

Ms. Deola introduced Robert Garcia, a three year old student, to recite the story "*The Cat in the Hat.*"

Robert recited "*The Cat in the Hat.*"

Dr. Guccio introduced Mr. Medio, Board President, for the next presentation.

Mr. Medio thanked Mr. Ulrich for all his hard work and service as Board President. He congratulated him and presented him with his Board President portrait.

Mr. Ulrich thanked the board members who preceded him along with Mr. Ron Franceschini and Mr. Frank Giordano. He said it has been a pleasure to serve the board.

Dr. Guccio asked if any board members had any questions on the HIB, Suspension, Cunningham Alternative School Report and Cunningham Alternative ADA Report.

Mr. Mercado asked if we are taking parents to truancy court when their child is not attending school. Mr. Medio said we are doing that and there will be meetings held in regards to punishments that we are trying to put in place. Mr. Medio said it is his understanding that charges for truancy can only be brought against the parents if the student is under sixteen. Mr. Mercado asked if a student is eighteen can we bring charges against him or her. Mr. DeSanto said there is Title 9 of the NJ Statutes which does not have the age limit that the truancy law has under 18A. He said we are looking into tightening up and pursuing action against parents regardless of the age of the child. Mr. English asked if eighteen year old students can sign themselves in and out of school. Mr. DeSanto said yes if they are truly emancipated, which means self-supporting and living outside of the home. Mrs. Morello asked how we address this. Mr. DeSanto said administratively and internally.



Approval of Minutes: Upon motion by, seconded by, the minutes were approved from March 6, 2013, March 13, 2013, March 20, 2103 and March 26, 2103. All Members voted “yes” except Ms. Rios who voted “yes” for March 13, 2013 minutes but “abstained” on the March 6, 2013, March 20, 2013 and March 26, 2013.

Report by  
Board Secretary  
& Correspondence:

None.

Solicitor’s Report:

Mr. DeSanto said it has been requested for him to provide a brief report on the history of the board’s acquisition of the WB Mason building at 1350 S. W. Boulevard. In May 2012 the board authorized the purchase by resolution at a public meeting of 1350 S. W. Boulevard for the sum of 1.4 million dollars. Mr. DeSanto said the board was satisfied that the contract price was well under the actual fair market value of the property. The assessed value at the time was \$1,446,000 and considering the city’s true value ratio was about 52% the assessment was about half of what the real value is. Mr. DeSanto said Mr. Merighi, the Architect of Record, estimated that if we had the property it would cost about 2.5 million dollars to replace the building. The board felt confident that 1.4 million was truly a fair price. Mr. DeSanto believes that 1 million of the 1.4 was funded through capital and the balance was from the general budget. He said Mr. Merighi arranged for a Phase I environmental study along with a survey of the property and obtained the necessary approval from the Department of Education. Mr. DeSanto said all legal requirements for the acquisition were satisfied. He said we closed on August 23, 2012 at which time the board took formal title to the property and have occupied it since that time.

Mr. DeSanto said the other matter that he has involves the superintendent’s evaluation. He said there is a principal of law called the Doctrine of Necessity. Under the doctrine when a public body is required to act on something and due to conflicts it does not have a majority of its body who are not conflicted the Doctrine of Necessity may be invoked by that public body. The superintendent’s evaluation must be conducted by the full board and not by a committee. Therefore, the board needs five or more members to be able to act. Mr. DeSanto said it is his opinion that the board should invoke the Doctrine of Necessity in order to enable all of the members to discuss and vote upon the superintendent’s evaluation.

Mr. DeSanto distributed to the board a Resolution invoking the Doctrine of Necessity to enable all Members of the Board of Education to discuss and vote upon the evaluation of the Superintendent.

Mr. Medio entertained a motion to adopt the Doctrine of Necessity.

Motion:

A motion was made by Mr. Mercado, seconded by Mr. English, to adopt the Doctrine of Necessity to enable all Members of the Board of Education to discuss and vote upon the evaluation of the Superintendent. All Members voted “yes.”

Public Comment on  
Agenda Items:

None.

Recommendations:

Public:

Kim Piccari, Wallace School Guidance Counselor

Ms. Piccari read a letter from the Wallace Middle School staff expressing their concern in regards to the elimination of a guidance counselor at their school.

Tina Ross, Parent

Ms. Ross asked if money has been put in the budget for school uniforms. Dr. Gruccio said yes there is \$55,000.00. Ms. Ross asked if the details have been worked out as to who will be receiving the free uniforms. Dr. Gruccio responded yes. Ms. Ross asked if this will be discussed at the May meeting. Dr. Gruccio said all of the details and regulations that support the School Uniform Policy will be discussed at the Policy & Personnel Committee meeting next month.

Carol Deola, All Kids First

Ms. Deola said she is here tonight to implore the board to consider honoring parental written requests for preschool choice.

Jennifer Trivellini, Parent/Petway Teacher

Ms. Trivellini expressed her concern in regards to the district not honoring parental requests for preschool choice.

Jennifer Wurcel, Parent

Ms. Wurcel expressed her concern in regards to the district not honoring parental requests for preschool choice.

Report of the  
Secretary/Custodian

Of School Monies (a.): Upon motion by Mr. Mercado, seconded by Mr. English, the reports of the Secretary and Custodian of School Monies for the month January 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."

**Ms. Ludy thanked Ms. Beatty for all her hard work during her absence along with the board, finance committee and Dr. Gruccio for assisting her.**

(b.) Approval of Bills: Upon motion by Mr. English, seconded by Mr. Mercado, the bills were approved and warrants issued for same. All Members voted “yes” except Ms. Morello who voted “yes” on all bills except #251674 dated 3/28/13. (\$5,785,603.60).

**Mr. English said in regards to the \$100,000.00 paid to Grainger he knows that we go through the bid process but wants to make sure that our purchasing agent is getting in touch with our local vendors to let them know that they can bid on items. He said it pains him to spend \$100,000.00 to a company that is not from Vineland. Mr. Medio asked what this is for. Mr. English said it was for the shelving for the S. W. Boulevard building. Mr. Mercado asked if the purchasing agent can be invited to the next Finance Committee meeting. Mr. Medio responded yes. Mr. English asked what the \$321,000 payment to Sodexo was for. Ms. Beatty said it is for payroll, food and supplies. Mr. Jennings asked what the payment was for to Distribution and Support Services. Ms. Ludy said she would look into this. Mr. DiGiorgio asked why we send a check to the Millville Public Charter School. Ms. Ludy said we have students that go from Vineland to the Millville Public Charter School. Ms. Rios asked if the purchasing agent can email a list to the board of all the companies/vendors the district utilizes in Cumberland County. Mr. Medio said yes.**

(c.) FIRST Reading of Policy #2468 – Independent Educational Evaluations (new) - **Ms. Morello asked if this is a mandated policy. Mrs. Polof said no it is recommended. Ms. Morello asked who recommends this policy. Mrs. Polof said we receive alerts from Strauss Esmay on mandated and recommended policies. She thought this was important because often special education has parents that request independent evaluations after our teams have done them. Mrs. Polof said we currently do not have a policy that limits or outlines the parameters of what the board would be responsible for and the evaluations could be costly. Mrs. Morello asked Mr. DeSanto if he reviewed this policy to see if it follows all the codes and rule of law. Mr. DeSanto said his experience has been that Strauss Esmay is not always correct and he was not asked to review this policy. Mr. Medio asked if this could be pulled from the agenda for review. Mr. DeSanto said he will review this policy with Mrs. Polof.**

Dr. Guccio wanted to clarify that the items that Dr. Mounier said he received ten minutes before the meeting started that totaled \$150,000 were included in the board packets that were sent out on Monday. Dr. Rossi said giving the board the paper is an attempt to make sure they are totally aware. Dr. Mounier said he did not receive a physical copy and was not able to access the online copy. Mr. Mercado asked if an email can follow any changes made on the agenda. Dr. Guccio said she did send an email on Saturday. Mrs. Morello said there should be a drop dead date for the agenda. Dr. Guccio said usually after the agenda setting meeting we do not add anything.

(d.) Approval of Collective Bargaining Agreement between the Vineland Board of Education and the Vineland Education Association (VEA) for the period July 1, 2012 – June 30, 2015 .

Motion:

A motion was made by Mr. Mercado, seconded by Mr. English, to approve the Collective Bargaining Agreement between the Vineland Board of Education and the Vineland Education Association (VEA) for the period July 1, 2012 – June 30, 2015. All Members voted “yes” except for Mr. Mercado and Mr. Ulrich who “abstained.”

- B. Proposed for review or discussion or adoption by Board Members: **Mr. Ulrich distributed a packet of the end of the year activities compiled by Dr. Guccio. He is requesting to look into discontinuing year end celebrations for the next school year and using that money to retain personnel. Mr. Mercado asked if this will be all or nothing. Mr. Ulrich said he does not think it should be all or nothing. He thinks if we are truly going to be this fiscal body that is worried about our employees we should look at some of the harder choices to save peoples jobs. Mr. Ulrich said he is struggling with having to lay off employees and he will not vote to do that. Ms. Morello suggested involving the schools to see what alternatives they can come up with. Mr. Ulrich said he agrees with Ms. Morello and if we can have some conversation on this he would like to withdraw this recommendation tonight. Mr. Mercado said he agrees with Mr. Ulrich and does not want to see any employees laid off. He thinks that our principals can find creative ways to save money. Mr. Mercado expressed his concern that the students who are attending these events are the students that do well in school and we are discussing cutting back on their recognition.**

**Mr. Jennings agrees with Mr. Mercado's comments in regards to recognizing the students who do well in school. Mr. DiGiorgio agrees with the spirit of Mr. Ulrich's proposal however; when you are looking at the numbers at the end of the day it is not a lot of money. He agrees with Mr. Mercado and Mr. Jennings with respect to recognition of our better students. Mr. DiGiorgio said until we effectively have efficient use of resources in our district resolved then we could look at this proposal down the road. Ms. Morello thinks that these things could be looked at and tweaked. She said there are big ticket items that are not performing like they should be and we need to get answers. Ms. Morello expressed her concern that there is professional staff in the district that are not being utilized well and not teaching close to 100% of the day. Ms. Rios suggested sending the list of activities to all principals not just the high school principals so they can share ideas. Dr. Mounier said there is a lot of discretionary spending that the board members know nothing about, which we need to get control of. Dr. Mounier applauded Mr. Ulrich for bringing up this issue because it is important in principal. Mr. Medio said he is in favor of the idea of saving money and feels teachers should not attend professional development during the school day. He said you cannot justify putting a substitute in a classroom when the teacher should be there teaching the students. Mr. Medio said he is not ready to discontinue year end activities until we go through attrition to reduce some of these positions that we are not having filled. Mr. Ulrich said the spirit of his discussion is to be fiscally responsible and not lay off people. He feels it is worth having a substitute for one day for professional development to allow staff members to learn new techniques and improve. Ms. Morello said teachers are the only profession that just recently had mandated on-going professional development. She said there is a way to have central administration in conjunction with administrators come up with a plan for professional development, which you need to have. Dr. Mounier believes that all professionals need to continue their education. He said in his field professional development takes place on weekends.**

Emergent Item(s)

(with prior approval) None.

Mr. English asked where we stand with the 2.0 GPA Policy for sports. Dr. Mounier said the details are still being discussed.

Mr. Ulrich asked if Mr. English can make a motion to have a 2.0 GPA Policy in effect acceptable to the board. Mr. Frey said we have been working on developing an easy report function specifically for sports. He said all the students are now tagged for the sport they are in and we have had samples produced that show the sport, student, current/past and historical grades as well as attendance. Mr. Frey said that data will be available for any time that you would want to view it to make a decision based on what the data actually shows. Mr. English said he would like this policy to be in effect September 1, 2013, which means it would revert back to the previous marking period of the prior school year. He said there will be some students that will not be playing a fall sport if it is effective. Mr. English said it would appear that this policy has board support so he asked when he can make the motion. Ms. Morello asked what the current status is for being involved in school sports. Mr. English said you can play in a sport with three failures because the eligibility is based on credits. Ms. Morello asked if we can obtain this policy from other districts to review. Mr. English said yes we have copies of them. He said there are schools where the athletes go to study hall and do not participate in gym. Mr. English said this item will be on next month's agenda for a vote.

**Board Member****Remarks:**

Dr. Mounier welcomed Ms. Ludy back from her absence. He commended Ms. Ludy for the wonderful job she is doing and said things are much better from the board's perspective. Dr. Mounier said as far as parental requests he does not think parents should have to come before the board and cry in order to put their children where they want them to attend preschool. He feels it should be 100% parental choice particularly for preschool children.

Mr. DiGiorgio welcomed back Ms. Ludy. He congratulated all the retirees in particular Jim Hill. Mr. DiGiorgio said all teachers are a very important piece of the world. He said we are just trying to compromise on something that could work more effectively and not take teachers out of the classroom for professional development.

Mr. Jennings asked if there was some way we could instill a hardship policy for preschool choice.

Mr. English welcomed Ms. Ludy back. He thanked Ms. Morello for pushing to promote the students. Mr. English expressed his concern in regards to the lack of communication.

Mr. Mercado thanked the students who did the flag salute. He congratulated all the Math 24 winners. Mr. Mercado also thanked the Giraffe Hero students and Ms. Deola. He wished the spring sports teams the best of luck. Mr. Mercado welcomed back Ms. Ludy and said she was missed. He congratulated all the retirees. Mr. Mercado sent his condolences to the Tramontana family on the loss of Luigi Tramontana Sr.

Report/Remarks by  
Board President:

Mr. Medio said he is tired of things coming up time and time again. He said at next month's meeting Dr. Gruccio will give the board a report on parental preschool requests.

Adjournment:

The Board adjourned the meeting by voice vote at 9:50 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Cherie Ludy  
Board Secretary

CL:df



