

A Board Retreat of the Board of Education of the City of Vineland was held on Saturday, June 19, 2010 at 8:35 a.m., in the Board Room, 625 Plum Street, Vineland, New Jersey, pursuant to notice with Mr. Franceschini presiding and the following members present: Mr. DeWinne, Mr. DiGiorgio, Mr. English, Mr. Fanucci and Dr. Mounier. Absent: Ms. Phillips, Ms. Rios and Mr. Ulrich.

Also present: Dr. Banks, Superintendent, Mr. Franchetta, Board Secretary, Ms. Charlene Zoerb, of the New Jersey School Boards Association and Debbie Marko, Daily Journal.

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:

Mr. Franceschini introduced Ms. Charlene Zoerb the Field Service Representative from the New Jersey School Board Association.

Ms. Zoerb said this is a workshop to determine the board goals for the coming year that will guide the district and staff in terms of their priorities. She said this is an important part the boards responsibilities as board members. Ms. Zoerb said our approach to goal setting is a standards and data based approach. She said as a board member your major role is to provide over sight to your district in terms of how you can improve the educational experience for our students. Ms. Zoerb said what happens in the district is a reflection as to what happens at the board table so the board working as a system will help achieve the goals. If you want to improve your district you have to set goals and priorities working towards those common goals.

Mr. Fanucci said the essence of what No Child Left Behind was meant for has never really been achieved. He said the educational budget that we have is bloated with nonsensical testing, ridiculous reporting and they have forgotten basic education. Mr. Fanucci asked if we have the power at a local level to change things. Dr. Banks said you can but you will not get the funding. She said as a superintendent what she is looking at to move the district forward is curriculum and what is happening instructionally. Dr. Banks said the standards are always under review and being revised. She said over the summer we are really going to take a look at realigning our current curriculum. Dr. Banks said she does not have a problem with No Child Left Behind but has a problem with the benchmarks especially for our special needs students.

Ms. Zoerb said it is not a perfect system and No Child Left Behind is a continuous process. She said things have been done a little different every year and there have been problems along with benefits. Ms. Zoerb said planning is very critical to improvements. She said many districts make the mistake if something is not working they change it. What happens is teachers are constantly being thrown new programs. Ms. Zoerb said Dr. Banks will discuss information that she prepared in regards to student achievement

Dr. Banks said we receive reports on a regular basis from the state in regards to assessments and how we are doing. She said Dr. Gruccio along with teachers review this data and turn to their corrective action plan for their buildings. Dr. Banks said everyone has a unified plan. We always review our School Report Card to see how we did and if our students made Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). If we do not make AYP our sub groups become our target groups. Dr. Banks said we make sure that we are addressing the topics that the students need to be taught so they can do well on the test. She said during the course of the year the students have opportunities to respond to open ended questions. Dr. Banks said every year Dr. Gruccio gives a presentation on the HSPA results. A comparison is shown on how the state did overall in language arts/math and what the district factor group is compared to other districts.

Mr. Franceschini asked what our current graduation rate is. Dr. Banks said we had a 91.3% graduation rate for the 2007-2008 school year.

Ms. Zoerb said staff and community input is also important. Dr. Banks said she has had meetings with the students and staff. In the fall she will be holding forums with the community with regard to what their concerns are and questions they may have. Ms. Zoerb informed the new board members that of all the Abbott districts, Vineland had the second highest score in terms of the QSAC scores. She said it was only the governance section that fell below a high achieving district. Dr. Mounier asked if governance is based on self evaluation. Ms. Zoerb responded yes. Dr. Mounier asked what happens in the case where people like to lie to themselves. Ms. Zoerb said that is one of the criticisms of QSAC. She said what happens is after the self evaluation is turned in a committee of people come in and spot check to see if things are overlooked or misrepresented. Ms. Zoerb encouraged the board that when QSAC comes around again and you are up for review to be involved in the governance section. Mr. Franceschini said that is a good point.

Dr. Banks said when you are a Title I school you develop a plan and there is a CAPA team visit. She said the CAPA team will conduct actual walk throughs in classrooms and review the corrective action plan to see what we are doing instructionally. She said they will make recommendations for revisions to the plan. Dr. Banks said next year the Title 1 process will be started with the high school, which will be invaluable in terms of what we want to do to move the high school forward. Ms. Zoerb mentioned that the CAPA team spends an entire week in the district and are specialists in every content area. She said they look at the entire curriculum, lesson plans and spend time in every classroom. She said at the end of the week the team will come up with a list of their recommendations. Mr. Fanucci asked what qualifications you need to be on the CAPA team. Ms. Zoerb said they are some of the most highly qualified people in the state. Mr. DeWinne asked if we do anything internally. Ms. Zoerb said some districts use the CAPA format before they need a CAPA visit to be preventative and do their own evaluations and walk throughs. Ms. Zoerb said other data/key indicators are drop-out rates, suspension/discipline data, absentee rates, violence & vandalism report, previous year achieved goals and goals in progress.

Mr. DeWinne asked if the grade level at the alternative school is mostly high school. Dr. Banks said she has concerns that some middle school students are at the alternative high school. She said we are required to design and implement a progressive method of discipline that includes intervention. Ms. Zoerb said there is so much to look at in terms of discipline and in meeting a child's needs to get them back on track. Mr. Franceschini said his concern with the alternative program is that there is no immediate intervention. Dr. Banks said if a severe intervention is needed you do not have to go through the steps. Dr. Banks said it is important for the board to be informed and if they would like a presentation on RTI or anything she will make sure that it happens. Ms. Zoerb said board members are the key people who set the visions and goals. She said how can you support something that you do not understand. Dr. Mounier asked if we have a glossary of abbreviated terms. Ms. Zoerb said she does have a glossary and will he mail it to him.

Ms. Zoerb reviewed the following Core Benchmark Standards:

- Curriculum
- Assessment and Evaluation
- Instruction
- School Culture
- Student, Family and Community Support
- Professional Development
- Efficiency and Organization

Ms. Zoerb said the two areas of goal development are the following:

District Goals

- Fiscal Management
- Personnel
- Instruction & Program
- Operations

Ms. Zoerb said the Board of Education collectively with the superintendent establishes district goals. She said the superintendent takes those goals and is held accountable by the board for those goals. Ms. Zoerb said when the board does the superintendent's evaluation part of the evaluation is based on the progress made towards those goals.

Board Goals

- Governance
- Process
- Procedure

Ms. Zoerb said at the end of the year the board will hold their selves accountable for their board goals.

The following items are looked at when developing goals:

- Mission Statement
- Strategic Plan goals
- Previous year district goals
- Essential Questions
- Focus Area Development
- Outcomes/Goals

Ms. Zoerb said to really move the district forward the board needs to set a few goals and focus on those goals. She said in January a transition workshop was held and expectations of the new superintendent and each other were discussed. Ms. Zoerb said the following goals were looked at as being important:

- Fairness and Consistency in hiring practices
- Holding administration accountable for moving the district forward
- Student Achievement/Small Learning Communities
- All district employees will become knowledgeable/accountable for district policies and regulations

Ms. Zoerb asked Dr. Banks to inform the board on what focus areas she feels are important from her perspective.

Dr. Banks said first and foremost would be student achievement and what is happening instructionally in the high school.

Dr. Mounier agrees with Dr. Banks about student achievement. He said some students come to school and are not prepared, troublesome, frustrated and angry. Dr. Mounier said the problem is that we have some people who do not receive instruction very well and it disrupts the instruction for everyone else. Dr. Banks feels it is important for us to make the attempt to reach out to the families of our at risk students. Ms. Zoerb said there are schools that have overcome many of the challenges with at risk students. She said there is a lot of information about how districts can approach the challenges that they have in order to meet the needs of those students. Dr. Mounier asked for the definition of an “at risk student”. Dr. Banks said an at risk student is economically disadvantaged, probably from a home where English is not the primary language and could be a student who moves around a lot.

Mr. DiGiorgio agrees that student achievement and taking the necessary steps to correct the high school are important areas. He also expressed concern in regards to the lack of the LEAP Program in the elementary schools. Mr. DiGiorgio said our primary focus should be our instruction and curriculum area, which drives our business. He would like to see the district be more proactive in fiscal areas. Mr. DiGiorgio feels more attention should be given to the outside of our facilities along with more encouragement to our staff.

Mr. DeWinne said he is not a big fan of measuring someone’s success or intelligence by a test. He said it is nice to see a well rounded student graduate. Mr. DeWinne also said it would be nice to see the students who are doing well be rewarded with resources to have more challenging instruction. He said not every student will attend college and we need to have basic courses at the high school. Mr. DeWinne said we need to communicate and educate the public and parents on what we are trying to accomplish. He said the more open the board is the better we are.

Mr. English also feels that basic courses need to come back because not every student goes to college. He said that he is very impressed with the automotive program. Mr. English said the automotive program is working nice because it is held in-house on the complex. He said work ethic needs to be enforced all across the board with as many things possible.

Mr. Fanucci said the major points have been covered. He feels we need to revamp our procedures and have staff trained better in security. Mr. Fanucci said there should be more student recognition done. Dr. Banks agrees with Mr. Fanucci and also feels there should be more staff recognition as well.

Mr. Franceschini said he agrees with everyone's comments. He feels the Emergency Preparedness Committee should start meeting again and customer service should be a priority.

Ms. Zoerb thinks the focus areas are pretty clear and maybe we could develop all input in to quality goal sounding statements. She said these goals could be reviewed by the entire board and make any changes you feel are necessary. Ms. Zoerb said you also need to look at as a board how you will support the district goals that you are setting. She said anyone who has not done a board self evaluation last year to please go online and do one. Ms. Zoerb mentioned that another thing to think about in terms of the board goals is that you are only a couple hours away from being a certified board. She said this is recognition that you as a board are committed to improving professionally and demonstrates to the community all the hours you put in.

Mr. Franceschini thanked Ms. Zoerb and everyone who attended.

The meeting was adjourned by voice vote at 10:36 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kevin J. Franchetta
Board Secretary

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