

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, December 1, 2010 at 7:01 p.m., pursuant to notice with Mr. Franceschini presiding and the following members present: Mr. DeWinne, Mr. DiGiorgio, Mr. English, Mr. Fanucci, Dr. Mounier, Mrs. Phillips, Ms. Rios, and Mr. Ulrich. Absent: None.

Also present: Dr. Banks, Superintendent, Dr. Gruccio and Mrs. 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. Franceschini 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 said the first presentation is recognition of the ladies who participate in our Art Goes to School Program. The primary purpose of the Art Goes to School Program is to stimulate an interest in the arts by elementary and middle school students. Dr. Banks said the ladies who have been bringing the Art Goes to School Program into the classrooms have been doing this between 30 and 35 years. She thinks it is a wonderful addition to our curriculum and the enrichment of our students.

Mrs. Phillips said as a former elementary principal she always had the Art Goes to School Program in her second and fourth grade classrooms. She is amazed because they are all volunteers and many are retired teachers who come into the school with such knowledge of art.

Mr. Franceschini introduced each of the Art Goes to School participants and presented them with a certificate.

Dr. Banks introduced Mr. Stephen Testa from Romano, Hearing, Testa & Knorr to present the 2009-2010 Audit.

Mr. Testa said that he will explain the format and contents of reports along with related information that the board has received. He said the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR) is the district's official annual report, which consists of four sections. The first section is an introductory section prepared by district management that discusses district goals, accomplishments and future outlook. There is a financial section, which includes the financial statements schedules and notes to financial statements.

Mr. Testa said the financial section presents certain required supplementary information in particular a management's discussion and analysis section, which is prepared by district administration. Also included in the financial section are required budgetary comparison schedules, which begin with the original approved budget, any amendments or transfers, the final budget, the actual and any variance of budget to actual. Mr. Testa said the statistical section presents the demographic information, tax rates, debt information of the city and school district. The last section is the single audit section, which is required because the district expends more than 500 thousand each of federal and state awards. Mr. Testa said the Auditor's Management Report on Administrative Findings, Financial Compliance and Performance is the report on management and includes the audit findings and recommendations. He said a two page financial summary was provided to the board with a summarization of the most important information to a school district and board. Mr. Testa said a letter was provided to the board which discusses their responsibilities with respect to the audit along with management and the district responsibilities. He said that he will review the two page summary since the CAFR is over 250 pages with too much information to go page by page. Mr. Testa said his firm is a local accounting firm so if anyone has any questions to please feel free to contact them or submit questions to Mr. Franchetta to be forwarded to him. He said with respect to the two page financial summary they are trying to show a summary of the fund balance for the general fund. The general fund balance is what the state uses to determine excess surplus. Mr. Testa said there are two ways to generate fund balance one is to have excess revenues over and above the amount budgeted and the other is to have unexpended appropriations. This year the district had excess budgeted revenues of approximately 3 million dollars, which consisted primarily of tuition revenues, extraordinary aid, additional non-public transportation aid and additional special revenue amounts to the school based budgets. Mr. Testa said there was 12.6 million dollars of unexpended appropriations and the bulk of it was in the unallocated health benefits area. There was approximately 1.5 million dollars of regular instruction and 1.2 million of special education funds that were not expended. Mr. Testa said for the year on a budgetary basis 15.6 million dollars was generated in fund balance. However, 22 million dollars of fund balance was utilized which was the original 8.6 million that was originally budgeted to be expended in 2010. In addition, there is an adjustment for prior year encumbrances. This adjustment is for purchase orders where the goods or services were not received by the end of the year and the amount rolls into the subsequent year's budget.

Mr. Testa said the net fund balance utilized was 6.481 million dollars for the year. The total revenues and transfers in were 162 million for the year and expenditures and transfers out were 168.5 million. Mr. Testa said there is 2 million dollars in the reserve for excess surplus account, which is the amount held until 2012 unless the state reduces state aid by that amount. There is \$1.00 in the capital reserve account, \$535,000 reserved for inventory and 12 million dollars designated in the 2011 budget. Mr. Testa said the unreserved and undesignated amount including the final state aid payments of 13.4 million dollars is \$4,250,000. The state requires districts to only maintain 2% of the general fund expenditures with adjustments for certain state revenues that were not received by the end of the year. Mr. Testa said the total general budget fund appropriations were \$170,996,000 and \$158,357,721 was expended with 92.61% of the budget expended. If the district had expended the full amount of the budget by the end of the year and did not receive the 13 million dollars from state aid you could have had a cash flow problem. Mr. Testa said the state is now permitting districts to borrow money to meet cash flow issues. The Vineland district borrowed approximately three million dollars in June 2010 so there would not be a cash flow situation by the end of the year. He said if you spend your entire budget in the year 2011 when you roll into the 2012 budget you will have 2 million dollars to appropriate. Mr. Testa said this year 12 million dollars was budgeted. If all the money was spent in 2012 you would be 10 million dollars short and would have to make an adjustment in the 2012 budget.

Mr. Franceschini asked for an explanation of what the terms are when we borrow money. Mr. Testa said the amount borrowed and interest comes out of the state aid money that is received. Mr. Franceschini asked if there is a cap as to how much we can borrow. Mr. Testa explained that you have to apply for the money and show need. Mr. Franceschini asked if there is a risk to borrowing. Mr. Testa said it is not a huge risk as long as they approve the amount that you think you will be short.

Mr. DeWinne asked Mr. Testa how many years he has been performing this audit. Mr. Testa said around 10 years. Mr. DeWinne asked if the bad debts that are listed under Exhibit G2 Enterprise Funds are before and after school payments that were written off. Mr. Testa said yes. Mr. DeWinne asked if the 3,128 employees listed under Exhibit J15 is full and part-time employees. Mr. Testa said that is correct. Mr. DeWinne pointed out that our property tax levy for the school tax is covering 11.42% of our budget. Mr. DeWinne asked Mr. Testa if it was possible on a monthly basis to keep tabs on our surplus and deficit amounts. Mr. Testa said it is possible to do but would be difficult.

Mr. Ulrich asked if the unencumbered money includes potential money that could be paid out to employees in contractual obligations/mediation or has the money been encumbered. Mr. Testa explained that the unreserved and undesignated amount has not been encumbered and at year end the salaries are closed out. Mr. Ulrich said it is fair to note that at the end of his term Governor Corzine passed a new school funding formula that was upheld by the NJ State Supreme Court. He said during these calculations our share for aid was calculated at about 44 million dollars. Mr. Ulrich said there is an exposure of about 22 million dollars for the taxpayers of Vineland and we are really not contributing what the state and Supreme Court says that we should contribute. Mr. DiGiorgio asked why they are not imposing it. Mr. Franchetta said we were held back because last year the voters turned it down and the city concurred with the voters.

Mr. Testa said it has been stated that this is a transition year and there were some retirements in key positions along with changes in personnel and duties. He wanted to point out that some of these were items that fell through the cracks because of these changes.

Mr. Testa reviewed the following findings and recommendations:

Finding No. 1:

The District did not obtain the disclosures required by Section 2 of P.L. 2005, c.271 from applicable vendors at least ten (10) days prior to the award of the contract or issuance of the purchase order.

Recommendation:

The District should obtain the disclosures required by Section 2 of P.L. 2005, c.271 from all applicable vendors at least ten (10) days prior to the award of the contract or issuance of the purchase order.

Finding No. 2:

One (1) instance was noted of a purchase being initiated, the goods received and an invoice received prior to the purchase order being issues.

Recommendation:

No purchases should be made prior to the issuance of a properly executed purchase order.

Finding No. 3:

There were a few capital items that were expensed and therefore not classified properly.

Recommendation:

Districts should reference “The Uniform Minimum Chart of Accounts for New Jersey Public Schools” and other available reference materials, such as the Budget Guidelines for the proper classifications required to be in compliance with N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-16.2(f).

Finding No. 4:

The District did not run a Fiscal Year-to-Date Payroll Register on June 30, 2010 and was unable to run the report subsequent to that date. As a result, it was necessary to use alternate methods to support the amounts charged to the various payroll/salary budgetary accounts. This also made the reconciliation of the payroll per the general ledger to the amounts reported on payroll tax filings more time consuming.

Recommendation:

The District should run and make available for audit the Fiscal Year-to-Date Payroll Register supporting the amounts charged to the various payroll/salary budgetary accounts.

Mr. DeWinne asked if the software upgrade to the payroll system allows you to go back and print a report. Mr. Franchetta said once the year is closed out the fiscal year bucket is wiped clean. Mr. DeWinne asked if there is software that allows you to do this. Mr. Franchetta said we were able to retrieve the files and create the reports. Mr. DiGiorgio asked what payroll software we use. Mr. Franchetta said Keystone.

Mr. Ulrich asked if the monitoring of bid thresholds would have been previously done by the Purchasing Director. Mr. Franchetta responded yes.

Mr. DiGiorgio asked if other software programs allow you to go back to your closed out fiscal year. Mr. Testa said there are a lot of software programs out there that once you get into the new year you are not able to go back.

Finding No. 5:

While it is the District's policy to have any increase of the amount of a purchase order approved by the School Business Administrator, we noted several instance where amounts billed by, and ultimately paid to, certain vendors exceeded the original purchase order amount, and in some cases, the contractual amount, without the School Business Administrator's approval to increase the purchase order amount.

Mr. DeWinne asked what you would do if the purchasing agent is the school business administrator. Mr. Testa said there would not be a problem in that instance. Mr. DeWinne asked if we are at risk of losing state aid if there are a lot of findings. Mr. Testa said if they are repeat findings it could be a problem.

Mr. Ulrich asked Mr. Testa because of the deficiencies that were found would he recommend us to have a purchasing director. Mr. Testa said if the duties that were being done by the purchasing director are not being done by anyone else then obviously you need to have someone do them.

Recommendation:

District personnel should not increase the amount of a purchase order above the original amount without having the increase approved by the School Business Administrator in accordance with its policy. In addition, vendors should not be paid in excess of the approved contract amount.

Finding No. 6:

As a condition of receiving state aid, N.J.S.A. 18A:55-3 requires school districts to implement a number of efficiency standards, including taking steps to maximize the district's participation on the federal Universal Service Program (E-rate). The District is not current in submitting claims for reimbursable costs under the federal E-rate programs and did not timely file its request for an extension of time to file said claims.

Recommendation:

The District should take steps to maximize its participation in the federal Universal Service Program (E-rate) and timely submit all claims for reimbursable costs.

Finding No. 7:

There were three (3) instances noted where the resolutions awarding contracts stated the contracts were awarded as “Extraordinary, Unspecifiable Services”, however the public notice advertising the award of the contract stated the contracts were awarded as “Professional Services”.

Recommendation:

The type of contract award contained in the resolution awarding the contract and type of contract advertised in the public notice should be consistent.

Finding No. 8:

During testing of the year-end physical inventory of food and supplies several instances of incorrect quantities being reflected on the count sheets. Those performing the inventory were informed of the discrepancies and were to make the appropriate corrections in the system. Subsequently, while performing the audit of the food service fund it was noted the corrections had not been made in the inventory system or the general ledger, necessitating the District to record the adjustments during the audit.

Recommendation:

District personnel should accurately perform the year-end physical inventory of food and supplies and reconcile the amounts to the general ledger.

Finding No. 9:

A few student activity cash disbursements lacked proper supporting documentation and/or approval.

Recommendation:

Proper supporting documentation and approvals should be maintained for all student activity cash disbursements.

Mr. Testa said given the size of the district and that it was a transition year a very good job was done by Mr. Franchetta, Mr. Smith and the financial staff.

Dr. Banks introduced Mr. Steve Dantine to present the Small Learning Communities survey results.

Mr. Dantine said a month and a half ago a Small Learning Community computer based survey was generated for the parents, teachers and students. He said from the parents we had 159 respondents out of a possible 2,424 households. We received 172 respondents that were teachers and a 56% turnout from the students. Mr. Dantine reviewed each question on the survey.

Dr. Guccio said the parents were also provided hard copies of the survey if they chose. She said some people on the survey felt there was not enough technology at the high school. Dr. Guccio said she personally agrees with that because we have been implementing a lot of technology in our elementary and middle schools. She said because the high school was not a title school we did not have the title funding that was used at the other school levels. Now that the high school has become a title school we will be going through the CAPA process. Dr. Guccio said part of the Title I plan gives us the opportunity to increase the technology available. She said the teachers also felt they needed more professional development. Dr. Guccio said two extra professional development days were approved for the high school.

Mr. Fanucci asked if money automatically comes with being a Title I school.

Dr. Guccio said she is not sure of the amount but we will receive funding from the state to help implement the plan that we develop.

Mr. English said if the tweaking does not work do we have a plan b and c in place. Dr. Guccio said that is why we have been having these on-going discussions with staff, administration and students. Mr. English asked Dr. Guccio if she visited the Ocean City School District. Dr. Guccio said yes and it was great to see how they implement things but did not reflect what we needed. Mr. English asked where we go from here.

Dr. Banks said it is important for us to realize within the space of the last year we have been very active in our discussion with the high school administration, teachers and students with regards to their concerns with the Small Learning Communities. We have made some very significant changes such as fine tuning the scheduling and curriculum issues. As far as where are we going from here she supports the recommendation to leave the Small Learning Communities in tact but to continue to work on fine tuning them. Dr. Banks said the Title I Plan and CAPA Team review will help us because they will make recommendations based on what they see.

Dr. Banks said as Dr. Gruccio stated being a title school will give us the opportunity for funding that the high school never had. She thanked Dr. Gruccio and Mr. Dantine for all their hard work in putting this together.

Dr. Gruccio mentioned that once a CAPA visit is completed and recommendations are made the school principal will present the CAPA findings and their plan implementing the changes.

Mr. English said it is disappointing to see only 7% of parent responses were received.

Mr. Dantine thanked the *Daily Journal* for advertising the surveys.

Mr. DiGiorgio asked if the board is going to be asked if they want to continue this educational format or is this something that will be discussed outside of here. He questioned who will be accountable if this does not work. Dr. Banks said the program is still basically fairly new. She said you really need to have at least a full four years so an entire class can go through the process. Mr. DiGiorgio asked if the board will base their decision on the recommendation of the superintendent and not the surveys. Dr. Banks said it was important for us to get feedback otherwise why bother to do a survey.

Ms. Rios asked if the high school was already in a failure status prior to the Small Learning Communities. Dr. Banks said yes. Mr. English asked if we could look at the data from where we were to where we are now to see if we have changed. Dr. Gruccio said that is what the CAPA visit will bring to us. She said the key is the curriculum we are implementing. It is our job beginning with the CAPA process to make sure we can change the way we instruct and what we use to drive that instruction. Ms. Rios said the Small Learning Communities implemented in the middle schools are working and perhaps we need to have some type of union between the middle and high schools. Mr. Ulrich said it is reasonable to say that it is going to take at least four years and we have to give it some time. Mrs. Phillips said she likes the recommendation of going to three learning communities in each of the buildings and adding an additional assistant principal. Mr. DiGiorgio said he has heard that there is a sense of not belonging to a class but feels the first priority that needs to be looked at is the curriculum. Mr. DeWinne asked how many independent shuttle buses are going back and forth. Dr. Banks said she thinks two. Mr. DeWinne said that he believes the board has the power to bring Small Learning Communities up for a vote.

Mr. DeWinne asked Dr. Banks if this comes up for a vote and the board said end the Small Learning Communities are we prepared now to implement plan b, c, or d. Dr. Banks said if the board took a vote to eliminate the Small Learning Communities she would ask for suggestions as to where we would go from there. She said at this point she does not think the answer is to go back to 9/10 and 11/12. Mr. DeWinne asked Dr. Banks if she is saying that there is not solid plan. Dr. Banks said administratively there has not been a “what if” discussion.

Comments by
Board Solicitor:

Mr. DeSanto said there were two matters that he was asked to address, which are Board Bylaws #0164 and conduct of Board Meetings. In light of the hour he suggests having these discussions at the January work session. Mr. DeSanto said a very important topic that he did want to discuss briefly was the evaluation of the Superintendent. He said five board members are precluded from participating as a result of decisions that the School Ethics Commission has rendered regarding board members and family members who are employees of the district. However, under the code the evaluation of the superintendent has to be conducted by a majority of the full board. Mr. DeSanto said you cannot comply with both requirements. He said about seven years ago the School Ethics Commission formulated what was called the “Doctrine of Necessity,” which allows boards of education to address this kind of dilemma. Mr. DeSanto said he will distribute to the board for their review a resolution of the School Ethics Commission that was adopted in 2003, which basically established this Doctrine of Necessity. He said what needs to be done is he has to determine that the board has a situation where you have conflicts that prevent you from deciding an issue or performing function and a requirement that you need to perform that function. Mr. DeSanto said he is fully prepared to say with respect to your roll in evaluating the superintendent that the Doctrine of Necessity should apply. He said he will prepare a resolution that sets forth what the conflicts are and what requirements need to be met to be adopted at a public session. So the public is aware that even though technically five board members are in conflict you need to function as a board. Mr. DeSanto said basically it is the board’s “get out of jail card” that allows you to do this one time only. Mr. DeSanto said his recommendation to the board is to adopt this resolution at the January meeting.

Ms. Rios asked if the board had this same conflict when Dr. Banks was hired. Mr. DeSanto said the individual conflicts you had then resulted from a different scenario.

Items for Review:

A. Superintendent

1. **Personnel Items** – Dr. Mounier asked if the words open position means it is a job that we have but has not been filled. Ms. Greenfield responded yes. Dr. Mounier asked why we are filling those positions now. Ms. Greenfield said they are new positions added.

Mr. English asked why there are some leave of absences from September and October. Ms. Greenfield said she reviews each leave request and sometimes they are after the fact because she did not have the time to review the paperwork. Mr. English asked if leave of absence positions are posted immediately. Ms. Greenfield explained the leave of absence process.

Mr. DeWinne asked if the salary amounts could be listed on the spreadsheet for the replacement positions. Ms. Greenfield said yes. Mr. DeWinne asked if the aides that are being rehired are funded through the grant. Ms. Greenfield said yes. Mr. DeWinne asked how many aides in addition to this list we rehired. Ms. Greenfield said many of the aides that we are rehiring have not accepted the position. Mr. DeWinne asked Ms. Greenfield if she can email him the number. Mr. DeWinne questioned the dollar amount of the stipend for the middle school SLC Curriculum Chairperson. Ms. Greenfield said \$2,840.00 and two teachers are splitting that amount. Mr. DeWinne asked why there is such a discrepancy between Rossi and the other middle schools for the tutoring hours. Ms. Greenfield said she would get back to him on this. Mr. DeWinne questioned why the security rates are different and some security personnel make more per hour than the tutor. Ms. Greenfield said it is a contractual issue.

Mr. DiGiorgio asked if there are any professional staffing agencies that exclusively deal with the education field. Ms. Greenfield said there are some and we have contracted out some special education services. She said sometimes it is more expensive to contract out so we really try to find our own.

Dr. Mounier asked why the numbers of hours to be worked for Adult Education extracurricular are not specified. Ms. Greenfield said the hours are not listed because they are substitutes and will only be called if someone does not come in on a particular night. Dr. Mounier asked if we have someone on staff who can translate the Small Learning Community Survey. Ms. Greenfield said our supervisor left and we did not have anyone on staff that could have done the translation during the work day. Dr. Mounier said there should be multiple people who are fluent in both languages that could have done this translation as a courtesy to the district or are we to the point where every single pencil stroke is something we pay for. Ms. Greenfield said an administrative person would have done it.

Dr. Mounier asked what is involved with transition observation. Ms. Greenfield said the employee is visiting, supervising and observing students that are participating in a special education work study program.

Mr. Franceschini on behalf of his colleagues wished Ms. Greenfield condolences on the loss of her father.

2. **Special Education Students** – Mr. DeWinne asked where the seven new students are coming from. Mrs. Polof said several have moved into the district, one was released from the detention center and went back to a placement and the remainders were transfers from our schools to an out of district placement. Mr. DeWinne asked if the transfers from our school district were determined by the child study team. Mrs. Polof said that is correct.
3. **Budgetary Transfers** – No discussion.
4. **Acceptance of Funds** – No discussion.
5. **Submission of Grants** – No discussion.
6. **Travel** – Dr. Mounier questioned why we cannot watch the Vineland High School teams play sports instead of going to Philadelphia. He asked if the 19 visits to the Veterans Memorial Home involve the same or different students each time. Dr. Banks said it is volunteer work and she would find out.

Ms. Rios asked if it is mandatory to have chaperones on field trips. Dr. Banks said it is usually one adult per ten students. Ms. Rios said she received a parent complaint about a trip to New York last year and there were no chaperones. Dr. Banks said she would have to find out the specifics. Mr. Ulrich said he received the same complaint and thought it was addressed last year. Ms. Rios said it was but this year the complaint was mentioned in the classroom.
7. **2009-2010 CAFR and Auditors Management Report** – Mr. DeWinne said based on the enrollment something the board may have to consider is closing one middle school and absorbing those students into the other three schools. Mr. Ulrich said what would we do if the state moves forward with the plan for the new middle school. Mr. DeWinne said he personally does not think that is going to happen.
8. **Implementation of Recommendations from the 2009-2010 CAFR and Auditor's Management Report in accordance with the Corrective Action Plan (CAP)** – No discussion.

9. **ECPA Budget and Five Year Preschool Program Plan for 2011-2012** – No discussion.
10. **Authorization of Disposal of Furniture, Electronics and Equipment** – Dr. Mounier said we need to have an assured accuracy of the assessment of the condition of items before they are disposed of. He said there should be a mechanism in place to back up the decision to dispose of things and should not be one person's responsibility. Mr. Ulrich said we are revising that policy now. Mr. Franchetta said this motion is for the disposal of items that are broken, manufactured by our staff and not safe.
11. **Approval of Bentz Entertainment Contract** – No discussion.
12. **Supplemental Educational Services (SES) Contracts** - No discussion.
13. **Harrison Twp Board of Education Agreement** – Dr. Mounier asked what this agreement is for. Mr. Franchetta said this is for a student who is transported to a special education school in Pennsylvania. Dr. Mounier asked how long the student is on the bus. Mr. Franceschini said two hours.
14. **Donation from Carl Tarabbio** – Mr. Franceschini thanked Mr. Tarabbio for his generosity.
15. **Approval of Bus Evacuation Drills** – No discussion.
16. **Bids** – No discussion.
17. **Polling at District Locations** – No discussion.
18. **Payment of Employee Legal Fees** – No discussion.
19. **First Reading of Policies #3412, #5120, #3322, #4322 and #8630** - Mr. English asked on Policy #5120 what the definition of equitable balance is. Mrs. Elliott said it is defined by the state as an equal distribution of race, ethnicity, gender, etc. Mr. English asked if the state mandates balance and do we have to abide by it. Mrs. Elliott said that is correct. Mr. English asked if we are following it. Mrs. Elliott said we are trying our very best. Mr. DeWinne asked how closely is that enforced. Mrs. Elliott said as a parent you can request to have your child transferred to another school for a variety of reasons, which can affect the numbers. Mr. DiGiorgio asked if a financial standpoint ever comes into play if we are facing a budget crisis and the funding does not exist. Mrs. Elliott said in her opinion we would have to contact the state and explain the situation.

B. Board**1. Discussion of the District Budget for the 2011-2012 school year.**

Mr. DeWinne said he is proposing to the board something different with the budget this year and that is to open it up for all members of the board in the board room. The reasons are transparency and to educate individual board members along with the public. Mr. DeWinne said that we all need to take some ownership and responsibility in the budget and he is requesting for this to be voted on by the board. If the majority of the members approve this we would not be the first district to do this. Mr. DeWinne said our budget is huge compared to other districts and we are the largest business in the county. He feels we need to vote on this soon and if the majority accepts it that is great. Mr. Franceschini asked Mr. DeWinne if his recommendation is to change the finance committee into a full board committee. Mr. DeWinne said his recommendation is to take the budget aspect out of the finance committee and create a budget committee that is a committee of the whole that everybody sits on. Mr. Franceschini asked Mr. DeSanto if we need to change bylaws if we decide to do this. Mr. DeSanto said he does not recall that the bylaws address the roll of the finance committee in that kind of detail. He said that he would be more than happy to look into it tomorrow. Mr. DeSanto said the board is authorized to appoint a committee as a whole or do a combination where the finance committee assumes its own role to do some legwork in between. Dr. Mounier thinks it is a good idea because it is better to make decisions on more information rather than less. Mr. Fanucci said he has conflicting thoughts. He understands the openness of it and thinks it is a good idea but the hard part about it is how do we address issues of situations with personnel in public such as potential cuts, loss and specific individual positions. He said if you are going discuss issues like this you would have to sent Rice Notices to people. Mr. DeSanto responded yes that discussion would take place in executive session unless the person allows it discussed in public. Mr. Franceschini said his opinion is that we should keep the finance committee but should have some open meetings possibly an hour before the work session. Mr. DeWinne said there is guidance out there that is published and the NJ School Boards Association is working on a new book that states the budget process should be an open process. Mr. Fanucci said also there are the schedules of trying to get nine people together to have this additional meeting. Ms. Rios said one idea is we can look at other districts to see how they are doing their budget process when it is open to the public. The other idea is we can hold meetings quarterly not monthly. Mr. Fanucci said you cannot hold the budget meetings quarterly. Dr. Mounier feels in his experience there is a general lack of communication amongst this board and he endorses this idea. Mr. Fanucci said as we go through the budget process each board member is provided with a full copy of the budget and there are public hearings on the budget. He said the idea is how you work on the budget in such a short amount of time. Mr. Fanucci said we have to start to address this now and have something in place for March. He said this budget will also be a little unique then some because the contracts are not settled.

Mr. Fanucci agrees that everyone's opinion is valid however he does not know if this is the right way to do it. Mr. Ulrich said he finds in committees that some things discussed never happen. He thinks the finance committee can move through the decision making process quicker and then disseminate the data for discussion during the extra time allotted at the meeting. Mr. Fanucci said what he is against is getting bogged down and having this become a marathon session for five hours. Mr. Franceschini asked Mr. DeSanto where we go from here. Mr. DeSanto suggested advancing this as a motion made by Mr. DeWinne at next week's meeting to form a committee of a whole for purposes of the budget process. If the motion carries you will be removing this from the finance committee to the committee as a whole, if it does not pass you can have a discussion and compromise it. Mr. DeWinne asked if a board member chooses not to attend the meeting would we only need five people to hold the meeting. Mr. DeSanto said a committee of the whole means the full board and the full board comprises of a majority of five or more. Each meeting would be public and when you are confronted with a situation in the budget process in which personnel may be discussed for that component you would have to hold an executive session. Mr. Franceschini said it is to his understanding that the board members obligation is only to attend the work and regular session but are not obligated to be on a committee. Mr. DeSanto said this will be advanced to next week's meeting under IX. B. Mr. Fanucci asked Mr. DeSanto if this should pass would he have to be in attendance for these public meetings. Mr. DeSanto said he would be if asked but there is no requirement that he has to be there. Mr. Fanucci said his only request if this passes is that the solicitor is present at those meetings. Mr. DeSanto said also if this passes we need to find a way of doing an advanced resolution in regards to going into executive session. Mr. DiGiorgio asked if Rice Notices can be electronic. Mr. DeSanto said Rice Notices are mailed or hand delivered but if everyone has an email address that is today's communication.

Review of Bills: No discussion.

Public Comments: None.

Committee Reports: Mr. Ulrich said discussed at tonight's Policy & Personnel Committee meeting was revisiting the Nepotism Policy along with a couple other policies that will be coming up for first reading next week. The discussion of a possible tuition increase for summer school was discussed, which will go to the Finance Committee. Mr. Ulrich said Mr. Franchetta is working on some regulations for the disposition of property. He said Mrs. Elliott is working on permission forms for legal review. Mr. Ulrich said also discussed was the possibility of adding an assistant vice principal as a floater between the North and South buildings.

Mr. Fanucci said at the Finance Committee Meeting a review of all of the financial data for the district was done with Mr. Testa. He said they also discussed the activity bus routes and briefly discussed the Solar Request for Proposal (RFP).

Unfinished
Business:

Mr. Ulrich said at the last meeting they discussed the possibility of filling the purchasing director position. In light of our auditor's report and the financial burdens we are facing he would like to move this forward to the agenda for a board vote. Mr. Ulrich thinks this is a needed position and we have a huge process to take care of with a multitude of situations.

Mr. DeWinne said at the last work session he requested a copy machine analysis. He also would like to have a discussion on the schedule for the fund balance and overtime for the year.

Mr. English asked if there will be a monthly Sodexo report. Mr. Franceschini said he will discuss this with Dr. Banks and get back to him.

Ms. Rios thanked Dr. Banks for fulfilling her promise and scheduling a training workshop for "Aspiring Administrators within Our Community" on Wednesday, January 5, 2011 from 3:45 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. in the board room. She also scheduled "How to Prepare for an Administrative Interview Workshop" on Thursday, January 13, 2011 from 3:45 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. Dr. Banks thanked Dr. Gruccio for her assistance in setting these workshops up.

Dr. Mounier thinks we need to schedule a vote on the Small Learning Communities. Mr. DeSanto said there is a fine line between the old business section and matters being brought up under VI.B. for discussion at a work session. He said the bylaws say to the extent possible matters that require extensive discussion should not be an Old Business item but should be presented to the board president and superintendent before or at the agenda setting conference. Mr. DeSanto said it could then be scheduled for discussion at a work session and then advance to the board meeting for a vote. Mr. Ulrich said that is what we did tonight. Mr. Fanucci said he would like a little more discussion on this to see what plans are in place in the event it is voted to be removed. He said the question is do we have enough time if Small Learning Communities were voted out to set standards in curriculum and scheduling for the next year. Mr. DeSanto said he realized there was a presentation tonight but part of the information that is available is the alternatives, which becomes the work session discussion.

New Business:

Mr. Franceschini said one of the reasons we hired the superintendent is to help us try to correct this problem because of her strong instruction background. He said Dr. Banks does not recommend for the Small Learning Communities to be dropped. Mr. Franceschini personally feels we should not drop the Small Learning Communities. Mr. DiGiorgio pointed out that the former board made the decision based on a superintendent's recommendation to go into Small Learning Communities. Mr. Franceschini said initially it was a state mandate and because of the mandate the superintendent recommended going into the Small Learning Communities. Mr. DiGiorgio said we need to have a discussion as to what the alternative would be. Dr. Banks said she thinks what the alternative would be is a very important question that needs to be discussed. She said what she has been hearing is let's do away with the Small Learning Communities but she has not heard what they would be replaced with. Dr. Banks said if the board wants to go in a different direction then she needs to hear what the thoughts are as to what that direction is. Dr. Mounier does not think it is the board's function to come up with a curriculum. He said the alternatives should have been a matter of some consideration for a period of time now. Dr. Banks said we are doing some very monumentally significant things and she thinks we need to have an opportunity to let those play out. We have made major changes in the curriculum this year for the students. It is significant that the high school is now a Title I school. The CAPA review and Corrective Action Plan that the high school has to develop is more important than you realize in terms of the accountability issues and concerns that we have with regard to instruction at the high school. Dr. Banks said she has been here a year and has been extremely active and aggressive in addressing the concerns at the high school. Dr. Mounier said he is disappointed with some of the survey studies and achieved nothing by sending people to Ocean City High School. Mr. Franceschini asked if the board agrees to have this on next month's work session agenda. Mr. Ulrich asked if we can take a poll on this. Mr. DeSanto said you do not have to poll because it has already been requested and will be scheduled for the January work session.

Adjournment: The Board adjourned to executive session at 10:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kevin J. Franchetta, CPA
Board Secretary

KJF:df