

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, 2015 at 6:04 p.m., pursuant to notice with Mr. English presiding and the following members present: Ms. Acosta, Ms. Codispoti, Mr. DeWinne, Mr. DiGiorgio, Mr. Jennings, Ms. Morello, Mr. Pagano and Ms. Rios. Absent: Mr. DeWinne who arrived at 6:05 p.m. and Mr. Jennings who arrived at 7:04 p.m.

Also present: Dr. Gruccio, Superintendent, Mr. Frey and Mr. Frangipani, Assistant Superintendents, Mrs. Haley, Board Secretary, Dr. Rossi, Executive Director of Personnel, Mr. DeSanto, Board Solicitor, press and public. Absent: None.

Mr. English 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, The Grapevine, Clerk - City of Vineland, and Administrative Office Public Bulletin Board.

Flag salute:

Resolution:

Mrs. Haley read a resolution to convene into executive session for the following reasons as outlined in N.J.S.A. 10-4-12. Any matter which, by express provision of Federal Law, State Statute or Rule of Court shall be rendered confidential or excluded from discussion in public Provision relied upon discussion of HIB appeal of Petway Elementary School Student. Any collective bargaining agreement, or the terms and conditions of which are proposed for inclusion in any collective bargaining agreement, including the negotiation of terms and conditions with employees or representatives of employees of the public body contract is non-union Administrative/Supervisory/Auxiliary Personnel Memorandum. Any pending or anticipated litigation or contract negotiation in which the public body is or may be a party. If pending/anticipated litigation the matter is security guard litigation. 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. Including discussion of VHS Roof Replacement Bids. **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 Ms. Codispoti, seconded by Mr. DiGiorgio, the resolution was passed. All Members voted “yes”.

Special

Presentations: Dr. Gruccio introduced Mr. Matthew Kass and Mr. Jeff Ashton to give a presentation on the Cunningham Academy Program.

Mr. Kass said Camelot has a 10-year history of success with targeted and effective programs that serve at risk students. He explained why Camelot’s model works and why he thinks it will be advantageous for the Vineland School District and children.

Mr. DeWinne said he appreciates Mr. Kass’s presentation and wished him well.

Ms. Acosta said every student deserves the opportunity to feel that they are a part of something. She said based on what she is hearing and the passion Mr. Kass has demonstrated tonight, she feels really good about this program. Ms. Acosta said she would like to hear more about alternatives for disciplining.

Mr. DiGiorgio echoed what everyone else has said. He said this is great and he thinks Mr. Kass has a lot of energy. Mr. DiGiorgio asked how many districts Camelot has been involved with and has he encountered any hurdles along the way.

Mr. Kass said he thinks we have had some challenges making people understand the importance of modeling the behavior that we expect out of the students. He cannot expect a student to look presentable and keep their shirts tucked in if the staff is not modeling that behavior themselves. Mr. Kass said by bringing in a model that really motivates students you will see some great outcomes.

Ms. Morello said in terms of the academic portion how are you aligning what you are doing to what is happening in the district so when the students exit the program and return to the high school their course work will be aligned to what is going on at the high school.

Mr. Kass said we need to determine what the level of the students are and address them accordingly. He said Camelot communicates well and their communication flow is seamless. Mr. Kass said we are going to communicate and make sure that the needs that we are providing the students align with the school that we are sending them back to.

Ms. Morello said suppose you have a student who has been on a track where they have taken fairly advanced courses but hit a stumbling block will you be able to tailor their continued participation at that level.

Mr. Kass said as far as the advanced classes, we are going to use Educere to provide some of the electives that we are not able to provide in a smaller setting.

Dr. Gruccio introduced Mr. John Frangipani, Assistant Superintendent of Administration, to present the February 2015 through July 2015 HIB Report.

Mr. Frangipani said he has been working closing with Mr. Kass for a while and he does bring a lot of energy to the table. He said this morning they met with Mr. Ernie Bernhardt, guidance counselor, to review each student's credits and see what courses they needed to take to make sure they are in place when the student arrives.

Mr. Frangipani said the Harassment, Intimidation, and Bully Report (HIB) is required by law and is required to be done twice a year. He said this is our February through July report. Mr. Frangipani explained the definition of HIB and said it can be one incident or multiple incidents. He said a HIB also has to disrupt the operation of a school. Mr. Frangipani presented a few examples of HIB incidents and said the real key is the interventions. He reviewed the results of the HIB Report with the Board.

Mr. English said Challenge Day was very successful last year at the high school. He asked if any thoughts been given to having it at the middle school level. Mr. Frangipani said he thinks this is something we can investigate.

Mr. DeSanto said when you think of a HIB think of the word target because there is a perceived characteristic of the victim that triggers the HIB, which is something we need to reemphasize.

Ms. Morello thanked Mr. Frangipani for the very in depth report and for all of his work over the course of the year in educating the Board and the public.

Ms. Morello asked if the PTA's at the school level are holding programs to help parents understand the steps that the district is taking to address these type of issues universally. Mr. Frangipani said he agrees and at this time of the year with the Back to School nights, it may be an excellent opportunity to address the HIB. He said we have brochures that are given to the schools that explain what a HIB is.

Comments by

Board Solicitor:

Mr. DeSanto said recently there has been some discussion regarding protocol for old business, new business, and matters that Board members would like to discuss. He said under your Bylaws particularly # 0164 the Conduct at Board Meetings is set forth. Mr. DeSanto said if a Board member seeks to propose an item for discussion at a work session he or she notifies the Board President and Superintendent prior to the agenda setting meeting. He said as a result the item can be included at the work session. Mr. DeSanto said if the Board member who is proposing the item has information pertaining to the topic it should be provided to the Superintendent. He said Board members shall attempt to the extent known to propose items for discussion at a work section under section 7b rather than under old or new business.

Ms. Morello publicly apologized to Dr. Guccio because she did not realize the matters that she wanted to discuss were supposed to be forwarded to Dr. Guccio as well as the Board President.

Items for Review:

A. Superintendent

1. **PERSONNEL**

1.1 **Personnel Items** – Ms. Morello thanked Dr. Rossi for clarifying a couple of items for her.

2. **PROCEDURES & OPERATIONS**

2.1 **Travel** – Ms. Morello asked how the softball training affects student work. Dr. Guccio said to her knowledge, usually with a trip of this sort, when time is missed the students are given time to make up the work that they miss. She said that she will double check this to make sure it is the process.

Later in the evening Dr. Guccio stated that Mr. Robbins said that this will be the fifth year for this softball trip and there is an opportunity for students to make up all work, which has not been a problem as of yet.

- 2.2 **Standard Operating Procedures 15/16** – No discussion.
- 2.3 **Dual Credit for Geospatial Information System** – No discussion.
- 2.4 **School Self-Assessment 2015** – No discussion.
- 2.5 **Bus Evacuation Drills** – No discussion.
- 2.6 **Use of School Facilities Revised Fee Schedule** – Ms. Morello said she is hopeful that there will be a very set process in place so the people who are going to be charged for facilities know what they are getting into. She said the people in the public should realize that the fees are not a profit maker but to cover the additional expenses incurred by the district when staff is required to come in,

Mr. DeSanto said a meeting was held with Mrs. Haley along with Mrs. Johnson, who handles the rentals. He said that Mrs. Johnson has been briefed on all of the new requirements. Mr. DeSanto said each applicant that comes before Mrs. Johnson for the rental of a facility are presented with the application, fee schedule, policy and administrative regulations, which will be standard in the package. Dr. Gruccio asked if it would be beneficial to post this on our website or television channel.

Mr. DiGiorgio asked if existing organizations that utilize our facilities would be sent this information in the mail. Mr. DeSanto said if they are using it now and are in place prior to July they are under the old system. He said when it comes time for their new application they will be briefed.

Ms. Morello said she would like to know in advance about the fee increase so she could make alternative arrangements or address her budgeting process. She said as soon as this passes a letter should be sent to everyone who ever had a contract explaining the changes. Mr. DeSanto said the revised fee schedule was adopted in July so there is no reason why this notification can be sent out immediately. Mrs. Haley said a letter can be sent out with the attached new fees.

Mr. DeWinne said there are people that still owe us money for using our facilities and we should not set aside these facilities for them until it is paid.

Mr. DeSanto said included in the language of one of the policy changes, that was approved last month, was any organization that has outstanding fees will be denied continuing access until the account is covered.

Ms. Rios asked if the facility forms can also be put online. Mrs. Haley said a link to the entire package should be put online.

2.7 **New and Revised Curriculum for 2015-2016 – a. Language Arts, b. Math-** No discussion.

3. **BUILDINGS & GROUNDS**

4. **FINANCE**

4.1 **Budgetary Transfers** – No discussion.

4.2 **Submission of Grants- a. General Mills Foundation, b. The Franklin Institute, c. NJEA Hipp Foundations, d. SNAP-Ed Program, e. IDEA** – No discussion.

4.3 **Acceptance of Funding- a. Kohl’s Foundation, b. NJYC** – No discussion.

4.4 **Donation for Use of Fields** – No discussion.

4.5 **Donation of Piano** – Ms. Morello asked if this was an individual or a business. Dr. Gruccio said an individual.

4.6 **Donation of Laptop Computers** – No discussion.

4.7 **Paid Lunch Prices** – Ms. Morello asked if these lunch prices were part of the bid package. Mrs. Haley responded no. She said every year we are supposed to calculate what the minimum meal price should be.

4.8 **Legal Fees Payment** – No discussion.

4.9 **Purchases in Excess of Bid Threshold** – No discussion.

4.10 **Newborn Nurses Contract** – No discussion.

4.11 **Straga Brothers, Inc. Change Order #3** – No discussion.

4.12 **Atlantic County Institute of Technology Contract** – Ms. Morello asked if this includes transportation. Mrs. Haley said this is just the tuition.

4.13 **Childcare Provider Contracts** – No discussion.

4.14 **Submission of PARCC Assessment Assistance** – No discussion.

- 4.15 **Achieve 3000 Software** – Ms. Morello asked for an explanation on this. Mr. Frey explained that it is an online component of our curriculum that mirrors the PARCC Assessments. Ms. Morello said if a student logs on to a language arts component they would have to get a certain percentage right before they can move forward. Mr. Frey said correct. Ms. Morello asked if there will be reports for teachers on this. Mr. Frey responded yes.
- 4.16 **The Wright Choice Contract** – Mr. DeWinne asked if this is a back up to the Newborn Nurses Contract. Mrs. Haley said they are both for special education services. Mrs. Godlewski, Special Education Supervisor, said according to state statute the parent has the right to choose a firm or agency to supply their child’s nursing care if needed.
- 4.17 **Inspira Medical Center IMPACT Healthcare Services Contract** – No discussion.
- 4.18 **Inspira Public Donor Agreement** – No discussion.
- 4.19 **No Child Left Behind Application** – No discussion.
- 4.20 **Non-Public Textbook, Technology and Nursing Aid** – No discussion.
- 4.21 **Perkins Grant Allocations** – No discussion.
- 4.22 **Corrective Action Plans for DiBiase Infant Care Center and Golan Learning Center-** Ms. Morello said the public should know that the corrective action plans are basically bookkeeping issues.
- 4.23 **Appointment of Attorney for Collection of Delinquent Accounts Receivable -** Ms. Morello asked what does this law firm do. Mrs. Haley said we do not use them much but we keep them on record just in case.
- 4.24 **Sheppard Bus Service Contract for Vineland Charter School** – No discussion.
- 4.25 **Donation of Back Packs** – No discussion.
- 4.26 **Board Secretary’s and Treasurer’s Report for May** – No discussion.
- 4.27 **Insight Workforce Solutions Contract** – Ms. Morello asked if this has helped with our substitute drought. Dr. Rossi said yes.

2. ITEMS PROPOSED FOR REGULAR AGENDA:

7b. Proposed for review or discussion or adoption by Board Members. The following items are proposed for Discussion by Ms. Morello:

- The detailed final plan for Alternative School.
- LEAP in the elementary level.
- Number of employees in the district for 2015-2016, including expected to be filled vacancies.
- A review, in detail, of appropriate behavior and involvement in upcoming Board Education race for board members, administration and district employees.
- Superintendent Goals for 2015-2016, separate and apart from the Strategic Plan. It would be appreciated if the goals were fairly detailed.
- Discussion by all board members of aligning the actual CSA evaluation with the goals of both the VBOE and CSA.
- Is there a plan to move the district to Windows 10? If so, when will it be shared?
- Language Academy.
- Plans to retain students once the Cumberland County Technical Education Center (CCTEC) opens as well as addressing the “brain drain” that other choice school option causes.

Ms. Morello said these are all things that she thinks are pressing and we need to turn our attention to them. She said the plan to retain students once the CCTEC opens is something as a Board we need to sit down with administration and look at what we have that they do not have. Ms. Morello said we really want to keep the best and brightest of our students in-house. Mr. DeWinne said this will also be a financial drain to this district. Dr. Gruccio said she understands the concerns but she is not sure it will be quite as bad as we are anticipating for a few reasons. She said there will be only so many students taken per year county wide starting with ninth grade for year one and they all have to pass an entrance exam. Dr. Gruccio said we do have our math and science academy, which is fifth through eighth grade. She said the feedback that we received from parents and students has been wonderful. Dr. Gruccio agrees that we should promote what we do have but she is not sure that it will be as major of a problem that we might be anticipating. Ms. Morello asked how many slots the CCTEC has for Vineland. Dr. Gruccio said she does not know if it is a specific amount for Vineland and said it is county wide. Ms. Morello asked if we can have an AD Hoc Committee because there are many moving parts to this. She said this has a potential devastating financial impact on the district. Mr. DeWinne agrees and said there are a lot of parents who do not want to send their children to Vineland Public Schools. Mr. English asked what Board members would be interested in the Ad Hoc Committee. Mr. DeSanto suggested taking a representative from each of the other standing committees finance, transportation, curriculum etc.

Ms. Morello said that Mr. Frey is giving language choice to students in the Applied Math and Science Academy. She said we need to promote the language academy.

Dr. Gruccio said if we were going to go with academies we should have stayed with small learning communities because that is exactly what they were. She said an academy is where a group of student have a same interest such as the arts or languages and it is incorporated in all their other key subjects. Dr. Gruccio said she understands what Ms. Morello is saying but in her mind that is not an academy but us promoting what we offer at the high school. Mr. Frey said that is part of our Strategic Plan as well. Ms. Morello said the Strategic Plan does what it should do but we need to be very clear on what we want to have happen in addition to the Strategic Plan. Ms. Acosta said she believes that the Vineland district's Math & Science Academy combines science and math into all of the subjects but the Schalick High School Academies do it differently. Mr. Frey said there are two ways to attend Schalick High School which are through School Choice or Academy. He said the Academy is something our vocational school does not offer. Ms. Acosta asked if there is a way to have a collaborative agreement with our future Cumberland County Vocational School and do the same thing. Mr. Frey said we are currently in discussions with the college to do just that. Ms. Morello thinks we have to move on this and may be late. She said we have wonderful programs in this district that need to be out front in the public eye so people know what is available here.

Ms. Morello said they have been discussing in the committee meetings LEAP in the elementary schools and she thinks it has hit a speed bump. She said if we are going to have a program and a dedicated curriculum that is Board approved, then it needs to be delivered consistently. Ms. Morello said she would like to see the focus back on the LEAP program. Dr. Gruccio said Mr. Stanger, Supervisor of Curriculum & Instruction, is in the process of looking at implementing a new program that is project based. Ms. Rios asked if this was discussed at the Curriculum & Meetings. Ms. Morello responded yes. Ms. Rios asked how long has this been in discussion. Ms. Morello said three or four times. Ms. Rios said this is a wonderful idea that should be open to more students. Mr. English said if we offer the program and we cannot financially sustain it, how would you balance that. Mr. Frey said this is a discussion that we have had several times. He said we changed the LEAP Program in the middle schools dramatically and we are now down to fifth grade. Mr. Frey said we are currently focusing on third and fourth grades. He said to balance the financial piece with our desire and requirement to have exceptional students work together is what we have been striving for. Mr. Frey said we have made some dramatic changes in our LEAP Program.

Ms. Morello requested for Dr. Gruccio to give the details to the Board on the Alternative School. Dr. Gruccio said she has it tonight to distribute and if any Board member has a question to please email her. Ms. Morello asked what happened to guidance. Dr. Gruccio said Camelot provides guidance. Ms. Morello asked if there is physical education, art and music. Mr. Frangipani said physical education, art and music is something that was always provided by the high school teachers and we will continue that practice. Mr. Frangipani said this year we budgeted \$345,000 to run the program and after discussion we decided to go with Camelot. He said we were able to bring ten students back who were placed out of district, which increased the cost to \$347,000 but reduced out transportation costs to about \$25,000. He said we will be providing the school nurse.

Mr. Frangipani said since we are only using one floor of the Cunningham building Mr. Weaver was able to close the third floor, which will bring the utilities cost down to about \$65,000 to keep the building heated and clean. He said there will be a custodian there in the evening. Ms. Morello said the part time salaries of the physical education, art and music teachers need to be rolled into the program costs so we know what we are actually spending. Mrs. Haley said her understanding is because those teachers are already being paid at the high school they will just come over to the alternative school. Ms. Morello said she would really like to know what the bottom line number is. Mrs. Haley explained that we basically moved things around in order to come up with enough money to run a program that we feel is better for the students without costing extra money in the budget. Ms. Morello said she understands completely but what she does not see is the salary amounts for physical education, art and music and whether they are paid for out of the high school. Mrs. Haley said currently those people are budgeted in the high school budget but to truly track where they are working we would have to split charge their salaries. She said the bottom line in the budget is it is not costing extra. Ms. Morello said if that could be done it would be appreciated. Mr. DiGiorgio asked if there will be a part time janitor at this school. Dr. Gruccio said full time but in the evening. Mr. Frangipani said during the day as needed. Mr. English asked if there is a boiler in the Cunningham building. Mr. Farinaccio, Asst. Director of Maintenance Services, said most of the school is electric heat pump system. He said there is a small electric boiler but it does not fall under the mandated black seal.

Ms. Morello said some of the comments made from those who participated in the Superintendent's evaluation were "we did not see that." Mr. English asked if the Board members who conflicted out of the Superintendent's evaluation are able to see the evaluation now that it is complete. Mr. DeSanto said they may request to see and review it in Dr. Rossi's office. Ms. Morello said that Mr. DeWinne wanted to see a different evaluation tool. She said it is an ok instrument but not a great instrument. Ms. Morello asked if we want to think about using a different format. Mr. English said for the last evaluation we were given four choices but this time we were not offered that.

Public Comment

on Agenda Items: None.

Ms. Morello mentioned that the student school board candidates had a picture of her with them and it appeared like an endorsement. She asked Mr. DeSanto to address this. Mr. DeSanto said he will be addressing appropriate behavior and involvement in school elections of Board Members, Administrators and other employees. He said first he wants to address what the School Ethics Act requires with respect to these three groups. Mr. DeSanto said the School Ethics Act applies to school officials, which includes Board members, certain Administrators, the Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent, School Business Administrator, Principals, Executive Director of Personnel and Purchasing Agent. He said these are the only administrators that are subject to the conflict of interest requirements of the School Ethics Act.

Mr. DeSanto said all other employees of the district are free to do whatever they want to do in terms of candidate endorsement. He said there is a very significant opinion that came out of the School Ethics Commission in 2014, which is A36-14. Mr. DeSanto said he believes that the principles set forth in this opinion would apply to the Superintendent, Asst. Superintendents, etc. He said the commission has determined that there would be no violation of the act for you to express yourself politically as a private citizen with regard to the endorsement of any candidates in any election. Mr. DeSanto said you do not give up your fundamental rights as a citizen upon being seated on a Board of Education however, certain precautions are necessary. He said School Board members and Administrators are allowed to endorse candidates. Mr. DeSanto said there is a balance between your rights and responsibilities as upper level officials to a district. He said the following are the requirements that you are to adhere to if you are going to endorse candidates for school elections. Mr. DeSanto said with regard to pamphlets or other publications you must include a disclaimer that your endorsement is as a private citizen. He said the use of social media including but not limited to websites would require a disclaimer that your endorsement is a personal one. Mr. DeSanto said the use of social media may only be published on your personal social media account. He said Ms. Morello's example is a perplexing one because there are situations when candidates are at an event and there are many photographs taken. Mr. DeSanto said if a Board member is publishing that photo as an endorsement then the Board member must adhere to these requirements. He said if the candidate posts the photograph we have no control over what they do because it does not necessarily imply a political endorsement. Mr. DeSanto cautioned Board members and upper level Administrators to be very careful not to be placed in those particular situations if possible. He said that he spoke with Mike Calbert from the NJ School Boards legal department and asked him if he was aware of anything other than this opinion. Mr. DeSanto said Mr. Calbert said he was not but mentioned that he had conversations in the past with his counterparts at the Association of School Administrators. The attorneys said that when asked they have advised Administrators that belong to that association not to endorse candidates even though they technically can. Mr. DeSanto mentioned that since the Board does the evaluation of the Superintendent if the Superintendent as a private citizen endorses a candidate for election he along with Mr. Calbert feel that if elected the endorsed Board member cannot participate in the Superintendent's evaluation because of a conflict of interest.

Mr. English thanked Ms. Morello for these questions and everyone who was involved.

8. Review of May 2015 bills – No discussion.

Committee Reports: Mr. Jennings said he will share his report next week.

Ms. Morello said her two committee reports are online if anyone has any questions.

Mr. English asked his colleagues if it were ok to start next week's Board meeting at 6:00 p.m. He suggested having all summer Board meetings begin at 6:00 p.m. Mr. English said Dr. Gruccio informed him that there was no need to have a meeting on August 26th because we meet on September 2nd.

Mr. DeWinne asked if the project at the high school will be complete not to disrupt the opening for students. Mr. Jennings said they are currently predicting to be on time. He said there has been several meetings and they are allowing teachers and students in to parts of the building. Mr. Farinaccio said we are looking at the last week in August. Mr. English asked if there has been any discussion concerning double shifting and moving quicker from the contractors point. Mr. Farinaccio said yes they even discussed weekends. He said they are anticipating using additional staff on their end to get the building cleaned. Mr. Farinaccio said the concern is when staff members come in and construction is still moving forward how that intermingles together. Mr. DeWinne asked if we have plans in place assuming we cannot get students back in the building. Dr. Gruccio said this is the first time she is hearing that we are cutting it so close so a plan has not been discussed yet. She said if it gets to that point somebody needs to let us know so we can make a decision. Mr. Farinaccio said there is a phasing schedule and opening up school is on track with what they are doing. He said the challenge is occupancy for the staff to get in and set up. Mr. English said he spoke with Mr. Merighi, Architect, and Mr. Merighi said that it is still being called a construction zone, which means you need to wear a hardhat to enter but he did not anticipate anything the last week of August. Mr. Farinaccio said he knows the major work is scheduled for next summer. He said they are running infrastructure now such as piping and the electric needed to accommodate the equipment when it arrives. Dr. Gruccio said we will meet with maintenance and put a backup plan in place. Mr. Jennings said we will be on the old boiler system one more winter and split sessions may be the best route for us.

Old Business: None.

New Business: None.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 8:31 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Helen G. Haley
Board Secretary

HGH:dt

