

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, February 3, 2016 at 7:04 p.m., pursuant to notice with Mr. English presiding and the following members present: Ms. Acosta, Mr. Bordley, Ms. Codispoti, Mr. DeWinne, Mr. Jennings, Mr. Pagano and Ms. Rios and Mr. Sbrana. Absent: None.

Also present: Dr. Guccio, Superintendent, Mr. Frey and Mr. Frangipani, Assistant Superintendents, Mrs. Haley, Board Secretary, Dr. Rossi, Executive Director of Personnel, Mr. DeSanto, Board Solicitor, press and public. Absent: None.

Mr. English 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 to be sent to the following, announcing time and place thereof, agenda, etc.: The Daily Journal, the Atlantic City Press, The Grapevine, Clerk - City of Vineland, and Administrative Office Public Bulletin Board.

Flag salute:

Resolution: None.

Special

Presentations: Dr. Guccio introduced Ms. Vanessa Rasmussen, Vineland High School AP English Teacher, to honor the VHS 2016 Poetry Out Loud Competition winner.

Ms. Rasmussen introduced Kathryn Slusarczyk winner of the Poetry Out Loud Competition. She said they are going to the regional competition on February 17, 2016.

Ms. Slusarczyk thanked the Board for recognizing and honoring the arts at Vineland High School.

Dr. Guccio asked Ms. Slusarczyk to recite her poem.

Ms. Slusarczyk recited *Mr. Darcy* by Victoria Chang.

Dr. Guccio introduced Mr. Purvesh Patel, Director of Food Service, to present an update on the Food Service Department operations.

Mr. Patel said he is here tonight to present general updates on what we are doing and where we are headed. He said the three topics that he will review are partnered accomplishments, meal participation and unpaid balances.

Mr. Jennings asked at what point are parents called in regards to lunch balances. Mr. Patel said we start calling when balances are around a negative \$50. Mr. Jennings asked if something will be set up in the future to control this number from getting as high as it is. Mr. Patel said the current system we have in place is sending out letters, making phone calls and introducing the online payment application.

Dr. Gruccio said as long as a parent is making an effort to pay their balance the child is not given an alternative meal. Dr. Patel said that is correct.

Mr. Bordley asked what the process is for notifying the parents. Mr. Patel said letters and phone calls. Mr. Bordley asked if the letters are mailed. Mr. Patel said yes the high balance letters are mailed.

Mr. English asked if there is a tool in place to see if possibly some of these students qualify for free or reduced lunch. Mr. Patel said phone calls are made through the guidance counselor and we do provide resources to help with the lunch applications that are online.

Ms. Rios asked if the lunch applications are mailed. Mr. Patel said no the lunch applications are online, which is new this year. Ms. Rios asked if the lunch prices are given to the students for the parents to be aware of the costs. Mr. Patel said yes.

Mr. DeWinne asked Mr. Frey if there is any way to link the information so it shows up on the parent portal. Mr. Frey responded yes.

Dr. Gruccio introduced Mr. Jim Scanlon, Testing Coordinator, to discuss testing information and scores.

Mr. Scanlon thanked the Board for giving him the opportunity to present the PARCC results for year one. He presented a short video with background information and facts.

Mr. Sbrana asked how much revision will be made each year in the style of the questions and the content.

Mr. Scanlon said they are analyzing the data and looking at questions that a majority of students may have gotten incorrect.

Ms. Rios asked if there are any websites to practice these types of questions and exams on. Mr. Scanlon said during PARCC family night the social workers will discuss websites that explain the PARCC testing. Ms. Rios asked for these websites to be emailed to her.

Mr. DeWinne asked if we barely achieved higher than the state average on the testing. Mr. Scanlon said that is correct. Mr. DeWinne questioned slide 23 on the presentation and asked Mr. Scanlon to get back to him on it.

Mr. Jennings believes that Administration is aware of the weak areas in the different schools and we have made moves to eradicate test scores. He thinks if we continue to work hard we will bring the scores up.

Dr. Gruccio said Administration and all of our teachers are working hard. She said every time you get your students use to a certain type of question or what to expect on the test they change the test. Dr. Gruccio said we are doing what we can to make our students as prepared as possible for the type of questions they are going to experience on the test. She said it is important for us to remember that it is one piece of the pie and the state keeps changing it.

Ms. Acosta asked how far along is the state in terms of identifying the variables. Mr. Scanlon said the state recently put information together that will speak on some of these variables. Ms. Acosta asked if the district can analyze are own score so we can figure out what variables are contributing to the scores are children are getting. Mr. Scanlon said that is what we are doing now.

Dr. Gruccio introduced, Mr. Wayne Weaver, Executive Director of Physical Facilities, to present an update on the district operations after the winter storm.

Mr. Weaver thanked all the UAW employees for the great job that was done during the snowstorm. He discussed the man hours, equipment and products used during the snowstorm.

Dr. Gruccio said the students arrived to school safely and she thanked the maintenance and transportation departments for doing a really great job.

Mr. Jennings thanked everyone for stepping up.

Ms. Codispoti thanked everyone who was out in the cold working.

Mr. Sbrana asked what the planning process was for the maintenance department to get ready for the storm. Mr. Weaver said we really tried to stay ahead of the storm constantly monitoring the precipitation. He said we try to conserve our resources and plow early.

Mr. Pagano commended everyone who worked during the storm.

Mr. DeWinne said he appreciates everyone's efforts.

Mr. English said he is sure we will be hearing very soon from the city in regards to shared service but he hopes that when that happens the district is our number one concern.

Mr. Weaver said he and Dr. Gruccio are scheduled to meet with the Mayor on Monday to discuss things of this nature. He said the priority would certainly be the schools.

Mr. English asked about safety factors and if there is a certain age that maintenance employees should be working behind the wheel versus behind the shovel. Mr. Weaver said we understand that it is a very difficult physical event and we give multiple breaks. He said if we feel a worker is over exerting themselves we bring them in and rely on what the employee tells us.

Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying (HIB Report), Suspension Report, Cunningham Alternative School Report/Average Daily Attendance – No discussion.

Comments by
Board Solicitor:

Mr. DeSanto wanted to update the Board with respect to the status of the Veterans Memorial School drainage easement. He said that he spoke with Ted Baker, County Council, and the Freeholder Board is scheduled to approve the easement on February 16th. Mr. DeSanto said he suggested to Mr. Weaver that he should get in touch with Mr. Knoop as soon as possible to get the work schedule so we do not impact the student's use of the field in the spring.

Ms. Rios departed the meeting at 8:09 p.m.

Items for Review:

A. Superintendent

1. **PERSONNEL**

1.1 **Personnel Items** – No discussion.

2. **PROCEDURES & OPERATIONS**

2.1 **Travel** – No discussion.

3. **BUILDINGS & GROUNDS**

4. **FINANCE**

4.1 **Budgetary Transfers** – No discussion.

4.2 **Board Secretary/Treasurer’s report for December 2015**- No discussion.

4.3 **Placement of Special Education Students** – No discussion.

4.4 **Submission of the following Grant – VHS Building for Career Pathways** – Ms. Codispoti asked if we know when we will be notified about receiving this. Dr. Gruccio said she does not know and hopes it goes through.

4.5 **Acceptance of the following funding – a. Landis 21st Century Community Learning Center, b. Mennies Environmental Education Field Trip to The Wetlands Institute**
No discussion.

- 4.6 **Renewal of Aetna Health Care Contract** – Mr. DeWinne said we asked the insurance broker to extend the term so we had a fiscal year beginning July 1st for the renewal of the health care insurance. He said they were able to do that without two price increases.

Ms. Acosta asked for an explanation if bids are put out for insurance costs. Mrs. Haley said she thinks the insurance companies do their own bidding. Mr. DeWinne said much of what the increase is based upon is our claims.

- 4.7 **School Bus Advertisements** – Mr. English said this is the first time the Board is viewing the actual advertisement that will be going on a bus. He said in today's time we have to get as creative as we can to bring revenue in to this district. Mr. English said this year we went with EIRC to handle the advertisements. He asked if it was possible to do this ourselves next year through the purchasing agent to receive the entire profit. Mrs. Haley said we have a one year agreement with EIRC but she can look into this.

Mr. DeWinne thanked Gary Galloway for his advertisements.

Mr. Sbrana recommended putting LED signs in high traffic school locations to put school activity and appropriate advertising messages on which would eventually finance the purchase of the sign.

- 4.8 **Staff Funded by Federal Programs** – No discussion.

- 4.9 **Closing of VHN Student Activity Account and Cancellation of Outdated Checks** – Mr. DeWinne asked if that is the only student activity account they have. Mrs. Haley said they are merging the north and south accounts. Mrs. Haley said there is a typo on the check date and the date should be June 16, 2015 not 2016.

- 4.10 **Acceptance of Mennies Digital Sign Donation** – Mr. English commended the staff and parents because we know what those signs cost.

2. REGULAR AGENDA

- b. Items proposed by the Board President or an individual Board Member – None.

Review of bills incurred during December 2015 – No discussion.

Public Comments: None.

Committee Reports: Ms. Codispoti said on January 27th the Curriculum & Instruction Committee met and we discussed utilizing Camelot for the middle schools, the phone call out system during the snowstorm and quarterly recognition meetings for teachers and students.

Mr. Pagano extended a thank you and appreciation to the transportation department for an outstanding job in regards to this past week's weather.

Ms. Codispoti said she is the preschool liaison and a meeting has been scheduled for her to meet with all the providers.

Mr. DeWinne said the Finance Committee meeting was held on January 28th and the minutes have been submitted to the committee members. He asked Mrs. Haley when the state aid will be announced. Mrs. Haley said the Governor's speech is February 16th and the state aid is announced two days later. Mr. DeWinne said currently there is a plan in place with a flat funded budget. He said if there are cuts made to our budget we have to do some work. Mr. DeWinne said the Board agreed to Mr. English's recommendation that we should have the presentation on the budget at a special meeting for the public. He said a meeting is scheduled on Monday, February 29th at Wallace Middle School to present the budget and listen to the tax payers. Mr. DeWinne encouraged anyone who is concerned about the finances to attend.

Ms. Rios returned at 8:30 p.m.

Mr. English said Mrs. Haley has given out several documents to the Board and has reached out to Board members individually to see if anyone had any questions or concerns regarding the budget. He said the packet that the finance committee members have been reviewing will be made available to each Board member a couple weeks before February 29th. Mr. English said he wants this to be as transparent and painless as possible. He said we are all working hard to do the best we can do to present a balanced budget and are heading in the right direction.

Mrs. Haley said we always have an official public hearing after the county reviews the budget. She said February 29th will be the budget presentation to the Board, which is open to the public and normally done the first week of March. Mrs. Haley said the budget will then be submitted to the county for review and when the county approves the budget we advertise it and hold the public hearing around the end of April. She said the Board then votes on the budget in May.

Old Business: None.

New Business: None.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned by voice vote at 8:36 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Helen G. Haley
Board Secretary

HGH:dt

