

The regular meeting of the Board of Education of the City of Vineland was held in the Board Room, 625 Plum Street, Vineland, New Jersey, Wednesday, January 21, 2009 at 7:01 p.m., pursuant to notice with Mr. Giordano presiding and the following members present: Mr. Bernardini, Mr. DeWinne, Mr. Evans, Mr. Franceschini, Ms. Rios, Mr. Spinelli and Mr. Ulrich. Absent: Mr. Fanucci.

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

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:

Brianna Carini, Cristal Diaz, Megan Pierce and Danielle Weissman students from Landis Middle School, led the Board in the Pledge of Allegiance. Mr. Kohaut Principal and Mr. Panas, Vice Principal were in attendance.

Special

Presentation (s):

Mr. Ottinger introduced Mr. Craig Phillips, Music Teacher, to introduce two students, Daniel Bradbury and Andrea Chieffo, who made the 2009 All South Jersey High School Orchestra.

Mr. Phillips said Daniel Bradbury is a junior and this is his first year in the All South Jersey High School Orchestra. He introduced Daniel to play the cello. Mr. Phillips said Andrea Chieffo is a senior this year and this is her third year in the All South Jersey High School Orchestra. He introduced Andrea to play the harp.

Mr. Ulrich mentioned that during the holiday season he attended the string ensemble at the high school, which was a very nice program.

Approval of Minutes:

Upon motion by Mr. Spinelli, seconded by Mr. DeWinne, the Board approved the minutes from December 3, 2008 and December 10, 2008. All Members voted "yes."

Report of the
Secretary/Custodian
Of School Monies:

Upon motion by Mr. Spinelli, seconded by Mr. Franceschini, the reports of the Secretary and Custodian of School Monies for the month of November 2008, which are in agreement were approved as submitted and on file in the Minute Book, and the Board approved its monthly certification of budgetary major account fund status and the Board Secretary's monthly certification as on file with the Secretary. All Members voted "yes."

Solicitor's Report:

None.

Public Comment on
Agenda Items:

None.

Motion:

A motion was made by Mr. Spinelli, seconded by Mr. Ulrich, to remove the table from the Vineland High School Guidance position so it can be voted on this evening. All Members voted "yes."

Recommendations:

See page 3 of this document

G I O R D A N O	B E R N A R D I N I	D E W I N N E	E V A N S	F A N U C C I	F R A N C E S C H I N I	R I O S	S P I N E L L I	U L R I C H
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RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

1. The Board approve the following personnel items in accordance with the lists provided and on file with the Secretary of the Board:

- a. List of retirements
- b. List of resignations/terminations
- c. List of leaves of absence
- d. List of employment of personnel
- e. List of transfers, assignments and/or promotions
- f. List of student assistants and New Jersey Youth Corps
- g. List of substitute personnel
- h. List of extracurricular assignments

Mr. Ottinger said Rob Haydak has been added as a volunteer wrestling coach pending verification by our athletic director. He said regarding the tabled item removed this evening he would like to forward the recommendation that was submitted previously based on the recommendation of Dr. McCann and Ms. Santagata.

2. The Board authorize the assignments of the pupils, whose names are provided and on file with the Secretary of the Board, to special education programs outside the district with tuition costs to be borne by the Board.

Further, the Board approve the acceptance of the tuition pupil(s), whose names are on file with the Secretary of the Board, for placement in special education programs offered in Vineland with tuition costs to be borne by the sending district(s).

(Tuition payment and assignments shall be regulated by Chapter 46, Laws of 1966, as amended, and the rules and regulations of the State Department of Education.)

All Members voted “yes” except for Mr. Evans who voted “yes” on all items except the high school guidance position he voted “no” and Mr. Franceschini who voted “yes” on all items but “abstained” on the high school guidance position and Ms. Rios who voted “yes” on all items but voted “no” on the high school guidance position. (8-0-0)

All Members voted “yes.” (8-0-0)

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3. The Board approve budgetary transfers in accordance with the list provided and on file with the Secretary of the Board:

- a. General Fund
- b. School-Based Budget

**Mr. Spinelli asked if these are the monthly transfers.
 Mr. Franchetta responded yes.**

All Members
 voted "yes."
 (8-0-0)

4. The Board approve submission of the following grant(s) as provided and on file with the Secretary of the Board:

- a. Target Field Trip Grant
 Barse Elementary School
 In the amount of ----- \$ 800.00
- b. Target Field Trip Grant
 Durand Elementary School
 In the amount of ----- \$ 800.00
- c. Target Grant
 D'Ippolito Elementary School
 In the amount of ----- \$2,000.00
- d. State Farm Good Neighbor Citizenship Grant
 Petway Elementary School
 In the amount of ----- \$3,698.00

All Members
 voted "yes."
 (8-0-0)

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5. The Board accept funding in the following amount(s):

- a. Target Field Trip Grant
 Barse Elementary School
 In the amount of ----- \$ 800.00
- b. Target Field Trip Grant
 Durand Elementary School
 In the amount of ----- \$ 800.00
- c. Target Grant
 D'Ippolito Elementary School
 In the amount of ----- \$ 2,000.00
- d. Carl D. Perkins Secondary Grant
 July 1, 2008 – June 30, 2009
 In the amount of ----- \$88,744.00

All Members
 voted "yes."
 (8-0-0)

6. Bids:

- a. The Board acknowledge receipt of bids for Printer
 Supplies and rejects and awards as follows:

 Reject:
 Star Data Products
 Ramsey, New Jersey

 Award:
 The Tree House, Inc.
 Newton, Massachusetts
 In the amount of ----- \$108,750.00
 (Estimate)

All Members
 voted "yes."
 (8-0-0)

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7. The Board approve travel for district members as required by NJAC 6A:10A-8.3 and school field trips as per lists provided and on file with the Secretary of the Board.

Mr. Spinelli asked if the travel for the athletic trainer is for re-certification. Mr. Ottinger said normally there is an athletic trainer’s convention and certification is involved. He said he will look into it.

All Members voted “yes.”
(8-0-0)

8. The Board approve cancellation of the list of checks provided and on file with the Secretary of the Board and remit the fund to the Department of Treasury, Unclaimed Property.

All Members voted “yes.”
(8-0-0)

9. The Board approve the Resolution authorizing the creation of Student Activity Accounts for the following schools in accordance with Board Policy #6660:

Johnstone Elementary School Newfield National Bank
 Mennies Elementary School Newfield National Bank

All Members voted “yes.”
(8-0-0)

10. The Board authorize payment to current and previous employees, who are not a party to the class action law suit, the cash equivalent of vacation days earned under Civil Service rules with the list that is provided and on file with the Secretary of the Board.

All Members voted “yes” except Ms. Rios who “abstained.”
(7-0-1)

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11. The Board approve payment in the amount of \$525.00 for legal services provided by James R. Swift to an employee whose name is on file with the Secretary of the Board in accordance with N.J.S.A. 18A:16-6.1.

All Members
 voted "yes."
 (8-0-0)

12. The Board approve the acceptance of funds of the FY 2008 No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Application to the State of New Jersey, Department of Education, in the amount of \$156,823.00 for the period September 1, 2007 through August 31, 2008.

All Members
 voted "yes."
 (8-0-0)

13. The Board approve a Resolution authorizing the City of Vineland to enter into an Inter-local Services Agreement with the Vineland Board of Education to provide the Board with Rock Salt.

All Members
 voted "yes."
 (8-0-0)

14. The Board approve a Resolution authorizing the City of Vineland to enter into an Inter-local Services Agreement with the Vineland Board of Education to assist in providing free influenza vaccines to eligible preschool students enrolled in the Vineland Public Schools Preschool Programs to help meet the new State requirements.

All Members
 voted "yes."
 (8-0-0)

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15. The Board approve the tuition contract between the Cumberland County Technical Education Center and the Vineland Board of Education for the 2008 – 2009 school year.

All Members voted “yes.”
 (8-0-0)

16. The Board approve the Joint Transportation Agreement for the 2008 – 2009 school year with the Lenape Regional High School District for Route SH-05.

All Members voted “yes.”
 (8-0-0)

17. The Board approve Addendum #3 to the Vineland Administrators and Supervisors Association (VASA) Contract that is provided and on file with the Secretary of the Board.

All Members voted “yes.”
 (8-0-0)

18. The Board approve Addendum #1 to the Amalgamated Local 2327 UAW, AFL/CIO Contract that is provided and on file with the Secretary of the Board.

All Members voted “yes.”
 (8-0-0)

Mr. Spinelli asked if it has been negotiated as to what group they will placed in. Mr. Franchetta said yes this is for the bus attendants and we are duplicating the salary guide for aides #1. Mr. Spinelli asked if Local #2327 has already agreed to where they are being placed. Mr. Franchetta responded yes.

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19. The Board award a Supplemental Educational Services (SES) contract/agreement to the following provider, in a form approvable by the superintendent and Board Solicitor, for tutoring services in Language Arts and/or Math, pursuant to the Federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation:

Learn-It Systems
 In the amount of ----- \$55.00 - \$65.00
 (Per Hour)

All Members
 voted "yes."
 (8-0-0)

20. The Board approve the Dual Credit Articulation Agreement between Cumberland County College and the Vineland Board of Education.

All Members
 voted "yes."
 (8-0-0)

21. The Board approve the Clinical (speech-language) Program Agreement between LaSalle University and the Vineland Board of Education, in a form of contract acceptable by the Board Solicitor and Superintendent of Schools.

REMOVED BY SUPERINTENDENT

22. The Board approve the Teacher-in-Training Agreement (revised) between the University of Phoenix and the Vineland Board of Education.

All Members
 voted "no."
 (0-8-0)

DEFEATED

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		1			2			
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								1

23. The Board approve the Agreement between The Richard Stockton College of New Jersey and the Vineland Board of Education for social work field internship, in a form of contract acceptable by the Board Solicitor and Superintendent of Schools.

All Members
 voted "yes."
 (8-0-0)

24. The Board grant permission for two (2) students from LaSalle University to participate at Dane Barse Elementary School in a University-based research project entitled "Television Viewing and Foreign Language Learning in Preschool Children" pursuant to Board of Education policy #9550.

All Members
 voted "yes."
 (8-0-0)

25. The Board establish March 11, 2009 at 3:45 p.m. in the Board Meeting Room as the date, time and place for drawing for position on the school ballot in accordance with Public Law 1995, c.278.

All Members
 voted "yes."
 (8-0-0)

Further, the Board establish the opening and closing of the polls from 1:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. on Tuesday, April 21, 2009 in accordance with Public Law 1995, c.278.

26. The Board accept the donation of \$500.00 from Kohl's Department Store to Mennies Elementary School in accordance with Board Policy #7230, "Gifts, Grants and Donations."

All Members
 voted "yes."
 (8-0-0)

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						2	1	

27. The Board approve the Resolution authorizing the Settlement Agreement for the employee whose name is on file with the Secretary of the Board.

All Members
 voted "yes."
 (8-0-0)

B. Proposed for review or discussion or adoption by Board Members: None.

Approval of Bills: Upon motion by Mr. Spinelli, seconded by Mr. DeWinne, the bills were approved and warrants issued for same. All Members voted “yes” (\$5,971,278.07).

Emergent Item(s)
(with prior approval) None.

Public: Richard Panas, Assistant Principal of Landis Middle School
Mr. Panas said as the Assistant Principal of Landis School one of his main responsibilities has been the administration of student discipline. He expressed his concern about the effectiveness of the Vineland Middle School Discipline Guide and a possibility that Landis Middle School could be identified by the State of New Jersey as persistently dangerous at the end of the 2009-2010 school year. Mr. Panas said that he has shared these concerns, following the chain of command, with the staff, Mr. Kohaut, Principal and Mr. Ottinger, Superintendent. He said that Landis Middle School has had sixty two incidents in the past fourteen school months from 2007 to present. Mr. Panas said on Friday, November 14, 2008 he expressed his concern via email to Mr. Ottinger. Mr. Panas said during his time at Landis Middle School he has received outstanding performance reports from his previous supervisor Dr. McCann and Mr. Kohaut. He said that he will continue to make every effort within his capacity to provide the students and staff at Landis School a safe learning and working environment. Mr. Panas said he provided Mr. Giordano with a binder to substantiate all the information that he sent previously in a letter the day before. He said his number one concern is the safety of the children, which he has expressed to Mr. Ottinger, Mr. Kohaut and the staff. Mr. Panas said he received an email from Mr. Ottinger regarding a meeting that will be held on Tuesday to discuss concerns about his performance and tenure. He said he came to Mr. Ottinger expressing a concern, which is documented. Mr. Panas said he is here for the students and does not appreciate the threats. He gladly welcomes the meeting on Tuesday and is well documented. Mr. Panas wants the board to know that they have the facts and hopes he can get some support to address this problem. He said under Dr. McCann Landis School did not have these incidents of fights but under the new discipline guide Landis has had sixty two incidents, which is a crisis.

Noel Bennett, Landis School Teacher

Ms. Bennett thanked the board for giving her this opportunity to speak tonight. She expressed her concern regarding the uniform middle school discipline code and the negative impact it has had at Landis School. Ms. Bennett said presently many students have the attitude that they can do whatever they want and act any way they can because nothing will happen to them. She is concerned about the increase of violence at Landis School, which was not as severe with the previous code. Ms. Bennett said she is in her fifteenth year of teaching at Landis School and this is the worst environment she has seen in those fifteen years. She said that currently she is the in-school suspension teacher and receives all of the referrals in the school. Ms. Bennett said she is concerned for all children and adults. She said that she stands before the board even though there could be possible repercussions to her and asks the board to consider reinstating the previous discipline codes that Landis School had. Ms. Bennett said her colleagues feel the same way and are fearful of repercussions.

Brenda Livengood, Landis School Teacher

Ms. Livengood said last month she emailed a letter to the board expressing her concerns regarding the increase in acts of violence, vandalism and weapons at Landis School. She said fights continue to break out and gang influence is evident. Ms. Livengood said under the previous code fights were almost non-existent and students knew there would be consequences for their behavior. She said many of her colleagues have voiced these same concerns but are hesitant to speak publicly for fear of negative ramifications. Ms. Livengood thanked the board for the opportunity to express her concerns and be heard.

Mr. Giordano respectfully asked Mr. Ottinger to meet with the staff at Landis Middle School to discuss concerns that they have. Mr. Ottinger said this is not a new issue and was first mentioned at the December meeting. He wanted to make it clear that he is not questioning the dedication and commitment of the teaching staff or administration. Mr. Ottinger said he does have some issues in the manner in which some of these things are communicated. He said if the administration or board feels it would be helpful for him to speak to the staff he will gladly do that. Mr. Ottinger wanted the public to know that neither the board nor he established the new discipline guide. He said the only directive that came from the board was that there had to be a consistent guide. Mr. Ottinger said the Personnel & Policy Committee met with principals and assistant principals to discuss this issue.

Continued

Mr. Ottinger said he thinks the Personnel & Policy Committee left the principals and assistant principals with a directive that if the policy needed to be revisited or improved it would be up to them.

Mr. Franceschini said they had a thorough meeting reviewing the discipline policy and are looking into it making sure everyone is on the same page. He said unfortunately some schools have different issues than others and they have to take that into consideration.

Mr. Spinelli said the board will take the responsibility of asking for a uniform discipline guide at that level. He said the administrators were involved in making that guide and they have asked administrators to revisit this to see if it needs tweaked. Mr. Spinelli said each individual child or incident is different. He said an increase in fights of that proportion is something that needs to be looked into to find out why.

Mr. Bernardini said he concurs with everything that Mr. Spinelli and Mr. Franceschini has said. He said each school every year has a different type of student body and you have to deal with different situations. Mr. Bernardini feels very strongly if there are problems in the policy that the principals and vice principals in each school will get together and try to work something out.

Mr. DeWinne said as far as the comment made by a staff member “fearful of repercussion” he hopes that is not the case. He said if the staff has concerns the board would like to hear them and should not be fearful of backlash for speaking. Mr. DeWinne said if there are concerns by the staff as far as their safety then it needs to be addressed.

Mr. Ulrich echoed what Mr. DeWinne said and is sure that no employee in this district will face any serious repercussions for going through the proper change of command. He said when you hear from an employee that there are many staff members in fear of negative repercussions that is ludicrous. Mr. Ulrich said that is a problem at the school level that seriously needs to be dealt with, which is what we have high paid administrators here to do. He said administrators need to deal with personnel issues to make sure their staff understands what is expected of them so they can relay that to the student body.

Board Member

Remarks:

Mr. DeWinne congratulated Andrea Chieffo and Daniel Bradbury.

Mr. Ottinger wanted to clarify that the district does have policies and there is a policy pertaining to the organizational structure and chain of command. He said for example he does not know anything about a report that the board was given this evening. Mr. Ottinger said if a report was submitted for the board to consider the administration should have been considering it as well. He said he knows that in regards to this issue during the past couple of weeks the board has been receiving emails before he has received them. Mr. Ottinger said it is his responsibility to make sure that the organizational structure of the district policy is followed. He thinks there is a misconception about discipline guides. Mr. Ottinger said there are times when more strict measures need to be taken and our administrators have that leeway to do that. He said the meeting held this evening with all the administrators at the middle school level was good. Mr. Ottinger said they will most definitely have a significant input on whether the present guide is effective or needs to be adjusted.

Report/Remarks by
Board President:

Mr. Giordano thanked everyone for bringing this information to the board.

Resolution:

Mr. Franchetta read a resolution to recess into executive session on **Wednesday, January 21, 2009** and **Wednesday, February 4, 2009** regarding personnel matters and pending litigation.

Motion:

Upon motion by Mr. Spinelli, seconded by Mr. Franceschini, the resolution was passed. All Members voted “yes”.

Adjournment:

The Board adjourned to executive session by voice vote at 7:57 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kevin J. Franchetta, CPA
Board Secretary

KJF:df