

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, November 5, 2008, at 7:03 p.m., pursuant to notice with Mr. Giordano presiding and the following members present: Mr. Bernardini, Mr. DeWinne, Mr. Evans, Mr. Fanucci, Mr. Franceschini, Ms. Rios, Mr. Spinelli and Mr. Ulrich. Absent: none.

Also present: Mr. Ottinger, Superintendent, Dr. Figgs and Dr. Gruccio, Assistant Superintendents, Mr. Franchetta, Board Secretary, Mr. Shapiro, Associate Board Solicitor, Mrs. Polof, Director of Special Education, Ms. Greenfield, Executive Director of Personnel, press and public. Absent: Robert DeSanto, Board Solicitor.

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:

Special

Presentations: None.

Comments by

Board Solicitor: None.

Items for Review:

A. Superintendent

1. **Personnel Items** – Mr. Spinelli asked for an explanation as to what the duties would be for the new vice principal and his replacement in guidance.

Mr. Ottinger said the person who is recommended for the position is the person who has scheduled Vineland High School South for the last six years and is considered an expert in scheduling. He said the recommendation for his appointment was based on the fact that he would schedule both buildings with a committee of teachers and guidance counselors. Mr. Ottinger said it is important to note that the south building had three assistant principals and now only has two. He said the north building had four and has two assistant principals currently.

Mr. Franceschini asked if the scheduling is in this assistant principal's job description. Mr. Ottinger said he has not looked at the job description lately but when he was at Vineland High School scheduling was the sole responsibility of the assistant principals.

Mr. Ulrich asked if this person was the expert in scheduling, was this connected to the block scheduling failure that we faced. Mr. Ottinger said this individual recommended early last year in the spring that there should not be a block schedule.

Continued

Mr. DeWinne asked if a position is not filled, where would the money go that was not spent on that position. Mr. Franchetta said if we know the person is leaving we would budget just enough to cover them and the amount for their replacement at the lower salary. He said if we did not know they were leaving the money would stay in the school based budget and transferred where it was needed. Mr. Franchetta said at the end of the year when the budget was closed the money would fall into the surplus.

Mr. Spinelli said in the past because we were an Abbott district if the money was not used we would lose it. He asked if we are still in that situation. Mr. Franchetta said we are not in that situation any more.

Mr. Ulrich asked if it we could carry a fund balance would it be wise to look at not filling positions immediately until we know what the numbers will be. Mr. Ottinger said for some positions that is a good point but the assistant principal position happens to be a position that we are not cutting. He mentioned that we have been working on the budget and are aware of what the deficit is going to be, which is not as much as we thought it would be.

Mr. DeWinne asked if the person makes a higher salary in this position would they be tied into the higher salary. Mr. Ottinger said they are not entitled to any new salary unless they have tenure in that position. Mr. DeWinne asked if we are looking to fill the important positions that will be vacated by retirements in January and February. Mr. Ottinger said there are some key positions being vacated that are important and needed.

Mr. Spinelli asked if we have teachers for the extra curricular After School Program for English Learners. Ms. Greenfield said yes it will be announced. Mr. Spinelli asked if we are in the process of taking applications. Ms. Greenfield responded yes.

Mr. Franceschini asked if there was a dollar amount for the coordinator of the Mash Program. Ms. Greenfield said the money was encumbered and there was a change in the individual.

Mr. Spinelli asked how many guidance counselors we have in all the elementary schools. Mr. Ottinger said at least one in each building.

Mr. Bernardini asked why name one listed on the extra sheet under resignations is leaving. Ms. Greenfield said he is taking another teaching position but will be keeping his coaching position

Mr. Ottinger noted that the job description for assistant principal at the high school does include scheduling.

2. **Creation of Bus Attendant Title** – Mr. Giordano asked how this came about. Mr. Spinelli explained that there are people who ride on the buses that are needed for some of our special needs students and are working out of their title. He said this would pay them appropriately in the correct title.
3. **Special Education Student Placements** – Mr. Spinelli asked if we have had behavior disability (BD) classes at Vineland High School for a long time. Mr. Ottinger responded yes. Mr. Spinelli asked if the numbers are much larger now than in the past. Mr. Ottinger responded yes. Mr. Spinelli asked if we have increased the number of teachers for these students. Mr. Ottinger said yes. Mr. Spinelli asked if these students are in a more restrictive environment. Mr. Ottinger said they are in a self-contained restrictive environment but the object is to get them mainstreamed.
4. **Budgetary Transfers** – No discussion.
5. **Submission of Grants** – Mr. Spinelli asked where the remainder of the money is coming from for the students to attend the National Constitution Center. Mr. Ottinger said they have to raise their own money for field trips.
6. **Acceptance of Funds** – No discussion.
7. **Bids** – Mr. Spinelli said in regards to the payroll system bid will a third party manager take part in this. Mr. Franchetta said no effective July 1 the Internal Revenue Service has new regulations regarding 403b plans and we have to be the plan administrator. He said we contracted with a company that will handle this for us.

Mr. Ulrich asked if this also includes the software for the nurses. Mr. Franchetta said no we just issued a purchase order for that.

Mr. DeWinne asked for an explanation on the Special Education Consultant. Mrs. Polof said the original submission for this consultant had an incorrect cost listed on the contract so this is a clarification of the original contract.

Mr. Ulrich asked if the gasoline will be re-bid. Mr. Franchetta said we decided to reject both bids and use state contract. Mr. Ulrich asked who the state contract vendor is for gasoline. Mr. Cox said it is Gulf and they have four stations on Delsea Drive. Mr. Ulrich asked what the amount is that we actually pay. Mr. Cox said we receive one percent off the retail price at each location.

Mr. Franceschini asked how we are with diesel fuel. Mr. Cox said we have a contract with Riggins that ends June 2010.

8. **Travel** – Mr. Franceschini asked for an explanation on previously approved. Mr. Franchetta said it was due to a price increase after the travel was approved. Mr. Franceschini asked about the internet access that was listed. Mr. Franchetta said it was for the employee to check their email when they are away during the week. Mr. Franceschini asked what that costs. Mr. Franchetta said about \$40.00.

Mr. Giordano asked if airfare is approved for someone today how long do they have to wait before they purchase the ticket. Mr. Franchetta said there is about a three week window of time between approval and when the ticket is purchased.

9. **Consultant Contract changes** - Mr. DeWinne asked for an explanation on this. Mrs. Polof said this is an update of the contract that was originally submitted due to a rate change.

Mr. Spinelli asked what this consultant provides. Mrs. Polof said they provide the orientation and mobility services for visually impaired students. She said we were just informed that the person that was doing this is no longer available.

Mr. Giordano asked if someone can just arbitrarily change a contract. Mrs. Polof said yes on a yearly basis. She said at this point we are not consulting with this vendor because there is no one to provide the service.

Mr. Spinelli asked if there is no one to provide the service then why are we approving the contract. Mrs. Polof said they are put on the consultant list in case they do get someone then we can use them without coming back to the board.

Mr. Fanucci asked if we have any students who are in need of this service at the moment. Mrs. Polof said yes we have two students. Mr. Fanucci asked what we are currently doing for these students. Mrs. Polof said we are looking for services.

Mr. Franceschini asked when a consultant comes in how long is the orientation for. Mrs. Polof said usually twice a week depending on the needs of the student.

10. **Speech and Language Services Hourly Rate** – No discussion.

11. **NCLB Application 2008-2009** – No discussion.

12. **State Student Tuition Contract** – No discussion.

13. **Gloucester County Vo-Tech Contract** – No discussion.

14. **Student Settlement Agreement** – Mr. Giordano asked Ms. Polof if this is the agreement she spoke to the board about. Mrs. Polof responded yes. Mr. Giordano asked how we ended up paying a settlement on this. Mrs. Polof said with this agreement we would not owe the family or child any money. The child would continue in the program that he is presently in for the next couple years. Mrs. Polof said the attorney fees would be paid by the district and the New Jersey School Boards Insurance Group would pay that cost after the deductible was made. Mr. Giordano asked if we have any idea on the cost of the legal fees. Mr. Franchetta said our deductible is \$15,000 so when all the legal fees are done anything in excess of that the district will cover. Mr. Giordano commented that the district is not at fault and yet we are paying legal fees. Mrs. Polof said the attorney did not withdraw his claim for fees and the judge felt that the attorney is entitled to fees.

15. **Opt Out of Civil Service System Resolution** – No discussion.

16. **Child Care Provider Contracts 2008-2009** – No discussion.

17. **Written Indoor Air Quality (IAQ) Program** – Mr. DeWinne asked how we monitor the air quality. Mr. Bernardini said Mr. Weaver along with Mr. Farinaccio, Mr. Fonville, and Mr. Lovecchio are the designated people on staff who are trained and certified to perform these requirements. The plan has to be submitted to the state as to how we are going to follow the PEOSH Standards.

18. **U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Partnership Agreement** – Mr. Ottinger said this is a program where professionals will join with teachers and administrators to educate students about fish and wildlife resources.

Mr. Spinelli asked what grade level this is for. Mr. Ottinger said Vineland High School.

19. **Affiliation Agreement with Temple University and University of Phoenix** – Mr. Spinelli asked why the Temple contract is commencing on July 2007. Mr. Giordano asked for a clarification on this at the next meeting.

Mr. Evans mentioned that the University of Phoenix is not a non-profit corporation and publicly traded. He said they have been involved in a number of law suits. Mr. Evans said they are an institution of education motivated by profits. Mr. Evans said he does not know if this is an institution that we would want to be affiliated with.

Mr. Giordano asked Dr. Gruccio to look into this.

20. **Winter Season Athletic Schedules** – Mr. Franceschini questioned why out of fourteen wrestling matches only four are at home. Mr. Ottinger said the schedule is done by the Cape Atlantic League and he will look into this
21. **Acceptance of Donations** – Mr. Franceschini asked if there is a check and balance of donated equipment prior to its use. Mr. Franchetta said Don Robbins, Athletic Director, looked at the treadmill and felt the model was fine.
22. **Disney World Trip Petway Students** – Mr. Giordano said this is absolutely fabulous.
23. **Approval of Policy #3216 and Policy #4216** – Mr. Franceschini said the personnel and policy committee thought this was needed for personal hygiene.

Board

1. None.

Review of Bills: Mr. DeWinne said he would like to meet with Mr. Franchetta to get an understanding on the money spent on the copiers.

Public Comments: Valerie Francisci, Vineland Resident
Ms. Francisci expressed her concern regarding the appointment of another administrative position to handle the scheduling.

Mr. Giordano said the position is being filled because an assistant principal left the district.

Lou Russo, Vineland Resident

Mr. Russo said he wanted to give his appreciation to the board members who have been at the high school trying to look at issues and work on solutions. He said at last month's board meeting several board members requested to meet people at the high school and hopes that has not been forgotten.

Mr. Giordano said he will speak about that later.

Committee Reports: Mr. Franceschini said discussed at the Personnel & Policy Committee meeting was the policies that are on tonight's agenda. He said this evening there was a Curriculum & Technology Committee meeting and an item discussed was the Holocaust Curriculum. Mr. Franceschini said they reviewed health services and the Steps Program that the school nurses are working on, which is a fitness program held at the YMCA. He said the nurses along with other district staff are working on a Wellness Through the Healthy Schools Program.

Mr. Spinelli said the Finance Committee will meet on November 17, 2008 and will be given insight on next year's budget along with staffing. He said hopefully administration will be as prepared as possible in the month of January so we could have a good idea as to where we are going with the budget.

Mr. Bernardini said discussed at the Early Childhood meeting was the contract for 2008-2009, which several small changes were made. He said the providers are having a problem with meeting their financial obligation because of the ten payment plan. Mr. Bernardini said the providers have to follow a budget process, which Dan Smith does very well and keeps a handle on the entire situation. He said a meeting was held with Susan Kutner from the Department of Education in regards to middle school #2 and everything was very cordial. Mr. Bernardini said all fifty nine projects are being reviewed. He said the next step will be to go out for bid and start the school in the spring of 2009.

Mr. Franceschini asked how similar middle school #2 plans are to Wallace School. Mr. Bernardini said we attempted to build another Wallace School. We were told no because Larry Merighi had too much on board and could not do it so we needed to find another architect.

Mr. Spinelli asked about the new door in the swimming pool area. Mr. Bernardini said he will discuss that with Mr. Spinelli later.

Mr. Giordano asked what the timeline is with the track. Mr. Bernardini said the track is finished but the last step needed to be re-done at the contractor's expense because of the rain. He said a student, who should not have been on the track, was injured. Mr. Bernardini said he along with the contractor are recommending that the public should be kept off of the track.

Mr. Ulrich said what good is it to have all of these nice facilities if we can not use them. He feels this is a ridiculous concept.

Mr. Giordano said these are community facilities that need to be open to the community but should not be abused.

Mr. Bernardini said we are liable for any injuries that occur on the track.

Mr. DeWinne asked if there will be procedures in place when the track opens to keep the students off of it during certain events. Mr. Bernardini said we can lock it down at night.

Unfinished Business: Mr. Giordano said a workshop will be held with our new representative, Charlene Zoerb, from the New Jersey School Boards Association, in conjunction with the New Jersey QSAC Improvement Plan. The board decided to hold this workshop on Monday, December 1, 2008 at 6:30 p.m.

Mr. Giordano said earlier Mr. Russo inquired about the formation of an Ad Hoc Committee to hear Small Learning Community issues. He appointed Mr. Franceschini along with Mr. Bernardini as the chair of the committee. Mr. Ottinger feels that this is a very bad idea and teachers should be communicating with him and administration. He said we will not need administration or central administration because the board is now going to intervene in the running of the high school. Mr. Giordano said this will not be any type of management just more of lending an ear to existing issues. Mr. Ottinger said the teachers need to be cooperating and discussing things with their administrators. Mr. Ulrich suggested issuing an anonymous survey to see what the perception is and how the students feel the small learning communities are being implemented along with parents and staff. Mr. Ottinger said he would say yes to that but what if the survey comes back totally negative. Mr. Ulrich said if the survey comes back where everyone is unhappy with the system in place then realistically we would have to look at out how it is being administrated to see if there are improvements administration can make. Mr. Ottinger said he knows that administration is meeting on a regular basis addressing concerns that we already know about.

Mr. Giordano mentioned again that this Ad Hoc Committee will not be a managerial responsibility in any way, shape or form on the part of the board. The board will not dictate the way the small learning communities need to be implemented. He said the purpose will be to listen to outstanding issues.

Mr. Ulrich said to be fair if the results and input come in negative the board is going to expect that actions be taken. Mr. Ottinger feels this is a no confidence vote for the principals.

Mr. Spinelli said realistically he thinks there are some people who are afraid to come forward, which he spoke to Mr. Ottinger privately about. He said morale is not what it was when Mr. Ottinger was the principal and there has to be a reason for it. Mr. Spinelli asked if it could be mandated for the students to take buses between buildings, which will resolve many of the problems.

Mr. Bernardini said comments made by Mr. Spinelli such as mandatory bus riding are comments he made during the October meeting. He said there are some things at the high school that are not right and feels there are loose ends.

New Business: No discussion.

Adjournment: The Board adjourned to executive session at 8:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kevin J. Franchetta, CPA
Board Secretary

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