

A special meeting of the Board of Education of the City of Vineland was held Wednesday, September 17, 2008 at 6:33 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, Ms. Rios and Mr. Ulrich. Absent: Mr. Franceschini and Mr. Spinelli.

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

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:

Public Comments: None.

Mr. DeSanto arrived at 7:00 p.m.

Recommendations: See page 2

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. Extracurricular assignments

Mr. Giordano asked if these are primarily Schedule B items. Ms. Greenfield responded yes they are all Schedule B and a correction on Mennies School. Mr. Giordano asked if there was a hold up with this. Ms. Greenfield said yes because we needed to have a discussion regarding stipends and how they were going to be utilized. Mr. Giordano asked if that is all resolved. Ms. Greenfield said yes we have an agreement between the union and administration. Mr. Giordano asked if we are doing this so they can start in the schools instead of waiting until the October meeting. Ms. Greenfield responded yes. Mr. Giordano asked about the Mennies School correction. Ms. Greenfield said Math 24 was listed under the clubs and it is a regular stipend position.

Mr. Ulrich asked why TBA is listed instead of an instructor. Ms. Greenfield said they wanted to make sure that the funds were board approved.

2. The Board approve travel for district members as required by NJAC 6A:10A-8.3 and/or school field trips as per lists provided and on file with the Secretary of the Board.

All Members voted "yes."
(7-0-0)

All Members voted "yes."
(7-0-0)

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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Public Comments: None.

Mr. Giordano said the primary purpose of tonight's meeting is to set the district goals that the superintendent needs to work on in conjunction with the board's request. He said the board needs to come up with three attainable goals and move forward. Mr. Giordano said that he emailed all the board members and asked them to come up with two or three items that should be a current priority in this school district. He said hopefully we can come up with three common goals that the entire board feels are important. Mr. Giordano introduced, Jane Kershner, Director of Field Services for New Jersey School Boards Association to begin the discussion.

Ms. Kershner said tonight is a goal setting evening and the power of coming up with specific goals is that the board as a single voice is asking the superintendent to spend the majority of his time on those goals. She said by setting goals you are fulfilling the law and the progress of these goals will form the sole basis for evaluating the superintendent next year. Ms. Kershner said one of the things that has been mandated is that the goals should be focused on student achievement. She said there are three types of goals and the goals that the board is setting tonight are the District Goals. Ms. Kershner said the district goals have to do with fiscal management, operations, personnel, and instruction & program. Ms. Kershner said the superintendent's goals are generally part of the professional improvement plan. She said one the parts of the legal evaluation that the board does on the superintendent is generally part of a professional improvement plan. Ms. Kershner said the board goals have to do with the board's area of governance, process and procedure. She said once the goals are formalized tonight she recommends that the board adopts them at the next meeting and gives them to the superintendent to write out his action plan. Ms. Kershner said the action plan specifies who is responsible, resources to be deployed, due dates of completion and criteria to be used to ascertain accomplishment. She said the action plan is the superintendent's opportunity to write down how he is going to achieve these goals and by doing this it is a protection for him. Ms. Kershner said generally when a goal is decided you can talk about whose responsibility is what. She reviewed the board calendar and CSA evaluation sheet. Ms. Kershner suggested for the board to move the superintendent evaluation up to March because she does the think the superintendent should be evaluated with new board members. She does not recommend setting any more then three goals or an absolute maximum of four goals.

Mr. Giordano said in light of the fact that this year we implemented small learning communities he believes that we need to have a comprehensive oversight and make this one of the goals. Ms. Kershner asked Mr. Giordano what he means by comprehensive oversight. Mr. Giordano said reporting to the board periodically on the progress and ironing out some of the flaws that everyone knew would be there.

Mr. Ulrich said we really need to have an evaluation on how the first year has gone with the small learning communities so we know where we are in this progress.

Mr. Bernardini said there is a misunderstanding with the public, students and some teachers on the small learning communities. He thinks we should hold a meeting at the high school and invite the public so they could present their thoughts as to why they feel this is not working.

Ms. Kershner said how the small learning community goal is going to be achieved is really Mr. Ottinger's job. She said if Mr. Ottinger decides it would be a good idea to have a meeting at the high school then it will be in his action plan.

Mr. Ottinger said he agrees that the board should have been given a report regarding some of the concerns. He said it is good for the board to know where we are in regards to this issue and they should be provided updates.

Ms. Rios feels not only the board should have knowledge of this situation but the public should as well.

Mr. Fanucci asked if there were criteria used for reporting to the board. Mr. Ottinger said he has made a list of every email sent to him by the board and that is how he will address the board's concerns on the small learning communities. He feels it is necessary for the board to have periodic updates because they are constantly contacted by the public.

Mr. Bernardini said at sometime administration has to address the board on this issue and he feels the public should be there to listen.

Mr. Ulrich said that may be a public relations or customer service aspect. He said what he interpreted this to be is that the small learning communities would be part of a strategic plan based upon the mission goals of the school district.

Mr. Ulrich said this would probably take about four years to evaluate and have a true benchmark as to whether or not the small learning communities have been successful.

Mr. Kershner said Goal #1 would be the following: Evaluate and provided periodic updates on the progress of the small learning communities. She said some of this could revolve around district public relations but she does not know how an action plan could be written for this.

Mr. Ulrich said he knows there has been some discussion about customer service and there are departments that we have been receiving complaints about. He said a goal could be to look at the people that are actually interacting with the parents on a daily basis.

Mr. Giordano asked if customer service would fall under district public relations. Ms. Kershner said she thinks so but this happened in other districts and they had to go into some major training programs. She said if this is something that is important enough to make as one of the district goals then there needs to be an action plan.

Mr. Ottinger said with the amount of cliental that this particular department deals with on a daily basis they are probably one of the best departments in the entire district. He said there were a couple of incidents that were brought to the board by the public where situations may not have been handled in the best manner. Mr. Ottinger said it would be good public relations if we could improve our communication with the public and explain what all of our departments do and how they operate. Ms. Kershner asked Mr. Ottinger if he was speaking about a brochure that could be given out. Mr. Ottinger said based on last year's goal Mr. Sbrana and various departments spent a lot more time on our local television. If the board sets a public relations goal he is suggesting that we extend what we are all ready doing to include other departments in the district.

Mr. Giordano asked if we need to go to a great expense to provide training. Ms. Kershner said if you want different results from some of your personnel you would have to invest time, energy and money into making that change occur. Mr. Giordano said how employees handle stressful situations is not part of their evaluation. Mr. Ulrich said that is what training can accomplish.

Ms. Kershner said the board should be referring any complaints they receive to the administration. Mr. Ottinger said the board does forward every single complaint to him. Mr. Ulrich said if you send Mr. Ottinger an email you will receive a response back within an hour. Mr. Ottinger said throughout the district there are repeated incidents of complaints that have been permitted to go on and on, which is an evaluation situation. Ms. Kershner asked if that could be a possible goal to improve and enhance the evaluation system. Mr. Ottinger does not feel the public receives enough information about what is going on in the district. Ms. Kershner said Goal #2 could be the following: To improve interaction with the community of Vineland. Mr. Ottinger said we do what we can. He said Mr. Sbrana is working with the high school administration to prepare programming for *Channel #9* in regards to the small learning community facts. Mr. Ottinger said we can not force people to turn on *Channel #9* to watch this.

Mr. Ulrich feels we are doing as much as we possibly can and you can not force a two way communication. If parents are that concerned they will show up at their respective school and have their complaints aired and answered.

Mr. Bernardini said a good public relations job was done when Debbie Marko, reporter for the *Daily Journal*, covered the school board. He said the individual who covers the school board now does not show up at every meeting. Mr. Ulrich told Mr. Bernardini to be careful because we were going to be QSAC'd on that.

Mr. Fanucci said he would like to see an improvement plan done internally on how internal divisions are treating staff members and how staff members are treating the divisions. Mr. Giordano asked if that could be incorporated into Goal #2. Ms. Kershner responded yes Goal #2 could be: To improve internal and external district relations by fostering positive interaction and improve interaction with community members and district employees. She said Goal #3 could be: Consistency of policies and programs throughout the district to insure there is articulation of curriculum throughout the district at all grade levels and schools. Maintain consistency in district policies which include but are not limited to hiring practices, discipline policy, safety and security accountability.

Mr. Ottinger mentioned that we took care of the discipline guide and Schedule B.

Ms. Kershner asked how the district is doing with the Early Childhood Program. Mr. Ottinger said the program is doing fantastic.

Mr. Giordano asked the board for other concerns they may have.

Mr. DeWinne expressed his concern as a parent that his child's teacher was out of the classrooms a lot due to training. Mr. Ottinger agrees with Mr. DeWinne and feels teachers should be in their classroom. He said that they would like to see the professional development take place after school. Mr. Ottinger said also the finances are not there to provide the professional development any longer.

Mr. Evans said as a district a goal should be to seek out grants that provide professional development and do not require fund matching. He said these grants pay for substitutes and for the teacher stipends to attend professional development outside the school hours.

Mr. Ulrich feels that professional development is valuable for teachers to have better skills because things change. He said it is important that the staff is exposed to different situations. Mr. Ulrich said the dilemma is how many days are we going inconvenience parents. He feels it is asking a lot of the staff who put in a long day to have professional development after school.

Mr. Giordano asked Mr. DeWinne if he was to set a goal in the area of finance what would his main concern be. Mr. DeWinne said to try and reduce some of our district costs during the summer and reduce unnecessary overtime.

Ms. Rios suggested for the district to come up with ways to work with the police department in informing the community about providing safety to the students. Ms. Kershner said that is bigger than just a goal. She said that is an ongoing responsibility that the district already has.

Mr. Giordano asked if advertising is the same each time a position is posted. Mr. Ottinger said it should be consistent.

Mr. Ulrich feels the salaries are subjective because he has not seen anything in writing as to what the salary would be with experience. He would like to see more consistency on what we pay teachers coming in to our district with public school experience. Mr. Ottinger said public school experience is in the VEA contract.

Ms. Kershner said this is the second sentence of Goal #3 maintain consistency in district policies which include but are not limited to hiring practices, discipline policy, safety, security and accountability. She asked if this would work as a third goal.

Mr. Fanucci said this is a comprehensive statement and is something that is worked on daily at the administrative level. He said this is meaty enough to be a third goal and does address Mr. DeWinne's, Mr. Ulrich and Ms. Rio's point.

Mr. Giordano asked if you would address one particular area in the action plan of that goal. Ms. Kershner said no it would be an entire goal and would take into account all of the things that were discussed.

Mr. Ulrich asked if a company was hired to review all of our policies. Mr. Ottinger said it is on going. Ms. Kershner said the district should acquire a complete up to date critical policy manual from New Jersey School Boards Association.

Mr. Giordano said the key is that we have to adhere to the goals and it has to be a priority.

Ms. Kershner reviewed the School District Accountability Act mandated training with the board. She said 1st term, 2nd year of service is Governance I: NJQSAC, 1st term, 3rd year of service is Governance II: School Finance and reelected/reappointed board members must take Advanced Training: Legal Update. Ms. Kershner said the agenda planning sheet that was distributed to the board lists the board of educations responsibilities that take place within a specific season. She said that Mr. Franceschini who is the NJ School Boards Association Delegate must attend the Legal Update Delegate Assembly in November.

Mr. Giordano asked Ms. Kershner if she will be bringing the board's new field representative some time in the future. Ms. Kershner responded yes her name is Charlene Zoerb. Mr. Giordano said he is sorry to see Ms. Kershner go and wished her the best on her promotion.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kevin J. Franchetta, CPA
Board Secretary