

A Board Retreat of the Board of Education of the City of Vineland was held on Tuesday, July 12, 2016 at 6:15 p.m., in the Board Room, 625 Plum Street, Vineland, New Jersey, pursuant to notice with Mr. English presiding and the following members present: Ms. Acosta, Mr. Bordley, Ms. Codispoti, Mr. Mr. Jennings, and Mr. Sbrana. Absent: Mr. DeWinne, Mr. Pagano, and Ms. Rios due to illness.

Also present: Dr. Gruccio, Superintendent, Mrs. Haley, Board Secretary, Mr. Frey and Mr. Frangipani, Assistant Superintendents, Dr. Rossi, Executive Director of Personnel, Ms. Jane Kershner, of the New Jersey School Boards Association and Debbie Marko, Daily Journal.

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:

Mr. English welcomed and introduced Ms. Jane Kershner the Field Service Representative from the New Jersey School Board Association.

Ms. Kershner expressed her disappointment that only 6 of the 9 Board members are present tonight. She welcomed the Central Administration staff and recommended for them to be excused since only 6 of the 9 Board members are present they are not needed. Ms. Kershner said if Central Administration chooses to stay she requested for them to give reasons as to why they are staying. All of Central Administration chose to remain at the retreat. Ms. Kershner asked the Board what they were expecting as a Board and what their specific expectations are.

Mr. Jennings said we are going to choose 3 goals to address and attain. Mr. English said these goals would be for the next school year. He asked about the new Board and should a retreat be scheduled in February.

Ms. Kershner said that the district goals should be done by June. She said that the Board needs to give the Superintendent a year to work on the goals or it is not fair. Ms. Kershner said the Board can have a retreat more than once a year. She said for the comfort of the new Board members joining the Board in January another retreat or mentoring workshop should be scheduled after they begin their term. Ms. Kershner said another retreat should be scheduled at this time next year for the Superintendent's evaluation. She asked the Board who is running for re-election.

Mrs. Haley asked Ms. Kershner what happens if the Superintendent's evaluation is due by June 30<sup>th</sup> and the retreat is held in July. Ms. Kershner said there are no school board police. Mrs. Haley asked about the QSAC scoring. Ms. Kershner said that the evaluation can be done by June 30<sup>th</sup> and the retreat could follow in July.

Mr. English expressed his concern that not every Board member has completed the Superintendent's evaluation online. Ms. Kershner asked about the Board members who are conflicted and said that may be why. She said that there are 6 Board members that are not conflicted. Ms. Kershner said that no one is conflicted out of the Board Self Evaluation, including Dr. Gruccio and Mrs. Haley.

Mr. DeWinne will assume responsibility for the Superintendent's evaluation. Ms. Kershner said that she will obtain the results once all Board members have completed the evaluation. She distributed a folder with the Superintendent's evaluation process in it. Ms. Kershner said the Board goals are different than the Chief School Administrator's (CSA) goals. She said that she does not have a compilation of the documents because not enough people have completed it and we will have to meet again once it is done.

Mr. Jennings summed up what he thought he heard tonight. Ms. Kershner said no you can still choose to work on the goals.

Ms. Kershner said that the Board probably had the summary of the evaluations at last year's retreat. The Board members did not recall this. Dr. Gruccio said that retreats were held on March 2, 2015 and May 4, 2015. Ms. Kershner reviewed the Board Self Evaluation process and form. Discussion ensued about the process including a chart of how the Board ranks itself.

Mr. Bordley asked Ms. Kershner why the Board has to vote on transfers if it is part of day to day operations. Ms. Kershner said it is the law. Mr. Bordley asked why that is. Ms. Kershner said she did not know because she is not a legislator. Dr. Gruccio presented background on the transfers that she proposed recently that were rejected by the Board. Ms. Kershner said the principals can move people because it is within the same building. She said that no Board member knows enough to second guess personnel decisions made by the Superintendent. Ms. Kershner said the way to deal with it is to support the Superintendent. You can always evaluate the Superintendent later if the transfers do not work out. Ms. Kershner said when the Board votes against the Superintendent's recommendation on transfers it demoralizes Central Administration, Board Members and empowers the nay sayers.

Mr. English asked what if the Board President goes to the Superintendent in advance of the meeting and says that there is not support for the transfers. Ms. Kershner said then you would need to meet with the Superintendent for additional information. Discussion followed about the school employees who attended the Board meeting and addressed the Board with tee shirts on that supported their assistant principal. Ms. Kershner said there should have been more discussion before this happened. Dr. Guccio said it was discussed over and over again at the policy & personnel committee meeting and in executive session, etc. Ms. Codispoti mentioned that there was one transfer that she had concerns with. Discussion ensued as to what the Board members thought about the transfers. Ms. Kershner said 5 Board members voted against the transfers and 4 voted for them. As a team whether you like each other or not, you need to find ways to work together.

Mr. English said this falls under “Communication” as a goal. He said that we just had a “tabled” vote on the transfer of teachers when a supervisor stated publicly that a transfer was not in line with the safety of the students.

Dr. Guccio said she gave the background that we had to cut 57 positions and Dr. Rossi worked to move employees around so we did not have to lose any employees.

Ms. Codispoti said that when a supervisor said in public that there was a safety/security issue then she felt she needed to vote “no.”

Discussion continued about the transfers.

Mr. Sbrana said that we are not supposed to go against the Superintendent but what are we supposed to do if we do not agree with the decisions.

Ms. Acosta said there has been a lot of frustration because we do not all have the same information and sometimes Mr. English has more. She would like everyone to work together.

Discussion continued about the meeting regarding the transfers and the safety issue in the physical education department that will occur if a female gym teacher is transferred out of Vineland High School. The Board did not feel comfortable about that. There was discussion about possibly having an executive session beforehand if needed.

Ms. Kershner asked the Board how they are going to get back to being a whole team.

Ms. Acosta discussed the committee process and when there is a vote. Mr. English said the committee was split on the budget. Ms. Acosta said it was confusing as to why the finance committee was not in agreement. Mr. English said that he and Mr. DeWinne were not in support of a tax increase. Ms. Codispoti said she did not want to be a rubber stamp. She said that she almost resigned from the Board because she was bombarded with emails, telephone calls and was attacked because she did not vote the way a member expected her to vote. Ms. Codispoti said that she has her opinions and is not a stupid person. She said that her heart and soul are here for the children. Ms. Acosta said to Mr. English's credit he did ask if the budget process should be done as a committee or a budget of the whole. Dr. Gruccio said it all came down to the tax increase. Mr. English said we are miles ahead of where we were two years ago. He said when the Board struggles he feels bad because maybe they do not have enough information. Mr. English said he expects the Board members to put in the same amount of time that he puts in and is upset that not every Board member is present tonight.

Ms. Kershner asked for another date to be scheduled to review the self-evaluation.

Dr. Gruccio read the goals from last year and asked if any proof had to be given. Mr. English said the goals were realistic and the job was done. Mr. Bordley said that he did not know what the goals were for part of the year because he was a new Board member but now he understands it better. Dr. Gruccio reviewed the goals.

Ms. Acosta expressed her concern in regards to an employee being transferred when there is potentially a difficult situation with that person. Dr. Gruccio said that in the long run the person is where they want to be. Ms. Acosta also expressed concern as to if there will be sabotage and will the person be held accountable. Dr. Gruccio said the principal needs to keep the person accountable. Mr. English expressed his concern about discipline and said that since Dr. Rossi has been here people are held accountable.

Mr. Sbrana said Shared Services with the city and college should be a goal along with the Grant for Wellness, SNJ and putting things on YouTube. He said that there was a comment made to discontinue the broadcasting on Channel 9. Dr. Gruccio said that can be discussed.

Mr. English said Goal #1 should be to make it mandatory (or strongly encourage) our new administrators to attend the Administrator Academy. He said there are other items that Board members would like to discuss but we will have to do that another time because of the three Board members who are absent.

Ms. Acosta asked if we could have an emergent meeting to pass the transfers. Mr. English said the meeting would have to be at 12:00 p.m. and there are some Board members who would not be able to attend.

The next meeting will be to discuss the Board Goals and then Ms. Kershner could meet with the non-conflicted Board members to review the Superintendent's goals.

The next Board Retreat has been scheduled for Wednesday, August 3, 2016 at 4:00 p.m.

A motion was made by Ms. Codispoti, seconded by Mr. Jennings to adjourn the meeting at 8:19 p.m. All Members voted "yes."

Respectfully submitted,

Helen G. Haley, CPA  
Board Secretary

HGH:dt

