

A special meeting of the Board of Education of the City of Vineland was held Wednesday, August 3, 2011 at 6:53 p.m., in the Board Room, 625 Plum Street, Vineland, New Jersey, pursuant to notice with Mr. Ulrich presiding and the following members present: Mr. DiGiorgio, Mr. English, Mr. Medio, Mr. Mercado, Dr. Mounier, Mrs. Phillips and Ms. Rios. Absent: Mr. Fanucci.

Also present: Dr. Banks, Superintendent, Dr. Gruccio, Assistant Superintendent, Mr. Franchetta, Board Secretary, Ms. Greenfield, Executive Director of Personnel and Mr. DeSanto, Board Solicitor. Absent: Dr. Elliott, Assistant Superintendent.

Mr. Ulrich 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:

Resolution: Mr. Franchetta read a resolution to recess into executive session on Wednesday, August 3, 2011 regarding personnel matters, contract negotiations and legal matters.

Motion: Upon motion by Mr. English, seconded by Mr. Mercado, the resolution was passed. All Members voted "yes."

Public Comments: None.

The meeting adjourned to executive session at 6:56 p.m.

The meeting resumed at 7:15 p.m. for a (public) executive session.

Mr. DeSanto said that under the Open Public Meetings Act an individual whose name is proposed to be discussed in executive session has the right to request for that discussion to take place in public. We are removing the discussion from executive session in the board conference room to the public board room. Mr. De Santo said the public and Dr. McCann are not permitted to participate in the discussion. This is basically an observation by the audience of the executive session.

Dr. Banks said we received a letter addressed to the board from Mario Olsen, the President of VASA, requesting that the board remedy what they believe to be a temporary hardship placed on the high school principal.

Dr. Banks said VASA was under the impression that the elimination of one high school principal and the requirement for the remaining principal to oversee the two schools was only a temporary measure meant to deal with the fiscal crisis facing Vineland this past year. She said the high school principal was willing to temporarily assume the oversight of the two schools to assist during the financial crisis. Dr. Banks said that Mr. Olsen further states that given that the state's fiscal crisis is now abated, VASA requests that this temporary arrangement be revisited. She said VASA is requesting that the Vineland Board of Education reinstate a second principal position to oversee one of the two high school buildings. Alternatively, if the district has now determined that it shall permanently have only one principal for two high schools, VASA requests that the board negotiate with them in good faith to provide equitable compensation for a permanent change in terms and conditions of employment for the remaining high school principal.

Mr. English asked for an explanation on equitable compensation. Dr. Banks said it is not defined in the letter.

Mr. Ulrich said to his knowledge this was never a temporary measure. He disputes that the financial crisis has passed in the state and district.

Mrs. Phillips personally would like to see a second principal at the high school and feels that it is impossible to be in two buildings at the same time.

Ms. Rios said there are approximately 700 students in an elementary school where there is a principal and assistant principal. She said there are two buildings with 3,000 students and the need is there. Ms. Rios suggested discussing this at a finance committee meeting to see if there is funding for this position. She agrees with Mrs. Phillips and feels we should move forward with this.

Mr. DiGiorgio agrees with Mr. Ulrich and does not think that our fiscal crisis has abated in any way. He does not recall this being a temporary situation. Mr. DiGiorgio said if we need to hire a second principal then we should look at eliminating assistant principals to cover the cost of the principal.

Dr. Mounier said anyone who thinks the fiscal situation is stable is watching the wrong television show. He does not see how we can continue to administer the high school with one person. Dr. Mounier said the wrong number of students does not strike him as being so much of the problem as having them divided between two buildings.

Dr. Mounier feels we should have another principal involved but how we manage to cover the cost is the question that we need to think about.

Mr. Ulrich said he does not disagree that being the leader of both buildings is a challenge but if we put a principal in the North building and a principal in the South building we have created two different environments, which is something we have been trying to get away from. He said from a management perspective he does not think this is a good situation to be in. Mr. Ulrich said he would like to know how many assistant principals we had when there was a principal at each high school building. Mrs. Phillips said there were three assistant principals. Mr. Ulrich asked what the situation is currently. Dr. Banks said because of the two additional assistant principalships we will have three in each building with one principal overseeing both buildings.

Mr. English said the CAPA report stated that we should have a minimum of two assistant principals. He took that as we start with two and maybe hire and additional two. Mr. English said before we go down the road of hiring two additional assistant principals we should look into hiring a second principal. Mr. Ulrich said the CAPA recommendation stated that an additional four assistant principals would be optimal.

Mr. DiGiorgio asked how many students are at each building. Dr. Banks said the total is about 3,500.

Mr. Ulrich said a corporation does not have two CEO's.

Ms. Rios feels if you have two separate facilities you need to have a leader in each facility.

Mr. Mercado asked what the problems were when there were two principals. Mr. Ulrich said the problems were that you could tell stories because there were two separate distinct buildings, two philosophies and two management styles.

Dr. Mounier said there is no particular reason to believe that two people cannot not share the same philosophy. He said you need consensus amongst the people.

Dr. Banks said all along she has impressed upon this board the importance of waiting for the CAPA report. She feels very strongly that the recommendations in the CAPA report are valid and need to be looked at.

Dr. Banks said that she along with the board need to make sure that the high school administration receives all the help that they can get in order to implement the changes that are necessary to move the high school forward. She supports all of the recommendations for assistants to the high school administration. Dr. Banks said she would recommend that the board consider reinstating the principalship at the North building because the administration could use all the help that they can get. She said also with the elimination of the Small Learning Communities you still have the nine/twelve configuration in both buildings. Dr. Banks said moving forward we still have the restructuring of the high school matter before us. She is requesting consideration for the reinstatement of the North building principalship.

Mr. Medio said considering that we are still in a fiscal crisis, which seems to be the consensus of the board, he does not think we can move forward on all the administrative positions that will be put before us tonight. He could go along with this decision as long as some of these other positions are not created. Mr. Medio said you cannot continue to increase the number of administrators in this district if you do not have the money and other things that are important. Mr. Medio asked what happened to the ECPA funds that were set aside for the hiring of an assistant principal. Mr. Franchetta said they fell into fund balance of the ECPA program and were allocated to next year's budget. Mr. DiGiorgio asked if we did not need that position in the prior years. Ms. Rios said the position was needed and requested but it was not the right time.

Mr. DiGiorgio asked if the recommendation is three assistant principals at each building and one principal. Dr. Banks said we already have three now and Dr. McCann has put forward a request for an additional fourth in each building. She said it is on the policy & personnel agenda for discussion next week. Mr. DiGiorgio asked if the board is being asked to make this decision tonight. Mr. DeSanto said the board would have to create the position because it was eliminated and then personnel would be authorized to post the position.

Mr. Ulrich said if there is board support for Dr. Banks recommendation then there would have to be a resolution on next week's agenda reestablishing the position of principal at the North building.

Dr. Mounier asked if it would be a formal process to eliminate assistant principals if the opinion of the board is to hire a new principal. Mr. Ulrich said yes.

Mr. English asked if we are talking about adding a principal but removing two assistant principals that were just hired. Mr. DeSanto said the recommendation was made with the notion that there is currently one principal and he is sure there will be some impact if there is going to be two principals. Mr. English said at the June 8th meeting Dr. McCann requested to meet with the board to discuss issues at the high school with his administrative staff present. He said we have not done anything with that request and asked if we are looking to move on that as well. Mr. DeSanto said within days of that meeting he was in discussions with one of Dr. McCann's Attorneys, Fred Jacob, and they were openly discussing when such a meeting can take place and the circumstances. He said that he did not receive any determination decision by Mr. Jacob on how this is to be done. Mr. DeSanto said currently this is not in the board's court. Mr. English said his concern is moving the high school forward without progressing towards a solution. Mr. Ulrich said it is complicated by the fact that there is litigation against the board. Mr. DeSanto said there are a lot of issues involved. He specifically requested for Mr. Jacob's to let him know if the request to express those concerns will be heard before the personnel committee or the full board. Mr. DeSanto said he has not been notified of any decision in that regard.

Mr. DiGiorgio asked if the end configuration result at the high school would impact any of these positions. Dr. Banks said she does not think the model at the high school has anything to do with what the CAPA report is suggesting in terms of the administrative assistants they feel the high school needs at this time.

Mr. Ulrich said the question will be for the board is do you want to have Dr. Banks proceed with a resolution to re-establish the position of principal at the North building. Mr. DeSanto said the board is not permitted to take votes in executive session. He said we are basically suggesting to Dr. Banks that the board would like to see her move forward with the resolution. Mr. DeSanto said the board can have their discussion and actual vote in the public session.

Mr. English asked when someone applies for that job they are applying assuming that they will be hired for the job at the high school. He asked if transfers could be done with other principals. Dr. Banks said yes she has the latitude to make recommendations to transfer staff in the district.

Mr. Ulrich said he hopes there will be public comments regarding this issue. Mr. DeSanto said there could be public comments at the end of the work session. He said when the resolution is on the agenda there could be public comment prior to the superintendent's recommendation.

Mr. English asked when he can ask Dr. McCann a question. Mr. DeSanto said not at this time.

Dr. Banks asked Mr. DeSanto to prepare the resolution to re-establish the position. Mr. Ulrich asked if this should be delayed until the September work session so it can be properly discussed. Mr. DeSanto said you can have a work session discussion next week and schedule the vote for the special meeting in August. Mrs. Phillips asked why tonight does not count as the discussion. Mr. Ulrich said to bring a matter up that is not on the work session agenda is not our normal procedure. Mr. DeSanto said this is an initiation from the superintendent.

The (public) executive session adjourned at 7:51 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kevin J. Franchetta, CPA
Board Secretary

KJF:df