

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, July 7, 2010 at 7:02 p.m., pursuant to notice with Mr. Franceschini presiding and the following members present: Mr. DeWinne, Mr. DiGiorgio, Mr. English, Mr. Fanucci, Dr. Mounier, Mrs. Phillips, Ms. Rios, and Mr. Ulrich. Absent: None.

Also present: Dr. Banks, Superintendent, Dr. Gruccio and Mrs. Elliott, 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. Franceschini 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:

Dr. Banks introduced Mr. Mario Olsen, Principal of Veterans Memorial School and Mr. Carey Savage, Title I Supervisor, to present the Veterans Memorial School Restructuring Plan.

Mr. Savage said if a school fails to reach achievement benchmarks on Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) for five years a restructuring plan needs to be done. He said if Veterans Memorial School does not make AYP this year the restructuring plan will go into effect. Mr. Savage reviewed the 2010 Restructuring Plan and said the idea of the plan is to achieve maximum success for all students.

Mr. DeWinne asked how long this plan is. Mr. Savage said it is a one year plan.

Mr. Ulrich asked what an electronic walk through is. Mr. Savage said the electronic walk through allows you to establish a common data base to instantly get trends and individual classes. Mr. Ulrich asked who will be using this data. Mr. Savage said it will be an informative type feedback used by the teachers and administration. Mr. Ulrich asked for the status on RTI. Dr. Gruccio said it is fully implemented at the elementary and middle schools and will begin at the high school in September. Mr. Ulrich asked why the option to replace the staff was not considered. Dr. Banks said eventually it could come down to that option. Dr. Gruccio mentioned that several years ago the entire district went through restructuring and this year the district is in the process of hiring 11 new administrators. She thinks we have done some drastic things.

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Mr. DiGiorgio asked if this plan will be implemented across all grade levels in the school. Mr. Savage responded yes. Mr. DiGiorgio asked if we will face the same thing again at the next evaluation period for those students who are having difficulty achieving now. Mr. Savage said hopefully this will not happen but it may turn out that way.

Dr. Mounier asked what costs are associated with this restructuring. Mr. Savage said we do not expect any over bearing costs only for the normal professional development.

Mr. Fanucci asked Mr. Olsen, Principal of Veterans Memorial School, if he had anything that he would like to add to this.

Mr. Olsen said as a new administrator he is collecting data and information to see how the school is going. He said there are three areas of focus that this plan covers. Mr. Olsen said we are trying to maximize the number of students engaged in lessons utilizing the curriculum and current resources that we have. He said we have peer shadowing for the teachers to share the ideas that are existing in the building. Mr. Olsen said Veterans Memorial School is a fantastic school with a lot of great resources, which will be utilized to improve the school. We have to get the students engaged in the classroom, enjoy coming to school and involved in the process of learning. Mr. Olsen said we also need to encourage parent involvement. There are teachers working this summer on a parent involvement group and trying different “outside the box” ideas to get parents involved. Mr. Olsen said you will see great things happening at Veterans Memorial School.

Mr. Ulrich asked Mr. Olsen if he feels the professional development is where it needs to be. Mr. Olsen said the professional development has to be effective and the teachers have to be receptive to the professional development to be able to utilize it in the classroom. He said the individuals who are delivering the professional development are a crucial component.

Mrs. Phillips feels the district has done a great job with professional development. She said the challenge is parent involvement, which is an area that needs improvement. Mr. Olsen said we are looking at many areas as to how we can bring the parents in to be part of the school. We may utilize the internet more this year along with the call out system to inform and disseminate information to our parents.

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Mr. DeWinne said Mr. Olsen has a big challenge and he wished him well. He said as a parent and board member he is willing to do anything to help achieve the Veterans Memorial School goals. Mr. Olsen said he appreciates that and will need the support of the board and many people.

Dr. Banks introduced Mrs. Ruth Ann Polof, Director of Special Education, to present an overview of the special education program.

Mrs. Polof said she will be presenting a special education summary to answer many of the issues and questions that the board had. She presented a comparison of the special education students to the total population, which has not varied from 1999 to 2009. The total special education students in the district over the last nine years have varied about 100 to 150 students. Mrs. Polof said the percentage of special education students per the total population has been very consistent over the last 11 years. The child study teams are assigned to schools based upon district needs as per IEP's. One team is assigned to service 37 private schools and the other is assigned to service the preschool program, including the community preschool providers and the early intervention program. Mrs. Polof said the average case management for the district is 53 students per team member. Research indicates that the evaluation process for one child takes 16 to 24 hours to complete from beginning to end. Mrs. Polof said special education contributes to the district through an IDEA Grant, ARRA IDEA, Medicaid, Extraordinary Aid, Recreation Grant, Categorical Special Education Aid along with revenue from tuition students we take in.

Mr. Ulrich thanked Mrs. Polof for her detailed presentation.

Mrs. Polof thanked Mrs. Polof for her great report.

Mr. DiGiorgio thanked Mrs. Polof for her presentation.

Dr. Mounier thanked Mrs. Polof for her impressive presentation. He said we spend a lot of money in this field and is not certain that we could not economize by how we allocate the work load amongst various team members. Dr. Mounier said we need to consider ways in which we can continue to decrease the costs and maximize the return for the district. He said we need to consider sending students to jail who have engaged in criminal activity instead of sending them out to various institutions.

Comments by

Board Solicitor: None.

Items for Review:

A. Superintendent

1. **Personnel Items** - Dr. Mounier asked what the summer testing issues are. Ms. Greenfield said it is for security, monitoring and administering the summer assessment test. Dr. Banks said this test is for the students who did not pass the HSPA and must pass this test to receive their diplomas. Dr. Mounier asked if the hourly rate paid is set by contract. Ms. Greenfield said that rate is the individual's hourly rate since this is a continuation of their duties. Dr. Mounier asked if we can utilize existing full time personnel in lieu of a substitute for a principals and assistant principals. Ms. Greenfield said we have done that on some occasions and the use of substitutes in this capacity has been greatly reduced. Dr. Gruccio noted that when an administrator retires they are automatically rolled over to the substitute list because the entire process expense has already been taken care of such as fingerprinting. Dr. Mounier noted that there is no hourly rate listed for the assistant soccer coaches. Ms. Greenfield said it would be a contractual stipend and we are rescinding one name and adding another. Dr. Mounier asked if the tennis announcer is a privately sponsored position. Ms. Greenfield said yes it is paid through the sponsorship. Dr. Mounier asked if the child study team hourly rates differ because they may be for an event instead of an hourly occurrence. Mrs. Polof responded yes. Dr. Mounier suggested for the titles to be changed on the spreadsheet to reflect what is actually being represented so there is no confusion. Mr. Franceschini asked how many hours we used last summer. Mrs. Polof said a lot of hours were used last summer for existing evaluations. Dr. Mounier mentioned that the rates in our contracts exceed those in other districts. Mr. Franceschini asked Dr. Mounier what districts he was referring to. Dr. Mounier said one district is Runnemedede. Dr. Mounier questioned the two different summer rates listed for guidance counselors. Ms. Greenfield said it is the difference between summer hours and summer programs.

Mr. DeWinne questioned the aide summer rates at Sabater School. Ms. Greenfield said the rate is for an interpreter. Mr. DeWinne asked if the board can have updates on how the LEAP Program is progressing. Dr. Banks said Dr. Gruccio will be giving a presentation on that in August. Mr. DeWinne asked if there is any way to take some of the summer help costs and incorporate the tasks into the legal attendance days at the end of the school year. Dr. Banks said she has significantly cut summer work hours.

Mrs. Phillips asked if some of this summer employment should have been approved in June since the starting date is July 1. Ms. Greenfield said some people who were approved in June decided that they did not want to do summer employment. She said timeframes are given to administrators as to when items need to be submitted.

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Mr. English asked if he was correct in saying that Mr. Smith is no longer involved in the WIA Program. Ms. Greenfield responded yes. Mr. English asked if we are still running the WIA Program and paying people. Ms. Greenfield responded yes. Mr. English asked who took over what Mr. Smith was doing. Ms. Greenfield said there are a number people involved. Mr. English asked if we know what the savings is for removing Mr. Smith. Ms. Greenfield said she does not know but will get that information.

2. **Employee Civil Service Lay Offs** – No discussion
3. **Civil Service Employee Displacement** – Mr. Ulrich asked if this list will be modified again in August. Dr. Banks said it is a work in progress.
4. **Special Education Students** – Dr. Mounier asked when a student is sent to an alternate school because of weapons, drugs and assaults at what point do we call it criminal behavior and let the legal system take care of it. Dr. Banks said we are required to provide the student with an education even if they are incarcerated. Mr. DeSanto said zero tolerance for weapons and drugs requires that the student be provided alternative schooling, which means we have to provide something outside of the regular school setting in terms of providing them the education. He said incarceration is totally up to the criminal justice system. Dr. Mounier asked at what point the individual finds themselves in front of a judge instead of educators. Mr. DeSanto said the majority of these students are under 18 years of age therefore are subject to the juvenile system. Dr. Mounier said his concern is we have people who are found guilty of possession of weapons, drugs and committing assaults placed into a school with others. Mr. DeSanto said that is the decision of the alternative school in terms of how they handle their population.
5. **Budgetary Transfers** – No discussion.
6. **Submission of Grants** – No discussion.
7. **Acceptance of Funds** – No discussion.
8. **Travel** – No discussion.
9. **Local School Tax Requisition** – No discussion.
10. **Appointment of Maryann Greenfield as Certifying Officer/Appointing Authority** – No discussion.
11. **Appointment of Kevin J. Franchetta as Qualified Purchasing Agent and Establishment of Bid Threshold** – No discussion.

12. **Creation of Assistant School Business Administrator title and Abolishment of Executive Comptroller title** – Mr. DeWinne questioned why this is being done. Mr. Franchetta said his assistant who holds the title of Executive Comptroller has received his Masters Degree. In order to be certified in this position he needs to be mentored and can only be mentored if he has the title of Assistant School Business Administrator to obtain his permanent certificate. When he receives his permanent certificate the State of New Jersey will reimburse the district for his pension and social security costs. Ms. Rios asked if there are extra funds for this position. Mr. Franceschini said no we actually save money.

13. **Participation with Hannah’s House Inc.** – Mr. English asked if we carry English as a Second Language (ESL) classes through to the twelfth grade. Dr. Banks responded yes.

Mr. DiGiorgio asked if a lot of parents participate in this. Mrs. Elliott said this is currently being run at the Sabater School and starts in October with family events. Mr. Ulrich noted that Sabater School has a good turnout for their events.

14. **Bayada Nurse Contract** – No discussion.

15. **Learning Resource Center-South Van Outreach Program at Barse School** – Mr. DeSanto asked for this recommendation to be subject to the approval of the Board Solicitor and Superintendent.

16. **Standard Operating Procedures for Business Function** – Mr. English asked if the policy could be changed to have the renter pay for security and maintenance. Mr. Franchetta said this could be discussed at the Personnel & Policy Committee meeting. Mr. Ulrich requested for this to be added to the Personnel & Policy meeting agenda. Mr. English asked if direct deposit is optional for employees. Mr. Ulrich said it is optional. Mr. English asked if it would be a paper and printing savings to make direct deposit mandatory. Dr. Banks said yes it is a negotiable item. Mr. English asked how much input a principal has on the budget. Mr. Franchetta said all the salaries in their building are fixed by contract. Any additions or subtractions that the principal makes are added or subtracted to their initial submission. Mr. Franchetta said the other items are usually done by a cost per pupil by grade level to have equity within the district. Mr. English asked why some schools acquire more grants then others. Mr. Franchetta said the grantor deems who receives the money. Mr. English asked who oversees the grant process in the district to make sure schools are applying for as many grants as possible. Mr. Franchetta said applications need to be sent to him. He will send the grant to one of the accountants to review and make sure all appropriate costs are included. Mr. DeWinne said if a school applies for a grant and is successful in achieving the grant, he suggested notifying the other schools to apply. Dr. Mounier asked if there is a clearing house with information about grants available. Dr. Banks said she is not familiar with one.

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Mr. English feels we need to purchase more materials wholesale as much as possible keeping are local suppliers in mind. He asked if we purchase items ourselves or trust the contractor. Mr. Franchetta said it depends on the complexity of the job. Mr. English asked who makes the decision as to what vehicle models are purchased. Mr. Franchetta said we generally do not purchase many vehicles. Mr. English asked when it comes time to purchase a vehicle to we go out for bid or purchase locally. Mr. Franchetta said usually we go with the state contract. Mr. English said he would like to look into using local businesses. Mr. Ulrich said usually the larger dealerships have the buying power to get the state contract. Mr. DeWinne asked Mr. English as a contractor does he feel money can be saved if we buy materials ourselves as opposed to the contractor. Mr. English said sometimes the contractor may be the low bidder but the reason they are making money on a job is because they mark the materials up 50%. He absolutely feels we can save money. Mr. English asked how we can vote yes on this item if changes need to be made. Mr. Franchetta said this was approved the beginning of the year because it was a requirement of the accountability regulations. He said these changes are just updates because of changes in law and policies. Mr. DeWinne asked if these updates were prepared by us or a service. Mr. Franchetta said it is our own document. Mr. Franceschini said this is something that could be looked at by the Policy & Personnel Committee. Mr. DeSanto said the vote on this item is all or nothing and cannot be fragmented. He said it could be put in place now, reviewed and the changes could be presented as an amendment.

17. **Temporary Facilities** – Mr. DeWinne said the Veterans Memorial School application is incomplete because there is no reason listed.
18. **Toilet Room Facilities Waiver** – No discussion.
19. **Veterans Memorial School Restructuring Plan** – No discussion.
20. **Payment of Legal Fees** – Mr. DeWinne asked what this is about and how much are the fees. Mr. Franchetta said there was an aide who was accused of something and found innocent. The state statute allows that if an employee is accused in their line of duty of something and is found innocent their costs for defense must be reimbursed by the district.
21. **Acceptance of Donations** – No discussion.
22. **Rejection of RFP's for Alternate Attorney** - No discussion.
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B. Board

1. Mr. Ulrich said discussed at the Personnel & Policy Committee meeting held tonight was term limits for the Board President and Vice President. The committee felt that it is a moot point because the board reorganizes every year and can change the bylaws.

Review of Bills: Mr. DeWinne requested information on the following four checks: Consolidated Steel & Aluminum, Roberts Brothers LLC, Scranton Corp. and Gary Simmerman. Mr. Franchetta said that he knows that the check to Gary Simmerman who is the county treasurer was for election expenses and the other three checks he will look into.

Public Comments: Maria Francisci, VHS Student
Ms. Francisci presented a petition to the board with over 400 signatures in regards to the Vineland High School lunch schedule.

Committee Reports: Mr. Ulrich said discussed at the Personnel & Policy Committee meeting held tonight was a UAW grievance, contracted services, a bylaw change, security guard services, policy changes, comptroller title change and substitute nurse salary rates.

Mr. DeWinne asked Mr. Ulrich if he thinks the rate increase for substitute nurses is enough. Mr. Ulrich said he personally does not but that is where we started.

Mr. English asked what happens when a nurse goes to lunch. Mr. Franceschini said either a nurse at a nearby school covers or an itinerant.

Ms. Rios said discussed at the Buildings & Grounds Committee was the life skills room, the Veterans Memorial School auditorium sound booth upgrades, gym floor and TCU's, the VHS track, summer projects and VHS boiler replacement.

Mr. Fanucci said at the Finance Committee meeting an update was given on the audit. He said there was a discussion on current bids/RFP's, the VHS track and life skills room, district cash flow, the 1.5% employee health benefit contribution and principal budget requests for the 2010-2011 budget.

Unfinished Business: None.

New Business: None.

Adjournment: The Board adjourned to executive session at 9:22 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kevin J. Franchetta, CPA
Board Secretary

KJF:df