

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, November 2, 2016 at 7:07 p.m., pursuant to notice with Mr. English presiding and the following members present: Ms. Acosta, Mr. Bordley, Ms. Codispoti, Mr. DeWinne, Mr. Jennings, Mr. Pagano and Ms. Rios and Mr. Sbrana. Absent: None.

Also present: Dr. Gruccio, Superintendent, Mr. Frey and Mr. Frangipani, Assistant Superintendents, Mrs. Haley, Board Secretary, Dr. Rossi, Executive Director of Personnel, Mr. DeSanto, Board Solicitor, press and public. Absent: None.

Mr. English 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, The Grapevine, Clerk - City of Vineland, and Administrative Office Public Bulletin Board.

Flag salute: Students from the Vineland High School JROTC Cadets led the Board in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Resolution: Mrs. Haley read a resolution to convene into executive session for the following reasons as outlined in N.J.S.A. 10-4-12. Any matter involving the purposed, lease or acquisition of real property with public funds, the setting of bank rates or investment of public funds where it could adversely affect the public interest if discussion of such matter disclosed; discussion of the terms and conditions of a lease with the State of New Jersey. Any matters falling within the attorney-client privilege, to the extent that confidentiality is required in order for the attorney to exercise his ethical duties as a lawyer. **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Board of Education hereby declares that its discussion of the aforementioned subject(s) may be made public at a time when the Board Attorney advises the Board of Education that the disclosure of the discussion will not detrimentally affect any right, interest or duty of the School District or any other entity or person with respect to said discussion.

Motion: Upon motion by Mr. Jennings, seconded by Ms. Codispoti, the resolution was passed. All Members voted “yes.”

Special Presentations: Dr. Gruccio recognized the Vineland Public School employees and Board members who have served in the military in honor of Veterans’ Day.

Dr. Gruccio introduced Mr. Nathan Frey, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum & Instruction, to present the Vineland Public Schools district test scores.

Mr. Frey reviewed the PARCC and NJASK test scores for the 2015-2016 school year.

Mr. English asked Mr. Frey to send his Power Point to each Board member.

Mr. DeWinne asked if this presentation will be posted for the public to view. Mr. Frey said absolutely he does it every year.

Mr. English said he visited Mennies Elementary School and it is phenomenal as to what they have done with the Chromebook carts. He asked if we are incorporating our technology to the best of our ability. Mr. Frey explained that some schools are moving fast integrating technology in the classroom and others are meeting the track that we put them on. He said financially it is difficult for schools and we understand that.

Mr. Jennings asked how we are doing with supplying the less fortunate children with equipment they can use. Mr. Frey said we have the Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) plan now, which is going extremely well. He said discipline is down and we have devices available in the classrooms.

Mr. English asked if we are collecting data from the teachers so every student has a fair chance. Mr. Frey said yes that is the path that we are on.

Ms. Acosta asked if every classroom at the high school level has technology or are the students taking their computers with them. Mr. Frey said at the high school the teacher signs up for the technology if it is not readily available.

Ms. Rios asked if we are still using pen/pencil and paper. Mr. Frey said yes about 50% of the time.

Student Liaison

Report: None.

Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying (HIB Report), Suspension Report, Cunningham Alternative School Report/Average Daily Attendance – No discussion.

Comments by

Board Solicitor: None.

The Board retired to executive session at 7:39 p.m.

The meeting resumed at 8:23 p.m.

Items for Review:

A. Superintendent

1. **PERSONNEL**

- 1.1 **Personnel Items** – Mr. Sbrana congratulated the retirees and thanked them for their many years of service to the district.

2. **PROCEDURES & OPERATIONS**

- 2.1 **Travel** – No discussion.

- 2.2 **Dual Credit Articulation Agreement** – Mr. Bordley said this is a fantastic opportunity.

- 2.3 **Adoption of Board Goals/Action Plan for 2016-2017** – No discussion.

- 2.4 **District Goals/Action Plan for 2016-2017** – Mr. English said due to the passing of Charlene Zoerb, the district's NJ School Boards Representative, our timing is off from the way we have handled things in the past. He said this is not the fault of central administration or the Board just an unfortunate situation. Mr. English asked if we could get something from the state in writing so we are not penalized. Dr. Gruccio said she would be happy to speak to the County Office of Education to see if we can receive something in writing.

- 2.5 **First Reading of Policy #5111** - Mr. DeSanto said in this policy there was a paragraph that addressed non-resident free tuition. He said we do not know how that got put into the policy and that is what is being deleted from the policy.

3. **BUILDINGS & GROUNDS**

- 3.1 **Resolution to Sell Residential Lots** – Mr. DeSanto said we received from our engineers the re-subdivision maps and we are applying to be on the City of Vineland December Planning Board meeting to get this approved.

4. **FINANCE**

- 4.1 **Budgetary Transfers** – No discussion.
- 4.2 **Board Secretary/Treasurer’s Report for September 2016-** No discussion.
- 4.3 **Placement of Special Education Students** – No discussion.
- 4.4 **Submission of the following Grant – a. Barse Energy for the Arts** – No discussion.
- 4.5 **Acceptance of the following funding – a. Barse Energy for the Arts** – No discussion.
- 4.6 **EIRC Shared Service Agreement** – Mr. Bordley asked if we are happy with their services. Dr. Gruccio said yes we have been.
- 4.7 **EIRC School Bus Advertising Contract** – No discussion.
- 4.8 **Gloucester County Technical School District Contract** – Mr. English said it is his understanding that we have some students that are still going to different schools and taking classes that we now offer. He does not believe that we should be paying for our students to attend GCIT and asked if we are bound by law with this. Dr. Gruccio said she spoke to the County Superintendent and we have to show that the class is equal or above what the student is taking in a particular school. Mr. English asked who makes the final determination. Dr. Gruccio said if it is challenged we have to prove that we provide the same class. Mr. English said he hopes that future and present Board members continue to pound the pavement on this. He said if we want to make Vineland great again it starts by staying here in the district.
- 4.9 **Salem County Vocational Technical School Contract** – Mr. English said 42 of our students are attending SCVT, which is a high number. He said that he would put our Performing Arts Program against anyone on the East coast.
- 4.10 **Revised Non- Public Nursing, Technology and Security Aid** – Mr. Bordley asked if this is state mandated. Mrs. Haley said the state allocates a certain amount of money to the non-public schools and we are the agency that it passes through.
- 4.11 **NJ Quality Single Accountability Continuum (NJQSAC)** – No discussion.

- 4.12 **Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR) and Auditor’s Financial and Management Report** – Mrs. Haley said Mr. Garcia from Ford Scott & Associates will be coming to the next meeting to do a presentation. Mr. DeWinne asked if we could get the audit in advance. Mrs. Haley said she hopes so.
- 4.13 **Implementation of Recommendations from CAFR and Auditor’s Financial Report** – No discussion.
- 4.14 **Adoption of 2017-2018 Budget Preparation Calendar** – No discussion.
- 4.15 **Staff Funded by Federal Program Salaries** – No discussion.
- 4.16 **Submission of 2015-2016 Perkins Secondary Consolidation Formula Grant** – No discussion.
- 4.17 **Submission of 2015-2016 No Child Left Behind** – No discussion.
- 4.18 **Award of Lease for 1350 S. W. Boulevard Unit #2** – Mr. English said this is a good way to generate revenue for the district.
- 4.19 **Donation of the following items – a. School Bus Parts to Police Athletic League (PAL), b. File Cabinets to the Vineland Police Department** - No discussion.

2. REGULAR AGENDA

- b. Items proposed by the Board President or an individual Board Member – **Security Plan for Vineland Public Schools by Personnel & Policy Committee** – Dr. Gruccio said at our last Personnel & Policy Committee meeting Mr. Pagano raised discussion regarding armed guards in our schools. She said that the Personnel & Policy Committee requested that she bring this forward for the entire Board to express their feelings as to whether or not this is a direction we should move in. Mr. English said he would like to get a feeling from everyone on this Board as well as the community as to what we are trying to propose. He said the key words are student and staff safety. Mr. English said there are schools in our surrounding counties that have armed officers and we unfortunately know what is happening in today’s society. He said this is a proactive approach verses a reactive approach. Mr. English thanked Mr. Pagano for doing a lot of homework on this and bringing it to the attention of the Personnel & Policy Committee. Dr. Gruccio said she has reached out to a couple of districts who have already gone through this process and has received nothing but positive feedback. Dr. Gruccio said the Cumberland County Technical Center has armed guards throughout their entire building. She said they provided training for the guards and presented to the public, faculty, and PTO, which has been nothing but positive.

Dr. Gruccio said she has also spoken to the Bridgeton School District who have had armed guards for 15 years and feel that it has been nothing but positive. Mr. English said his personal opinion is that he would never want to be part of a Board that knew something like this was out there and chose not to take advantage of it. Mr. DeSanto said he believes the committee's discussion was about armed safety officers not to be confused with arming the security guards that are already present in the buildings. Mr. Pagano said over the past 50 years in this country there has been 1,246 students in our schools of all ages that have been shot. He said 445 students across the United States have been killed from gunshot wounds and 801 injured. Mr. Pagano said in his opinion we cannot put a price on safety. He said today's world is not like it was 50/60 years ago. Mr. Pagano said the change in security would propose having at least one armed retired police officer (RPO) per facility along with regular security officers. He said this greatly enhances the safety and security of our students and faculty during school hours. Mr. Pagano said the armed officers that would be employed in our schools would be retired police officers with at least 20 to 25 years of training, experience, knowledge, and ability. He said in order to continue to carry a weapon in the State of New Jersey you are required to continue the same training as every other police officer who is active and you have to qualify twice a year. Mr. Pagano feels very strongly that in today's world this is the direction that we have to move in. Mr. English said this came out of committee with the attention to aggressively move forward with this but at the same time get the feel of the Board and community. Mr. DeWinne said he would feel safer as a parent knowing that someone is trained and on alert for anything that may come. He said safety is priceless but we do need to understand the cost impact of this. Mr. DeWinne feels this is something the Board should move forward with as long as it is well researched. Mr. Pagano said metal detectors in today's world prove to be not that effective. Ms. Rios asked if the Board or public have questions, whom should they be referred to. Dr. Gruccio said they can be referred to her and she will try to find the answer or reach out to Mr. Pagano. Mr. Sbrana asked how will the RPO's interface with the existing security staff and management of it. Dr. Rossi said we have not explored this beyond the Board committee level in tonight's discussion but there are many activities that security officers currently do. He said we see current duties of our full-time guards remaining in effect. Mr. Bordley said Bridgeton's head security officer oversees both the armed and unarmed security guards. He said this has worked very well through training. Mr. Sbrana asked if this mirrors a proposal that was made in the state senate for retired police officers. Mr. Pagano explained that this would be a Class III Police Officer, which is still in effect but they are still specials with limited hours and have to be hired by the city. He said we are looking to enhance our security and protection. Mr. Bordley said retired police officers in schools have countless hours of training and active shooter drills. He said if we actually had an active shooter situation you would have someone on the inside that can relay the information to the responding officers on the outside, know how to lock down, and proceed through the school in a safe manner. Mr. English asked Dr. Gruccio what would be the next step for this. Dr. Gruccio said we would have to convene internally with all the stakeholders involved and develop what we feel would be an appropriate description of the lead person that we would want to oversee this.

Mr. English said it appears we have Board support for armed RPO officers. Dr. Gruccio said if this is how the Board feels then we can move quickly on it. She thinks our intentions are not to lose any of our current people. Dr. Gruccio said the goal is to protect our students and staff to the best possible ability that we can. Ms. Acosta thanked Mr. Pagano for his presentation tonight. She said we are talking about our children so whatever the price is it is. Ms. Codispoti said we as a Board and a district would be negligent if we did not put this forward. She said we need to make sure our students and faculty are safe because there are too many people out there who want to do damage. Ms. Codispoti thinks we would be hurting ourselves if we did not put this into effect and feels this is a good idea.

Review of bills incurred during September 2016- No discussion.

Mr. English said that Mr. Jennings had a home emergency and left at 7:41 during executive session.

Public Comments - Janice Bokma, School Nurse

Ms. Bokma read a memorandum from the NJ Department of Education dated December 15, 2015 in regards to employment of Certified School Nurses (CSN). She implored the Board to hire Certified School Nurse's for a couple of our schools and does not feel that a CSN can be employed by a 3rd party company.

John Provenzano, Director of Security

Mr. Provenzano spoke in regards to having armed guards in our schools. He expressed his concern in regards to the cost factor during a budget crisis. Mr. Provenzano said that he does not want parents to feel we have unsafe schools. He said that he requested an assistant director of security and was told the Board would not approve it. Mr. Provenzano said he would like to work together with Mr. Pagano and compare the information he has with Mr. Pagano in order to make a decision about hiring armed guards.

Mr. English said Mr. Provenzano has some good information to review with Dr. Gruccio.

Jose Lugo, Security Guard

Mr. Lugo said he was told that there was no money to approve a permanent assistant director of security position. He agrees with Mr. Pagano and Ms. Acosta that we should not put a price on the safety of our children. Mr. Lugo feels that they were disrespected when he along with Mr. Provenzano were not consulted about having armed guards in the schools.

Mr. English said this is the initial discussion on armed guards that has taken place. He said it is nothing personal and we opened the dialogue this evening concerning what we would like to do moving forward. Mr. English said we know our schools are as safe as can be but we are just trying to make them a little safer. He said why give a promotion for an assistant director of security and in six months have to take it away. Mr. English said we did exactly what the process dictates that we are supposed to do. He promised that we will do what is best for all but unfortunately sometimes not everyone is happy with that decision.

Committee Reports: Mr. English said the Facilities Committee met and the minutes are on the website. He said if anyone has any questions to please contact Dr. Gruccio.

Mr. English announced that schools are closed next week and the regular Board meeting will be held on Wednesday, November 16th at 7:00 p.m.

Old Business: None.

New Business: None.

Ms. Acosta said that Mr. Provenzano's staff does an excellent job. She thanked Mr. Pagano for his presentation. Ms. Acosta urged everyone to support Vineland High School football.

Mr. Sbrana echoed the comments made by Ms. Acosta in regards to our security staff who do an excellent job. He thanked the veterans for their service.

Ms. Rios echoed Ms. Acosta and Mr. Sbrana's comments and believes our security department does a wonderful job as well as other departments within our district. She thanked the flag salute students as well as the veterans. Ms. Rios encouraged everyone to vote on November 8th.

Mr. Bordley said it is very disheartening to hear that our Zpass system was not working. He said the Board received an upsetting email and he apologized to the parent. Mr. Bordley urged everyone to research the two questions that are on the ballot because they are very important decisions for South Jersey.

Mr. Pagano thanked everyone for their input tonight. He said putting armed guards in schools is not by any means a slight to our security guards but an attempt to enhance the future that we live in.

Ms. Codispoti echoed the comments made by her fellow Board members. She urged everyone to research the candidates before voting.

Mr. DeWinne said he is happy to see the ROTC students. He urged everyone to support our undefeated football team.

Ms. Codispoti wished all the School Board Candidates good luck.

Dr. Guccio wished the football team continued success. She thanked the JROTC students for the flag salute. Dr. Guccio thanked all the veterans for their service in our country. She wished all the candidates the best in the election and urged everyone to please vote. Dr. Guccio said she truly respects our security department and will include them in the process.

Mr. English told a story about his next door neighbor who was a veteran. He thanked the veterans because we would not have what we have today without them. Mr. English said he agreed with everything that was said by his fellow Board members tonight. He wished all the Board candidates the best of luck.

Adjournment: A motion was made by Ms. Codispoti, seconded by Mr. Bordley to adjourn the meeting at 9:47 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Helen G. Haley
Board Secretary

HGH:dt

