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 6, 2014 at 7:01 p.m., pursuant to notice with Mr. Medio presiding and the following members present: Mr. Baruffi, Mr. DiGiorgio, Mr. English, Mr. Jennings, Ms. Morello, Ms. Rios and Mr. Ulrich. Absent: Mr. DeWinne.

Also present: Dr. Gruccio, Superintendent, Mr. Frey, Assistant Superintendent, Mr. Haley, Interim Board Secretary, Dr. Rossi, Executive Director of Personnel, Mr. DeSanto, Board 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.

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 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. Update on UAW Negotiations, Update on School Psychologist Negotiations and VASA Unfair Practice Case. Any pending or anticipated litigation or contract negotiation in which the public body is or may be a party and the matter is John Sammons 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. **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. DiGiorgio, seconded by Mrs. Morello, the resolution was passed. All Members voted “yes”.
Special Presentations: None.

Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying (HIB Report), Suspension Report, Cunningham Alternative School Report/Average Daily Attendance - No discussion.

Comments by Board Solicitor: None.

Public Comments On Agenda Items: None.

Items for Review:
A. Superintendent

1. **PERSONNEL**

1.1 Personnel Items – Ms. Morello asked if the procedures in place for the residency investigators have been tightened up because she is surprised to see a name on the agenda. Dr. Rossi said he will look into it.

Mr. English asked about the transfer of a food service worker. Dr. Rossi said Sodexo accommodated an interpersonal conflict that we are dealing with. Mr. English asked about long term substitutes and their knowledge in the area they are substituting in. Dr. Rossi said we would make a decision on the availability of suitable substitutes. Mr. English said he believes the Supervisor of Language Arts position is a very critical position and asked if Ms. Evans was given an exit interview. Dr. Rossi said we have all spoken to Ms. Evans. Mr. English asked if Board members are privy to exit interviews. Dr. Rossi said some employees felt that in these economic conditions there is attentiveness to their positions. Mr. English said he understands that tough decisions need to be made but he does not want to cheapen our product.

Mr. Ulrich feels that a written policy by the district to have exit interviews through personnel is absolutely critical. He said we have to create an environment for people to want to work here. Mr. Ulrich asked if the district has a written policy for conducting exit interviews to assess why we are losing talents. He said Andrea Evans was a great employee and her leaving is a bad loss for the district. Dr. Rossi said in his experience people in mid-career situations are reluctant to go on record with comments that Mr. Ulrich seeks.
Ms. Morello said in 2004 the Board discussed exit interviews and the feeling was you cannot mandate people who are leaving but it is a good practice.

Mr. English asked if people understand that the Board is supporting a lot of these positions and the budget dictates many of these cuts. He hopes the district is not being painted on the negative side and will not get an ideal candidate to apply for a job.

Mr. DiGiorgio said we are not trying to scare anyone out of their job and if you do your job well you have nothing to fear. He said the Board is not sitting up here making the decisions to run the district but making sure it runs well.

Ms. Rios asked if we will be replacing a lot of the resignations on the list. Dr. Rossi explained that there are economic considerations and it is a case by case basis. Ms. Rios said when the budget was done many of these resignations were not accounted for. Dr. Rossi said yes but there are also budget problems in the year ahead.

Mr. DiGiorgio said attrition creates opportunities. He asked if the Applied Math/Science Academy position is at Veterans Memorial School. Mr. Frey responded yes. Mr. DiGiorgio asked how the selections were made. Mr. Frey said the normal process.

Mr. English asked if an employee can grieve a transfer. Dr. Rossi said generally no.

Mr. DiGiorgio asked if any of our costs are increasing as a result of having the academy at Veterans Memorial School such as additional transportation costs. Mr. Frey said we are working with transportation to make sure all of the pieces are in place.

Ms. Morello asked if there is a way to indicate if a transfer is voluntary or involuntary. Dr. Rossi said he personally does not know if we want to get in to an individual’s business.

Mr. Medio said he spoke to Andrea Evans and she got a promotion to be a principal in a school that is closer to her home.

1.2 Assistant Business Administrator’s Contract – No discussion.

2. PROCEDURES & OPERATIONS

2.1 Travel – a. Field Trips, b. District Travel – No discussion.
2.2 Continued use of Textbooks/Curricular Activities in Grades PreK-12 – No discussion.
2.3 First Reading of Policy 3283 and 4283 – Dr. Gruccio said these policies need to be approved before the school year begins. She said next week will be considered the second reading so we can have them approved because they both deal with electronic communications.

2.4 First Reading of Policy 2412, Reg. 2412, Policy 2417, Reg. 2417, Policy 2481, Reg. 2481, Policy 5200, Reg. 5200, Policy 5610, Reg. 5610, Policy 5611, Reg. 5611, Policy 5612, Reg. 5612, Policy 5613, Reg. 5613, Policy 8462, Reg. 8462 – Mr. Ulrich asked about the due process for students with disabilities that commit an assault on a staff member. Ms. Morello said it is a manifestation hearing that Mrs. Godlewski can explain.

Mr. Jennings said he noticed a grammatical error while reviewing the policies.

Ms. Rios asked if the Policy & Personnel Committee ever reviewed the home instruction policy so there are no reoccurrence of circumstances. Mr. Frey explained that this being checked directly by those involved.

2.5 NJ Dept. of Education 2014 School Self-Assessment – No discussion.

2.6 Geospatial Information Systems Course – Ms. Morello asked if we have that kind of agreement for anything at Cumberland. Dr. Gruccio responded yes.

3. BUILDINGS & GROUNDS

3.1 Use of VHS by American Red Cross – Ms. Morello asked if this is the only school in the district being used as a shelter. Dr. Gruccio said it was the only one that was submitted for approval. Mr. Farinaccio, Assistant Maintenance Director, said he thinks this is just an addition. Dr. Gruccio asked Mr. Farinaccio to send her the approved list of buildings so she can send it to the Board.

4. FINANCE

4.1 Budgetary Transfers – Mr. Medio asked if Board members can initiate budgetary transfers. Mrs. Haley said she thinks that would be ok but she would ask Mr. DeSanto and the County office.

Mr. DiGiorgio asked if we borrowed any money at the end of this fiscal year. Mrs. Haley said no.
4.2 **Non-Union Administrative/Supervisory/Auxiliary Personnel Memorandum** – Mr. DiGiorgio asked if a longer term can be discussed. Dr. Rossi said this group of employees is not a negotiating group. Mr. DiGiorgio asked if this group is similar to any other group in the district. Dr. Rossi said a portion of the VEA group. Dr. Gruccio asked Mr. DeSanto if there is any reason prohibiting us from doing this. Mr. DeSanto said not that he knows of but to ask Mr. Pepper. Dr. Gruccio asked Mr. DiGiorgio if we find out that the agreement can be longer than one year can we move forward with this. Mr. DiGiorgio said yes.

4.3 **NJSBIG Safety Grant Funding** - Ms. Morello asked what this money will be used for. Mrs. Haley said for security doors and surveillance cameras.

Ms. Morello asked if we are ever going to own Almond Road School. Mr. Farinaccio explained that there are specific legislative hurdles in order to sell the building. Mr. Ulrich asked if the abatement money went towards our facility plans into capital or was it absorbed into the budget. Dr. Gruccio said she would check with Mr. Weaver and let the Board know.

4.4 **Sale of School Buses on Gov.Deals** – Mr. English asked if there is an issue with the 2011 bus. Mr. Callavini said it was totaled.

4.5 **Project Lead the Way, Inc. Agreement** – Ms. Morello said there are some nuts and bolts issues. She said consistency on delivery in all four middle schools has been taken care of. Ms. Morello said there are some professional development training costs in years one and two that have been identified. She said year one everyone will be teaching the same module and year two would be the introduction of a second module. Ms. Morello asked if we are going to commit to this for a three to five year time span. Dr. Gruccio said it is our hope that each year we can add another module for our students. Ms. Morello asked Dr. Gruccio if she is happy with the consistent delivery. Dr. Gruccio responded yes.

4.6 **Legal Fees Payment**- Dr. Gruccio said Mr. DeSanto requested for this item to be pulled from the agenda.

4.7 **Submission of IDEIA Grant** – No discussion.

4.8 **Catapult Learning Agreements** – No discussion.

4.9 **The Wright Choice Agreement** – Ms. Morello asked if Mr. DeSanto has reviewed all the contracts. Mr. DeSanto said we have an excellent procedure in place that is working beautifully.
4.10 **Interim Healthcare of NJ Staffing Agreement** – Mr. English asked about the words crossed out in the contract. Mr. DeSanto said he requested for the ability to cancel on 30 days’ notice to be crossed out.

4.11 **Ark Educational Services Agreement** – No discussion.

4.12 **Sheppard Bus Service Student Transportation Contract $1,471,414.** – Ms. Morello asked how many bus routes this encompasses. Mr. Callavini said around forty. Ms. Morello asked how many buses we would need if we provided those services. Mr. Callavini said the same amount.

Mr. DiGiorgio asked what we pay for transportation on an annual basis. Mr. Callavini said around 9.2 million dollars for operating.

4.13 **Challenge Day Program Agreement** – Ms. Morello asked for an explanation of this program. Dr. Gruccio explained that it is a character education program that Vineland, Millville and Bridgeton will take part in. Ms. Morello requested additional information on this program.

4.14 **Achieve 3000 Software** – Ms. Morello asked if this is KidBiz or TeenBiz. Dr. Gruccio responded TeenBiz. Ms. Morello asked if KidBiz is finished in the elementary schools. Mr. Frey said no not completely. Ms. Morello asked if the 240 slots are sufficient for all students. Mr. Frey said yes.

4.15 **Asset Works LLC Appraisal Services** – No discussion.

4.16 **Inspira HealthCare Occupational Health Services** – No discussion.

4.17 **Bayada Home Health Care, Inc. Contracts** – Mr. Ulrich asked if this in place of a certified school nurse substitute. Dr. Gruccio said this is for substitute nurses and special education students. Mr. Ulrich asked for the amount that is paid to a certified substitute school nurse rate per day. Dr. Rossi said he would get that information to him. Mr. DiGiorgio requested the costs of the hourly contract. He asked if the pool of available people would increase if we increased the substitute rate. Dr. Rossi said we can attempt that.

Mr. English asked why there is a different termination clause in each contact. Mr. DeSanto said the contracts should be consistent and we will look into this tomorrow.
4.18 **Blackboard Engage Web Hosting Service** – Ms. Morello asked what exactly we host in-house and what do we spend on services provided by others. Mr. Frey said he would get that information to her.

4.19 **Sheppard Bus Service Student Transportation Contract $659,880.** – Mr. English asked why the preschool routes are higher. Mr. Callavini said the preschool routes include an aide in the cost and the Charter School routes are twice the length as far as mileage. Mr. English asked if we are still going out of district with buses. Mr. Callavini said out of district routes are long and would double the cost. He kept the routes in-house to give our employees the opportunity to earn more money.

Mr. DiGiorgio asked if these two contracts are included in the transportation 9.2 million dollar operating expense. Mr. Callavini responded yes.

4.20 **Meal Prices** - No discussion.

4.21 **Award Bids: All Surface Asphalt Paving, Falasca Mechanical** – Mr. English expressed his concern that the pool project has not been started yet with school beginning soon. Mr. Farinaccio said we did lose time on the project but we are still going to have this job wrapped up during the month of September. Mr. English said we approved the amount for this project in the budget for four hundred thousand dollars and we are accepting a contract for less. He asked where the remainder of the money is. Mr. Farinaccio explained that we did not have enough money to complete the pool and dehumidification. Mr. English asked if swimming is not part of the curriculum for the 2014-2015 school year. Mr. Frey said that is correct. Mr. English asked if the only people who will be using the pool are the swim team. Mr. Frey said unless a club develops or other activities occur. Mr. Ulrich asked if we have money in our capital funds to cover this project. Mr. English said if the money is there finish the project and move on. Mr. Ulrich said if we have $500,000 for an auxiliary gym then we have $30,000 to finish this pool project. Ms. Haley explained that when the fund 12 budget was submitted there were certain projects identified in it. She said there were discussions along the way about the auxiliary gym and cuts were made to come up with the funding. Ms. Haley said then the heating/air conditioning issue came forward so the money for the gym was going back and forth. She said the budget that was submitted to the county did not identify the $495,000 for either of those projects. Ms. Morello asked if a transfer of money can be done to complete this project. Ms. Haley said an internal decision would have to be made. Mr. English expressed his concern that this was supposed to be a summer project.

Mr. Medio said it is 8:30 p.m. and at this time asked for public comments.
Public Comments:
Sandy Urban, UAW Representative

Ms. Urban said in reference to 4.19 the Sheppard Bus bid she asked if these are the routes that are being awarded to Sheppard Bus as a result of the removal of ten buses from the transportation department. Mr. Callavini said yes that is what the contract covers. Ms. Urban asked if there was consideration to give these specific schools and programs to our drivers instead of subbing them out to Sheppard Bus. Mr. Callavini said the current packages do not fit. Ms. Urban said she believes in the past we did facilitate additional routes. She hopes the Board would take another look at this to try to keep as many of the routes in-house.

4.22 Purchases in excess of Bid Threshold – No discussion.

4.23 Award Bid: Sheppard Bus Service, Inc. – Mr. English asked for an explanation on this item. Dr. Gruccio said this is for St. Mary’s School.

Mr. DiGiorgio asked if this is state mandated and do we have to provide this transportation to non-public schools. Mr. Callavini said yes. Mr. DiGiorgio asked if we check if a student is in the two mile radius. Mr. Callavini said we are not required to reimburse or transport the students if they do not make the state mileage. He said the situation is a little different if there are two children in one household in different grades.


4.25 Expansion of YMCA Before/After School Program to include Rossi and Wallace Middle Schools – Mr. Ulrich asked if the YMCA were the only bidders for the program. Dr. Gruccio responded yes.

2. ITEMS PROPOSED FOR REGULAR AGENDA:

a. Report by the Secretary of the Board of Education – None.

B. Proposed for review or discussion or adoption by Board Members:

Title I Money – Ms. Morello said through the budget process everyone is referencing RAC money. She said RAC money is Title I money that is siphoned off the top of the Title I award to the district. Ms. Morello said that Landis Middle School receives $900,000 right off the top. She said Leuchter School also receives a portion of the money because they are a target school. Ms. Morello said there are other schools that have similar needs but the money is not put aside for them directly.
Ms. Morello expressed her concern how progress or a lack of progress at Landis Middle School will be determined. She said there are conversations coming up with benchmarks to measure students against themselves. Ms. Morello said she is not comfortable having one school with that big slice of the pie. She said there are other schools that deserve the same attention, funding and technology equipment. Dr. Grucchio wanted to clarify that because Leuchter School is a target school that does not mean it is a school that has educational needs. She said it means that the money they do receive has to specifically go to the Title I students. Dr. Grucchio said next year, when we receive approval for whole school status, the money they receive from Title I can be used for all the students within that school. Dr. Grucchio said in regards to the math and literacy coaches the $900,000 is off the top of the title money for the focus school. She said part of that money was designated for math and literacy coaches that are not necessarily assigned to Landis Middle School. Ms. Morello asked if there are any other schools in the district that are whole schools with Title I designation. Dr. Grucchio said the title money can be used school wide. Mr. Medio asked if these are new positions or transfers of teachers within the district without any extra costs to the district. Dr. Grucchio said the new positions are funded with the money that was designated out of the $900,000. Ms. Morello asked what is Landis not having this year that cost $400,000 last year. Dr. Grucchio said she would find out. Mr. Medio asked where is the data that shows that these coaches were successful at Landis School. Dr. Grucchio said we just received the scores but she has a chart that compares last year to this year. She said the chart shows growth in grades six and seventh in language arts and there was growth in grades six and eight in math.

Mr. Medio said he would like to see what Board members are going to vote to hire five new positions that are not proven to be successful after two years in place. Dr. Grucchio said growth is being shown across the board. Mr. English asked if it would not be better to give $100,000 to each middle school. Dr. Grucchio said that would not give you a math and language coach. Ms. Morello said we need to be assured that we are going to get results out of this and know what it is that we are funding. Mr. Medio asked what the test scores were of the other three middle schools. Mr. Frey said we would need to get that data. Mr. Medio expressed his concern that we are going to take a qualified math teacher out of the classroom and put into a program that has not been proven to work. He said our middle schools have the lowest student/teacher ratios around, which is supposed to be one of the number one factors in learning. Mr. Medio said that he cannot imagine how you can justify five new hires at $400,000. Ms. Morello asked if we can subcontract those services with an agency like EIRC. Dr. Grucchio said it is worth looking at. Mr. Ulrich expressed his concern that Title funding can change and go with the wind. He said we are trying to make educational decisions and does not know if we should be doing that. Ms. Morello said she is trying to get answers as to if this effective and if we are getting what we are looking for. Mr. Medio asked what was eliminated at Landis School to make up this $400,000 loss. Dr. Grucchio said she would be happy to get a list. Ms. Rios asked how this program works for students who are not good test takers. Mr. Baruffi said he personally thinks it is a teacher who makes students good and he is not sure if coaches can make a teacher better.
Mr. Ulrich agrees with Mr. Baruffi and said it is about the employee. He said if you have good employees to provide support it makes the difference.

Ms. Morello said the next issue is principal assignments to schools depending on enrollment numbers. She said there are 369 students at Johnstone Elementary School and many of them have significant needs. Ms. Morello said you need support there to be able to communicate with parents.

Ms. Morello said her last issue is the auxiliary gym at the high school. She said they received some information that there were potential risks for student injuries using the space they currently have. She said everyone was on board for the walkway that the students do not even walk under. Ms. Morello said if we have an auxiliary gym then space is freed up for a fine arts, dance or music academy. Mr. English said he was a big supporter of the walkway. He said the walkway is a safe place for the students to walk under and he does not know why they are not using it. Mr. English said he does not think it is money that was wasted because if we still had the buses the cost would have been up to a million dollars very soon. He asked why the auxiliary gym was never put in the Long Range Facility Plan if it was so needed. Mr. Farinaccio explained that there are limitations with what the state calls out for an auxiliary gym. He said we tried to look at places internally in the building to try to modify spaces but they were too narrow for that specification. Mr. English said if it is a safety issue it should have been put in the Long Range Facility Plan a long time ago. Mr. Farinaccio said if the district wants to move forward with a new auxiliary gym he said it would be an amendment to the Long Range Facilities Plan accompanied by a Board resolution and a Department of Education Project resolution.

Mr. Medio said everything that was said about the walkway was correct. He said everybody makes mistakes and that was his. Mr. Medio said we voted for the walkway because we were going to combine the ridiculous bus routes we had. He said we never voted for an auxiliary gym and it was taken out of the budget. Mr. Medio said what he keeps hearing about the alleged safety issues is false. He said there was a coach who was kicked in the head and received a concussion. Mr. Medio said a student had someone roll on to his ankle. He said we have the space to put in a dance program that could be year round with three other rooms that can be turned into classrooms.

Ms. Morello said things need to be addressed if we are going to complete the pool and move forward to make space for the choice programs.

Mr. Ulrich asked Dr. Gruccio if she ever submitted the auxiliary gym for any consideration. Dr. Gruccio responded no. Mr. Ulrich asked if $500,000.00 could be used to repair windows at D’Ippolito School and put in infrastructure replacements that are in our schools that we do not take care of. He feels we are wasting a lot of time on something that is not approved by the state and probably will not be approved by the state. Mr. Ulrich said $500,000.00 could be used to fix and support the things we have in place already.
Mr. Ulrich said it is wrong that we keep micromanaging and putting matters in that are not parts of the plan.

Mr. DiGiorgio said he supported the walkway and thought it was a good idea but it turned out to look differently then he thought it would. He asked if the walkway was part of the Long Range Facilities Plan when it was presented by the superintendent. Mr. Farinaccio said approval was needed for the walkway. Dr. Gruccio said she did not recommend the walkway. The walkway was an idea that came through committee from a Board member.

Ms. Rios said we do have other priorities in this District that do need to be focused on.

Mr. DiGiorgio said a couple years ago $3,000,000 was allocated into capital. He asked if in the future we will have the capacity to transfer money and allocate to capital to address future needs. Mrs. Haley said it was in the capital reserve which is Fund 12. Mr. Medio asked why this money was not appropriated for the things we are discussing such as windows. Mrs. Haley said the entire Fund 12 budget is all our capital projects. Mr. Medio asked if that money was supposed to go towards the air conditioning. Mrs. Haley said Fund 12 money was designated for projects and submitted to the state. She said certain cuts were made to those projects and we were told by the county that we had to stay with what was originally submitted. Ms. Morello said can we agree to move forward to finish the pool. Mrs. Haley said she will email the Board a spreadsheet on Fund 12 so decisions could be made.

Dr. Gruccio presented a list of supervisory positions that she would like to hire for September and discussed the need for them. She requested the Board’s support as she moves forward to put these recommendations on the agenda. Mr. Medio said we will review this list and discuss it in committee or at next week’s Board meeting. Mr. Ulrich asked if the actual costs could be attached with these positions. Mr. DiGiorgio asked if internal candidates could be considered first. Dr. Gruccio said absolutely.

Review of Bills: Mr. English said he understands that there were some bills for Grainger that had to be paid. He asked if we are hurting the district by not purchasing from Grainger. Mrs. Haley said the last purchase order that she approved for Grainger was for $75.00 and she has not approved any since. Mr. English said there are multiple things on the list that our local vendors offer.

Mr. Ulrich said Dr. Rossi just presented the rates for substitute nurses. He said the daily rate is $140.00 without certification and $155.00 with certification. He said it is significantly less than Bayada’s $300 per day rate. Mr. DiGiorgio said we need to increase the substitute nurse rate. Mr. Ulrich asked if we can pull the Bayada contract from next week’s agenda if the majority of the Board is in agreement.
Mr. Medio asked what is going to happen if we increase the rate and we do not get any substitutes. Mr. Ulrich said we can put Bayada back on the agenda. Ms. Morello said we could pull from our substitute list first and use Bayada as needed. Mr. Ulrich said he would like to know the amount we spent on in-house Bayada nurses (school nurse only).

Ms. Morello said she had a conference call with Mrs. Bleistine, Mr. Hart and Dr Gruccio in regards to how the registration process went and the report went well. She said there were two Curriculum and Personnel & Policy Committee non-meetings and she has notes.

Mr. English said in regards to the Ad Hoc Transportation Committee he said it seems like it all centers around the budget and the amount of money. He said today he heard that it takes 9.2 million dollars to run transportation. Mr. English said he believes that this is one area that you do not want to privatize. He said we did not have enough money to purchase new buses so we had to privatize routes. Mr. English said he thinks with a district/fleet our size we can make money in the busing business.

Mr. Medio said the Ad Hoc Transportation Committee was supposed to be in place for a few months. He said before Mr. English goes any further with this, Administration needs to let you know what the projected deficit is and what their plans are to make it up to find that million dollars to purchase those buses in the upcoming year. He said he does not think there is anyone on this Board who is opposed to buying those buses.

Mr. Ulrich said Mr. Callavini wanted to purchase eight buses and he felt that purchasing three and a half buses was going to send us down a replacement path that was not good. He expressed his concern that if you are going to go down the privatization road then you should be honest with your employees and give them a chance to negotiate and work with the district in a collaborative way. Mr. Ulrich said he does not know if that has always been the mindset among both the unions and administration.

John Caudill, Mechanic
Mr. Caudill expressed his concern that the mechanics are under-staffed.

None.

None.
Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned by voice vote to executive session at 10:19 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Helen G. Haley
Interim Board Secretary