

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, July 18, 2012 at 7:26 p.m., pursuant to notice with Ms. Rios presiding and the following members present: Mr. DiGiorgio, Mr. English, Mr. Fanucci, Mr. Medio, Mr. Mercado, Dr. Mounier, Mrs. Phillips and Ms. Rios. Absent: Mr. Ulrich.

Also present: Dr. Gruccio, Superintendent, Dr. Figgs, Interim Assistant Superintendent, Ms. Ludy, Board Secretary, Mr. DeSanto, Solicitor, Mrs. Polof, Special Education Director, press and public. Absent: None.

Ms. Rios 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, Clerk - City of Vineland, and Administrative Office Public Bulletin Board.

Flag Salute:

Special

Presentation (s): None.

Approval of Minutes: Upon motion by Mr. Fanucci, seconded by Mr. English, the minutes were approved from June 6, 2012 and June 13, 2012. All Members voted "yes" except Mr. English who voted "yes" on June 6, 2012 and "abstained" on June 13, 2012.

The board recessed to executive session at 7:34 p.m.

The meeting resumed at 8:26 p.m.

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 May of 2012, 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:

Lee Burke, Vineland Resident

Mr. Burke discussed the Safe Routes to School Program in which he was invited by Dr. Guccio to participate in. He hopes the board will consider this resolution and looks forward to working with them.

Terry Kuhnreich, Teacher

Mrs. Kuhnreich expressed her concern in regards to the transfer of Dr. McCann and Mr. Panas.

John Schneider, Teacher

Mr. Schneider expressed his concern in regards to the transfer of Dr. McCann and Mr. Panas.

Recommendations:

Public:

Thomas McCann, Principal VHS

Dr. McCann said he cannot help but think that his assistant principal is being targeted by the superintendent of schools. He expressed his concern that if Mr. Panas is transferred there will be no male assistant principals at Vineland High School South, which is a key factor in running a building such as the high school. Dr. McCann emphasized the need to have males handling the discipline. He said to have Madeline Galan as the single disciplinarian for the South campus would be overwhelming.

Richard Panas, VHS Asst. Principal.

Mr. Panas said he is the sole disciplinarian at Vineland High School South and thinks he does a good job. He said Dr. Gruccio is not too fond of him and he does not know why. Mr. Panas said he is the single person that has been targeted. He said he has no desire to be promoted and is happy doing discipline, which he loves. Mr. Panas said he does not know where the name “the hammer” comes from. He said if Dr. Gruccio has a personal problem with him then she should hold him accountable. Dr. Gruccio said she has no problem with Mr. Panas and respects him as a disciplinarian, which is why he has been part of these plans. Mr. Panas said he wants to hear Mr. Olsen publicly say that the people he has at the North cannot do the job. He said the recommendation should be to move Joe Camardo to Veterans Memorial School and keep Jackie Cheli at Cunningham. Dr. Gruccio said someone has to leave Vineland High School South and she asked Mr. Panas what his recommendation would be.

Mario Olsen, Principal VHN & VASA President

Mr. Olsen said this has been going on for months and a decision has to be made. He said in the invent VASA finds that this has become an issue that is punitive we will take every measure necessary through NJPSA to file a grievance and look at the legal ramifications. Mr. Olsen feels that at every level and school there is a different style and the principals and assistant principals are all effective in their own way. He implored the board to consider everything that was mentioned tonight along with his email, time of the year and things that have been taking place before making such an important decision.

Mr. Medio asked what email. Mr. Olsen said he sent an email to Dr. Gruccio.

Dr. Gruccio said she has not had the time to look at her emails today. She said we are here working hard and trying to do what is right, even though we may disagree. She said these people are up here not making one penny and giving their time in trying to make the right decisions. She thinks the audience has been extremely rude and disrespectful and would appreciate if they would have a little bit of manners. Dr. Gruccio said whether the people in the audience believe it or not she has not read her emails. She has been extremely busy doing two jobs for months. Dr. Gruccio said last week she had 1,387 emails and stayed until 9:00 at night reading them.

Mr. Olsen said we have to keep in mind what is best for our children. He understands Dr. Gruccio's direction and knows she has a very difficult job. Mr. Olsen said all we ask is for these decisions to be based on sound educational moves and what is best for the students.

Terry Kuhnreich

Ms. Kuhnreich thanked those who sat and listened. She said it is difficult at times as a board member to make the right decisions. Ms. Kuhnreich said you have something in place that works perfectly. She said Mr. Olsen and Mr. Palmer are the male leaders at Vineland High School North. Ms. Kuhnreich said we need "the hammer" at our building and that is who needs to stay at Vineland High School South. She implored the board not to make this change.

John Schneider

Mr. Schneider said he was not disrespectful to anyone tonight. He urged the board not to make this change and to keep Mr. Panas where he currently is now.

Ronald Walker

Mr. Walker said this is not a game and you need to evaluate why you are making the change.

Dr. Mounier said in light of testimony from our staff and the public it seems that the issue of gender balance in the staff is a valid consideration. He said if we need to make a move it may make sense to reconsider who we are moving. Dr. Gruccio said we have three vice principals in Vineland High School South and two in the North building so someone has to leave Vineland High School South. Dr. Mounier said there will still be an imbalance. Dr. Gruccio said because of the ninth and tenth graders it was agreed to have three vice principals in the North building.

Mr. Medio said there is not a principal at Veterans Memorial School and asked if a recommendation could be voted on.

Public Comments: Public Comments were reopened on the Veterans Memorial School issue only.

Joseph Camardo, Cunningham Alternative School Principal

Mr. Camardo said the plan he heard of until tonight did involve Jackie Cheli moving with him to Veterans Memorial School and he does not know how she personally feels about this. Mr. Camardo feels it will be difficult for one individual to handle both the principal and assistant principal duties at the Alternative School. Dr. Gruccio said she believes if someone is competent one person could run the program, which they have done in the past. Mr. English asked if a male figure is needed at the Alternative School. Mr. Camardo thinks it would be beneficial. Mr. Camardo said he and Ms. Cheli have a good working relationship and are a good team. He said that he has no problems working with Ms. Myers but knows that she expressed an interest in being transferred to the high school. Mr. Camardo asked who Jackie Cheli would report to. Dr. Gruccio said the high school principals.

Vivian Rodriguez

Ms. Rodriguez said change is always positive except when it is forced. She said there is a lot of doubt on the board and if change is forced there is a lot of stress and added pressures.

Mario Olsen, Principal of Vineland High School North

Mr. Olsen said it would be his recommendation to move Mr. Camardo and Ms. Cheli to Veterans Memorial School. He suggested putting a substitute at the Alternative School so thought could be given as to who you want to run the Alternative Program.

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

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.” (\$6,930,674.46).

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

Public: Joseph Camardo, Principal of Veterans Memorial School
Mr. Camardo thanked central administration and looks forward to working with the staff at Veterans Memorial School. He said there is a great staff at the Cunningham Alternative School and he hopes whoever is there will continue to make improvements.

Board Member
Remarks: Mr. English commended the maintenance, security and technology departments for their work during the storm. He announced that on Saturday, July 21st the Downtown Vineland Seafood Festival will be held.

Mr. DiGiorgio said the city puts a lot of effort into Downtown revitalization such as the Seafood Festival event.

Mr. Mercado wished his wife a Happy Birthday!

Report/Remarks by
Board President: Ms. Rios also commended the maintenance department on an excellent job during the storm. She thanked Mr. DiGiorgio for keeping the district informed during the storm. Ms. Rios said she expects the utmost respect from our leaders in this district. She said when a board member is speaking or someone is speaking at the podium they should be given undivided attention. Ms. Rios said that she thinks all of our leaders, staff and educators have the potential to teach or run any school. She said the reason she voted “no” is because there were too many changes. Ms. Rios said as far as males and females she could handle any job that she is given. She reminded board members about the Rule of Order.

Dr. Gruccio said she received a telephone call from Mr. Franceschini who is the head of the local Red Cross. She said Mr. Franceschini extended his thanks to everyone in the district who helped during the storm.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned by voice vote at 10:45 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Cherie Ludy
Board Secretary

CL: df

