

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, August 5, 2009 at 7:01 p.m., pursuant to notice with Mr. Giordano presiding and the following members present: Mr. Bernardini, Mr. DeWinne, Mr. DiGiorgio, Mr. Fanucci, Mr. Franceschini, Mrs. Phillips, Ms. Rios, and Mr. Ulrich. Absent: none.

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

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.

Mr. DeSanto arrived at 7:03 p.m.

Flag salute:

Special

Presentations:

Mr. Giordano introduced Ms. Jane Kershner and Ms. Charlene Zoerb from the New Jersey School Boards Association to present a brief overview on the input from the forums conducted with the staff and community regarding the superintendent search.

Ms. Zoerb said Ms. Kershner distributed the results from the community and staff. She said a summary was also done for the public to review. Ms. Zoerb said the first item in the packet was the advertisement because she wanted to remind everyone of the qualifications and criteria that was listed. She said they held two staff forums and one community forum. Ms. Zoerb said for the superintendent search criteria she compiled the following common themes that were mentioned by the staff, community and board of education:

- Small Learning Communities
- Budget Cuts/Funding Reductions
- Discipline
- Safety
- Academic Performance of Students
- Intermediate and High School programs
- "Schools In Need of Improvement" Status
- Parent Involvement

Ms. Zoerb said the following is the education, experience, background and training that the staff, community and board of education would like to see:

- Proven Leadership
- Expertise in school wide improvement and reform
- Urban or experience in similar district
- Teaching experience
- Community Engagement
- Curriculum and academic focus
- Finance, personnel, planning, and technology expertise
- Understanding of and appreciation for diversity

Ms. Zoerb said the following were the leadership or personnel characteristics that were discussed:

- Child centered
- Good listener and communicator
- Personable
- Visible
- Strong leadership skills
- Collaborative
- Trustworthy
- Sense of humor
- Visionary

Ms. Zoerb asked the board to spend some time reviewing the candidate profile criteria they developed before starting the next round of interviews. She said the Vineland Staff and Community Forum results are the verbatim on discussions that they had with us. Ms. Zoerb said the forum results are categorized in the strengths and achievements of the district, critical issues, background, training, experience, leadership style and personal characteristics. She said the last section of the forum results were if you wanted to ask one question of each candidate what would it be. Ms. Zoerb thanked the community and staff members who took the time to attend the forum.

Mr. Franceschini asked how many members of the community attended the forum. Ms. Zoerb said about fifty.

Comments by

Board Solicitor: Mr. DeSanto said in regards to the matter he discussed with Mr. Ottinger, Ms. Greenfield and Mr. Franchetta involving the interviewing of candidates for a supervisory position there is a probable need for a policy. He said the policy can provide board member access to the applications and board member involvement in the process. Mr. DeSanto said he prepared a workable policy that takes in consideration the interest and needs of the board to be able to intelligently vote on appointments. This will at the same time allow administration to do their work in an effective and timely manner. Mr. DeSanto asked Mr. Giordano for his permission to give the sample policy to Dr. Figgs so the Personnel & Policy Committee can review it at next week's meeting and perhaps present the policy to the board. Mr. Giordano asked what the specific title of the policy was. Mr. DeSanto said he left the policy at his office but it provides for board member review of applications and an orderly interview process for applicants. Mr. Giordano said that is fine.

Items for Review:

A. Superintendent

1. **Personnel Items** – Mr. Giordano asked if there will be additions next week. Ms. Greenfield said yes some resignations, new employment, spreadsheets and transfers.

Mr. Ulrich thanked Dr. Figgs for postponing his retirement until November.

2. **Budgetary Transfers** – No discussion.
3. **Submission of Grants** – No discussion.
4. **Acceptance of Funds** – Mrs. Phillips commented that the Family Friendly Grant at Sabater School will bring in about \$45,000 to \$50,000. She commended and thanked Mrs. Bechtel for all her work.
5. **Bids** – No discussion.
6. **Travel** – Mr. DeWinne said he questioned some of the pre-kindergarten field trips. He said the response that he received from Mr. Smith was that we are sending four grade levels to a local farm for \$2,000 per trip. Mr. DeWinne said he thought that was high and requested a break down. Mr. Smith provided the breakdown and each trip is budgeted for 105 students, 35 adults and 10 staff members. Mr. DeWinne said each trip utilizes three school buses, which is approximately \$300 per bus.

Continued

Mr. Ottinger said this is one of those situations where the budget has to be submitted to the state and the state ultimately decides if it is a legitimate expense.

Mr. Fanucci said he knows of other field trips that were further away and were not that expensive.

Mr. Ottinger said these field trips could be reviewed because \$300 for transportation to Oak Road does sound like a lot.

7. **No Child Left Behind 2009 Amended Application** – No discussion.
8. **Tentative Tuition Charges for 2009-2010** – No discussion.
9. **Cumberland County Educational Cooperative Joint Agreement** – No discussion.
10. **Sheppard Bus Service Contract** – Mr. Giordano asked if there is an incident with these bus drivers, does this company deal with it. Mr. Franchetta said yes these bus drivers are Sheppard Bus Service employees.
11. **Cape Atlantic League 2009-2010 Membership** – Mr. Fanucci asked if there is anyone on the executive committee for the upcoming year. Mr. Ottinger said there is only one representative from each county and he does not think it is our district's turn.
12. **Catapult Learning Agreement** – No discussion.
13. **Success Building Lease** – Mr. Giordano asked why this lease is for four years. Mr. Franchetta said he along with Mr. Weaver negotiated this time period with Mr. Hallissey because they thought it would be the time needed in order to have the new school in place. Mr. Giordano asked what happens if we only need three years. Mr. Franchetta said we would still be obligated for the four years.

Mr. DeWinne expressed his concern that the lease is too long and cost too high.

Mr. Bernardini said the new middle school will start the first of the year and eighteen months will bring you to the year 2011. He said we will then redistrict the entire city, which will bring us to the middle of the third year and Dr. Figgs will no longer be here. Mr. Bernardini said if the school is delayed in being finished we may need that space to rent.

Mr. DeWinne feels maybe we could get a better price or terms.

Mr. Franchetta said the price that we are paying has been the same price since the inception of the lease. He said this time we negotiated a \$7,500 credit annually because Mr. Weaver's staff is going to do the general preventative maintenance in the building. Mr. DeWinne asked how big the building is. Mr. Franchetta said six classrooms are used for the Success Program and the back of the building we use for storage. Mr. DeWinne asked if our warehouse is at capacity. Mr. Franchetta said yes.

Mr. Franceschini asked what we are paying in taxes. Mr. Franchetta said the owner pays the real estate taxes.

Mr. Bernardini mentioned that Mr. Hallissey, the owner of the building, has to install a sewer line which is part of this deal. He said this is the best situation for us. Mr. Bernardini asked Dr. Figgs how much the transportation lines will change when the new middle school is built. Dr. Figgs said we work very closely with the transportation department and hopefully we will keep it as minimal as possible.

Mr. Giordano asked who would be responsible if there is a major problem with the building. Mr. Franchetta said the landlord.

Mr. DiGiorgio said that he agrees with Mr. DeWinne and feels the lease structure may be a little too long. He said for this type of space \$10.00 a square foot is probably a good number.

Mr. Fanucci said there are buildings out there that we could probably get at a very reasonable price however we would have to look at the cost of outfitting it.

Mr. Franceschini asked if we could renegotiate the lease to lock in for three years with an option of four years.

Mr. Giordano asked if it is too late to do anything this year in light of the fact we have an ensuing academic year. Mr. Franchetta said he could speak to the landlord.

14. **Appointment of Stanley H. Allen Inc., t/a/Allen Associates for Broker/Consultant of Employee Health Services** – No discussion.
15. **Winter Season Athletic Schedule** – No discussion.
16. **Netherlands Student Exchange Program** – Mr. Ulrich asked if this program allows for twenty students from just the Netherlands. Mr. Ottinger said he is pretty sure but he will check. Dr. Figgs mentioned that there will be a presentation on this next week.
17. **Approval of New and/or Revised Curricula** – No discussion.

18. **Bayada Nurse Contracts** – Mr. Franchetta said this is a standard contract that we use every year with Bayada for students that have a one-on-one LPN Nurse.
19. **Approval of First Reading of Policy #6520 Payroll Deductions and #8635 Pupil Transportation Vehicles and School Buses** – Mr. Fanucci said he expressed a couple of concerns with respect to Policy #6520 with Mr. Franceschini. He said one issue is the number of vendors is too low that the staff is limited to. The second issue is the percentage of people the vendor needs in order to become eligible as a vendor in the district. Mr. Franceschini asked Mr. Fanucci what he would propose. Mr. Fanucci said he thinks the cap needs to be opened up to maybe fifteen or twenty vendors in the district. He does not agree with the number of employees the vendor needs to obtain to be eligible.

Mr. Ulrich said do you really want a vendor who is representing two people because someone from our side will have to be responsible in managing all these different vendors. Mr. Fanucci said the third party administrator will be managing the vendors and all we do is deal with the payroll deduction. Mr. Fanucci said he would feel more comfortable if he could hand pick his vendor versus a menu of people out there that may or may not be qualified. In the current market conditions he does not believe we should completely limit who our employees get to choose from. Mr. Franchetta said GWN handles our account through the third party administrator and there is a cap annually on how much money employees can shelter. He said the third party administrator would have to be careful about the amount that people put in their tax shelter because the IRS could penalize you if a mistake is made. Mr. Fanucci said this would fall on the third party administrator and they would be liable.

Mrs. Phillips questioned why we have a limit of only ten vendors and do not give the employees more of a choice. Mr. Fanucci said that is his point and he does not think in this economic climate you could stop them.

Ms. Rios asked if we had a limit in the past. Mr. Fanucci responded no.

Mr. DiGiorgio asked if an employee could contribute to two or three different vendors. Mr. Franchetta said you could but you would have to be careful about the annual limit.

Mr. Giordano asked if limiting has to do with the workload it would create if it were unlimited. Mr. Franchetta said we would still have to give GWN an accounting of the money and there could be issues.

Mr. Fanucci wanted to know what the Personnel & Policy Committee's thought was behind the benefit. Mr. Franceschini said it was the recommendation of Mr. Franchetta and Mr. Shapiro to put a limitation on it.

Continued

Mr. Giordano asked if this was an emergent item for tonight's meeting. Mr. Franchetta responded no. Mr. Giordano asked if this needs to go back to the committee for further research. Mr. Ulrich and Mr. Fanucci said they would like to hear from the union on this item. Mr. Giordano asked what would happen in the interim if this was going to be part of negotiations. Mr. DeSanto said this is the first reading on the policy and it could go back to the committee and be represented when the committee feels they have sufficient information to make some further recommendations.

Board

1. None.

Review of Bills: Mr. DeWinne questioned the \$3,000 payment to Richard Gabriel Associates. Mr. Franchetta said it is for GASB 45. Mr. DeWinne asked if all the monthly checks have been sent out. Mr. Franchetta responded yes.

Public Comments: None.

Committee Reports: Mr. Bernardini said discussed at the Early Childhood Provider meeting held in April were articles, budget approvals, contract updates, swine flu updates, student safety, books, legal attendance days, COR Online, Little Folks Scholarship and congratulating Mr. Dan Smith on his promotion as Executive Controller.

Mr. Franceschini asked Mr. Bernardini if he knew what the statistics were on children who attended preschool and retained in kindergarten. Mr. Bernardini said he did not know but this would probably be discussed at tomorrow's provider meeting.

Mr. Ulrich asked if we will be distributing material at the back-to-school nights on the swine flu. Mr. Ottinger said yes we discussed this today during a meeting with city members. He said the city will be giving a presentation at our administrative staff meeting on September 17 in regards to the swine flu and the upcoming school year.

Mr. Franceschini said currently the South Jersey Hospital region is going through a pandemic flu drill. He said we are hopeful that we will be more prepared.

Mr. Ottinger said at the request of the city and county we are going to implement a system for our staff/students who are sick to call in their illness and report it in one of three categories such as fever and flu like symptoms.

Mr. Bernardini said discussed at the Buildings & Grounds Committee meeting was the progress of the new science labs at Vineland High School North. He said they should be completed by middle to late October. He said Middle School #2 is still projected to go out for bid in August or September. Mr. Bernardini said the Vineland High School South and North school stores will both be ready for the opening of school. A new sound booth is being constructed by district maintenance staff for the Veterans Memorial School Auditorium. Mr. Bernardini said re-grading has been done on the ball field along with drainage resolutions. He said \$78,186 has been received from the New Jersey School Boards Association Insurance Group Grant and we are doing at least six or seven projects with that grant money, which are all upgrades. Mr. Bernardini said some concrete fell off of the Landis School Tower and an observation along with recommendations were made by O'Donnell & Naccarato to ensure that engineering wise it is sound. He said the ceiling over the seating area of the Vineland High School North pool has collapsed and has been repaired.

Mr. Franceschini said at the Curriculum & Technology Committee meeting held today they discussed curriculum for the 2009-2010 school year. He said that currently the scheduling for Vineland High School South and North is at 90%. Mr. Franceschini said Mr. Dantine presented a computer update and said there should be a plan to continuously upgrade the computer system for each building.

Unfinished Business: None.

New Business: None.

Adjournment: The Board adjourned to executive session at 8:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kevin J. Franchetta, CPA
Board Secretary

KJF:df