

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, July 2, 2008 at 7:03 p.m., pursuant to notice with Mr. Giordano presiding and the following members present: Mr. Bernardini, Mr. Franceschini, Ms. Rios, Mr. Spinelli and Mr. Ulrich. Absent: Mr. DeWinne and Mr. Fanucci.

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

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:

Special

Presentations:

Mr. Ottinger introduced Mr. Michael Brodzik to present a brief overview on the Learners with Exceptional Abilities Program (LEAP).

Mr. Brodzik said the gifted and talented program is a mandate by the State of New Jersey and the LEAP Program is for kindergarten through eighth grade. He said there are two components to LEAP, which are academic and talent. The students in the talent component are gifted in fine and performing art skills such as dance, music, instruments, painting and drawing. The academic component focuses on language arts and math. Mr. Brodzik said students go through the curriculum at a faster pace or a greater depth. He said there are two significant changes for next year, which are staffing and how the students are chosen for the program.

Mr. Franceschini asked how the classroom teacher will handle this. Mr. Brodzik said the LEAP students will interact with other students and there will be activities with multiple level groups. He said at some point the LEAP students will receive challenging activities appropriate to their level.

Mr. Ulrich asked if every grade level will be given accelerated reading and math assignments. Mr. Brodzik explained that children will be identified in the second half of kindergarten. Mr. Ulrich asked if the elementary teachers have been asked their opinion on the extra responsibilities they have been given. Mr. Brodzik said there is balance but there is a lot more work involved. He said the principals identified the teachers for next year and they are all volunteers who are interested and willing to do it.

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Mr. Ulrich asked if the numbers are proportional to the size of the school or does it vary from school to school. Mr. Brodzik said typically they are proportional but the smaller schools tend to have fewer students. He said multiple criteria is used in the identification process to select the students.

Mr. Franceschini asked if notification will be sent home to the parents whose children are selected for this program. Mr. Brodzik responded yes.

Mr. Giordano asked if the rollover of students from one year to the next would eliminate the potential of any new students in the program. Mr. Brodzik responded no.

Mr. DeWinne arrived at 7:15 p.m.

Mr. Fanucci arrived at 7:24 p.m.

Mr. Ottinger introduced Ms. Millie Ramos to discuss English as a Second Language, Level V.

Ms. Ramos said the instruction for the English as a Second Language V course will reinforce reading, grammar and writing abilities for the English language learners. The course will concentrate on developing, reinforcing and enhancing reading and writing abilities. Ms. Ramos said every lesson will address the NJ Core Curriculum Standards for English Language Proficiencies and ESL Standards 1 and 2 grade level cluster 9 through 12. She said the pre-requisites are that students need to have a passing grade in the ESL IV course and the standard scores from the MAC II English Proficiency Test.

Mr. Spinelli asked how the students currently exit ESL. Ms. Ramos said we have multiple criteria for exit. She said the students must first pass a test established by the state, which is a secured standard test administered every year. Mr. Spinelli asked what students would take that test. Ms. Ramos said every student in the program would take it in the spring. Ms. Ramos said the other criteria needed to exit ESL would be teacher recommendation and general program grades.

Mr. DeWinne asked on an average how long does it take a student to be fully mainstreamed in English. Ms. Ramos said around 87% of our students exit successfully after four years in the program.

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Ms. Rios asked if a student learns quickly would they stay on the same level as the other students or would they advance. Ms. Ramos said generally they would exit ESL III and advance to English IV.

Mr. Ottinger mentioned that many of our ESL students this year qualify for School Counts and New Jersey Stars.

Comments by

Board Solicitor:

Mr. DeSanto said Mr. Ottinger has notified the board that the Supreme Court has scheduled the oral argument on the school funding case for September 22, 2008. He said that he along with Mr. Ottinger will attend the oral argument to personally observe and report to the board what occurs. Mr. DeSanto mentioned that the wealthy school districts have formed a coalition and are also fighting the school funding law. He said the school funding law has lowered the bar for them. Mr. DeSanto said this is the first time since Abbott was won that the wealthy districts and Abbott districts are in unison on an issue.

Items for Review:

A. Superintendent

1. **Personnel Items** – Ms. Greenfield mentioned that there are some changes that need to be made because some of the Schedule B rates are not correct.

Mr. Spinelli asked if the principals are monitoring whether or not there are enough students participating in a club to make it cost effective to run. Mr. Ottinger said he will find out if the principals are monitoring the number of students in each club.

Ms. Greenfield advised the board that there may be three assistant principal appointments added to next week's agenda. Mr. Ulrich said he thought there were two assistant principal positions open. Ms. Greenfield said the third is for Barse School. Mr. Spinelli said Barse School never had an assistant principal. Mr. Ottinger said we are allowing Mr. Johnson to interview and it is up to the board whether or not it is approved. Mr. Spinelli asked if we are adding a position. Mr. Ottinger said if the board decides that they do not want the position at least as a superintendent he can say he was fair to every principal. Mr. Giordano asked where the money would come from. Mr. Ottinger said the district has money in the budget for it.

Mr. Bernardini asked how many teachers have not been reappointed. Ms. Greenfield said currently about four non-tenured elementary teachers along with some tenured teachers and civil service employees.

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Mr. Giordano asked if the four teaching positions under employment are replacements. Ms. Greenfield responded yes. Mr. Giordano asked if the additional bus drivers are also replacing people. Ms. Greenfield said they are replacements.

Mr. Spinelli asked if the assistant principals in the elementary schools are possibly on a chopping block next year. Mr. Ottinger said if we face the budget perspective that we have been talking about over a three year period 700 employees would be on the chopping block.

Mr. Ulrich said his concern is if we approve this assistant principal position and then cut it we would have artificially increased salaries for a person who is ruffed.

Mr. Franceschini asked if Barse School is our smallest elementary school. Mr. Ottinger said the criteria for an assistant principal is 550 students. He said we have three schools that do not meet that criteria. Mr. Bernardini asked if we could find out when those assistant principal positions were created. Mr. Ottinger said we would find that out. Mr. Franceschini asked how many students are at Barse School. Mr. Ottinger said close to four hundred.

Mr. Giordano asked if the Abbott regulations mandate that you have to hire an assistant principal if you reach a certain enrollment. Mr. Ottinger said in the Abbott regulations positions were listed that you were required to have.

Mr. Spinelli asked if there has been discussion at the administrative level of moving the other assistant principals into the open slots. Mr. Ottinger said there have been major discussions about assistant principals at the elementary level and our first inclination was if we had vacancies we were not going to fill them in view of what may happen in the future. He said the principals are against that and as long as we can afford to have them it is better for our students.

Mr. DeWinne said he thinks the conversation is that the assistant principals should be moved out of Winslow and Johnstone School and put in the open slots. He said all of our schools that are below the 500 threshold would not have an assistant principal.

Mr. Spinelli said it is Mr. Ottinger's call whether or not he wants to remove the assistant principal position.

Mr. Giordano asked if the candidates for the assistant principal positions could be told that the position may not last forever. Mr. Ottinger said he is pretty sure it has already been said and some people have not applied based on that.

2. **Placement of Special Education Students** – Mr. Franceschini asked if we filled all the special education teacher positions. Mrs. Polof said there is one at the high school and two at the middle schools.

Mr. Ottinger noted that an employee who was in attendance at last week's meeting has been transferred back to the elementary level from the secondary level.

Mr. Franceschini asked Mrs. Polof what the plan was if the special education positions are not filled by September. Ms. Greenfield said we have certified substitutes.

Mr. Bernardini asked if we are receiving aid for each student that is flagged in yellow on the report. Mrs. Polof explained that at the end of the year we receive extraordinary aid for any student over \$40,000.

3. **Budgetary Transfers** – No discussion.
4. **Submission of Grants** – Mr. Spinelli mentioned that some of the grants received actually cost the district money. He asked if we are going to start overseeing the grants and not accepting grants that would cost the district money in the long run. Mr. Franchetta said sometimes with grants there could be matches that have to be made in excess of what is going to be given to us. He said there are also costs with each purchase order that is processed. Mr. Spinelli asked if we should start reviewing the grants before accepting them. Mr. Ottinger responded yes.

Ms. Rios asked if we will be receiving the complete funds for the NJ Child Assault Prevention Grant. Mr. Ottinger said in regards to the bullying legislation we do not have a choice with this grant but he will find out what the percentage is.

5. **Acceptance of Funds** – No discussion.
6. **Bids** – Mr. Ulrich asked if the Keystone bid is a maintenance agreement for software that we have including the parent teacher component. Mr. Franchetta responded yes.
7. **Travel** – No discussion.
8. **State of NJ Homeless Contracts** – Mr. Giordano asked what this entails. Mr. Franchetta explained that these are students that the state is responsible for their tuition.
9. **NJ Nutrition Education Program Memorandum of Understanding** – No discussion.

10. **Licensed Practical Nursing Program Memorandum of Understanding** – Mr. Spinelli asked if an agreement is being drawn up. Mr. Ottinger said he thought it was attached. Mr. Giordano asked for a general overview of this item for next week.
11. **Bayada Nurse Contracts** – Mr. Giordano asked if Mr. DeSanto has reviewed these contracts. Mr. DeSanto said this is the standard format that has been developed over the years.
12. **Cape Atlantic League Membership Renewal** – Mr. Spinelli mentioned that in a couple of years the entire football format will be changed.
13. **Meal Prices** – Mr. Giordano asked for an overview on this item. Mrs. Holt said the breakfast would increase to \$1.50 and lunch \$.35. She said it would only effect the paid breakfasts and lunches.

Mr. DeWinne said it is frustrating because the free lunches that we have to provide are reimbursed by the state and federal government with a shortage of \$700,000. Ms. Holt said it has been at least fourteen years without any increase from the state. She said the federal government reimbursements are about 3%.

14. **Temporary Facilities** – Mr. Ulrich asked if the Licensed Practical Nursing students would go to the Adult Education Center like they are currently doing. Mr. Ottinger said since we still have the facility at Elmer and the Boulevard for another year and a half we are going to use it.

Mr. DeWinne asked if we can we try to negotiate out of the contract if we do not need the space. Mr. Franchetta said we tried.

15. **Toilet Room Waiver** – Mr. Franchetta explained that this is one of our providers and the Department of Education is requiring us to have our board approve a vendor's lavatory. He said these two classrooms at the Nazarene Learning Center do not have a lavatory and preschool regulations require a lavatory in each classroom.

Mr. Franceschini asked if these restrooms are handicap accessible. Mr. Franchetta said he is not sure.

16. **Technology Five-Year Planning Document** - No discussion.
17. **Revised LEAP 2008-2009** – No discussion.
18. **ESL Level V Course** – No discussion.

19. **Clinical Education Agreement** – No discussion.
20. **Carl D. Perkins Spending Plan for 2008-2009** – No discussion.
21. **Automotive Program Donation** – Mr. Bernardini said this is a monetary donation from R.K. Chevrolet to the automotive program.
22. **Payment to Employee** – Mr. Giordano said this payment is because we are backed in to a corner and have no choice.
23. **First Reading of Policy #3230 (Revised)** – Mr. Giordano asked what prompted this revision. Mr. Franceschini explained that it was in regards to an employee's band.

B. Board

1. None.

Review of Bills: No Discussion.

Public Comments: Elaine Greenberg
Mrs. Greenberg commended the board and thanked the newspapers for the Licensed Practical Nursing Program on the agenda. She is glad that this Program will continue and be held at the college where it belongs.

Committee Reports: Mr. Spinelli said discussed at the Finance Committee meeting was the increase in school meal costs and vendors for school pictures. Mr. Giordano asked if currently the principal in each school can bring in their own vendor. Mr. Spinelli said yes. Mr. Spinelli said other issues discussed were grants. He said we are attempting to expedite the budget process so hopefully by January 2009 we will have a tentative budget. Mr. Spinelli said substitutes were discussed from principals to clerks in an attempt to save money. He said the next Finance Committee meeting will be held on Monday, July 14, 2008.

Mr. Bernardini said discussed at the Buildings & Grounds Committee meeting was the track re-surfacing and on July 16 we will open the bid. Mr. Spinelli asked if the state took this off emergent items. Mr. Bernardini responded yes. He said there will be some ground clean up on the girls' softball field. The lettering will be installed on the Sabater and Dallago Schools. Mr. Bernardini said there is a schedule for middle school #2 to go out for construction bid. He said we submitted about 10 emergent items, which were all turned down. Mr. Weaver said these items were all approved in our Long Range Facilities Plan and will eventually be done.

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Mr. Bernardini said the summer move of the Adult Education Center to the Center City School is in progress. He said what needed to be fixed at the Elwyn Building was handled and cost the district man hours and paint, which he would like to get back. Mr. Bernardini said the swimming pool at the Elwyn Building had not been used since school was opened and Elwyn owes the district somewhere around \$65,000. He commended the maintenance department for the job they did at Elwyn. Mr. Bernardini distributed pictures of the deteriorated wall at the Vineland High School track. He said Frank Romano, a 2008 Vineland High School graduate, is going for his Eagle Scout badge and would like to restore this wall as his community service project. Mr. Bernardini said Mr. Romano would also like to install a flag pole at the track if he could raise the funds. Mr. Bernardini questioned whether or not the board could help if Mr. Romano could not come up with the funds for the flag pole. He asked if this project would need board approval. Mr. DeSanto said yes because we are allowing someone to perform work on our property. Mr. Bernardini said he would like this put on as an emergent item because Mr. Romano will be going to college in August.

Mr. Spinelli asked what would happen if Mr. Romano was injured while doing this. Mr. DeSanto said he does not think it would be a problem because he is a volunteer but we should check with our insurance carrier.

Mr. Bernardini said David Bennett an athletic trainer at Vineland High School has a son who was diagnosed with brain cancer. He said a benefit catered by Five Points Inn will be held on Sunday, August 10, 2008 at St. Anthony's Greek Hall and all proceeds will benefit Mr. Bennett's son.

Mr. Franceschini said the presentation given at the beginning of the meeting was discussed at the Curriculum & Technology Committee meeting. He said a Personnel & Policy Committee meeting will be held next Wednesday and the Curriculum & Technology Committee will be held Wednesday, August 6.

Mr. Giordano said since Ms. Arroyo has left Mr. Franceschini will now be the Chair of the Curriculum & Technology Committee and Mr. DeWinne will fill in the vacancy.

Unfinished Business: None.

New Business: Mr. Spinelli asked if the board will receive information on the board vacancy candidates. Mr. Franchetta said all the candidates were required to submit a letter of interest and resume. He said that he will provide the board with copies.

Mr. Giordano said the meeting to interview the board candidates will be held on Wednesday, July 16, 2008 at 7:00 p.m.

Adjournment: The Board adjourned to executive session 8:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kevin J. Franchetta, CPA
Board Secretary

KJF:df