

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, October 5, 2011 at 7:47 p.m., pursuant to notice with Mr. Ulrich presiding and the following members present: Mr. DiGiorgio, Mr. English, Mr. Fanucci, Mr. Medio, Mr. Mercado, Dr. Mounier, Mrs. Phillips and Ms. Rios. Absent: None.

Also present: Dr. Banks, Superintendent, Dr. Gruccio and Dr. Elliott, Assistant Superintendents, Mr. Franchetta, Board Secretary, Mr. DeSanto, Board Solicitor, Mrs. Polof, Director of Special Education, Ms. Greenfield, Executive Director of Personnel, press and public. Absent: None.

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:

Special

Presentations:

Dr. Banks introduced Mr. Keith Nocco to present an update on Sodexo.

Mr. Nocco presented a brief overview on three ongoing projects. He said one project is the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program, which is the introduction of fruits and vegetables once a week to the children. Mr. Nocco said on Friday at Sabater we participated in a joint venture with the Department of Agriculture and Rutgers Extension to taste test new food products that may be coming down the line. He said Rutgers is partnering with various school districts to hear their ideas and feedback on the new products. Mr. Nocco said Breakfast in the Classroom has begun at Johnstone, Barse and Petway Schools and we are receiving positive feedback from the three schools. He said the equipment installed at Vineland High School North and D'Ippolito School is working well. Mr. Nocco said that there is an increase of about 240 extra lunches a day compared to last September.

Mr. Ulrich asked if there was another option available for first grade children who are having problems opening up the dressing packets. Mr. Nocco said packets are the easiest option for transporting purposes. He said there may be some inconvenience once a month when vegetables are served.

Mr. English asked Mr. Nocco how the staff is adapting and does he feel under staffed. Mr. Nocco said no he looks at the central kitchen as a team effort and being one unit.

Dr. Banks introduced Mr. Tony Melendez, Director of Casa PRAC, Inc., to give a presentation on Project HELP.

Mr. Melendez thanked the board for giving him the opportunity to make this presentation. He said Casa PRAC, Inc. is an organization that has been around for thirty years providing services for the Hispanic population and all societal challenged residents regardless of color, race or creed. Mr. Melendez said the mission of Project HELP in the 2011-2012 academic year is to continually improve the quality of education to the English as a Second Language grades K-5 students by providing instructional after school tutorial services. He said the goals of Project HELP are the following: 1. Provide after school ESL tutorial services in the core curriculum of the child; 2. Improve the overall academic performance; 3. Develop good study skills; 4. Build student self esteem and a positive outlook towards education; 5. Assist parents in establishing effective parent/teacher communication skills. Mr. Melendez said Project HELP staff consists of an English as a Second Language teacher, a teacher's assistant and participants from the Foster Grandparents Program. Tutoring is provided Monday through Thursday from 3:30 p.m. until 6:30 p.m. Healthy snacks and transportation is provided by Vineland Public Schools. Mr. Melendez said we have always worked closely with the Vineland School System and teachers. He said that we are looking to enhance this program by way of financial assistance. Mr. Melendez said if the board is interested he would like to provide additional information.

Ms. Rios asked if this program is income based or free to the entire community. Mr. Melendez said it is free to the community.

Dr. Banks introduced Mr. John Procopio to give a presentation on the Holiday Tree Event.

Mr. Procopio said for the last three years all Vineland public, private and parochial schools have participated in a Holiday Tree Project in downtown Vineland. He said Walmart donated all of the trees. Mr. Procopio said the tree judging is done by the Mayor, Vineland City Council and Board of Education members, community members and retired teachers. He said next year we are going to try to hold a fall festival scarecrow event. Mr. Procopio said by participating in the tree project we are trying to build community partnerships and receive vast benefits for the students. He said that he works with a couple of sports programs and feels it is important for them to get out and do community service. Mr. Procopio is hoping the board supports the Holiday Tree Event.

Comments by  
Board Solicitor: None.

Dr. Banks said at this time she would like to discuss the bullying reports and suspensions as of September 2011. She said as of this date we have a total of 123 reports of bullying throughout the district. Dr. Banks said of those 41 are deemed to be actual incidents of harassment, intimidation and bullying. She said for the month of September we had a total of 296 suspensions and there were 177 at the high school and 13 at Cunningham School.

Mr. English asked if it were possible to receive a breakdown on the suspensions between the North and South buildings. Dr. Banks said yes she could provide that information.

Items for Review:

A. Superintendent

1. **Personnel Items** - Mr. English asked if the food service position has been filled. Ms. Greenfield responded no. Mr. English asked how we are doing with substitutes in the food service department. Ms. Greenfield said she is working with Mr. Nocco on a posting for Sodexo substitutes.

Dr. Mounier asked what an Intake Specialist is. Ms. Greenfield said it is a special program with the NJ Youth Corp.

Mr. Ulrich asked how we are doing with substitutes. Ms. Greenfield said there will be another orientation the end of this month that all substitutes have to attend in order to start working. She said we have about twenty that we will be processing for the orientation. Ms. Greenfield said the Bridgeton and Millville School Districts have increased their rates so we may need to look at this again. Mr. Ulrich asked how we are doing with school nurse substitutes at the high school. Ms. Greenfield said we do not have many.

Mrs. Phillips questioned the salary on the second name listed under new employment. Dr. Banks said that is a typo. Ms. Greenfield said she will correct it.

Mr. Mercado asked if an employee can rescind their retirement if it has been board approved. Ms. Greenfield said it can be resubmitted to the board and they have the discretion whether or not to approve it.

Mr. DiGiorgio asked about the salary range for the purchasing director position. Ms. Greenfield said it is the step before the last step on the guide and the position was reduced in compensation. Mr. DiGiorgio said a good purchasing agent can earn his salary on what they save the district and he would like to see an analysis at the end of the first year.

Mr. Ulrich said if the purchasing director can accomplish half of what his goals are we are going to be in real good shape.

2. **Placement of Special Education Students** – Dr. Mounier mentioned that there were no names listed for out of district placements. Mr. Medio asked for the regulations that state names can no longer be put on the agenda for public session. Mrs. Polof said the names were taken off because of confidentiality issues but the remainder of the information should be listed.
3. **Budgetary Transfers** – No discussion.
4. **Travel** – Mr. English asked for clarification as to whether Alex Gomez’s travel is for baseball or softball.
5. **Van Outreach Program Contract for Barse School** – No discussion.
6. **Gloucester County Vocational-Technical School District Contract** – No discussion.
7. **Harrison Township Transportation Agreement** – No discussion.
8. **Complete Care Health Network Agreement** – No discussion.
9. **Adoption of Aflac Flex One Plan** – No discussion.
10. **Updated School Anti-Bullying Specialists** – Mr. English asked why there are three schools with no backups. Dr. Elliott said a back up person was not identified but the assistant principals or any other designated guidance counselor can act as a backup. Mr. English asked if one person can handle the high school load. Dr. Elliott said one anti-bullying specialist per school is part of the statute.  
  
Mr. Ulrich asked if we are anywhere with the county superintendent on the bully coordinator/student service position. Dr. Banks said she just received the combined job description and will be sending it to the county superintendent for his approval.
11. **Appropriation of Additional State Aid** – Mr. Medio said his goal is to find at least a million and a half dollars to put into roofing and thousands of dollars to address this shortfall to be fiscally prudent.

Mr. Medio asked if the tennis court resurfacing has been started. Mr. Franchetta responded no. He expressed his concern that you cannot hire people when you have shortfalls projected. Mr. Medio requested for the money that has been set aside for a high school principal, language arts supervisor, clerk, mechanic and bus yard gates be added to the ARRA fund to bring the shortfall down to approximately 1.3 million.

Mr. Ulrich said he shares the same concerns as Mr. Medio on the short fall of the job ed money that we received and applied to our budget for actual employment this year, which was in excess of four million dollars.

Mr. Mercado asked where the two assistant principals would be located. Dr. Banks said at the high school.

Mr. DiGiorgio asked if the ARRA money was used to hire the assistant principals. Dr. Banks said no.

Mr. Medio requested a five minute recess at 8:37 p.m.

The meeting resumed at 8:44 p.m.

Mr. Ulrich said we moved three million dollars into capital improvements in June. He said we have roofs at several schools that need to be addressed and Mr. Medio's concern is that we are spending money on salaries that we do not have and eventually will lead to people being rified and positions being abolished. Mr. Ulrich said this is a valid concern and we can decide as a board to take the entire amount of money and put it towards capital improvements. Mr. Ulrich said that he agrees with Mr. Medio on this issue.

12. **Submission of Grants** – No discussion.

13. **Acceptance of Funds** – No discussion.

14. **Donations** – No discussion.

15. **Bids** – Dr. Mounier asked for an explanation on the bid that is being rejected. Mr. Franchetta explained that his was for computer services.

Mr. Mercado asked if there were any local bidders for the roofing bid. Mr. Franchetta said no. Mr. Mercado asked if we reached out to local contractors. Mr. Franchetta said he sent notification out to around eighty roofers, which included local contractors. Mr. Ulrich said the prospective purchasing director stated that his philosophy is that you first try to cultivate your local bidding then county, out of county and state.

Mr. DiGiorgio feels it is important that we make whatever efforts that can be made to benefit the county. Mr. DeSanto said there is always the issue of prequalification and bonding.

Mr. Franchetta stated that he sent the bid out to ninety one roofers.

Mr. English asked if this roofing contractor will be charging for travel time. Mr. Franchetta said there is no travel time.

Mr. Fanucci asked if we are always obligated to take the lowest responsive bidder. Mr. Franchetta said yes.

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

17. **Cancellation of Account Receivable** – Dr. Mounier asked if this was money that we cannot collect. Mr. Franchetta responded yes.

18. **New Bank Depository** – Mr. Ulrich asked if this has to do with Aflac. Mr. Franchetta said yes the money collected from Aflac has to be deposited into its own separate bank account.

Mr. Fanucci asked if there was a procedure for choosing the bank. Mr. Franchetta explained that we contacted all of the local banks for their rates and charges.

19. **Oppenheimer Funds Investment Provider** – Mr. Ulrich asked how many 403 (b) Plans contractually we allow. Mr. Franchetta said he thinks it is now unlimited and we have around ten.

20. **Supplemental Educational Service (SES) Agreements** – Mr. Medio asked approximately what this will cost. Mr. Franchetta explained that this is part of the No Child Left Behind Grant and an amount must be set aside in the grant for this specifically. Mr. Medio asked if we can hire teachers to do this at \$25.00 per hour. Mr. Franchetta said we are an SES provider but we must also offer this to outside providers. Mr. Ulrich asked if we will utilize all of the providers. Mr. Franchetta said the students choose which one they would like to attend.

21. **Evacuation Drills for September** – No discussion.

22. **Barse ESL Teacher** - Dr. Mounier asked how much of a need is there for Mandarin Chinese translation. Dr. Elliott said we currently have three families who speak Mandarin Chinese.

23. **Tuition Student** – Mr. Medio asked what the difference is between this student and the special education assignments. Mr. Franchetta said this is not a special education student.
24. **Employee Suspension** – No discussion.
25. **Approval of Asst. Superintendents and Business Administrator Contracts for 2011-2012 school year** – Mr. Ulrich said if you recall Dr. Banks pulled this from a previous agenda when Mr. DiGiorgio asked for the 2010-2011 contracts to be tabled. He read a letter from the Dr. Stepura, the County Executive Superintendent, approving the revised employment contracts.

Mr. DiGiorgio asked if the county superintendent approves the form of the contracts not the content. Mr. Ulrich said he approves both. Mr. DiGiorgio asked if vacation day accruals are based on the current rate or the rates for the year they were accrued on. Mr. Franchetta said it is based on the rate at that point in time. Mr. DiGiorgio asked if the vacation days can be used at any point in time. Mr. Franchetta said they can be exhausted before termination, retirement or separation. He said they are allowed a one year carry-over of vacation time. Mr. Franchetta said vacation days have value upon death or separation but sick days are capped and do not have value at death.

B. Board

1. Discussion of Approval of the contracts for the Assistant Superintendents of Schools and the Business Administrator pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-3.1 for the period of July 1, 2010 to June 30, 2011 in a form acceptable by the County Superintendent.
  - a. Dr. Mary Gruccio, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum & Instruction
  - b. Dr. Dina Elliott, Assistant Superintendent for Administration
  - c. Mr. Kevin Franchetta, Business Administrator

Review of Bills: No discussion.

Public Comments: Bill Jannarone, Parent

Mr. Jannarone thanked the superintendent, administration and board for effort that was put forth in helping his daughter correct her schedule. He also wanted to appeal the decision not to calculate the AP Calculus course taken by his daughter when determining her Grade Point Average (GPA).

Dr. Banks wanted to clarify that in a letter she sent to Mr. Jannarone she indicated that if he disagreed with her decision he had a right to appeal it to the board, which is what he is doing.

Melanie Druziako, Parent

Ms. Druziako thanked Dr. Banks and Dr. Gruccio for approving classes that her daughter, Stephanie, took at Cumberland County College. She said that she is here to appeal a decision made by Dr. Banks on changes that were made to the senior course selections. Ms. Druziako also wanted to clarify some inaccuracies that were stated and provide her interpretation as to the reason her daughter took certain classes.

Wendi Carlon-Wolfe, Parent

Ms. Wolfe thanked Dr. Banks for the decision that she made. She believes that Dr. Banks leveled the playing field by allowing students to take courses they are interested in but not get a leg up by replacing a non-weighted course with a weighted course. Ms. Wolfe mentioned that the public meeting regarding Option 2 scheduled for October 13<sup>th</sup> conflicts with a meeting at the high school regarding Parent Portal.

Nick Griffie, Parent

Mr. Griffie thanked the board for corresponding with him through emails along with Dr. Elliott for speaking to him and his wife. He said that his daughter is first on the waiting list for attending Petway Elementary School.

Valorie Francisci, Parent

Ms. Francisci thanked Dr. Banks for the decision she made regarding weighted versus non-weighted courses, which will affect all students fairly. She said it is very important that there is a level playing field in place to all students in the graduating classes.

Victor Druziako, Parent

Mr. Druziako asked if the appeal that is filed this evening orally is procedurally sufficient. Mr. Ulrich said the board will accept the appeals and tomorrow he will speak to Mr. DiDomenico, Associate Solicitor.

Mr. Medio asked if the board is clear as to what the appeals are. Mr. Ulrich said the appeals are that they want their children's courses figured into their GPA. Mr. Medio said that means that as of right now the courses are not being figured in as non-weighted courses that replace non-weighted courses. He said the appeal is not to have the courses figured in as non-weighted courses that they replaced.

Mr. Jannarone said his appeal is based on fairness, which is if a student takes a weighted course and receives a grade it should be treated as a weighted course grade.

Mr. Druziako said the sole portion of the decision that they are appealing is the crediting of the weighted course and inclusion in the GPA.

Ms. Wolfe said other students have worked equally hard and their class rank will go down as a result of the decision made here.

Committee Reports: Mrs. Phillips said at yesterday's Curriculum & Technology Committee meeting Option 2 was discussed. She said they decided to hold a public meeting on October 13<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m. in the board room at 625 Plum Street.

Ms. Rios said the Policy & Personnel Committee interviewed various high school staff members' individually in regards to the high school CAPA Report and the majority of the staff indicated the following. The CAPA Report was very accurate as to where the high school stands and what changes need to be made to move the high school forward. Ms. Rios said the staff feels an additional principal should be hired so there is one principal in each building. She said the following topics Fusion, Master Schedule Consultant and Ninth Grade Academy were also discussed but the answers varied and not everyone was asked the same question. Ms. Rios said today the committee met with the assistant principal candidates Lauren Savas and Tina Morris along with Mark Zorzi the purchasing director candidate.

Ms. Rios said the September preschool provider meeting was held at Little Lamb. She said that she will be holding the meetings every other month at the various preschools so we can learn from each other and create unity within the district and providers. Ms. Rios said a preschool registration update and chain of command list was distributed to all of the providers who were present at the meeting. She said if parents have a preschool preference they need to submit a letter directly to Dr. Elliott by September 30<sup>th</sup> to be on the preschool preference waiting list. Ms. Rios said the providers expressed their concerns about the financial burden due to the Department of Education not paying them on time. She said some providers stated that they will not be open for the summer. Ms. Rios said we discussed submitting their financial concerns to Mr. Hart so that a possible meeting can be scheduled with the Department of Education to address their concerns. She announced that the next childcare provider meeting will be held on November 15, 2011 at 5:30 p.m. at All Kids First Preschool.

Ms. Rios said she attended the carnival held at Winslow Elementary School on October 1<sup>st</sup>, which was a wonderful event. She said it was nice to see how everyone came to make this event possible. Ms. Rios congratulated Ms. Bechtel, Principal, along with Winslow staff, parents and local businesses that participated in this event for a job well done.

Mr. Ulrich asked if we pay the providers for summer school. Dr. Elliott said that is provided by a separate entity and is individualized by provider. Mr. Ulrich said summer school has nothing to do with the board. Dr. Elliott responded no.

Mr. English thanked the Policy & Personnel committee for allowing him to attend their long meeting, which answered a lot of his questions. He said it gave him an eye opening experience as to what is really going on at the high school.

Mr. English said discussed at the Facilities Committee meeting was the Almond Road facility, VHS South wrestling mats, capital maintenance projects, indoor air quality, solar panel project update and the facilities maintenance project review.

Mr. Fanucci said at the Finance Committee meeting they discussed the Almond Road project and the six million dollar funding allocations. He said they also discussed updates on assignments that were given to Mr. Franchetta in regards to a meeting of the committee as a whole with respect to the new budget.

Unfinished  
Business:

Mr. English asked Mr. DeSanto if it is in our best interest to pursue the track litigation any further. Mr. DeSanto said absolutely. He said we have contacted several potential experts to replace the one that abandoned us. Mr. DeSanto said once he receives the name, resume and cost he will submit it to the board for approval.

Mr. Ulrich asked how this will be done if it has already been corrected. Mr. DeSanto said we have written reports, photographs and test analysis. He said we just need the right person to put it together and determine cause. Mr. Ulrich asked why the bonding company will not make a settlement offer with us. Mr. DeSanto said the burden is on us to prove the deficiency.

At this time Ms. Wolfe, a parent in the audience, asked if it was appropriate for a board member to be speaking to two parents about an issue during a board meeting. Mr. Ulrich said that he thought Mr. Medio went to the restroom. Ms. Wolfe said Mr. Medio is out in the hall speaking with two parents and she has a problem with that.

Mr. English asked Mr. DeSanto if it is safe to keep the litigation in his committee as a follow up. Mr. DeSanto said yes he will make sure to report to everyone with his progress. Mr. English said he did not want to fall into the same situation with the tennis courts. Mr. DeSanto said he has not been presented with any information about the tennis courts. Mr. Ulrich said there are safety issues that currently exist and when this project comes up it will be voted on and discussed by the entire board.

Mr. English asked if there was a process in place for the Sodexo Committee chaired by Mr. Medio to set up a meeting. Mr. Ulrich said it is on his list of things to do and he will have Mr. Medio schedule a meeting.

New Business: Mr. English asked if uniforms for athletes and non-athletes are taken out of a particular budget or do the students fund raise for them. Mr. Ulrich questioned if this should be a discussion between the athletic director, Dr. Banks and Dr. McCann. He said that he has never seen a request refused for uniforms. Mr. Mercado said he was told that last year the golf team purchased their own shirts. Mr. Fanucci said if that is happening then the coaches need to make the proper submissions to Mr. Robbins, the athletic director. Mr. English asked if uniforms are ordered and not in on time how is this addressed. Mr. Ulrich asked Dr. Banks to look into this.

Mr. Medio asked if there was discussion while he was outside about the discussion he was having because if there are any problems he would like to clarify them. Mr. Ulrich said a parent said that you were speaking to two parents outside the board room. Mr. Medio said yes he was and he would like to explain to everyone what he was discussing because he does not want his reputation smeared unfairly. Mr. Ulrich said it was not smeared.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 9:49 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kevin J. Franchetta, CPA  
Board Secretary

KJF:df