

A Board Retreat for the Board of Education of the City of Vineland was held Saturday, June 20, 2009 at 9:07 a.m., in the Board Room, 625 Plum Street, Vineland, New Jersey, pursuant to notice with Mr. Giordano presiding and the following members present: Mr. Bernardini, Mr. DeWinne, Mr. DiGiorgio, Mr. Fanucci, Mr. Franceschini, Mrs. Phillips, and Mr. Ulrich. Absent: Ms. Rios.

Also present: Mr. Ottinger, Superintendent, Mr. Franchetta, Board Secretary, Charlene Zoerb, NJ School Boards Association Representative, Press and Public.

Mr. Giordano 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. Giordano said the following three items need to be accomplished today:

1. Superintendent Evaluation
2. Board Goals
3. Superintendent Search

Mr. Giordano introduced Charlene Zoerb of the New Jersey School Boards Association.

Ms. Zoerb reviewed with the Board their Self Evaluation. The Board members were provided an opportunity to review the compiled results of the Board Self Evaluation. Ms. Zoerb pointed out to the Board the summary of challenges they noted as part of their self-evaluation and how they plan on meeting those challenges. She reviewed the first chart and all the scores fell between good to commendable. Finance and policy making were rated the highest. The next chart discussed Board performance versus Board member individual performance. Overall the Board feels that they are doing a good job in this area. She pointed out there is frustration with the Board members on their understanding of finance. The last chart compares last year to this year, in almost all areas the Board feels that they have improved in all areas. As to the detailed reports, the Board is struggling with multi-year planning. The Board sees themselves as strong in policy setting. In student achievement, the Board rated themselves high. Also in finance the Board rates themselves high, although the individual scores are lower. In Board operations and performance, the board may want to look for areas of improvement in the future.

Board and Superintendent relations will also be a critical area for the Board in the future. Challenges facing the district in the future include: parental involvement, loss of Abbott status, safety, technology, small learning communities, advocacy classes, providing a second to none education to all students, improve standardized test scores in all areas across the board for all students, funding, accountability, violence/discipline, lines of communication, chain of command and leadership issues, loss of general courses at the high school level. Ideas to meet challenges include realizing board roles, contract negotiations, understanding curriculum, communication between board and administration, staff accountability, and communication with the public. The final document is the Professional Improvement Plan for the Board, which is a type of action plan. This document will become part of the QSAC documentation and will include Board goals and district goals established by the Board.

Ms. Zoerb discussed the importance of setting goals that can be worked on during the next few months by the current Superintendent and passed on to the new incoming Superintendent. She asked the board to write down one or two good things or goals they have accomplished in the last year. Ms. Zoerb discussed the importance of data driven goals and decision making. She asked the board to write down something that they have received a lot of input on via feedback or data that they feel needs to be corrected in the coming year.

As to the first item, the Board felt the following items were going well: finance, fiscal responsibility indicated by four board members, policy, working together as a board, teaching staff, safety of schools, middle school AYP, K12 System staff training. Feedback: accountability of administration, staff moral, student safety, small learning communities, board member roles and board/superintendent relationships. The most common were the Small Learning Communities and board/superintendent relationships.

Ms. Zoerb said after hearing all of these items she asked the board to choose two district goals they want to set for the coming school year. She said the superintendent's input will be very important in establishing these district goals for the coming school year. The Board identified the following goals: Small Learning Communities was a common theme, accountability, student safety, and increased student achievement.

The Board discussed the small learning communities at the high school level, successes and areas in need of improvement. The Board identified the first district goal as: “Ongoing sustained evaluation and support for the small learning communities.” The second district goal was identified as: “The Board will ensure that all district employees will become knowledgeable and accountable for district policies and regulations.” The first Board goal was identified as: “The Board will employ New Jersey School Boards Association to assist in the process of hiring the next superintendent for Vineland Public Schools.” The second board goal is: “Improve our knowledge labor relations and negotiation process in order to prepare for the upcoming contract negotiations.” Action plans were discussed in order to implement each of the district and Board goals.

The Board recessed at 10:48 a.m. for a short period.

The meeting resumed at 10:55 a.m.

Ms. Zoerb briefly discussed the employee forums that were recently held on the superintendent search. She reviewed the calendar for the superintendent search. Ms. Zoerb said as of Thursday, twelve applicants were received for the superintendent position.

Mr. Ulrich expressed the importance of having a superintendent that knows our community or a like community.

Ms. Zoerb distributed a notebook to each Board member for their use in the superintendent search. The Board established August 6, 2009 at 6:00 p.m. to review the applicants and select candidates to interview. The interviews will be held on August 10 and 11, 2009 at 6:00 p.m. On August 11, 2009 the Board will decide if second interviews will be held, additional background checking, or Board member visitation of the candidates' district. Ms. Zoerb asked the Board members if any of their family members could possibly work for a potential candidate. Once the candidates are determined, the Board solicitor will be contacted to make a final determination. Ms. Zoerb asked the Board members to identify with the Board President any possible conflicts so the Board solicitor can make a final determination as to possible conflicts. Ms. Zoerb asked if the Board had considered posting updates on the district's website information regarding the superintendent search. She said communication is at the heart of the process. She discussed the possibility for the finalist to meet the community in a public forum, which would be support for the finalist.

Ms. Zoerb reviewed the credentials and criteria for the superintendent search. The Board expressed the importance of having a guideline for the candidate to have five to ten years experience as a principal to be considered. Also the candidate should be familiar with a district of our size and composition. The candidates should have expertise in finance, personnel, technology, curriculum, communications and long term strategic planning. The candidate should have the following leadership qualities: participatory management, engaging public speaker and be a good communicator. As to personal characteristics the candidate should have a sense of humor, good listener, child centered and collaborative management style. Ms. Zoerb asked the Board if they wanted any other important criteria listed.

Mr. Franceschini said he is looking for a sincere and passionate candidate.

In summary the Board is seeking a candidate that is committed to the children and community of Vineland. She said that she will be providing updates of the response to the advertisement. Ms. Zoerb asked who her contact person would be during this process. The Board appointed the Board President for this position.

The meeting adjourned at 12:01 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kevin J. Franchetta, CPA
Board Secretary

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