

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, October 3, 2012 at 6:42 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. Gruccio, Superintendent, Mr. Frey, Assistant Superintendent, Dr. Figgs, Interim Assistant Superintendent, Ms. Ludy, Board Secretary, Mr. DeSanto, Board Solicitor, press and public. Absent: Mrs. Polof, Director of Special Education

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 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:

The board recessed to executive session at 6:44 p.m.

The meeting resumed at 7:28 p.m.

Ms. Rios departed the meeting at 9:47 p.m.

Special

Presentations:

Dr. Gruccio introduced Mr. Olsen, Vineland High School North Principal along with Mr. Goodwin, Systems Analyst to present an update on the high school scheduling conflicts.

Mr. Olsen said things are currently running very well at Vineland High School North and the new Genesis Program has been great. We have been able to respond to conflicts and resolve issues quickly. Mr. Olsen said as of today there are no conflicts and the teachers are very happy that the classes are balanced. Mr. Olsen said there have been many questions as to what is a conflict. He said a conflict means there is something wrong with the schedule and explained various scenarios that could happen with a schedule.

Mr. Ulrich said everyone is scheduled but there are still conflicts.

Mr. Goodwin explained when a student has a conflict with their schedule it means the student has more classes than they should have. Mr. Fanucci asked if all these conflicts have been corrected. Mr. Goodwin responded no. Mr. Fanucci asked if we have any idea how much longer this will take.

Mr. Goodwin said as of today there are 150 students with conflicts and approximately 98% of the students are at Vineland High School South.

Mr. Ulrich asked Dr. Gruccio how long it will be until the conflicts are resolved. Dr. Gruccio said she cannot answer that and believes guidance and administration at the building have to correct the conflicts.

Dr. Gruccio asked Mr. Goodwin if there is a reason why the conflicts could not have been resolved by now. Mr. Goodwin said the majority should have been resolved before the start of school.

Mr. DiGiorgio asked Mr. Olsen if he allocated additional resources by the board for people to prepare schedules. Mr. Olsen said before he arrived there were six hundred hours allocated to the guidance department in both buildings. Dr. Gruccio asked if both buildings were approved for a teacher to assist with the schedules. Mr. Olsen said yes within those six hundred hours.

Dr. Gruccio asked Mr. Goodwin if he has any idea when all this will be resolved. Mr. Goodwin said no because he does not receive a lot of communication from Vineland High School South.

Ms. Rios said at the last board meeting she requested for both principals to be present at tonight's meeting. She asked if it is a board request that they attend is it mandated. Mr. Ulrich said the principal answer's to the superintendent who answers to the board. Dr. Gruccio said she requested Dr. McCann's presence the day after our last meeting and received an email yesterday from him who thought the meeting was at 2:00 p.m. Mr. Ulrich told Dr. Gruccio that she is in charge of the district and it is her responsibility to ensure that these types of matters are taken care of. He stated that if somebody cannot take care of these matters he will put someone in place that can.

Mr. DiGiorgio asked if students have conflicts during certain periods what are they doing during the time they are not scheduled anywhere. Mr. Olsen said he cannot answer that.

Mr. English asked how you hold someone accountable for this. Dr. Gruccio said she will send out an email tomorrow requesting for all conflicts to be resolved by Monday. She would like an update report at next's Wednesdays' meeting.

Mr. Goodwin stated that Genesis is a district wide software that we are using for grades K to twelve and it is working.

Dr. Gruccio asked if there is a way to know how many hours the guidance counselors and administration were on Genesis over the summer to get this job done. Mr. Goodwin said yes. Dr. Gruccio requested to have that information for Wednesday. Mr. Goodwin complimented the four middle schools on doing a fantastic job this summer. Dr. Gruccio said she is happy that Genesis is working but expressed her concern that there is still one building with many students and conflicts.

Mr. English said he has several emails stating that Vineland High School South does not believe they have any issues, so how can there be conflicts. He asked if the numbers from Genesis could be wrong. Mr. Goodwin said no.

Mr. Medio asked Dr. Gruccio what days last month she went over to Vineland High School South to see what was going on with this. Dr. Gruccio said she was there yesterday.

Mr. Ulrich said Dr. Gruccio has been directed to get the answers that we need and this will be followed up with additional clarification.

Mr. Medio said he received an email that there were 461 conflicts and it turns out that they were not conflicts.

Mr. English said there was a guarantee to decrease the students traveling between buildings and increase instructional time. He asked if that has happened. Mr. Olsen said the instructional time is the same as last year. He said there are 650 moves throughout the day for the North campus and we are working on decreasing that for next year.

Mr. Medio congratulated Mr. Olsen and his staff along with the staff in the South building because there has been a 100% improvement from last year.

Ms. Rios asked how the two additional buses are working out. Mr. Olsen said we strategically place the buses each period so we can move the most students during one period. Ms. Rios asked if additional buses are needed. Mr. Olsen said he does not believe so.

Comments by
Board Solicitor:

None.

HIB/Suspension Report/Cunningham Alternative School Report – No discussion.

Mr. Mercado said the diskette that the board received this week was easier to understand. Dr. Gruccio said Dr. Rossi is trying to make the forms easier to understand.

Items for Review:

A. Superintendent

1. **Personnel Items** – No discussion.
2. **Placement of Special Education Students** – No discussion.
3. **Budgetary Transfers** – Mr. DiGiorgio asked if budgetary transfers happen every month. Ms. Ludy said typically from July through November we would not have transfers. She said this year is transitional due to Systems 3000 but going forward we will be able to have three years projection and budget in the proper line items.
4. **Travel**- No discussion.
5. **Bids** - Mr. DiGiorgio asked for an explanation on Change Order #6 for the Landis Computer Lab/Locker Room Renovations. Mr. Weaver explained that additional VCT was needed.

Mr. Ulrich asked if we set project completion dates or give incentives for finishing projects early. Mr. Weaver explained that we put a completion date in the contract.
6. **Submission of Grants** – No discussion.
7. **Acceptance of Funds/Donations** – No discussion.
8. **Gloucester County Career-Technical Program Contract** – No discussion.
9. **Childcare Provider Contracts** – Dr. Gruccio mentioned that we opened an additional classroom at All Kids First.
10. **Dr. Robert Smick Contract** – Mr. Mercado asked if this went out for bid. Ms. Ludy responded yes.
11. **AP Literature/Composition Curriculum** – No discussion.
12. **Participation in CyberPatriot Competition** – No discussion.
13. **Landis School Mighty Milers Program** – No discussion.

14. **Bus Evacuations September** – No discussion.
15. **VHS Video Club** – No discussion.
16. **Transportation Operation Efficiency Performance Review** – Mr. Medio asked where this company came from. Ms. Ludy said they were recommended by the State of NJ Transportation Department. Dr. Gruccio explained that the board requested for a thorough analysis of the transportation department.
17. **South Jersey Technology Partnership Hosted Exchange to Manage VPS Email** – Mr. Medio asked if this is not 90% e-ratable if we do it now. Mr. Fanucci said just for this year the following years are 90% e-ratable. Mr. Medio asked where the money for this is coming from. Mr. Frey explained that with all the money we are currently spending on email over time this money will come back to us in an e-ratable form. Mr. Ulrich asked what the cost difference is with the fees we are currently paying. Mr. Frey said it would be approximately \$22,000 of new money. Mr. Ulrich asked where the additional funds will be taken from. Ms. Ludy said we received an insurance refund of about \$60,000 and we are going to use that money.
18. **Pitney Bowes Mail Machine** – Mr. Ulrich asked what is wrong with the old mail machine. Ms. Ludy said it is very antiquated.
19. **First Reading of Policy 5511.1 – Master Policy/Mandatory Uniforms** – Mr. DeSanto said he distributed to the board a copy of Title 18A 11-8a, which is the statute that allows the Board of Education to adopt a school uniform policy. He said a Board of Education may adopt a dress code policy to require that students wear uniforms if the policy is requested by the principal, staff and parents of an individual school and if the board determines that the policy will enhance the school learning environment. Mr. DeSanto said the statute is clear and the initiation of the request has to come from the school. He said if this is adopted at the November board meeting the schools can start submitting their requests. Mr. DeSanto said this is step one.

Mr. Mercado said he would like to see this happen before the end of the year.

Dr. Gruccio said we are still awaiting the response from two schools and we will have the final numbers shortly to see if everyone is on board.

Mr. Medio asked how you determine what percentage of parents want school uniforms. Mr. Ulrich said the parents who show up at the back to school nights are making the decisions. Mr. DeSanto said the definition of support from the parents is whatever you want to make it.

B. Board Proposed by the Board President or any individual Board Member**1. Discussion of timetable and status of Interim Assistant Superintendent for Administration.**

Dr. Gruccio said the position has been posted. She thanked Dr. Figgs for his time and for being a tremendous help to all of us. Mr. Ulrich asked what the proposed time table is for posting, closing and recommendations. Dr. Rossi said the closing date is October 10, 2012 and the ad will be in the paper this week. He said the committee will be here on October 16th for the first interviews and October 18th for second interviews. Dr. Gruccio said we should have a name for the November agenda. Mr. Medio said that he does not think we need the position at this time. Dr. Gruccio feels the position is one of the most critical positions that we have. She said it would have a major impact on our district without the position in place. Mr. Mercado asked if the duties can be performed by a supervisor. Dr. Gruccio responded no. Mr. Ulrich asked if the only statutory requirement of the position is that the assistant superintendent must hold a superintendent certificate by statute. Dr. Gruccio said in order to hold that position you must have a chief school administrator certificate. Dr. Mounier asked why some of this work cannot be done by a competent clerk or secretary. Dr. Gruccio said whomever is in the office oversees the placement of students through the summer, handles all HIB forms, evaluations and is a liaison for our all guidance counselors and social workers. Mr. Ulrich said in the absence of the superintendent you need to have someone in place to assume the responsibilities. Dr. Mounier said he does not see how this legitimizes having an assistant if others can be available for long time service. Mr. English said in his opinion if you take the duties that Dr. Figgs is currently doing and distribute them amongst the other people he does not know if that would be effective. He feels the evaluations of the principals should come from someone higher. Dr. Mounier said for practical purposes if a position is not filled by someone who is high ranking could we not save money having the work done by other people. Mr. Ulrich said the assistant superintendent is a vital position in this district and we need to have someone that can do the things required of a supervisor and not someone who is subordinate to someone else. Dr. Mounier asked if law and regulation requires us to fill this position.

2. Discussion of Outsourcing Alternative School Program.

Dr. Gruccio said the county proposed a County Alternative Program and at the last moment the state said in order for us to be the LEA we would have to be responsible for everything such as hiring the staff and providing the space. She said this program fell through at the last minute. Dr. Gruccio said presently that same organization is having discussions with the county and vocational school. She said they are working very to put a curriculum together that would have a strong component of vocational education for these students.

Dr. Gruccio said currently there has been a commitment from Bridgeton, Vineland and Salem to send students to this program. She said that she has invited representatives to speak to the finance committee. Dr. Gruccio said Ms. Ludy thinks there may be some advantages financially being an LEA. Mr. Ulrich said nothing is happening anytime soon. Dr. Gruccio said hopefully by the new year we will have answers and a commitment.

Mr. Medio said he proposed having the board give direction to administration as to the future of the Alternative School Program. He said the direction was to keep the program at Cunningham School as an Alternative Program and follow policy in the district as to sending students there. Mr. Medio said he cannot believe that there is a majority of board members who want to bring students from other cities in the county to Vineland. He feels that we are addressing a problem that does not exist. Mrs. Phillips expressed her concern that if other cities will be sending their students to this program we will be very limited as to how many of our students can attend. She feels that we need our own Alternative School and Cunningham School is the perfect place. Mr. English asked how many students the county program would hold. Mr. Medio said the alternative school serves as an option for students who cannot function in the high school. Dr. Mounier feels the alternative school is more of a remediation and he would support the idea of vocational/technological types of education. Mr. English said his vision was to have one building a technical high school and the other a college high school. Mr. Ulrich asked Dr. Gruccio why we have a substitute at the Alternative School. Dr. Gruccio said she tried to move people there and did not get board support. She said our current vice principal at the alternative school has taken a medical leave and will then retire. Dr. Gruccio said she needed to have someone in the building. Mrs. Phillips said we need to post and fill that position. Mr. English feels that we can move some people. Mr. Mercado said he as spoke to many people and he has not heard one person who does not agree that this county needs a full time vocational school. Dr. Gruccio said there have been conversations to move the Cumberland County Vocational/Technical School to a full time vocational school. Mr. Ulrich suggested for each board member to speak with Dr. Gruccio independently with their desires so she can make an informed decision. Mr. Medio said at the last board meeting he made a proposal and did not propose discussion of outsourcing the alternative school program. He said the message is clear that with all the work the administrators at Plum Street have it is very unfair to expect them to spend hours discussing an alternative school that the board is not supporting. Mr. Ulrich asked each of the board members to entertain a conversation with Dr. Gruccio. Mr. English asked if there will be a presentation from the Vo-Tech. Dr. Gruccio said the Vo-Tech has been in conversations with the high school. We can expand our programs to a certain degree and we want to work in conjunction with the Vo-Tech but that takes time. Dr. Gruccio said as far as the Cumberland County Vocational-Technical School going to a full time high school that is a county issue that is being addressed and is on the table. She said we do not have the space to go to a full time vocational high school but we do have the space to expand the vocational activities for our students at our building. Mr. English asked why a teacher is teaching off of a cart if we have space at the high school.

Dr. Guccio said she was originally told there was no space and in a meeting today with high school administration she was told that there is plenty of room in V-wing. Mr. Ulrich said this will be advanced until next week. He said the board can vote on Dr. Guccio doing outsourcing of the alternative school. Dr. Guccio asked how we vote on something that we do not have all the facts on. Mr. English asked when the facts will be on the table. Dr. Guccio said that is what we are in the process of doing. Mr. Ulrich said what is the sense if you have five board members that do not want to do this. Dr. Guccio cautioned the board to please keep in the mind the other issue that we have to deal with is space. Mr. Medio said if the superintendent does not get the message from the board by gentle discussion then in the future he will make his own proposal and there will be a vote. Mr. Ulrich expressed his concern that the board tries to run the job of administration, which is a mistake. Mr. Medio said the mistake is not having a retreat in the year in a half that he has been on the board at which time the board is supposed to direct administration in what they want done over the course of the next year. He asked Mr. Ulrich not to imply that he is unethical. Dr. Guccio said a retreat was scheduled for September but she was asked by board members to wait until January for the new board to be in place. She clarified that the retreat is a discussion to set goals and develop a strategic plan between the board and administration not the board dictating to the superintendent what they want. Dr. Guccio said she was told the program will be happening in Vineland with or without us. Mr. Ulrich said Mr. Medio, Mrs. Phillips and Mr. English brought up legitimate concerns, which deserve conversation. He also thinks that it is prudent to have a plan in place that is going to examine opportunities within the district. Mr. Ulrich said this will be left on the agenda for a vote next week. Mr. DeSanto said he understands the motion would be to direct the superintendent to discontinue any further dialogue regarding outsourcing the Alternative School. Dr. Mounier said it is important to point out that some are not interested in maintaining the status quo but to improve the alternative school without having to send students out or bring them in. He said we need a thorough evaluation of one proposal versus another. Mr. Ulrich said that is what we are voting against to actually do. Mr. Fanucci feels a vote may be premature if this has not been presented to the board yet.

3. Discussion of status of third Assistant Principal position for Vineland High School North.

Mr. English said currently at the Vineland High School North building we have one principal and two assistants. He questioned if we need the extra person at the North Building and can we move the extra person at the Vineland High School South building to the alternative school to save money. Mr. English said that he received an email that a female cannot run the alternative school, which he personally feels an outstanding female can trump a male if it be. He said if the flavor is that we need a strong male presence at the alternative school there are four males currently at the high school campus. Mr. English asked how we go about moving someone to a needed position that we are paying a substitute for.

Mr. Ulrich said if Dr. Gruccio were to gather support from five board members for transfers that were absolutely needed then that is up to her. Dr. Gruccio said she agrees with Mr. English but every recommendation she made was voted down as to who we can move to the alternative school or North building.

Mr. Ulrich said Mr. Medio's, Mrs. Phillip's and Mr. English's concerns are all valid points for discussion and debate. He said when we do not have these discussions or debates we do not know where we are at. Mr. Ulrich said we should do what is in the best interest of the district and let the professionals do their job.

Review of Bills: No discussion.

Public Comments: None.

Mr. Mercado expressed his concern that it is unfair to save public comments until the end due to the time and feels this should be moved to the beginning of the meeting. Mr. DeSanto said in our bylaws we are supposed to accommodate public comments by 9:00 p.m. and if we have not reached that portion of the meeting we suspend discussion to public comments.

Committee Reports: Mr. Fanucci said the most of the items discussed at the Finance Committee meeting have been discussed already tonight.

Mr. English said discussed at the September Facilities Committee meeting was student overcrowding and the status of the Almond Road Pre-K Center.

Mr. Medio said we have addressed overcrowding by opening up space next year for 250 to 300 students at the previous Adult Program at the Sabater School complex. He said in addition there is supposed to be 100 students at the Charter School on Landis Avenue. Mr. English said if the existing Charter School does not find space we will inherit 200 more students. Mr. Ulrich said keep in mind that we have the ability to look at our middle schools and if we had to switch schools around we could do that. Mr. Ulrich asked what the status is on middle school #2. Mr. Weaver said we have reached out to the Department of Education and School Development Authority to try to schedule a meeting to get this project moving. Mr. DiGiorgio asked if we are being forced by the state to reconfigure next year. Dr. Gruccio said the state knows that we are over in class size and that we do not have the capacity to meet their cut offs. Mr. Medio asked if we have the class sizes of other school districts. Dr. Gruccio said no but she can get them.

Mr. English said discussed at the October Facilities Committee meeting was a walk-way between VHS South and North, VHS South HVAC System, Almond Road Pre-K Center, new tennis courts, new warehouse and a district auction update.

Mrs. Phillips said at yesterday's Curriculum Committee meeting Mr. Frey presented an overview of this year's test scores.

Mr. Ulrich said at tonight's Policy & Personnel Committee meeting they were presented with an update on the Master Uniform Policy along with surveys. He said they also discussed policy changes, claims and security department.

Unfinished

Business: None.

New Business:

Mr. Mercado asked if the board will be hosting a School Board Candidate debate. Mr. Ulrich said that is normally done by the Chamber of Commerce. Dr. Gruccio said the School Board Forum will be held on October 22, 2012 at Wallace Middle School at 6:00 p.m.

Mr. Ulrich thanked the board for bringing these items up for discussion. He apologized to Mr. Medio and said he has a strong opinion that we should support our administration.

Dr. Gruccio welcomed Mr. Ulrich back and thanked Ms. Rios for the nice job she did in Mr. Ulrich's absence.

Adjournment:

The meeting was adjourned by voice vote at 10:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Cherie Ludy
Board Secretary

CL:df

