

A special meeting of the Board of Education of the City of Vineland was held Wednesday, August 27, 2008 at 6:35 p.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. Evans, Mr. Fanucci, Mr. Franceschini, Ms. Rios and Mr. Spinelli. Absent: Mr. Ulrich.

Also present: Mr. Ottinger, Superintendent, Dr. Figgs and Dr. Gruccio, Assistant Superintendents, Mr. Franchetta, Board Secretary, Mr. DeSanto, Board Solicitor and Ms. Greenfield, Executive Director of Personnel.

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:

Recommendations: See page 2

G I O R D A N O	B E R N A R D I N I	D E W I N N E	E V A N S	F A N U C C I	F R A N C E S C H I N I	R I O S	S P I N E L L I	U L R I C H
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RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

1. The Board approve the following personnel items in accordance with the lists provided and on file with the Secretary of the Board:
 - a. List of retirements
 - b. List of resignations/terminations
 - c. List of leaves of absence
 - d. List of employment of personnel
 - e. List of transfers, assignments and/or promotions
 - f. List of student assistants and New Jersey Youth Corps
 - g. List of substitute personnel
 - h. List of extracurricular assignments
 - i. List of summer hours
 - j. List of reinstated personnel

All Members
voted "yes."
(8-0-0)

Mr. Spinelli asked if the Family Friendly Grant costs the district anything. Mr. Franchetta said the grant covers the costs. Mr. Spinelli asked if all the people listed will be doing data analysis. Mr. Ottinger said he does not know all the details but the entire district is doing the analysis at Veterans Memorial School.

Mr. Franceschini asked what the amount of pay is for the REBEL Advisor listed under extra-curricular. Ms. Greenfield said \$25.00 per hour.

Mr. Giordano asked if all the employment positions are replacements. Ms. Greenfield said there are some new positions such as preschool teacher and aide positions that are newly funded in the budget.

Mr. DeWinne asked how many substitutes we will have at the high school level. Ms. Greenfield said we have two science vacancies at the high school level.

Mr. Spinelli asked if the transfers are due to the fact that we needed to move people around to service the students properly. Ms. Greenfield said some buildings closed and teachers were moved around at Vineland High School North/South because of the small learning communities.

Vineland Board Of Education
 Report to the Board – August 27, 2008

G I O R D A N N O	B E R N A R D I N I	D E W I N N E	E V A N S	F A N U C C I	F R A N C E S C H I N I	R I O S	S P I N E L L I	U L R I C H
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4. The Board approve the Addendum to the Vineland Administrators and Supervisors Association (VASA) Contract for the period of July 1, 2007 to June 30, 2010.

Mr. Spinelli asked if this is the addition of the administrative assistants' salary schedule. Mr. Ottinger said they were not affiliated with VASA at the time the contract was approved and now they are.

Mr. Giordano asked what does the salary guides for administrative assistants is attached as Schedule B mean. Mr. Franchetta said it is the page that contains their salary.

5. The Board approve a request for a waiver of toilet room facilities for the rooms at Leuchter School. (This request is required in order to continue State approval of our use of these rooms.)

6. The Board accept the donation of V-twin engines from Honda of America to the Vineland High School Automotive Technology Program in accordance with Board Policy #7230, "Gifts, Grants and Donations."

Mr. Bramante said he was awarded at the AYES Conference a brake line kit and a diagnostic scan tool, which are valued at approximately \$8,500.00. He said that he would like to donate them to the automotive program so the students can use them.

The board decided to approve the donation at the September meeting.

All Members

Public Comment:

April Lynn, parent

Ms. Lynn expressed her concern in regards to her daughter, Toni, being dropped from the high school roster because of excessive absences.

Mr. Ottinger said he is aware of the situation and there is more to this than what is being presented. He said that he concurs with the decision.

Mr. Giordano told Ms. Lynn that someone from the district will be in contact with her.

Randy Luis, parent

Mr. Luis expressed his concern regarding his daughter walking to Landis School from Chimes Terrace.

Mr. Giordano said he sympathizes with Mr. Luis however; a few years ago the eligibility requirements were changed for transportation and it is out of their hands.

Mr. Ottinger and Mr. Spinelli suggested contacting Mayor Romano in regards to possibly doing an investigation to declare this area a hazardous route.

Benny Mendez, parent

Mr. Mendez expressed his concern regarding his daughter walking to Landis School from Chimes Terrace.

Mr. Bernardini mentioned that a survey was done by the police department and none of the streets in Vineland were declared hazardous.

Ronald Walker

Mr. Walker expressed his concern in regards to the bus stop at Crystal and Pine being dangerous.

Mr. Ottinger said this will be looked into.

Special

Presentation:

Mr. Giordano introduced and welcomed Ms. Jane Kershner, Director of Member Services of the New Jersey School Boards Association.

Ms. Kershner said the board failed the governance portion of QSAC and needs to share a professional growth plan with the state.

Continued

Ms. Kershner reviewed the Code of Ethics with the board. She said there are only four areas the board failed that pertain to the specific items under governance. Ms. Kershner said the first area is:

- 1) Each member of the school board or advisory board confines his or her board action to policy making, planning, and appraisal, which relates to Code of Ethics (c). The explanation is do not become involved in the administration, organization or implementation of policy and goals.

Ms. Kershner said even if board members think what they are doing is not incorrect you need to be aware of what the state is dealing with. She said the state right now is not happy with boards in general. Mr. Spinelli commented that the board is not happy with the state either. Mr. Franceschini asked if he was correct in saying that the board sets policy, creates policy and oversees policy. Ms. Kershner responded yes. She asked the board members if they operate through the board president. Mr. Franceschini said most of the time. Ms. Kershner said she is concerned with the little bit of time that the board does not. Mr. Giordano said he tells his colleagues that they should feel free to contact the superintendent over any issues. Ms. Kershner said board members should go to the board president who would then go to the superintendent. She said we all deal with perception and how others perceive us. The things that the board does not do well are the ones that come out in public. Mr. Spinelli said the QSAC report was not made by the public but by employees in the district with their perception of the board. Ms. Kershner told the board if they continue to do these things they will fail this report again in three years. Mr. Spinelli said the point needs to be made that it is not necessarily the public that is complaining but the employees. Ms. Kershner said if additional training will not only rectify this but make the board better as a team what difference does it make. Mr. Fanucci said it makes a huge difference. He said it is the relationships the board has with administration and themselves as board members that allows this district to function as well as it does. Mr. Fanucci said the board members put in a lot of time and deal with a lot of grief and aggravation. He said he is comfortable enough going to anyone in the district with a problem and feels he has never overstepped his bounds. Mr. Fanucci said he does not dispute anyone's opinion but feels we should move on. Ms. Kershner asked what would be most helpful in doing the kind of training that the state is requiring. Mr. Fanucci questioned what the board could be trained on because old habits are hard to break.

Mr. Bernardini said the perception is if a board member contacts the superintendent with a problem they did something wrong. He thinks a lot of this is because of him. Mr. Bernardini said he is retired and is the type of person that likes to get things done and if that is the situation it is about time to leave this board. Ms. Kershner said that is why the board failed governance.

Ms. Kershner told the board that she thinks their hearts are in this but the state comes in and this is the result. She said because of this result the board needs to have a professional growth plan. Ms. Kershner said in order to not receive the same kind of occurrence three years from now, we need to discuss ways that things can change a little bit. She said that she does not represent the State of New Jersey but is a training agent.

Mr. DeSanto said he has had the pleasure of sitting in this seat for twenty years has seen all boards and various superintendents. He said what is truly ashamed about this discussion is that we have a good mix of people in terms of the composition of this board and the superintendent we now have. Mr. DeSanto said he is not so sure that he sees administration objecting to a heads up call from a board member. He thinks it is the content of the discussion and the way it is presented. Mr. DeSanto said administration has one boss and that is the superintendent. The Board of Education has that fine line to be drawn between oversight and policy making and its implementation. Mr. DeSanto said when you cross that implementation line that is where the problem occurs. Ms Kershner said that is right and agrees with Mr. DeSanto that the problem is the perception.

Mr. Bernardini said there were individuals that did the report, which caused the board to fail the QSAC. He would like to know from those individuals what things were so offensive that caused the board not to pass.

Mr. Giordano said the board knows that they need to be in compliance. Ms. Kershner said the board has to do this because of the report that came out. She said the perception that people got is that you are micromanaging and not sticking to policy.

Mr. Franceschini said unfortunately the perception of the community is that the board are the micromanagers and have more power then we actually do. Ms. Kershner said she agrees and it is that way in every town across New Jersey.

Mr. Bernardini mentioned that the former superintendent did not address problems that were brought to him.

Ms. Kershner said we are going to need to have a couple more workshops.

Mr. Evans said it sounds like the people, who decide if the board is being ethical, at any point can change the rules of the game. He said if the board has the workshops and improve the next time around, they could still be told they are bad in another area. Mr. Evans said the board could be doing the best job in the world but the employees' perception can be skewed. Ms. Kershner said the process is not as arbitrary as it seems. She understands what Mr. Evans is saying but if she was a member of this staff and heard what he was saying, she would be very unhappy.

Mr. Spinelli asked if people were trained on filling out the QSAC report. Mr. Ottinger said it was rather easy. He said the real issue was that the board interfered where they should not have. Mr. Ottinger said this happened on to many occasions and needed to be rectified. He said there are a lot of examples to substantiate that fact. Mr. Spinelli said the examples should have been brought to the board so they could be rectified. Mr. Ottinger said they were brought to board members many many times. He said that he knows there is not a board member here who does not have the best interest of the district at heart and mind. There are situations where board members were involved in things and should not have been. Mr. Ottinger feels board members should not be involved in interviews. Ms. Kershner said Mr. Ottinger is right that board members should not be involved in interviews other than the superintendent.

Mr. Franceschini asked if a retreat could be scheduled for theory into practice. Ms. Kershner feels that having a discussion like this in public is unfair to the board and public. She said a retreat would be very good and would benefit the board.

The board decided to hold the retreat on Wednesday, September 17, 2008.

Mr. Giordano said there were some flaws in the process because it was brand new but the board still needs to be in compliance. He said the board is going to do what they need to do and move forward.

Mr. DeWinne asked if he was correct in saying that the board is required to be a member of the New Jersey School Boards Association who provide governance to the board. Ms. Kershner responded yes. She said the state recently enacted legislation that makes training mandatory for board members. Mr. DeWinne asked if the district's cost for dues was the same because we are a larger district. Ms. Kershner said it is a formula that is based on enrollment and held the same for ten years.

Mr. Giordano asked when the board's goal setting should be scheduled. Ms. Kershner said it could be done at the theory in practice meeting.

The meeting was adjourned to executive session at 8:11 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kevin J. Franchetta, CPA
Board Secretary

KJF: