

The regular meeting of the Board of Education of the City of Vineland was held in the Vineland High School North Auditorium, 3010 E. Chestnut Avenue, Vineland, New Jersey, on Wednesday, June 8, 2011, at 6:17 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. Banks, Superintendent, Dr. Guccio and Dr. Elliott, 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. 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:

Jonathan Figueroa, Jeimy Lopez, Michael Salanitro and Briana Sammons, students from AFJROTC led the Board in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Special

Presentation (s):

Dr. Banks introduced Dr. Thomas McCann, Principal of Vineland High School, to present the AFJROTC Program.

Dr. McCann said this evening the ROTC Program students will be introduced. He introduced Retired Captain of the United States Air Force, Steve Dantine, to do the honors.

Mr. Dantine introduced Major Robert V. Simpson the AFJROTC Instructor and Senior Master Sergeant Pierre Charles the leaders of this program to introduce the cadets.

Major Simpson introduced the cadets who discussed their experiences and feelings for the program. Mr. English presented the cadets with recognition certificates.

Mr. Ulrich said this is a really good program at Vineland High School, which allows us to be diversified and offer instruction to a wide range of individuals.

Dr. Banks introduced Ms. Sheryl Rasmussen to present the Odyssey of the Mind Team.

Ms. Rasmussen said Odyssey of the Mind is a creative problem solving competition. She said in the fall the students choose one of five problems and work to solve that problem all year competing against other schools in the spring. Ms. Rasmussen introduced each of the students and Dr. Mounier presented them with recognition certificates.

Dr. Banks said each year we have the honor of having each building recognize a Teacher of the Year. She said tonight's recipients, who are representatives of their individual buildings, will be attending a luncheon tomorrow afternoon at the Cumberland County Vo-Tech for a County wide recognition. Dr. Banks acknowledged the following 2011 Teacher-of-the-Year recipients: Dianne Rakotz, Landis, Kathleen Campbell, Memorial, JoAnn Sipin, Rossi, Deloris Colvin-Kennel, Wallace, Michelle Pantalione, Barse, Stephanie Armstrong, Sabater, Denise Luciano, D'Ippolito, Robin Belfi, Durand, Melissa Morgan, Johnstone, Susan Petitt, Mennies, Stephanie Mastro, Petway, Jennifer Curran, Winslow, Barbara Sisk, Dallago and Christina Deal, Leuchter.

Mr. Mercado asked if someone was missed at the high school level. Dr. Banks said no.

Dr. McCann introduced Ms. Vanessa Rasmussen, a Vineland High School teacher, who was presented the M. Jerry Weiss Early Career Teaching Award by the NJ Council of Teachers of English.

Dr. McCann announced that Christine Schneider and Beverly Messore, who are two outstanding teachers at Vineland High School, received the Teacher of the Year Award.

Dr. Banks introduced Mr. John Schneider advisor of SkillsUSA to discuss the New Jersey State Leadership Conference.

Mr. Schneider said he along with Mr. Bramante are the co-advisors for SkillsUSA. He said our students have had a tremendous amount of success competing against schools throughout New Jersey and the entire country. Mr. Schneider congratulated Josué Feliciano who received a perfect score. He said in 23 years he has never had a student receive a perfect score. Mr. Schneider said Josué is going to the Nationals and believes he will win a National Gold Medal for Vineland High School.

Josué thanked the board for their support and for allowing him to attend SkillsUSA.

Dr. Banks introduced Mr. Louis Bramante, who is the automotive teacher at Vineland High School, to present the State Finals Ford AAA Challenge Awards.

Mr. Bramante said at Vineland High School we run an Automotive Program, which is at the same level as most junior colleges. He said our students work, learn and compete at state and national levels. Mr. Bramante said he is proud to introduce Mr. Joseph Wheeler and Mr. Nicolas Cole Sammartino who have brought a lot of pride to the Vineland Public Schools Automotive Program.

Dr. Banks introduced Ms. Lori Cummines, Choral Director, to present the Vineland High School Select Choir, Madrigals Singers and Women's Chorus.

Ms. Cummines thanked the board for honoring all of these exceptional students. She said all of these clubs, programs and organizations being honored tonight and throughout the year motivate our students to come to school, stay in school and excel in school. Ms. Cummines announced that the Select Choir, Madrigals Singers and Women's Chorus made a clean sweep at the spring competition with three first place titles. She said the students will perform a song from their competition. Ms. Cummines introduced each of the students who were presented certificates.

Dr. Banks introduced Jason Alt, Managing Editor of *The Daily Journal*, to present the Greater Cumberland County Educator of the Year.

Mr. Alt said he is here this evening with Sharon Bruno and Sharon Dauito Baxter, both members of The CEO Group. The CEO Group are a group of business and community leaders who are dedicated to providing opportunities for the children in our area. Mr. Alt said we are here tonight to honor one of the district's finest and most respected educator, William McDevitt. He said *The Daily Journal* and The CEO Group teamed up to create the Greater Cumberland County Outstanding Educator of the Month Award. Mr. Alt said they solicited the community to nominate educators that they felt were the best in our region. He said in February Mr. McDevitt was the winner of the award. Mr. Alt presented the Greater Cumberland County Outstanding Educator of the Month Award to William McDevitt.

Mr. McDevitt thanked Mr. Alt, *The Daily Journal* and The CEO Group for presenting this award monthly. He said there is research that shows students who have continued education in the arts have improved test scores. Mr. McDevitt also thanked the Vineland Community and Vineland School Board for allowing the art programs to flourish.

Mr. Ulrich said Mr. McDevitt has a great reputation in the district and the reason our programs are flourishing is because of educators like him.

Approval of Minutes: Upon motion by Mr. Fanucci, seconded by Mr. English, the minutes were approved from May 4, 2011, May 11, 2011 and May 18, 2011. All Members voted “yes.”

Report of the
Secretary/Custodian
Of School Monies:

Upon motion by Mr. Fanucci, seconded by Mr. English, the reports of the Secretary and Custodian of School Monies for the month of April 2011, 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:

Mr. DeSanto said the School Ethics Commission has adopted a Doctrine of Necessity in the event that a Board of Education finds itself in a position where as a result of conflicts of interest the board does not have a majority of participating members to vote on a particular issue that requires board approval. He said the board will have before them a vote on the ratification of a contract with the Vineland Education Association (VEA). Mr. DeSanto said five members of this board have conflicts of interest according to School Ethic Commission decisions. He said Mr. Ulrich, Mr. Mercado and Mr. Medio have wives employed by the district and Mrs. Phillips and Mr. Fanucci have sisters employed by the district who are VEA members. Mr. DeSanto said that only leaves four members who would be able to vote on the ratification of the VEA Contract. He said the commission has ruled that in such circumstances, where the board needs to act, you may invoke the Doctrine of Necessity by resolution.

Mr. DeSanto said he is giving the board the opinion tonight that they cannot act on the ratification if you only have four board members. He has drafted the resolution that needs to be adopted in order to have a valid vote on the VEA Contract. Mr. DeSanto said this resolution waives the conflict for this limited purpose. He said if there is any other board member who has a conflict that may prevent them from objectively voting then they need to articulate it in connection with their consideration of the VEA Contract. Mr. DeSanto said it would be appropriate for a motion to be entertained to adopt a resolution invoking the Doctrine of Necessity to enable all Members of the Vineland Board of Education to discuss the negotiations process and conduct a vote on a tentative settlement for a collective bargaining agreement between the Vineland Board of Education and the Vineland Education Association.

Motion:

A motion was made by Mr. Fanucci, seconded by Mr. English, to adopt a Resolution invoking the Doctrine of Necessity to enable all Members of the Vineland Board of Education to discuss the negotiations process and conduct a vote on a tentative settlement for a collective bargaining agreement between the Vineland Board of Education and the Vineland Education Association. All Members voted “yes” except for Mr. Medio and Mr. Mercado who “abstained.”

Public Comment on
Agenda Items:

Kevin Santiago, Student of Ms. Scull
Mr. Santiago spoke in support of Ms. Scull who he has known since his freshman year in high school. He said Ms. Scull is a wonderful teacher who taught him life skills and how to mature.

Recommendations:

B. Proposed for review or discussion or adoption by Board Members:

1. A motion was made by Mr. Fanucci, seconded by Mr. English, to approve reappointment of non-tenured professional personnel for the 2011-2012 school year as per the list provided and on file with the Secretary of the Board in accordance with N.J.S.A. 18A:27-4.1(b). All Members voted “yes” except Mr. English, Ms. Rios and Mr. Ulrich who voted “no.”

Approval of Bills: Upon motion by Mr. Fanucci, seconded by Mr. English, the bills were approved and warrants issued for same. All Members voted “yes” (\$6,485,998.88).

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

Public: Dr. Elliott, Asst. Superintendent of Administration
Dr. Elliott said earlier tonight we recognized the district’s Teachers of the Year. She said that she is honored to sit on the County Teacher of the Year Board that puts forth each district’s nomination form and committee selection. Dr. Elliott said that she is well versed in the selection process that the districts and schools have to take. She said this involves a committee of certain individuals selected by the principal including the prior Teacher of the Year. Dr. Elliott said a vote takes place and submitted to her office for determination and then sent to the county office. She said the county office establishes the deadlines. Dr. Elliott said tonight there was a question as to whether or not we omitted the high school from this process. She said the high school along with the Cunningham Alternative School did not put forth names to her office for submission to the county office and state.

Mr. English asked if this is a mandatory process. Dr. Elliott said no.

Wendi Carlon-Wolfe, Parent

Mrs. Wolfe expressed her concern in regards to the changes in the rules regarding courses at Vineland High School and Option #2.

Dr. Banks said the Option #2 Program has not been presented to the board yet and will be at the next work session. She said that she will be meeting with several parents who expressed concern about this next week.

Matthew Wolfe, Vineland High School Student

Mr. Wolfe expressed his concern in regards to Option #2. He requested for the board to provide an equal learning environment where a GPA ranking reflects hard work and intelligence.

Kelly Almeida, Parent

Ms. Almeida said she is happy to hear there will be more emphasis on the Bullying Prevention Program next year but feels there should be autism awareness implemented district wide. She expressed her concern regarding the home instruction her son is receiving.

Mr. Ulrich asked Dr. Elliott to give a review on the district's Bullying Program.

Dr. Elliott said everyone who comes in contact with children will be a part of the Bullying Program training. She said the policies that will be put in place with the bullying legislation will be based on a committee's decision, which will involve parents because all student needs will be addressed. Dr. Elliott said the curriculum piece will include how to interact with everyone who is in your class and environment.

Dr. McCann, Principal of Vineland High School

Dr. McCann asked the board if they would consider having an executive session with his administration.

Mr. Ulrich said he has no problem with it.

Karen Stratoti, Parent

Ms. Stratoti expressed her concern in regards to a problem with an assignment being deleted in March from a student's record and a letter she received explaining what was done. She would like to see the district policy that allows for an assignment to be deleted from the first marking period.

Mr. Ulrich told Ms. Stratoti that she is more than welcome to meet with Dr. Gruccio. Ms. Stratoti said she did meet with Dr. Gruccio who stands by the letter.

Dr. Banks said the decision was made and the letter was written with consultation under the advisement of the Board Attorney, Nicole Curio. Ms. Stratoti would like to see the policy that states you are allowed to delete an assignment from two previous marking periods.

Dr. Banks said we will look at this again with the attorney.

Mr. Medio asked Ms. Stratoti when her son handed in his assignment. Ms. Stratoti said in October. Mr. Medio asked what his grade was. Ms. Stratoti said her son received an A (92) and it was counted as a test grade, which counted as 30% of the overall grade. Mr. Medio asked what his first marking period grade was. Ms. Stratoti said an A. Mr. Medio asked when this grade was removed. Ms. Stratoti said we noticed it March 28th.

Mr. Ulrich told Mr. Medio it is not the board's place to question Ms. Stratoti and he can meet with Dr. Gruccio to get the details. He said this will be administrative decision that the board will review.

Board Member

Remarks:

Dr. Mounier said this district has many problems but there is a lot to be pleased with. He congratulated all the award winners. Dr. Mounier said it brings him pleasure to see and hear that the arts, ROTC, mechanics, welding and other mind expanding activities are alive and well in Vineland.

Mrs. Phillips congratulated all the award winners and thanked all the speakers who came to the podium. She also thanked all the staff members for working so hard all year and giving the best that they had to our students.

Mr. DiGiorgio echoed the sentiments of his colleagues regarding the award winners. He said we do have a lot of room for improvement on many things but there are many great things happening in our district. Mr. DiGiorgio said he heard about the Stratoti's situation and is hoping we can revisit it to find a better solution. He said we have very good people in this district and he is very proud to be part of this district. Mr. DiGiorgio congratulated the new principal and assistant principals at the high school.

Mr. Fanucci said it is amazing to see all the students who received awards this evening and it gives him a great sense of pride to see how well they achieve. He congratulated everyone who was promoted and wished them the best. Mr. Fanucci thanked everyone who spoke this evening and addressed their concerns with the board. He wished everyone a safe and great summer.

Mr. English said his thoughts and prayers go out to the Wallace family on the passing of David Long over the weekend. He said in regards to our high school Teacher of the Year he has had the privilege of knowing one of them, Ms. Christine Schneider. Mr. English said he has known Ms. Schneider for 30 years and she is an outstanding teacher, mother and dear friend who truly symbolizes what a teacher should be. He is sorry for the unfortunate lack of communication this evening because Ms. Schneider definitely deserves better. Mr. English thanked the entire staff and crew of the Vineland Public Schools (VPS) broadcasting and communication department for their outstanding commitment, work ethic and dedication towards keeping our community updated. He said that he attended the AVID graduation last night and thanked Ms. DePre, Ms. Rothman and Mr. Adams because this is truly a great program. Mr. English told the class of 2011 that their journey as high school students is quickly coming to end. He can only hope and pray for their continued success, health and safety.

Mr. Mercado commended all of the students this evening and congratulated the Teachers of the Year. He thanked the staff and retirees for all their hard work. Mr. Mercado said he has attended some wonderful events in the district and apologized for the events that he missed. He agrees one hundred percent with comments made by Ms. Phillips. Mr. Mercado said that he knows that we have qualified staff within our district for principal and assistant principal positions. He feels there needs to be a policy on this issue. Mr. Mercado said that he looks forward to attending the graduation and asked the students to be on their best behavior.

Ms. Rios thanked the parents who spoke tonight and said hopefully we can address their concerns. She congratulated everyone who received an award tonight as well as those who performed. Ms. Rios also congratulated the new principal at Barse School and assistant principals at Vineland High School.

Report/Remarks by
Board President:

Mr. Ulrich asked his colleagues if they receive an email or telephone complaint to forward it to him and he will send it to Dr. Banks. He said parents and people in the community are not always going to be happy with administrative decisions. Mr. Ulrich said no one on this board wants to have a student harmed by any action from our employees.

Mr. Ulrich congratulated the new principal and vice principals in the district. He wished Mr. Palmer the best of luck and said he will be held to a high standard as we do with all our employees and supervisors. Mr. Ulrich said he and Mr. English attended the AVID graduation. He encouraged his fellow board members to attend this ceremony next year because it is truly unbelievable and it is what education is about. Mr. Ulrich said AVID is a good program and he commended Ms. Depre, Ms Rothman and the other staff members. He said there are a lot of good things going on in this district with motivated staff members and good instruction. Mr. Ulrich thanked all staff members and students that helped him raise about \$5,000 for Relay for Life.

Dr. Banks congratulated Sylvia Moreno, Madelyn Galan and Darren Palmer on their new positions. She said they will all do a terrific job. Dr. Banks also congratulated all the student and Teacher of the Year award recipients including the high school Teacher of the Year recipients. She thanked everyone for a great year.

Adjournment: The Board adjourned the meeting by voice vote at 8:17 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kevin J. Franchetta, CPA
Board Secretary

KJF:df