

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, 2015 at 7:00 p.m., pursuant to notice with Mr. English presiding and the following members present: Ms. Acosta, Ms. Codispoti, Mr. DeWinne, Mr. DiGiorgio, Ms. Morello, Mr. Pagano and Ms. Rios. Absent: Mr. Jennings arrived at 7:05 p.m.

Also present: Dr. Guccio, 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 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 discussion of collective bargaining issues regarding building Principals. 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 discussion of Vineland Board of Education vs. Green Lane litigation and Taylor-Carrion & Nelson vs. Vineland Board of Education litigation. Any matter involving the employment, appointment, termination of employment, terms and conditions of employment, evaluation of the performance, promotion or disciplining of any specific prospective public officer or employee or current public officer or employee employed or appointed by the public body, unless all individual employees or appointees whose rights could be adversely affected request in writing that such matter or matters be discussed at a public meeting. The nature of discussion is the performance of the Superintendent's duties and responsibilities. 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 Ms. Morello, seconded by Mr. DiGiorgio, the resolution was passed. All Members voted “yes”.

Special

Presentations: Dr. Guccio introduced Ms. Tammy Monahan, Rossi Middle School Principal, to honor a student.

Ms. Monahan said Rossi School has several initiatives in place that recognizes students when they go out of their way to help other students without expecting anything in return. She said one initiative is the Rossi Recognition Referral Program. Ms. Monahan said our first student recognized this year for an act of kindness is Henry Garton. She said Henry went out of his way to help a new student and put that student’s needs before his own.

Dr. Guccio introduced Ms. Carmella Heer, Leuchter School Principal, to highlight the success of the Leuchter School Lending Library.

Ms. Heer introduced Ms. Diana Ulrich, teacher and student Jocelyn Delacruz. She said that Ms. Ulrich over the summer sent her an email in regards to an article she read in the *Daily Journal* about little free libraries popping up throughout the United States. Ms. Heer said that she researched it and ordered an unfinished birdhouse type of box that came with \$250 worth of free books. She said it is simple, you bring a book in and take a book out. Ms. Heer said the *Daily Journal* has metal boxes and you can apply for a box filled with books to start this movement.

Mr. English said he has some books that he may want to donate.

Ms. Morello asked Jocelyn how many books she has currently read from the box. Jocela said one.

Dr. Gruccio introduced Mr. Dan Russo, VHS Head Football Coach, to discuss Homecoming plans.

Mr. Russo introduced Rayshawn Blakely, Daquan Cosby, Isiah Pacheco, Daivon Seymore, Jarred Banks and Ryan Banks who are captains on the football team. He said they excel on the football field and do excellent as well in the classroom. Mr. Russo thanked the Board for the weight room and said everyone is utilizing it. Mr. Russo discussed the Homecoming festivities that will be held this Saturday with kick off at 2:00 p.m.

Mr. Jennings said he is really happy that Mr. Russo knows the concerns that the Board has with grade point averages (GPA's). He thinks that we are on the right path. Mr. Jennings said that winning and losing is all about growing and learning.

Mr. DeWinne commended Mr. Russo on the job that he is doing and wished the program nothing but success.

Mr. English said it is so important to see the community atmosphere back. He said as long as you give it your best in life nothing else really matters. Mr. English wished Coach Russo the best of luck and thanked him. Mr. English said we are seeing all three grade levels with the presentations and there are plenty of positives going on.

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

Comments by

Board Solicitor: Mr. DeSanto said an issue has come up this week and he would like to take a couple minutes to remind the Board of the responsibilities of Rice notices. He said under the Sunshine Law if an employee is going to be discussed in executive session that employee is entitled to a Rice notice. Mr. DeSanto said in that notice the employee is given the opportunity to have that discussion moved from the executive session conference to the public Board room. He said an issue has developed on how the Rice notice is authorized. Mr. DeSanto distributed a handout to the Board in regards to the Persi case where the appellate court clearly determined that there is no law or regulation that states who has the authority to issue Rice notices. The Commissioner said that Rice notices may be issued the same way that special meetings are called.

Mr. DeSanto said the Board Secretary must give a Rice notice to someone if directed by either the Board President or five Board members by a petition or directive. He said there is no regulation or requirement anywhere regarding when that Rice notice is to be issued. Mr. DeSanto said there is a recommendation out there that suggests that we should follow the 48 Hour Notice but it is not a requirement. He said there is no legal requirement that the Rice notice has to be served 48 hours in advance.

Mr. Pagano suggested out of courtesy we should follow the 48 hours. Mr. DeSanto said he thinks that Administration has always done that as a courtesy to the employee.

Ms. Morello said it is not always a discussion from a negative perspective.

Ms. Rios asked if the rule still applies if you have four conflicted Board members. Mr. DeSanto said the Commissioner said it would be a majority of the full membership of the Board. He said it is either the Board President or five of nine Board members.

Mr. DiGiorgio asked if the Board President is conflicted can he call the meeting. Mr. DeSanto said if the Board President is conflicted the Vice President should step up to do it however; a Rice notice is a clerical or administrative matter and there is no decision being made regarding the merits of the discussion. He does not see a problem if the Board President issues the Rice notice and steps away.

Ms. Morello thinks this Board should make their feelings known to the Ethics Commission in writing. She said if enough people do then it may make some impact.

Mr. English said as Board President he had to make a decision and he is a conflicted Board member. He said he reached out to Charlene Zorb, from NJ School Boards, Mr. DeSanto, and Dr. Gruccio so no one was in the dark with any of this situation. Mr. English said he was approached by a Board member who said they had the majority of the non-conflicted Board members. He believes that the five non-conflicted Board members will handle this as professional as they do with the Superintendent's evaluation. Mr. DeSanto said since we have to honor these rulings that also means the discussions that take place cannot be shared with the conflicted Board members.

Items for Review:

A. Superintendent

1. **PERSONNEL**

- 1.1 **Personnel Items** – Ms. Morello said she reached out to Dr Rossi for clarification on two of the transfers and he said that they will be pulled from the agenda. She said the two transfers are still on the agenda. Dr. Rossi said they will be pulled from the regular meeting agenda.

Mr. English thanked the Board members who had their questions answered prior to the Board meeting.

Mr. DiGiorgio asked about the classroom that has had four teachers in three years. Dr. Rossi said it is a very difficult environment. Mr. DiGiorgio asked if we did not have appropriate personnel in those classrooms previously. Dr. Rossi said it is a very challenging environment and people do not have longevity in those areas. Mr. DiGiorgio asked if the candidates that we are putting in these classrooms will hopefully improve the scenarios in that classroom. Dr. Rossi said we are optimistic. Ms. Morello asked if some of these students can be split up. Dr. Gruccio said this is one particular class that we have not been able to retain a teacher due to the difficulties the students have. Ms. Godlewski, Director of Special Education, said our self-contained populations for this specific disability are four in the district. The classes are close to being at max so we would not be able to distribute them. Ms. Godlewski said we are hoping for continuity of instruction to be able to have someone consistent as a teacher in those classes.

Ms. Morello asked Dr. Rossi how he is doing with the substitutes. Dr. Rossi said very well in some areas. He said the high school is a challenging place for substitutes and they prefer the other schools. Dr. Rossi said we are advertising regularly in the local media.

Mr. DiGiorgio asked if the people are certificated who have short-term contracts. Dr. Rossi responded yes.

- 1.2 **Hourly Pay Increase for Substitute Bus Drivers** – No discussion.

2. **PROCEDURES & OPERATIONS**

- 2.1 **Travel** – Ms. Morello asked about the Santo Domingo trip. Dr. Gruccio said the Interact Club goes every summer and work in an orphanage. Ms. Morello asked if they have to be a member of the Interact Club to attend this trip. Dr. Gruccio responded yes.

Mr. DeWinne asked if the junior class trip is on the agenda. Dr. Gruccio said yes it was added to the agenda.

2.2 **Uniform Memorandum of Agreement between Education and Law Enforcement Officials-** No discussion.

2.3 **Memorandum of Understanding between VBOE and Tri-County Community Action Agency** – Mr. DiGiorgio asked for an explanation on this. Dr. Gruccio said it is a program that offers opportunities to students in the county who need support in preparing for college.

2.4 **First Reading of the following Bylaws/Policies: Policy 3322, Policy 4322 Policy 5615, Policy 5756, Policy 8540, Regulation 8540, Policy 8550, Policy 8820, Policy 5330, Regulation 5330, Policy 5339, and Bylaw 0164** – Ms. Morello asked if the other policies will have regulations tweaked if they need to be aligned. Dr. Gruccio said they would have been already.

Ms. Rios expressed her concern about not receiving the backup for executive session in advance. Mr. DeSanto said by receiving it online we have to make sure there is a protection that only Board member's see it. Mr. English said we will have the information delivered as what was done in the past or Board members can pick the information up at the Board office and sign for it.

2.5 **Bus Evacuation Drills** – Ms. Morello asked if Mr. Callavini is at the bus evacuation drills. Mr. Callavini said the principals are helping, which has been very helpful.

2.6 **Dual Credit Program between Vineland Board of Education and Cumberland County College** – Mr. DiGiorgio asked if this was just for seniors. Dr. Gruccio said no.

2.7 **High School Partnership Program Agreement between Vineland Board of Education and Stockton University** – No discussion.

3. **BUILDINGS & GROUNDS**

3.1 **Temporary Facilities Landis Intermediate School- Ippolito Annex** – No discussion.

3.2 **Toilet Room Facilities Waiver – a. Golan Learning Center, b. Sabater School** – Ms. Morello asked how we ran out of classrooms with toilet facilities at Sabater School. Dr. Gruccio said it was the Adult Education rooms. Mr. Weaver, Executive Director of Physical Facilities, said the waivers are for P3, P4 and Kindergarten. He said it is probably a Kindergarten class that does not have a toilet room facility.

4. **FINANCE**

- 4.1 **Budgetary Transfers** – No discussion.
- 4.2 **Board Secretary/Treasurer’s Report June 2015 (final/revised) and July 2015** – No discussion.
- 4.3 **Placement of Special Education Students** – No discussion.
- 4.4 **Acceptance of the following funds – a. 21st Century Community Learning Center, b. Cumberland County Alcoholism and Drug abuse Service Grant, c. General Mills Foundation, d. National Constitution Center Grant** – No discussion.
- 4.5 **Comprehensive Maintenance Plan Report** – No discussion.
- 4.6 **Maintenance Reserve Deposit Worksheet (form M-1)** – Ms. Morello asked if this is a paper trail for the encumbered money. Mrs. Haley said yes and it is submitted to the county.
- 4.7 **Acceptance of following Donations – a. Books from BAM, b. School Supplies from Newfield National Bank, c. Tablets/folding stand cases from DonorsChoose.org** – Mr. DeSanto said we discussed having a limit of \$1,500 or less on donations that the Superintendent could approve and notify the Board without having to get Board approval each time.
- Ms. Morello suggesting putting donations elsewhere on the agenda so people who donate can be acknowledged.
- 4.8 **Professionals for Services/Assessments for Classified Students** – Ms. Morello asked if this will help us be compliant. Ms. Godlewski said yes these are for extra services that are needed.
- 4.9 **Contract between VBOE and Camden County Technical School for the 2014-2015 and 2015-2016 school years** – Ms. Morello asked if transportation was included. Mrs. Haley said it is just for tuition.
- 4.10 **Revised Resolution Appointing the Legal Depositories** – No discussion.
- 4.11 **Student Activity Account at Newfield National Bank for Sabater School** – No discussion.

- 4.12 **No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Final Reports** – No discussion.
- 4.13 **Submission of the 2016 Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Final Report** – No discussion.
- 4.14 **Submission of Environmental Education Field Trip Program Grant** – No discussion.
- 4.15 **Adding Helen G. Haley as an Authorized Signer on the following Student Activity Accounts: Mennies Elementary School, Landis Middle School, Rossi Middle School and Wallace Middle School** – Mr. DeWinne asked if this was a requirement. Mrs. Haley said her name was not on several of the activity funds and we are trying to make them all consistent.

2. ITEMS PROPOSED FOR REGULAR AGENDA:

- b. Items proposed by the Board President or and individual Board Member: **Role of Board Committees** – Mr. English said a lot of our school business can be done through effective committees and he wants to make sure everyone is on board with the process.

Mr. DeSanto said one of the duties and responsibilities of a Board is to confine your action to policy making, planning and appraisal. He said another important duty is to carry out the requirement that you are not to administer the school district but to see that it is well run. Mr. DeSanto said the Board has considerable authority to oversee the operation of the school district. He said in many regards Board committees carry out the function of oversight. Mr. DeSanto said Board committees are basically the screening of Board action. He said many issues are first heard by a committee and the legwork is done and recommendations are then made to the full Board. Mr. DeSanto said committees cannot direct Administration relating to their particular subject matter or do anything other than request information through the Superintendent. He said #0155 is the Bylaw that covers Board committees and the first paragraph makes everything clear. Mr. DeSanto said the work of committees is advisory, conduct studies, gather information, and make recommendations to the Board. He said the work of the committee is to not administer or manage the school district. Mr. DeSanto said the NJ School Boards Association has developed *Best Practices to Make your Committees More Effective, More Efficient*, which was distributed to the Board last month. He said you need to make sure that the committee understands what its roles and responsibilities are. Mr. DeSanto believes that our current bylaw will have the definition of duties/responsibilities and clear protocols on how each committee is to work. He said that he also distributed the *Role of Committee Leaders* and each chair should review this. Mr. DeSanto said the committee process serves as a vital function to the Board and it is difficult for the Board to act without delegating to committees to bring matters before you.

Review of
July 2015 Bills – No discussion.

Public Comments: Lee Burke
Mr. Burke commended the Board for having a Transportation Committee. He said the public can also suggest agenda items to the Board through the Superintendent or the Board President and create policies to be considered through committees. Mr. Burke said if the Board members are made aware of the outcome on litigations then the public should be made aware of it. He supports Ms. Morello's request in regards to sending a letter to the Ethics Commission expressing the Board's displeasure on a number of items.

Vicky Miller
Ms. Miller suggested putting the behavior disorder class at Landis School back in the school instead of the outside trailer.

Committee Reports: Mr. English thanked Mr. Pagano for the Transportation Committee minutes.

Mr. Pagano thanked Mr. Callavini for going above and beyond in taking care of everything he requested from him.

Ms. Morello said at last month's Curriculum Committee meeting Ms. Godlewski, Director of Special Education, shared the special education website, which was very informational and answered a lot of questions. She said Mr. Frey also showed them a calendar that was on the website that displays the activities for every school. Ms. Morello said they discussed PARCC and the district will be receiving the results on October 23rd.

Old Business: Ms. Morello asked if we are going to purchase the Almond Road School. Mr. DeSanto said he believes this is an executive session item because we are in negotiations with the State. Mr. Weaver said two days ago we had discussions with the Treasury.

Mr. DeSanto said the Board is a party to litigation in two categories, insurance covered claims and claims that are not covered by insurance. He said insurance covered claims are handled by our insurance carrier with assigned counsel. Mr. DeSanto said generally the district is not involved in the payment of funds of the insurance covered claims. He said the district has a deductible that covers attorney fees and costs. Mr. DeSanto said the majority of the time the carrier pays the settlement.

Mr. DeSanto said cases are resolved in two ways either by settlement or determination. He assured the public that any determination of those cases must be approved by the Board by resolution at a public meeting.

Mr. English said last month he felt that the majority of the Board was leaning towards discussion concerning budget of a whole. He said that he hopes the finance committee is scheduled to meet in October. Mr. English said he would like to develop a schedule on how we want to proceed with budget of a whole. He would like to make sure that this is the majority of the Board's decision to go that route.

Mr. DeWinne said he was part of both methods. He said the committee is meeting late October to lay out the process as far as projected salaries and benefits with an expected increase. Mr. DeWinne said the cut lists will be in January or February. He suggested waiting until January for the newly elected Board members to get up to speed.

Ms. Morello said she is a Board member until December 31st and understands what Mr. DeWinne is saying. She said if you wait until January the bulk of the thinking is in place. Ms. Morello said it would be prudent to know the direction the other six Board members want to go in.

Mr. DeWinne asked what our surplus is for this year. Mrs. Haley said tomorrow at 8:30 a.m. is the audit exit conference. She said today we found out how much we are receiving in funds from the State for homeless tuition, which we have been waiting for. Mrs. Haley said all of that is surplus. She said we are finding more things to adjust the surplus to make it higher. Mrs. Haley said we will know the surplus by the end of the week. She said the next step is that we have to open up next year's budget and import all the salaries that we currently have. Mrs. Haley said there are several unions whose term expires June 30, 2016 so we will put a projected figure in for them. She said we will roll everything over this year with no increases and that will show us where we stand and the total expenditures. Mrs. Haley said we have to estimate what our health insurance and regular liability insurance will increase to. She said during the next few weeks it will all come together and we will see what our shortfall is.

Mr. English said he has faith in Dr. Gruccio and Mrs. Haley who are the people guiding this budget. He asked for each Board member to email him their thoughts on the budget process so he can be proactive.

New Business: Mr. DeWinne said late August of next year he would like to name a building after Dennis Tanner who gave his life for a student. He said it is time that we take the 9/10 building and name it the Dennis Tanner building. Mr. DeWinne said Mr. Tanner was forgotten about and thanks to Ms. Marko and some administration, the Dennis Tanner scholarship is back. He said Mr. Tanner was an assistant principal and at the last minute filled in as a chaperone on a trip to Puerto Rico. A riptide took a student out in the water and he gave up his life saving the student. Mr. DeWinne said if there is anyone who deserves this honor, it would be Mr. Dennis Tanner. He said that most of the Board members are behind him on this and he believes the community will support this cause. Mr. DeWinne said the students in this district should learn what a true hero Mr. Tanner was.

Mr. English said the man gave his life for another student and we will make this happen together.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned by voice vote at 9:09 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Helen G. Haley
Board Secretary

