

An open work session of the Board of Education of the City of Vineland was held in the auditorium of Vineland High School South, 2880 E. Chestnut Avenue, Vineland, New Jersey, Wednesday, April 2, 2008 at 7:02 p.m., pursuant to notice with Mr. Giordano presiding and the following members present: Ms. Arroyo, Mr. Fanucci, Mr. Franceschini, Mrs. Gavigan, Mr. Snyder, Mr. Spinelli and Mr. Ulrich. Absent: Mr. Bernardini.

Also present: Mr. Ottinger, Superintendent, Dr. Figgs and Mr. Peters, 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: Dr. Gruccio, Assistant Superintendent.

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. Giordano commented that the cast of *Singing in the Rain* were absolutely sensational.

Mr. Ulrich said he was astonished at how well the production of *Singing in the Rain* was put on.

Mrs. Gavigan commended the Cap n Dagger Club on a stellar performance.

Mr. Spinelli said the students did a great job and it was a stunning performance.

Mr. Ottinger said he knows how hard the Cap n Dagger Club members work and he appreciates everything they do.

The Cap n Dagger Club members performed the finale of *Singing in the Rain*.

Ms. Eileen Bosco thanked everyone and introduced the cast of the Cap n Dagger Club. She distributed Certificates of Appreciation to all cast members present for their participation in the annual musical

Mr. Ottinger introduced Mr. Rusty Phillips, Principal of Veterans Memorial School, to discuss the school's restructuring plan.

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Mr. Phillips said they are doing their best in trying to bring AYP to all of the students at Veterans Memorial School. He said he developed a plan along with Mr. Peters, Dr. Figgs and Dr. Gruccio. Mr. Phillips said they will be monitoring student assessments through benchmarks through Learnia, which is a web-based system. He said results will be monitored through NJASK and they will do quarterly analysis with report card data. As we see students who are in need of improvement the guidance department will set up meetings with the parents. Mr. Phillips said the RTI process will be started district wide next year and we will be monitoring our common planning time with our three learning communities. He said we will maintain our literacy coach. The implementation of the LEADS Program will have a significant impact on our language arts literacy scores. Mr. Phillips said this will all go into affect September 2008. He said that we still have a part-time math coach who has helped our special education teachers immensely this year. We will continue to align the special education students with the regular content area and hopefully raise their scores. Mr. Phillips said because of the asbestos issue last year our school family was divided into five schools. He feels because the students were not together it had a profound impact on our test scores. Mr. Phillips said they are concentrating more on differentiated instruction and data. He said today the consultant was dealing with differentiated instruction in math and the math teachers said they gained so much information from this instruction.

Mr. Franceschini asked if the consultant also goes to the other middle schools. Mr. Phillips said he does not know but thinks he is available if the other schools are interested.

Mr. Spinelli asked if the consultant came during the common planning time. Mr. Phillips responded yes.

Mr. Phillips said they will continue to increase the amount of time spent on language arts literacy and math.

Mr. Spinelli asked how many basic skills teachers there are in Veterans Memorial School. Mr. Phillips said two. Mr. Spinelli asked if the basic skills teachers are effective in their position. Mr. Phillips responded yes. Mr. Spinelli asked if the basic skills teachers are being utilized properly or being used as substitutes. Mr. Phillips said they are being used as basic skills teachers.

Continued

Mr. Phillips said after this school year is completed all sixth, seventh and eighth grade language arts and social studies teachers will be trained in the LEADS model. We believe that the LEADS model is making in roads to our students in passing and doing better in language arts literacy.

Mr. Spinelli asked if this is the first year we had walk through observations. Mr. Phillips said he did a few last year. Mr. Spinelli asked how it is dealt with if something is seen during the walk through that is not favorable. Mr. Phillips said he puts an index card on the teacher's desk that says either good job or please see me later.

Mr. Ulrich asked how often the curriculum supervisors for literacy or math visit to make sure the curriculum is being followed. Mr. Phillips said not as much as we would like them to be there because there is only one person handling each.

Mr. Spinelli asked if the SLC Leader does anything. Mr. Phillips said our literacy coach has meetings with Dr. Henson, Language Arts Supervisor.

Mrs. Gavigan asked if a walk through takes the place of a formal evaluation. Mr. Phillips responded no.

Mr. Spinelli asked Mr. Phillips if he has academic based after school programs. Mr. Phillips responded yes. Mr. Spinelli asked if they will be affected by the loss of Schedule B. Mr. Phillips responded no.

Mr. Phillips said we have programs and workshops for parents to attend. He said we have the new call out system where we are able to call parents with a message.

Mrs. Gavigan asked if the new automated call system is helping and encouraging parents to come in to the school. Mr. Phillips responded yes.

Mr. Phillips said next year they are adding an additional special education class, which will make seven special education classes for next year. His concern is that his school his not doing well with special education students and he is worried about the test scores. Mr. Phillips said they will not be adding any new teaching staff members.

Mr. Spinelli asked if the special education teachers are ICS. Mr. Phillips said some are.

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Mr. Ulrich asked Mr. Phillips with the 7% reductions in the budget how did his staff development make out. Mr. Phillips said it was cut completely but we still have about \$18,000 in Title I money that deals with staff development.

Mr. Snyder asked if there is horizontal integration between the disciplines and consistency between the different class levels. Mr. Phillips said it is tough to put both horizontal and vertical articulation in place. He explained that he meets with his department chair people and SLC leaders twice a month on various issues. Mr. Snyder asked if there is pull out type system for students to know where they should be because of the late results and testing. Mr. Phillips said we have both, one concentrates on language arts and the other math.

Comments by

Board Solicitor: None.

Items for Review:

A. Superintendent

1. **Personnel Items** – Mr. Spinelli asked if we are rectifying the SAC situation. Mr. Ottinger said right now we are not because the budget is submitted as is and the corrections will be made later on. Mr. Spinelli asked if we were going to reinstate literacy coaches. Ms. Greenfield said they are still cut. Mr. Spinelli said because of the nursing cuts will the Adult Nursing Program be no longer offered. Mr. Ottinger said the program is depended on enrollment and tuition and we do not know yet.

Ms. Arroyo asked if the Adult Nursing Program is tuition based. Mr. Ottinger said it is 100% tuition based and if they have enough enrollments the program will continue. Ms. Arroyo asked how many students we need. Mr. Ottinger said around 25 or 30.

Mr. Franceschini asked what the tuition currently for the nursing program is. Mr. Franchetta said they just cover textbook and supplies. Mr. Franceschini asked if we have enough applicants what will we be charging. Mr. Ottinger said around six to eight thousand dollars.

Mr. Ulrich asked when the Reduction in Force (RIF) letters are sent reinstating a teacher as an elementary teacher or coach and there is no coach available will letters be resent reinstating them as an elementary teacher. Ms. Greenfield responded no the letters will go out riffing however, on many of the letters she will be writing a note to lesson their concern.

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Mr. Ulrich asked if retirements have been factored in. Ms. Greenfield said yes there were sixty nine positions cut and she is already reassigning staff based on those positions. Mr. Ulrich asked how many of the non-tenured certified teachers are going to loose their jobs. Ms. Greenfield said thirty two.

Mr. Giordano asked if the position listed under employment has been appropriated for. Ms. Greenfield explained that has been a vacancy for a while and the person who is going into the position has been the substitute for that position.

Mrs. Gavigan asked if we have some vacancies in special education. Ms. Greenfield responded yes.

Mr. Ottinger commented that Ms. Greenfield and her staff are doing a great job in trying to encourage people and letting them know where they stand.

2. **Special Education Students** – No discussion.
3. **Budgetary Transfers** – Mr. Spinelli asked if these are the normal transfers. Mr. Franchetta responded yes.
4. **Submission of Grants** – Mr. Franceschini asked if we have a defibrillator at Petway School. Mr. Ottinger said he does not know and he will find out how many are in each school.
5. **Acceptance of Funds** – No discussion.
6. **Bids** – Mr. Spinelli asked for an explanation on this rejection. Mr. Cox explained that the vendors took exception to the regular buses on the engine warranty so we are changing the specifications. He said on the special education buses they bid on a bus that was larger then we wanted so the cost was well beyond the budgeted amount of money.

Mr. Franceschini asked what the warranty was on the engine. Mr. Cox said there are three engines available and the vendors bid a lower engine with a lower warranty. We could not accept it if it did not meet the specification on a material matter so we rejected it. Mr. Franceschini asked if the newer buses are more fuel efficient. Mr. Cox said the emissions are better.

Mr. Spinelli asked if buses come with GPS. Mr. Cox said new vehicles do not come with GPS.

7. **Travel** – No discussion.

8. **Cancellation of Checks** – No discussion.
9. **Federal and State Revenue Rulings Resolution** – Mr. Giordano asked for an explanation on this item. Mr. Franchetta said this is due to the vacation day settlement. He said this is to obtain a revenue ruling from the IRS to see who would be responsible for the taxes on this settlement.

Mr. DeSanto explained that under the settlement agreement that the board approved the legal fees that are to be paid to the attorneys for the class are being paid in one lump sum by the district. He said the district is not paying the fees and are not obligated. Mr. DeSanto said he along with Mr. Franchetta became concerned because the employees were not getting this money directly and we were not taking out withholding tax and deductions. He said it was decided before the district is at risk with the federal and state government we would require them to get a revenue ruling at no cost to the board.

Mr. Ulrich asked if we did any withholding on the prior payments. Mr. Franchetta said 25% federal withholding was withheld from the payments we did that were outside of the class, which he cleared with the IRS.

Mr. Giordano commented that Mr. DeSanto and Mr. Franchetta have done an outstanding job handling this complicated issue and he thanked them for their diligence.

10. **Review Results of Carl D. Perkins Grant** – Mr. Franchetta mentioned that there were no recommendations from the Department of Education on this review.
11. **Compliance Investigation of Tiny Tots and Frank Tejeras Learning Center** – Mr. Spinelli asked if this deals with things that the state found not in compliance. Mr. Ottinger responded yes. Mr. Spinelli asked if is up to the district to make sure they comply. Mr. Ottinger said yes.
12. **Class Action Suit Vacation Day Payment** – No discussion.
13. **Vineland Non-Certificated Supervisors Association Agreement** – Mr. Giordano asked if this is the latest bargaining unit. Mr. Ottinger said correct.

Mr. Spinelli asked who is involved in this agreement. Mr. Franchetta said seven people. Mr. Spinelli asked what titles are in this agreement. Mr. Franchetta said the supervisors of maintenance and transportation.
14. **Participation with the Cumberland County Education Cooperative** – No discussion.
15. **Veterans Memorial School Title 1 Restructuring Plan** – No discussion.

16. **Summer 2008 Programs** – Mr. Spinelli asked if this was for promotion only. Dr. Figgs explained that for grades 6 through 12 it is strictly for promotion. The programs for the special education population are part of their IEP's for an extended year requirement.

Mrs. Gavigan asked if the district is permitted to charge tuition for a promotion through summer school. Dr. Figgs said we do for out of district students at the high school level. Mrs. Gavigan asked if it was a possibility to charge tuition to our students. Mr. Ottinger said it is legal and we could charge our own students tuition but as we look down the road we are probably looking at not having summer school. Mrs. Gavigan asked if parents would have to find a summer program for their child if we did not have summer school. Mr. Ottinger said he does not think there are any summer school programs around this area.

Ms. Arroyo mentioned that students would lose their electives the following year.

Mrs. Gavigan asked if we would retain students. Mr. Ottinger said absolutely if they do not make the requirements.

Mr. Ulrich said if we started to retain these children it would cause population problems within the schools and the problem would be worse if summer school was cut.

Mr. Franceschini asked what summer school costs. Mr. Ottinger said about \$300,000. Dr. Figgs mentioned that we are going to be increasing the tuition costs about \$60.00 for out of district students.

Mr. Spinelli asked what the average number is of out of district students that attend our summer school. Dr. Figgs said about 50 to 75 students and the majority of students are from our district. He said we will have to make a change in regards to the high school program because of the transition of moving into small learning communities. Dr. Figgs said the summer school program will be housed at Rossi School.

Mr. Franceschini asked if the new tuition for the out of district students covers our cost. Dr. Figgs said we trying to recoup as much of the cost as possible.

Mr. Ulrich asked if it would be better to reduce the class size of summer school for our students by not accepting out of district students. Mr. Ottinger said we do not have to take out of district students because there is no significant gain for us to do it. Dr. Figgs said we have been taking out of district students as a courtesy.

Mrs. Gavigan said if we do phase out summer school then the district would have to get the word out loud and clear to the parents.

Continued

Mr. Giordano asked if we already appropriated money for summer school 2009 in the budget that was just submitted to the Department of Education. Mr. Ottinger responded no it is not in the budget for next year. He said that he has never been an advocate of summer school and thinks that students have plenty of time during the school year to do what they are supposed to do.

17. **Acceptance of Donations** – No discussion.
18. **Notification of Non-Tenured Professional Personnel Not Offered a Contract for 2008/2009-** No discussion.
19. **Notification of Tenured Professional Staff Not Offered a Contract for 2008/2009-** No discussion.
20. **First Reading for New and Revised Policies – a. Policy #4433.1, b. Policy #5120, c. Policy #7232** – Mrs. Gavigan said that she is very disappointed that there were no adjustments made since our last meeting in Policy #5120 the assignment of pupils. Mr. Franceschini said during the committee meeting our colleagues decided that the policy that was submitted was sufficient.

Mr. Snyder said if we are offering a courtesy to staff members he is trying to figure out what that courtesy is. He asked Mr. Franceschini if he agrees with his assessments on this. Mr. Franceschini said he was entertaining to change some language, like what was suggested, but other colleagues were satisfied with the current language. Mr. Snyder feels that the minority of the board has a different opinion and thought there would be some compromise. Mr. Franceschini said there was no compromise. Mr. Snyder said this is a waste of paper because it is language that we already do.

Mr. Ulrich mentioned that Dr. Figgs attended the Personnel & Policy Committee meeting. He said that he has to take his word that every employee request is considered and if available is placed. Mr. Ulrich said that is within the realm of being administrators and placing students in the population. He feels we are dabbling into administrative goals, which we should not do.

Mr. Giordano asked Dr. Figgs for a scenario where a problem could be presented with this in regards to not being able to honor a request. Dr. Figgs said the problem would be where we have other parents, who are not staff members, making requests for their child to enroll in a particular school. He said we make every effort in trying to honor the request, which may not happen when the parent wants it to but they are put on a waiting list. Dr. Figgs said if space is not available staff member or non staff member we just can not do it.

Continued

Mr. Giordano does not understand why a non staff member would be mad if they are not employed here. Mr. Ottinger asked Mr. Giordano if he would be mad if he had three children at a school where there was no more room in the classroom and we moved your children out to take in three staff members' children. He said currently we have children in schools where they belong and if we make this an absolute and we have no room we would have to take children out of the school they belong.

Mr. Snyder said the idea is a courtesy policy and we should look at this in a different way. He said staff members can submit their requests prior to July 1 before the school year begins. Mr. Ottinger said he looks at what is fair for students and what would happen to a child who could not attend their school because a staff members' child was put in their place. Mr. Snyder said that happens all the time. Dr. Figgs said he has to look at the total picture and feels over the last thirteen years the office has been quite fair on how this situation is handled. Mr. Snyder said he sympathizes with Dr. Figgs but feels this is part of his duty. He said this is his last work session and he feels this policy is a necessity for our staff members. Mr. Snyder said Dr. Figgs and Mr. Ottinger will not always be here and who is to say the next person will look at this with the same point of view as Dr. Figgs.

Mr. Ulrich said he understands Mr. Snyder's opinion but the only problem he has is if a child is bumped from a neighborhood school due to a staff courtesy.

Mr. Spinelli said he understands Mr. Snyder's position but what would happen if a child attended a school for years and is bumped out in fifth grade due to a staff courtesy. He said we have argued both sides but you have to take into consideration how administration feels about this.

Mr. Franceschini asked Dr. Figgs how many staff requests he receives per year. Dr. Figgs said no more then two dozen.

Mr. Fanucci asked without bumping a child out could part of this policy be just to add a student. He said if one or two students are added to each class are we really doing much harm to a classroom size. Mr. Spinelli said you are talking about equalization in each building where you need to have equal amounts of ethnicities.

Dr. Figgs said if you were to do this as a professional courtesy you are talking about certificated staff and he feels the number would grow if this were to become a reality.

Ms. Arroyo said there are pros and cons on both sides but we have to remember that parents have to make arrangements to get their children to school.

B. Board

1. No discussion.

Review of Bills: No discussion.

Committee Reports: Mr. Giordano said the finance committee discussed the current policy in effect for substitute principals and assistant principals, which is being implemented and enforced per Dr. Figgs office. He said the other issue discussed was the reinstating of some positions, which is being considered. Mr. Spinelli mentioned that district vehicles were also discussed at the meeting. Mr. Giordano said no one is taking a vehicle home on a full time basis and the superintendent's discretion will prevail for any individual that needs to take a vehicle home.

Mr. Franceschini said the Personnel & Policy Committee will meet next week at 5:30 p.m.

Ms. Arroyo said the Curriculum Committee will not be meeting this month and will meet in May after the reorganization.

Mrs. Gavigan mentioned that there has been no Buildings & Grounds Committee meeting since the last work session.

Unfinished Business: Mr. Giordano asked where the request is regarding the use of handcuffs by certain security personnel in the district. Mr. Ottinger said he thinks it is still in the review and discussion stages.

Mr. Snyder asked when this issue was brought up. Mr. Ottinger said it was never brought to the board. Mr. Provenzano, Director of Security, said he reviewed other district policies and tried to come up with a policy on the handcuff issue. Mr. Ottinger said we are very lucky in Vineland because most of the time the police department's juvenile unit is with us at the high school or throughout the district.

Mr. Ulrich said use of force in general is a litigated situation but if you are acting in the sense of protecting other students there is not a lot of difference between using force and safely securing that individual. He said what you have to keep in mind is that with any type of extension of force you will be dealing with training issues and special certifications would have to be done.

New Business: None.

Adjournment: The Board adjourned to executive session by voice vote at 8:58 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kevin J. Franchetta, CPA
Board Secretary

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