

A special meeting of the Board of Education of the City of Vineland was held Wednesday, July 14, 2010 at 5:21 p.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, Dr. Mounier, Mrs. Phillips, and Mr. Ulrich. Absent: Mr. Fanucci and Ms. Rios.

Also present: Dr. Banks, Superintendent, Mr. Franchetta, Board Secretary and Ms. Charlene Zoerb, NJ School Boards Association Representative.

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:

Special

Presentation:

Mr. Franceschini introduced Ms. Charlene Zoerb the representative from the NJ School Boards Association to discuss the board goals.

Ms. Zoerb said discussed at the board retreat in June were three focus areas:

1. Student Achievement
2. Fiscal Efficiency
3. Learning Environment-School Culture

Ms. Zoerb said the board sets the district goals in collaboration with the superintendent. The superintendent's job is to take a specific goal and develop action plans. Ms. Zoerb said it is the superintendent's job to determine how the goal will be achieved by next year bringing the action plan back to the board. The goals should be finalized by the September board meeting and reported to the public.

Mr. Franceschini asked how many goals are recommended. Ms. Zoerb said we recommend no more than four goals and sometimes less is more.

Mrs. Phillips said she was not at the board retreat but feels that the three areas presented are the exact three areas that she would have suggested.

Mr. Ulrich asked if the Alternative School is aligned with the NJ Core Curriculum Content Standards. Dr. Banks responded no.

Ms. Zoerb asked if any board member has a suggestion as to how they would like to see the Student Achievement goal read.

Mr. DeWinne said we have students in our district that are gifted at a young age and there was a program in place called LEAP, which has changed. He said that he knows there are some changes on the horizon that Dr. Gruccio is involved in and does not know how the changes will be implemented for this coming year. Dr. Banks said LEAP is listed under #6 on the 2010-2011 District Goals Action Plan. She asked Mr. DeWinne if he wants the goal worded differently or just leave the LEAP Program as one of the activities that needs to be addressed. Mr. DiGiorgio said part of the learning needs of all students need to be met was lost last year. He said we cannot forget those that do well and offer them the same opportunities to be challenged. Dr. Banks said that Dr. Gruccio will be giving a presentation in August on the LEAP Program. She said based on what Dr. Gruccio's presentation is this is something that can be included in our resource piece for addressing the LEAP Program. Mrs. Phillips asked if part of Dr. Gruccio's presentation is about changing the LEAP Program. Dr. Banks said several meetings were held to discuss possible ways to change what we currently do given what we have. She said there are some recommendations that are changes. Dr. Banks said Dr. Gruccio's presentation could become part of the recommendations for addressing the gifted and talented students through LEAP.

Ms. Zoerb said based on what was said she suggested changing the goal to read the following way: Increase student performance levels on standardized tests and in course work focusing on the unique learning needs of all students.

Mr. Franceschini said he likes the re-wording of the goal.

Dr. Banks said she likes the addition of focusing on the unique learning needs of all students because it addresses everybody.

Ms. Zoerb asked if anyone would like to add anything to the second goal Fiscal Efficiency. She said part of a board members role in terms of budget and fiscal efficiencies is to set parameters going in to the next budget cycle.

Mr. DiGiorgio asked how you long-term plan more than a year out. Ms. Zoerb said a five year strategic plan is done and the goals that come out of that plan are general enough to drive the annual goals. She said just because you plan it does not mean that you are going to achieve every goal.

Dr. Mounier asked at what point do we develop a plan that you might call tactical instead of strategic that goes point by point. Ms. Zoerb said after the goals are set the superintendent is responsible for developing the action plans. She said the board sets the goals and the superintendent determines how she is getting there.

Dr. Banks asked if anyone would like to add anything to district goal statement #2 - Fiscal Efficiency.

Mr. DeWinne said communication needs to be more open. He said the finance committee can do a lot of things but the full board has the same amount of responsibility in approving changes to the budget etc. If he was on the outside and not a member of the finance committee he would want to know what the information is to help make that decision. Ms. Zoerb said some boards do their finance committee as a whole board and hold the meeting an hour before their regular meeting. She said the Ocean City district does it this way because there is so much interest from the community. Mr. DeWinne questioned how productive were those meetings. Ms. Zoerb said they were very productive. Mr. DiGiorgio said he likes the idea but there are instances when certain information needs to be confidential. Mrs. Phillips asked what the reason was for Ocean City to change their format. Ms. Zoerb said to include all board members in the budget process. Mrs. Phillips asked if Vineland has ever done the finance part as a full board. Mr. Franchetta said not finance.

Ms. Zoerb said the last focus area is learning environment-school culture and there was a lot that fell under that area. She said the discussions were safety/security, emergency preparedness, discipline, celebration of student/staff success, staff moral/support dealing with change and customer service.

Mr. Franceschini asked the board if they were ok with district goal statement #3 - To promote a positive learning environment for students and staff. Dr. Banks suggested adding the word safe to read positive and safe learning environment.

Ms. Zoerb reminded the board that board self-evaluations still need to be done. She said it may be beneficial as a board to discuss some of the processes used in terms of governance.

Dr. Banks mentioned that Dr. Stepura and his team will be coming in to meet with her and the administrative team to review QSAC as well as governance.

Mr. Ulrich said during the last QSAC monitoring the process was not followed as to what the board's ability was as far as being present at certain meetings and discussions. He said the board was taken out of that and given a failing in governance. Ms. Zoerb said generally the superintendent forms a QSAC committee and a board member is part of that committee. Mr. Ulrich said we were not part of that committee. Ms. Zoerb said when you follow and have a process a lot of the conflict goes away.

Mr. Franceschini encouraged the board to utilize the New Jersey School Boards Association and Ms. Zoerb if there are questions.

Mr. Ulrich said when misunderstandings occur they are always a result of a process. He suggested additional training for school board members beyond the accountability seminars that are mandatory. Ms. Zoerb said a board focus area could be to enhance your knowledge and skill in governance through additional professional development with the New Jersey School Boards Association.

Mr. Franceschini asked what the next step would be. Ms. Zoerb said as far as the district goals your superintendent needs to further develop, change and review the action plan in order to bring back to the board to demonstrate how she plans for the district to achieve the goals. She said an action plans need to be done for the board goals.

Dr. Banks asked if we are set with the three goals. Ms. Zoerb responded yes. Dr. Banks requested for board members to email her items that they would like to expand on so she can incorporate it into the action plan.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kevin J. Franchetta, CPA  
Board Secretary