

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 3, 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. DeSanto, Board Solicitor, Mrs. Polof, Director of Special Education, Ms. Greenfield, Executive Director of Personnel, press and public. Absent: None.

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:

Mr. Ottinger introduced Mr. Stephen Testa, from Romano, Hearing, Testa & Knorr Accounting Firm to review the 2007-2008 Audit.

Mr. Testa said that he will explain the format and contents of the report, review the summary of the financial position and present the audit recommendations. He said the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR) includes detailed reporting at the school level, statements, disclosures, supplementary information along with an introductory section. Mr. Testa said the Auditor's Management Report on Administrative Findings, Financial Compliance and Performance is the report on management and includes the audit and recommendations. He said the CAFR is over 260 pages and has a lot of information to absorb. Mr. Testa said he will review a few of the financial highlights of the summary. He said there are two ways a district can generate fund balance one is to have excess revenues and the other is to have unexpended appropriations. Mr. Testa said we had \$622,000 in excess revenues and unexpended appropriations of approximately 9.2 million dollars. He said the total fund balance generated was \$9,887,000 however; included in that number was \$5,905,000 from the prior year. Mr. Testa said there was an adjustment for prior year encumbrances, which would have been orders that were placed prior to June 30. The goods or services were not received by June 30 so the amount could flow into the next year's budget and increase the budget line item. Mr. Testa said the net fund balance generated was \$3,893,000 for the year. He said the composition of fund balance as of June 30, 2008 in the general fund reserved for encumbrances is \$98,833,000. There is \$8,673,000 reserved for excess surplus and \$4,354,000 reserved for excess surplus designated for subsequent years expenditures.

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Mr. Testa said we have \$1.00 in the capital reserve account, \$606,000 reserved for inventory, and \$925,000 designated for subsequent year's expenditures. He said that would leave us with unreserved and undesignated deficit prior to the final state aid payment of 2.7 million dollars. Mr. Testa said the state pays their final aid payment to the district in July and the funds are not received by June 30. He said because the state does not want to recognize the expense in that fiscal year the revenue would have to be recognized in the subsequent fiscal year. However for budgetary purposes, this amount has been counted in the budget to see what the undesignated fund balance would be with the final state aid payment. Mr. Testa said the total fund balance in the general fund is approximately 18 million dollars. He said the state requires districts to only maintain 2% of general fund expenditures in fund balance. Mr. Testa said the 2% calculation actually comes out to \$3,012,000. He said the total general fund budget appropriation is \$161,953,000 and \$152,688,000 was expended, which is 94% of the budget expended. He said the revenues were \$166,282,000 with transfers from special revenue for whole school reform of 5.7 million dollars. The total revenues and transfers in were \$172,000,000 and the expenditures and transfers out totaled \$168,000,000 with a \$3,893,000 increase in fund balance. Mr. Testa said there were six recommendations in the Auditors Management Report, which have already been addressed in the Corrective Action Plan. He reviewed the following recommendation:

- 1) The district did not properly classify a certain line item.
- 2) The district should incorporate into its Position Control Roster certain information required to be included therein that is currently being maintained in separate reports.
- 3) Reimbursements for travel expenditures should not exceed the amounts approved by the Assistant Commissioner, if required.
- 4) The Board should be certain it receives the disclosure forms required by P.L. 2005, c.271 at least ten (10) days prior to the award of certain contracts and records the date it receives them in order to better document compliance with the ten (10) day requirement contained therein.
- 5) The free and reduced lunch applications should be carefully reviewed by district personnel and properly classified as free, reduced or paid.
- 6) The District should report related services consistent with those contained in the student's IEP's and be certain that all related services qualifying for inclusion on the A.S.S.A. report are included.

Continued

Mr. Testa pointed out that while those findings are required to be reported in the Auditor's Management Report there were none required to be reported in the Schedule of Findings with the single audit report. He said there are no material instances of non-compliance and no material weaknesses in internal control, which is very good. Mr. Testa said the Corrective Action Plan needs to be approved and sent to the county superintendent's office within thirty days. He said Mr. Franchetta and Mr. Rochetti along with the rest of the financial staff did a very good job this year. Mr. Testa commended the board and administration for continuing to recognize the importance of the financial reporting and compliance.

Comments by

Board Solicitor:

Mr. DeSanto reported to the board that he had the pleasure of meeting with Judge Julio Mendez, the presiding judge in the family division, this week along with Joe Callavini, transportation coordinator. After that meeting the Judge met with the solicitors from Millville and Cumberland Regional. Mr. DeSanto said Judge Mendez wanted to get an understanding in regards to the problems districts have with respect to split custody homes and transportation problems. He said Mr. Callavini was excellent in providing a number of stories to the Judge so he had some data to understand. Mr. DeSanto said as a result of this we believe the court orders coming out will have clearer provisions regarding what schools children are to attend. He said hopefully the administration's nightmares on these issues will be addressed.

Mr. Giordano asked if this will have an impact on the residency hearings. Mr. DeSanto responded yes.

Mr. DeSanto said he distributed to the board a summary of the most recent Abbott decision. He explained that the State of New Jersey was trying to get the court to declare constitutional the most recent funding law that the legislature passes. All the remedies that were achieved by the Education Law Center would be eliminated and replaced by this funding law. Mr. DeSanto said the court remanded the application and appointed Judge Doyne. Judge Doyne will hold hearings and form a record to decide and recommend to the Supreme Court whether or not this statute fairly addresses appropriate education, core curriculum standards, and how poor children are supposed to be provided for. Mr. DeSanto said Vineland along with a few other districts are automatically involved in the remand to Judge Doyne because we participated in the application process. Mr. Ottinger and Mr. Franchetta submitted a detailed certification, which was part of the proofs that were submitted to the court.

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Mr. DeSanto said the fight is just beginning and he will discuss the strategies in executive session. He said that we are going to be very much involved in the fight with the Education Law Center in terms of providing Judge Doyne and the Supreme Court with the impacts this funding would cause this district.

Mr. Bernardini asked Mr. DeSanto if we are successful with this appeal, will we receive this money for the 2009 budget. Mr. DeSanto said for the 2009-2010 budget we can apply for supplemental funding or whatever we need in a need based budget. Until further order of the court it appears that we could apply and do our budget based on the past rules.

Mr. Spinelli said he presumes that for the 2009-2010 budget we are going to ask for almost everything we possibly can. Mr. DeSanto said we should ask for whatever we need and whatever we can justify.

Items for Review:

A. Superintendent

1. **Personnel Items** – Mr. Ulrich asked why there is an amended salary for the Literacy Coach. Ms. Greenfield explained that when this person was rehired they were brought back three steps lower and is now being moved up to the appropriate salary because of tenure. Mr. Ulrich asked if this is a retired person that returned. Ms. Greenfield responded yes. Mr. Ulrich asked why they would have tenure rights again. Ms. Greenfield said they start accruing tenure when they return. Mr. Ulrich asked if this is a particular title in a VEA Contract. Ms. Greenfield responded no. Mr. Ulrich asked why we are obligated to move a person that is not in a specific title through steps. Ms. Greenfield said because they are covered under the teachers' contract.

Mr. Spinelli said contractually if it is written you have to do move them when they receive tenure.

Ms. Greenfield read page 9 Article 7 (B.) of the VEA Contract.

Mr. Ulrich asked what the definition is of separation. Ms. Greenfield said it means termination.

Mr. DeWinne asked if it were possible to show what the increase is for people that are being promoted or transferred. Ms. Greenfield responded yes.

Continued

Mr. Giordano asked if the second amended salary under employment is because it was not realized up front. Ms. Greenfield said yes it was an error.

Ms. Rios asked how we know if the position actually exists or is a new position. Ms. Greenfield said she will not show anything with a new position it is always a replacement. She said if there was a new position it would be addressed first with the board. She said they are all replacements or a one year grant.

Mr. Giordano asked if the people that are hired under a one year grant understand that up front. Ms. Greenfield responded yes it was advertised as such and they sign the contract for one year. Mr. Giordano asked at the end of the one year would they go back to the position they had before. Ms. Greenfield said they receive a letter that their contract is over.

Mr. Ulrich asked if there is a policy in place that conducts exit interviews to determine why a person is leaving. Ms. Greenfield said she does not have the capacity to interview everyone that retires but she sends a survey out to every employee. Mr. Ulrich asked how long it takes to meet with an employee to conduct an exit interview on why they are leaving. Ms. Greenfield said with all do respect she does not have the time in addition to everything else that she does.

Mr. Giordano said a few years ago exit interviews were researched but nothing materialized. He said this could be looked into because he also feels this is important.

Mr. Spinelli congratulated and wished Dr. Figgs good luck.

2. **Placement of Special Education Students** – No discussion.
3. **Budgetary Transfers** – Mr. Spinelli asked if these are the normal monthly transfers. Mr. Franchetta responded yes.
4. **Acceptance of Funds** – No discussion.
5. **Travel** – Mr. Giordano said there was no travel listed. Mr. Franchetta said there will be travel listed next week.

Mr. Ottinger advised the board that there may be some situations where students need to travel and there is not time to bring it before the board. He said in those situations he was told by the board that he can proceed.

6. **Approval of 2007-2008 Comprehensive Annual Financial Report and Auditor's Management Report** - Mr. Giordano asked if there is any other way to handle travel rate increases. Mr. Franchetta said we should have asked the Commissioner if we could pay the additional amount, which we did not do.
7. **Approval and Implementation of the Recommendations from the 2007-2008 Comprehensive Annual Financial Report and Auditor's Management Report in Accordance with the Corrective Action Plan** - No discussion.
8. **Addendum to the Vineland Administrators and Supervisors Association Contract** – Mr. Spinelli asked why we are doing this deletion now. Mr. Franchetta said the deletion was an over site in the contract. He said the administrative assistants was just to clarify what we are doing. Mr. Ottinger said we agreed that that the administrative assistants could perform Schedule B assignments for this year only.

Mr. Giordano asked if it has always been that if you were an administrator you could not coach. Mr. Ottinger responded yes but this will need to be revisited some day.

Mr. Franceschini asked if an administrative can volunteer to coach. Mr. Ottinger said yes.
9. **Uniform Memorandum of Agreement between Education and Law Enforcement Officials** – No discussion.
10. **The College of New Jersey Teacher-in-Training Agreement** – No discussion.
11. **SMILE New Jersey Dental Agreement** – Mr. Giordano asked if this is available to any student who needs these services. Mr. Ottinger responded yes. Mr. Giordano asked if it was free. Mr. Ottinger responded yes.
12. **Clinical Education Agreement between Healthsouth Corporation and Vineland Board of Education** – No discussion.
13. **Casa PRAC Truancy Prevention Program** – No discussion.
14. **A-1 Entertainment, Inc. Contact** – Mr. Giordano said this needs board approval because the individual is an employee of the district. Mr. Franchetta mentioned that the dance was cancelled and will be rescheduled. He said the policy states the board has to approve it and he was not made aware of this in time.
15. **Donation from David R. Kotok** – No discussion.

16. **Approval of Ten New High School Courses** – Mr. Evans asked how many teachers will be required for these courses. Mr. Ottinger said none. He said they are developing new electives that will fit in each new small learning community. Mr. Evans asked if this will be for existing teachers. Mr. Ottinger said yes there will be no new hires.

Mr. Spinelli asked if the curriculum was done for these courses. Mr. Ottinger responded no only the course outlines. Mr. Spinelli asked what the cost will be for curriculum development to write these curriculums. Mr. Ottinger said it will not be around \$15,000, which is no more than usual.

Mr. Evans asked if it will cost \$15,000 for each course. Dr. Gruccio said no for the total courses. Mr. Evans asked if the book and other subsequent costs are figured. Dr. Gruccio said nothing is purchased until there are enough students signed up

Mr. Ulrich mentioned that we are deleting more courses than we are adding.

Mr. Spinelli expressed his concern with block scheduling because of the problem it caused this year. He said we should either correct or do away with the block scheduling.

B. Board

1. None.

Review of Bills: None.

Public Comments: Brittney Hostler, Student
Ms. Hostler said she is a Rebel Member, which is an anti-smoking club that does a lot of community service. She announced that on December 12 at the Vineland Ice Skating Rink from 7:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. Rebel will be having a drug free fun event for the county called Freeze out Big Tobacco.

Committee Reports: Mr. Giordano mentioned that he along with Mr. Bernardini and Mr. Franceschini had a brief meeting on setting some ground rules for the Small Learning Communities Ad Hoc Committee. He said they will choose a day to go to the high school after dismissal and provide the opportunity for any staff member that would like to speak to them on an issue. Mr. Giordano said it will not be a session where staff members will complain about other staff members or not wanting the small learning communities. He said it will be to hear legitimate issues that will be given to Mr. Ottinger for administration to handle.

Mr. Ulrich asked if it would be possible to do an out call for parents. Mr. Giordano said yes.

Mr. Franceschini said discussed at the Curriculum & Technology Committee meeting was small learning communities, new courses and scheduling goals. He said also discussed was advocacy. Mr. Franceschini said next year advocacy will be better because there are advocacy programs already set in the middle school, which will make the transition from middle to high school better.

Mr. Ulrich said the goal is to get student movement between buildings down to about ninety students, which is Mr. Sullivan's goal as far as the scheduling goes.

Mr. Bernardini said he is glad to see that tournament chess was put back into the special education courses.

Mr. Fanucci asked if the courses that are being deleted are not as necessary as the courses being implemented. Mr. Franceschini said most of the deleted courses are due to poor attendance. Mr. Fanucci asked if once a course is deleted can it be brought back at a later date. Mr. Franceschini said yes.

Mr. Spinelli asked if we were still trying to get ROTC in. Mr. Ottinger said the first time we were turned down and he is not sure if they reconsidered. He said it that he will look into it.

Mr. Evans asked if there was a need for the English and Mathematics Readiness course, how you can take it away. Mr. Gruccio said it will be an eighty minute block all year long.

Mr. Franceschini said discussed at the Personnel & Policy Committee meeting was the bus attendant position, established rate for professional staff, policy practice for substitute drivers, policy and practice for emergency communications for bus incidences.

Mr. Giordano asked how the substitute bus drivers learn the routes. Mr. Franchetta said the computer system that transportation uses produces explained routes for the bus drivers. Mr. Giordano said he assumes the substitute drivers know the Vineland area. Mr. Franchetta said it is difficult because Vineland is sixty three square miles with new streets opening every day. Mr. Franceschini said thank God for Global Positioning Systems (GPS).

Mr. Giordano asked if all of our buses are equipped with Global Positioning Systems. Mr. Franchetta said not all of our buses.

Mr. Bernardini said discussed at the Buildings & Grounds Committee was the re-surfacing of the running track. He said the striping can not be done until the weather is warm enough. Mr. Bernardini said also discussed was the girl's softball field improvements. He said Mr. Ottinger, Mr. Franchetta, Mr. Farinaccio, met with officials from both the Department of Education and the New Jersey School Development Authority to discuss Middle School #2. He said the school will have a separate gym, cafeteria and auditorium. Mr. Bernardini said there is discussion currently going on as to who will be the architect. Mr. Ottinger said the School Development Authority met with Perkins & Will, who are still very interested in the project. Mr. Bernardini said probably construction for Middle School #2 will start in 2009. He said that we are going to resubmit a very comprehensive plan on the boiler and piping replacement.

Mr. DeWinne mentioned that there is a stretch of Chestnut Avenue on school property that does not have a sidewalk. Mr. Bernardini said it is a city owned portion. Mr. DeSanto said whenever there is a new construction project it will require sidewalks. Mr. Bernardini said when the fields were done it was not required to put sidewalks in.

Mr. Spinelli said discussed at the Finance Committee Meeting was the Audit Report.

Unfinished Business: None.

New Business: None.

Adjournment: The Board adjourned to executive session at 8:31 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kevin J. Franchetta, CPA
Board Secretary

KJF:df