

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 7, 2011 at 7:04 p.m., pursuant to notice with Mr. Ulrich presiding and the following members present: Mr. DiGiorgio, Mr. English, Mr. Fanucci, Mr. Medio, Mr. Mercado, Dr. Mounier, Mrs. Phillips and Ms. Rios. Absent: None.

Also present: Dr. Guccio, Acting Superintendent, Dr. Elliott, Assistant Superintendent, Mr. Franchetta, Board Secretary, Mr. DeSanto, Board Solicitor, Mrs. Polof, Director of Special Education, Ms. Greenfield, Executive Director of Personnel, press and public. Absent: Dr. Banks, Superintendent.

Mr. Ulrich announced that in compliance with the New Jersey meeting law commonly referred to as "The Sunshine Law," the Vineland Board of Education has caused notice of this meeting.

Flag salute:

The board recessed to executive session at 7:04 p.m.

The meeting resumed at 7:21 p.m.

Special

Presentations:

Dr. Guccio introduced representatives from the Vineland High School Madrigals under the direction of Lori Cummines to present musical selections.

Comments by

Board Solicitor:

None.

Dr. Guccio introduced Dr. Dina Elliott to present the monthly Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying (HIB) Report and Suspension Report.

Dr. Elliott reviewed each of the school reports and said there was a total of 92 reported cases for the month of November to present. She said the total number of reports for the month of November to present were 92 and 57 were found to be bullying cases and 35 were unsubstantiated. Dr. Elliott reported that there were 620 total suspensions for the month of November.

Mr. Fanucci asked if the building administrators are following up on the student incidences that are duplicated every month. Dr. Elliott said yes administration has been phenomenal with progressive discipline and taking remedial measures when necessary.

Mr. Medio asked how many of the students who were suspended were sent to the Cunningham School Alternative Program. Dr. Elliott said since our last board meeting six students were sent to the Cunningham Alternative School, which is a total of 18 students.

Ms. Rios asked if all the assistant principals are consistent with the discipline policy. Dr. Elliott explained that each level has a discipline code and the principal or assistant principal can exercise any component of that code depending on the offense. Ms. Rios asked who the parent or student would contact if the discipline given was not consistent with the policy. Dr. Elliott said if a parent, guardian, or student feels the policy was not followed our first chain of command would be the building principal after that they could contact her or Dr. Gruccio.

Dr. Mounier asked under what circumstances would a penalty be rescinded or reversed at a higher level. Dr. Elliott said if due process was not followed or if there was a problem with the student that was not disclosed. Dr. Mounier asked if there has ever been any arbitrary reversal of opinions from the schools to central administration. Dr. Elliott said not that she has seen at this point. Dr. Mounier said on the spreadsheet the board received there seems to be overlap between the categories and he asked if they could be streamlined. Dr. Elliott said we are working on that but there are some extenuating circumstances at the high school. Dr. Mounier asked if the board will be receiving these reports monthly. Dr. Elliott responded yes.

Mr. Fanucci asked if there is a mechanism in place to ensure that when a teacher sends a student to the principal for disciplinary reasons it is being followed up on. Dr. Elliott said there is nothing formal in place and that would fall under the building level administration.

Mr. Medio asked if a student is sent to the office from a classroom or is a referral sent to the office. Dr. Elliott said in some instances it is a simultaneous action.

Items for Review:

A. Superintendent

Dr. Gruccio asked if we could begin with Item #7

7. **Appointment of Stanley H. Allen, Inc.** – Mr. Ulrich said a Finance Committee meeting was held tonight and at that meeting Mr. Allen presented an opportunity for health insurance savings. Mr. Ulrich asked Mr. Allen to give a brief explanation on this savings.

Mr. Allen thanked the board for the opportunity to be here as the district's benefits representatives. He said they are looking at an alternative with AmeriHealth Insurance which is a wonderful company with one of the strongest networks in the area. Mr. Allen said what they have presented to the Finance Committee tonight would save the district around \$700,000 for the first year. He said AmeriHealth was able to give us a rate formula cap for a second year that would limit the amount of increase that we would be able to have. Mr. Allen said we are looking at the possibility of moving forward on March 1st. He said the next move would be to meet with the unions. Mr. Allen said he knows the employees will be very pleased with AmeriHealth who have the largest number of primary care physicians and specialists then any of the carriers.

Mr. Ulrich said at the beginning of the week Mr. Allen and his employees will be scheduling appointments with the unions. He said this is a great opportunity but it is time sensitive because of the rate lock in that AmeriHealth has offered us. Mr. Ulrich said after the board has digested this and questions are answered, he will propose a resolution to be put on the table because of the time sensitive nature of this issue.

1. **Personnel Items** – Mr. Medio asked why ICR teachers are being hired for the three and four year old program. Dr. Gruccio said it is for in-class resource. Mr. Medio asked why we have already determined that three and four year olds need in-class support. Mrs. Polof explained that most of our referrals are received from early intervention where children have been receiving services from birth. Mr. Medio asked how many three and four year olds in the district need these services. Mrs. Polof said around one hundred children.

Mr. English asked if we have to post for another service technician because of Mr. Trzeciak's transfer to Network Administrator. Ms. Greenfield said we have two Network Administrator, an electronics and computer service technician vacancy. She said two individuals turned jobs down because of the salary. Mr. English asked if there was a going rate. Ms. Greenfield said it is a salary guide issue. Mr. DiGiorgio asked if these are entry level positions. Ms. Greenfield said for these positions you need a number of years of experience. Mr. English asked if overtime is offered to the technicians. Ms. Greenfield said that is something that Mr. Dantine would have to answer. Dr. Gruccio said Mr. Dantine has requested overtime on occasions, which is approved in her office.

Mr. DiGiorgio asked how ECPA is funded. Mr. Franchetta said ECPA is a special state fund for early childhood and is funded by the number of pupils that are served on October 15th annually.

Mr. English said at the early childhood preschool three of our six master teachers are out on medical, maternity and family leave. He asked if these positions will be posted. Ms. Greenfield said if we know how long a person will be out we try to hire someone on a short term contract.

Mr. Medio asked what do these master teachers do at the preschool level. Dr. Gruccio said they travel to the providers, model lessons and work with teachers to provide support.

Dr. Mounier said that Dr. Banks' six week paid leave of absence ends on December 28th, which would be during the holiday break. Ms. Greenfield said you do not count the paid time off. She said January 9, 2012 would be Dr. Banks return date. Dr. Mounier asked who is paying for the seven days. Mr. Ulrich said the district is paying for them. He said Dr. Banks submitted medical documentation putting her on a leave until January 8, 2012 and she is entitled to the days during that time period.

Mr. Mercado asked how somebody has so many sick days only being with the district two years. Mr. Ulrich said there was a specific sick time bank that was set aside for catastrophic illness. He said the actual time that was granted was contractual. Mr. DiGiorgio asked if this is consistent with the previous superintendent contracts. Mr. DeSanto responded yes.

Mr. Ulrich said he contacted Ms. Zoerb, the representative for the district from New Jersey School Boards Association, and she is willing to supply whatever services are needed for superintendent search purposes. He said that he has also received several unsolicited mailings from different companies regarding the superintendent search. Mr. Ulrich said all the options are open to us. He said with the New Jersey School Boards Association everything would be included except the interview process.

Mr. English asked if the school nurses leave the building at lunch time. Dr. Gruccio said they can. Mr. English asked if there is coverage for them when they leave. Dr. Gruccio said if there is an emergency we have a list of nurses in a close building that would cover.

2. **Special Education Students** – No discussion.
3. **Budgetary Transfers** – No discussion.
4. **Travel** – Dr. Mounier said there is a proposed trip for the Success students to the Longport Radio Station. He asked if students cannot return to the general student population how can we expect them to achieve the objectives set forth in the field trip request. Mrs. Polof said our goal at Success is not necessarily for the students to return to the general population but for them to be prepared to go into the world and be productive citizens.

5. **Submission of Grants** – No discussion.
6. **Acceptance of Funds** - No discussion.
7. **Stanley H. Allen, Inc. Agreement** – Discussion held beginning of meeting.
8. **Youth Advocate Program, Inc. (YAP) Agreement** – No discussion.
9. **Salem County Vocational Technical School Contract** – Mr. Mercado asked how many students are enrolled in this program. Mr. Franchetta said the students are on the attached list. Mr. Mercado asked if we should be looking at having this type of program in our district. Mr. Ulrich said these are great specialized schools. Mr. Franchetta said most of the students that attend this school are for the dance and visual arts piece. Mr. Mercado requested for this to be looked into.
10. **Bayada Nurse Contract** – No discussion.
11. **City of Vineland Inter-local Services Agreement** – No discussion.
12. **Bus Evacuations for November** – No discussion.
13. **Cancellation of Checks** – Dr. Mounier asked why someone would not claim a check for over seven hundred dollars. Mr. Franchetta said it will be listed in the newspaper and they will have the right to claim it from the state. He said if they do not claim the money the state will take possession.
14. **Bids** – Mr. Medio asked if he can have a list of how many days teachers have been taken out of the classroom for training and how many substitutes we have been short on.

Dr. Mounier asked how many licenses Success Maker covers. Mr. Dantine explained that with Pearson you own the license and it is just a matter of scheduling with Success Maker. Dr. Mounier asked how many students this covers. Mr. Dantine said around six to seven thousand students in second to eighth grade but not at the same time. Mr. DiGiorgio asked if this was a onetime expenditure. Mr. Dantine said yes it is a onetime cost and the maintenance renewals are twenty to thirty thousand per year.

Mr. DiGiorgio said he hopes we can find a better way to conduct our training because it is important to have the teachers in the classroom as much as possible. Dr. Gruccio said we try to balance it but it is difficult.

Mr. Medio expressed concern that if you are a district in need of improvement you cannot justify pulling a teacher out of a classroom.

Mr. Ulrich mentioned that Mr. Zorzi, the new purchasing director, mailed out thirty notices to Vineland contractors for the bids but unfortunately an out of town bidder won.

B. Board

1. Mr. Medio stated that at the last board meeting he mentioned that he wanted to discuss the reinstating of clubs, the intramural sports program and funding for end of the year dinners that are currently not funded by the board. Dr. Gruccio said she believes the awards dinner is in the school based budget. Mr. Ulrich asked what specific dinners he is referring to. Mr. Medio said the sports banquet is not funded. Mr. Fanucci said he recalls that there was an issue after he was elected with the accountability regulations. Mr. Franchetta explained that the accountability regulations reduced the amount you can spend on banquets and parent events. Mr. Franchetta said currently the honors banquet is funded by the district. Mr. Medio said there also was a band and select choir dinner. Mr. Fanucci asked if the money allocated for the board is not used could any of it be used for these costs. Mr. Franchetta said he would have to look at the accountability regulations. Mr. Ulrich said also the board use to have a dinner for the retirees, which is no longer held. Mr. Medio said he is proposing that these dinners are put back. Mr. Fanucci said this is a good discussion for the finance committee. He said this could also be discussed at a committee as a whole budget meeting. Mr. English asked if activities buses were put back at the middle school level. Mr. Franchetta said the buses were on the six million dollar list that was restored. Mr. English asked if we have to provide busing if we provide the after school activity. Mr. DeSanto said generally transportation is provided. Mr. Medio said why we do not put a small amount of money into the intramural programs which would help improve the sports programs and discipline at the intermediate level. Mr. DiGiorgio asked if any decisions were made on the six million dollar supplemental aide. Mr. Ulrich said only on the school locker bid.

Review of Bills: No discussion.

Public Comments: Nicholas Griffey, Parent
Mr. Griffey said his daughter is first on the waiting list for Petway School. He questioned if he is out of line requesting for his daughter to attend a different school then where she was assigned.

Dr. Elliott said it is not unusual and there is a policy in place that allows for this. She said this summer there were over 1,000 parental requests that filtered through her office.

Mr. Griffey asked how he would go about enrolling his children in Petway School for next year. Dr. Elliott said she would need the request in writing, which can be submitted now.

Lee Burke, Vineland Resident

Mr. Burke said it is truly unfortunate when a board fails to approve personnel recommendations of the superintendent and administration. He feels it is time for the board to have discussion among themselves with guidance from the NJ School Boards Association on their role and ethical responsibility on personnel recommendations.

Gary Beres, Parent

Mr. Beres wanted to publicly commend Lori Cummines and said the select choir is privileged to have her as their director. He also commended the board and administration on the formation of the SIT Committee, which consists of administration, parents and community members who discuss matters at hand in the high school.

Committee Reports: Mrs. Phillips said discussed at yesterday's Curriculum & Technology Committee meeting was Peer Challenge a new middle school program. She said Peer Challenge is a health curriculum that is presented to sixth, seventh and eighth graders for the purpose of preventing teen pregnancy. She said they also discussed the high school scheduling.

Mr. English asked if they are looking for a scheduling solution. Mrs. Phillips said yes. Mr. English asked if it were possible at the next meeting to discuss the movement between the high schools. Mr. DiGiorgio expressed his concern that there is too much movement between buildings. Mr. Medio concurs with Mr. DiGiorgio and feels there needs to be some changes. He said the board would have to make a decision as to how much extra money we want put in to add extra classes at each building to cut down on the movement. Mr. English asked if we are looking at continuing to have a scheduling consultant. Mr. Ulrich said that is an administrative solution. Dr. Gruccio said they are looking at a new scheduling program. Mr. Fanucci asked if the movement is really the issue or is the issue how the movement is handled and guided. Mr. Medio said the problem is not being in the classroom to get the instructional time.

Ms. Rios said at the Preschool Provider meeting held on November 15 they discussed the chain of command. The providers are to contact Mrs. Bleistine first, Dr. Elliott second and the board as a last resort. Ms. Rios said the providers expressed their concern in regards to bills, which is a state issue. She said the providers were told to contact Dr. Ellen Wolock at the Division of Early Childhood Education to address this issue.

Ms. Rios said discussed at the November Policy & Personnel meeting was uniforms for the students, which will take about a year and a half to do. She said they also discussed substitute nurses, three day itinerant nurse positions and the substitute rate. Ms. Rios said they were informed that there is one social worker covering grades nine through twelve who is also the bullying coordinator. She said a request for an additional social worker was discussed and referred to the Finance Committee to determine if there is sufficient funding for this position.

Mr. Ulrich said it is not an option we need to have an additional social worker at the high school.

Ms. Rios said at today's Policy & Personnel meeting they reviewed the FMLA military leave. She said Ms. Greenfield discussed the clerk typist sweep. Ms. Rios requested for Ms. Greenfield to give an explanation on that issue.

Ms. Greenfield explained that every year all the clerk typist positions are reviewed. She said Civil Service allows after a year of being a clerk typist an employee can be promoted to senior clerk typist. Ms. Greenfield said our policy has been to do this every three years. She said this has not been done for a while and it is in our best interest to have this on the January agenda.

Mr. Franchetta requested that in the future for this to take effect in July so it can be properly budgeted.

Mr. Medio said there seems to be a need for another security guard at Johnstone School because it is impossible for one guard to cover. He asked if there has been any movement on this. Dr. Gruccio said today she and Dr. Elliott spoke with Mr. Smith and they requested for this additional position to be added to the budget for next year because the entire elementary Behavior Disabilities (BD) population is housed at Johnstone School. Mr. Ulrich asked if there has been any discussion with Mr. Provenzano to reallocate a security guard to Johnstone School from another building. Dr. Gruccio said not to her knowledge. Mr. Fanucci said that suggestion was made to Dr. Banks.

Ms. Rios said at the Policy & Personnel meeting a handout was received on Sudden Cardiac Death Among Student-Athletes and if anyone wishes to read it, please let her know. She said James Cooper who is the Director of School Programs for the FedUp-4U Initiative Program spoke at the meeting.

Ms. Rios said this organization is endorsed by the Cumberland County Prosecutor's Office and they hold assemblies on character building, anti-bullying, abstinence and/or protection. She said the organization would like to start an after school program where students from our district can attend and take advantage of.

Mr. English asked Mr. Robbins, Athletic Director, if he will be bringing the Student Athlete "F" Policy back to the committee. Dr. Elliott said they requested for Mr. Robbins to review the statistics for the first semester. She said Mr. Robbins will present those statistics at the Policy & Personnel Committee around March. Mr. English said several other districts in South Jersey have their own policies and it is interesting to see how many students are doing phenomenal.

Mr. Fanucci said finance was discussed tonight during the public meeting. He said a meeting will be scheduled in January to address the issues brought up by Ms. Rios.

Mr. English said at the November Facilities meeting they discussed the Landis School renovation bid. He said also discussed was the district auction for the items at the warehouse. Mr. English said Mr. Zorzi, Purchasing Director, stated that there is a lot of cleanup work that needs to take place prior to the auction. Mr. English said Mr. Zorzi will be developing an inventory list, which will be distributed to the schools for review. He said the committee received an update on the solar panel project. Mr. English said that CCIA consultants Gable Associates were still in the process of negotiations with two solar developers. He said that Mr. Weaver provided a drawing from Manders & Merighi showing the new tennis courts. Mr. English said due to the holidays there will probably be two facility meetings held in January.

Mr. Medio said that he would prefer to keep the tennis courts where they are. He said it is hard to approve moving the courts and taking away the lighting because they are utilized at night. Mr. English said it may be more expensive to keep the tennis courts where they are then to move them because of the drainage issues. Mr. Medio asked what Joe Isabella's and John Wagner's analysis was. Mr. Weaver said they are still negotiating to get the energy piece down to a reasonable number for savings. He said as of today we are still not where we want to be with the number to make it feasible.

Unfinished Business: None.

New Business: Mr. Medio requested for Board Member comments to be added to the work session agenda. Mr. Ulrich said the bylaws would have to be modified.

Mr. English asked if the Life Skills room at the high school is being used to its full potential as of today. Mr. Ulrich asked Mr. English to address his concerns to Dr. Gruccio.

Mr. Mercado asked what he would have to do in order to request a formal investigation into the hiring of the Assistant Principal at Dallago School. Mr. Ulrich said if we need to have a personnel discussion it can be done with Dr. Gruccio and Mr. DeSanto. Mr. Mercado said he is not going to let this go and has information the public should no. Mr. Ulrich said the proper protocol is to make the superintendent aware of a potential problem and if it involves an investigation we can consult with our legal team.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned by voice vote at 9:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kevin J. Franchetta, CPA
Board Secretary