

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 7, 2009 at 7:07 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: Dr. Gruccio, Assistant Superintendent, Mr. Franchetta, Board Secretary, Mr. Smith, Executive Controller, Mr. DeSanto, Board Solicitor, Mrs. Polof, Director of Special Education, Ms. Greenfield, Executive Director of Personnel, press and public. Absent: Dr. Figgs, Interim Superintendent.

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.

Flag salute:

Mr. Giordano announced that Dr. Figgs, Interim Superintendent, is attending a three-day workshop and Mr. Franchetta, Asst. Superintendent for Business/Board Secretary, will be taking his place tonight as Interim Superintendent.

Special

Presentations:

Mr. Franchetta introduced Dr. Mary Gruccio to present the New Jersey State Assessment Results.

Dr. Gruccio thanked her supervisors, Donna Nedohon, Andrea Evans, Steve Dantine, Ruth Polof, Wade Anastor and Carey Savage for taking the time to help her put this presentation together. She reminded the board that last year the benchmarks were changed by the state at grades five through eight. Dr. Gruccio said because the benchmarks were changed our scores went down quite a bit. The positive part is that this year the scores and grades are going back up. Dr. Gruccio said this year the test was changed in grades three and four so you will see a decrease in some of those areas. She said as a result students in grades three and four now have to earn a greater percentage of correct answers in order to be deemed proficient in Language Arts and Mathematics. Dr. Gruccio reviewed the district performance in Language Arts Literacy and Mathematics for grades three through eleven. She along with her supervisors came up with the following recommendations to address the concerns in the presentation:

- All levels should continue to analyze data to drive instruction.
- Monitor student progress utilizing district and state benchmarks.

- Focus on academic rigor, differentiated instruction and use of alternative assessments.
- Continue to provide professional development to improve the quality of instruction.
- Continue to provide professional development.
- Continue to provide mat coaches at middle and high school level.
- Focus on small group instruction.
- Fine tune the implementation of Small Learning Communities with a focus on academic rigor. We continue to suggest that the high school become a Title I school.
- Continue with RTI (Response to Intervention) Learnia, AIMSWeb, and Read 180 to monitor student progress and drive instructions.
- Encourage principals to participate in leadership training through the partnership with the state and Rowan University at no cost to the district.
- Place major emphasis on our limited English proficient students and special education students.
- Through ARRA stimulus money, we are implementing the Children's Literacy Initiative (CLI) at grade K-4.
- We have reinstated an academic after school program at the elementary and middle school levels through Stimulus ARRA funding.
- ARRA money is also being used to provide math consultants at the elementary level to focus on differentiated instruction with our staff.
- ARRA Funds will enable us to update computers in elementary and middle school levels.
- We purchased new test prep materials in mathematics and language arts for grades 3-5.

Dr. Gruccio said we need to look at the big picture and this was a snapshot of what our students did the day of the test. She said the most important thing to remember is the best way we can improve education for our students is by improving classroom instruction. Dr. Gruccio said it is her hope with everybody's efforts that we will continue to show gains and work with our children as well as our staff so the appropriate instruction is taking place and all of our students achieve and receive the best education they can possibly receive.

Mr. Ulrich asked why we have not received Title I status for the high school. Dr. Gruccio said she tried but did not have the support of the high school administration or superintendent because it requires a lot of work.

Continued

Mr. Ulrich said the recommendation is that the board and superintendent look at Title I designation to open up different avenues of funding and academic achievement at the high school to take us out of that status. Dr. Guccio said that would be her personal opinion.

Mr. DeWinne asked what schools are in Group A. Dr. Guccio said she does not have a list of the schools. Mr. DeWinne agrees that the best way to improve the scores is through classroom instruction. He asked Dr. Guccio what she thinks the future holds for our students. Dr. Guccio said she hopes we are headed upward and forward. She said students need to be encouraged and have instruction that is exciting and related to what they know and understand.

Mr. Giordano asked if he is to understand that we never took the initiative to become a Title I school because of the workload involved. Dr. Guccio said it is a tremendous amount of work. She said a meeting was held with the high school administration. We encouraged them to support the suggestion but we were told the timing was not good.

Mr. Bernardini asked if the high school went to Title I designation at that time, would we have done Small Learning Communities. Dr. Guccio said once you are a Title I school you receive additional funding and the state comes in to do a CAPA visit. She said CAPA is a team of people from your school and state who get together to review the data, see what areas they need to focus on, develop and implement a plan. Dr. Guccio said every year the team comes back to analyze where they are and to see if gains were made. Mr. Bernardini asked if Bridgeton and Millville are Title I schools. Dr. Guccio responded yes.

Mr. Franceschini asked if Millville High School has met their benchmark. Dr. Guccio said she does not know.

Mr. Fanucci asked how long our middle schools have been Title I. Mr. Franchetta said since at least 1986. Mr. Fanucci asked if the CAPA visits are once a year. Dr. Guccio said it depends on what your status is. Mr. Fanucci commented that if being a Title I school is an improvement for the students then he does not see how timing could ever be bad for something like that.

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Mr. Franceschini said since we are in our second year of Small Learning Communities at the high school next year would be a good year to start the initiative to become a Title I school. He said this is something that could be discussed at our committee meeting.

Comments by

Board Solicitor: None.

Items for Review:

A. Superintendent

1. **Personnel Items** – Mr. Giordano asked if there will be any additions for next week. Ms. Greenfield said yes some additional extra pay spreadsheets and new employments.

Mr. Ulrich asked how quickly the floating RN Nurse position will be re-posted. Ms. Greenfield said we had two candidates that were interviewed so we offered the position to the other candidate and she accepted.

2. **Placement of Special Education Students** – No discussion.

3. **Budgetary Transfers** – No discussion.

4. **Submission of Grants** – Mr. Fanucci asked if we have a support mechanism in place to assist people who are applying for grants. Mr. Franchetta said the grants are all submitted to his office and if help is needed one of the accountants in the accounting department will help.

Mr. Ulrich asked if any consideration has been given to hiring a grant writer. Mr. Giordano said we did have one in the past.

Mr. Franceschini asked why we cannot give the teacher the commission for writing a grant. Mr. Franchetta said that is something we need to do contractually. Mr. Giordano said this is something to be noted for future conversation.

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

6. **Bids** – No discussion.

7. **Travel** – No discussion.

8. **Appointment of Federal Programs Staff** – Mr. Giordano asked if this is an annual approval. Mr. Franchetta said that is correct.
9. **Department of Treasury’s Public Agency Review Results** – Mr. Giordano asked for an explanation of this. Mr. Franchetta said this was an audit of Mr. Cox’s department that came up with no recommendations.
10. **Petty Cash Funds** – No discussion.
11. **Cancellation of Accounts Receivable** - Mr. Giordano asked if this was really a cost saving measure in the long run.

Mr. DeSanto explained that as a result of the audit money was owed by DiTomo Childcare above and beyond what was paid to them. He said there was a \$14,000 deficiency and he brought suit against the corporation. Mr. DeSanto said before the DiTomo’s moved to Florida about \$9,000 that was held in a trust account of a local attorney. He said the Sheriff’s Department put a levy on that trust money and we were able obtain the \$9,000 leaving a deficiency of \$5,497.40. He said this is a docketed judgment in New Jersey and a lien on any real estate that the corporation may own for the next twenty years.

12. **Annual Maintenance Reserve Deposit Worksheet (Form M-1)** – No discussion.
13. **Comprehensive Maintenance Plan Report** – No discussion.
14. **Submission of Educational Specification/Schematic Designs for Veterans Memorial School’s Sound Booth and VHN Room W108 Alterations** – No discussion.
15. **Joint Transportation Agreements** - No discussion.
16. **Gloucester County Vocational Technical School Contract** – No discussion.
17. **Salem County Special Services Agreement** – No discussion.
18. **Childcare Provider Contracts** – Mr. DeWinne asked what are Dallago and Leuchter’s school based budgets. Mr. Franchetta said they are funded through ECPA, which is part of the grant that also pays for the providers.
19. **Interim HealthCare Agreement** – No discussion.

20. **Influenza Vaccine Inter-local Services Agreement** – Mr. Giordano asked if we always had this agreement. Mr. Franchetta said we had it last year. Mr. Giordano asked if this was just for the regular flu vaccine. Mr. Franchetta responded yes.
21. **Supplemental Educational Services (SES) Agreements** – No discussion.
22. **Landis School 21st Century Community Learning Center Program** – No discussion.
23. **Donations** – No discussion.
24. **Long-Range Facilities Plan Update to Decommission Maurice Fels School** – Mr. DeWinne asked if this will take a couple of months. Mr. Franchetta said he is hoping that this will move quickly and that we will have the transfer on next month's agenda. Mr. DeWinne said currently the wrestling program is housed at Veterans Memorial School gym and it would be nice for the city to be able to get into Maurice Fels School. Mr. Franchetta said we could lease the building to the recreation commission at no charge.
25. **First Reading of Policy #2418, "Response to Intervention."** – No discussion.

B. Board

1. **Discussion of the approval of a Resolution for the Public Hearing approving the contract terms for the Assistant Superintendents of Schools and the Business Administrator pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:11-11 for the period of July 1, 2008 to June 30, 2009 and July 1, 2009 to June 30, 2010.**

Mr. Giordano said it is now mandated that the Assistant Superintendents each have their own individual contract approved by the County Superintendent.

Mr. Franchetta explained that at the time the contracts were written we did not have a County Superintendent so they had to be sent to an Assistant Commissioner in Trenton. He said the contracts sat on the Assistant Commissioner's desk for a couple of months. Mr. Franchetta said the Assistant Commissioner finally approved this year's contract but not last year, which he thought was a clerical error. He contacted the state and was told that the year is over and it is a moot point. Mr. Franchetta said if he gets audited it will be a problem so he appealed to the new County Superintendent who wrote a letter approving last year's contract.

Mr. Ulrich asked if there was an error in the sick time because the state statute changed to \$15,000. Mr. Franchetta said when the statute went into place if you were employed as of June 6, 2007 whatever you had on that date would count.

Review of Bills: No discussion.

Mr. Giordano mentioned that many times there is no discussion on items because the board receives the packet on the Friday prior to the work session. He said the board has sufficient time to review the items and contact central administration for information.

Mr. Giordano introduced Ms. Charlene Zoerb the district's New Jersey School Boards Association Field Representative to present a brief update on the superintendent's selection process.

Ms. Zoerb said the process is confidential and because of that the public is not privy to all the steps and time that is put into getting this district to the final point of choosing their next superintendent. She said about twenty nine hours of interviewing was done with different sets of questions with each round. Ms. Zoerb said the questions came from the community; staff input forums and board members. She said the board members committed a tremendous amount of time and dedication to the process. Ms. Zoerb said reference checking was done by NJ School Boards as well as the board going to visit the finalist's school district. She said the next step is the finalist will visit this district. The process has been flawless and she sincerely does not think a board could have done it better. Ms Zoerb commended the board for working together as a team and going through every step. She said it is important to know that the Board of Education was focused at all times and their foremost concern was their students and seeking out the highest level of qualifications for their next superintendent. Ms. Zoerb said there is one more site visit to do and after that the board and Mr. DeSanto will enter into contract negotiations. She said assuming the successful outcome of the contract negotiations the board will be scheduling an opportunity to welcome the candidate to the district and come before them for board approval.

Public Comment: Linda Foresman,
Ms. Foresman expressed concern in regards to the cleanliness of the weight room at Vineland High School South.

Committee Reports: Mr. DeWinne said discussed at the Finance Committee meeting was the K-12 software implementation and the Federal Stimulus funding. He said our annual audit has begun by Romano, Hearing, Testa & Knorr. Mr. Franchetta presented an update on the upgraded Keystone payroll system and provided information on the Department of Education's Data Collection.

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Mr. DeWinne said other items discussed at the meeting were the vehicle that was purchased in the transportation department and whether all data is being backed up in the Administration office. Mr. Smith and Mr. Franchetta answered some questions in regards to a bus trip to a local farm. Mr. DeWinne said that Mr. Franchetta will provide all details for future field trips. The committee asked Mr. Franchetta to move forward with planning so that the board does not miss the opportunity for the next reorganization regarding the vendors we do business with. Mr. DeWinne said the board has had several discussions about giving other vendors the opportunity to submit Request for Proposals (RFPs).

Mr. Fanucci requested that either at the November or December Finance Committee meeting they should be provided with a list of the vendors for the Request for Proposals.

Mr. Franceschini said unfortunately they could not discuss the high school update at tonight's Curriculum & Technology meeting because no representation from the high school was present at the meeting. He is requesting a written report from the high school to be discussed at the next meeting. Mr. Franceschini said they were updated on the K-12 System and there are challenges. He said there is a meeting scheduled for October 21 to try to resolve some of the issues. Mr. Franceschini said they also discussed the Aerospace Science I Curriculum, Physical Training/Wellness Program Addendum and the Children's Literature Program. He said because of the holidays there will be no meeting in November.

Mr. Bernardini asked Mr. Weaver to contact Mr. Robbins, Athletic Director, tomorrow in regards to the sanitizer in the weight room. He said at the Buildings & Grounds Committee meeting Mr. Weaver and Mr. Franchetta evaluated the Construction Management proposals and Project Management Firms for Middle School #2. Mr. Bernardini said both Mr. Weaver and Mr. Franchetta will be going to Trenton on October 21 to choose the Project Management Firm for Middle School #2. He said the facilities department is reviewing the concept of building a secondary bus drop off road to the North side of the Dallago Early Childhood Learning Center. This request is the result of site congestion and traffic flow pattern issues. Mr. Bernardini said the cast column on the Landis Tower will be replaced in November. He said we received a check in the amount of \$78,186.00 from the New Jersey School Boards Association Insurance Group Safety Grant.

Mr. Bernardini said with this grant money two new lifts have been installed at the VHS South campus, three garage doors, a tire machine, pavement repair along with repairs.

Mr. Giordano asked where the funds from the New Jersey School Boards Association Insurance Association are derived from. Mr. Franchetta said it is really a return of premium but it is awarded as a grant back to us.

Mr. Bernardini said the Vineland High School North science labs have been completed. The ownership transfer of Maurice Fels to the City of Vineland was also discussed.

Mr. Fanucci said at the next facilities meeting he would like to look into solar energy sources on our buildings. Mr. Weaver said solar energy technology is changing and they are doing a coating on the roof, which is the solar panel. He said in regards to Middle School #2 will be hoping to do a pre-bid next week at the high school for the actual contractor. Mr. Ulrich said he hopes we get a local contractor.

Mr. Franceschini asked Mr. Weaver where we are with the Emergency Preparedness Committee. Mr. Weaver said we are developing a matrix and looking at different levels as far as cleaning. He said we are continuing to get all the canisters mounted and there is currently a shortage on the dispensers. Mr. Weaver said as problems are discussed with the committee we are reacting. He said we are putting actual drinking cups at the fountains, which could be a contamination source. Mr. Franceschini asked if students in the elementary schools do self-serve in the cafeteria. Mr. Weaver said he thinks so. Mrs. Phillips said Petway and Sabater Schools are both self-serve, which she is not in favor of. Mr. Weaver said that is something that could be discussed at the next meeting on October 13.

Unfinished Business: None.

New Business: None.

Adjournment: The Board adjourned to executive session at 8:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kevin J. Franchetta, CPA
Board Secretary

KJF:df