

The regular meeting of the Board of Education of the City of Vineland was held in the auditorium at Vineland High School South, 2880 E. Chestnut Avenue, Vineland, New Jersey, on Wednesday, December 10, 2008 at 7:03 p.m., pursuant to notice with Mr. Giordano presiding and the following members present: Mr. Bernardini, Mr. DeWinne, Mr. Evans, Mr. Fanucci, Mr. Franceschini, Ms. Rios, Mr. Spinelli and Mr. Ulrich. Absent: None.

Also present: Mr. Ottinger, Superintendent, Dr. Figgs and Dr. Gruccio, Assistant Superintendents, Mr. Franchetta, Board Secretary, Mr. DeSanto, Solicitor, Ms. Greenfield, Executive Director of Personnel, Mrs. Polof, Special Education Director, press and public. Absent: None.

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: Amanda Escobar, Ariana Escobar, Kirk Pierce, Denae Clarke and Brandon Tomasso, students from Vineland High School, led the Board in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Special

Presentation (s): Mr. Ottinger introduced the Arts Community Select Choir under the direction of Lori Cummines and the All Community Select Choir under the direction of Eileen Bosco, who performed musical selections prior to the meeting. He also recognized the Polaris Players who performed a wonderful production of *Noises Off* under the direction of Natalie Quackenbush.

Mr. Giordano mentioned that he attended the *Noises Off* play, which had to be a difficult production to put on. He said the timing was absolutely phenomenal and he congratulated the cast for an outstanding job. He said the workshop that is being held tonight by a representative from the New Jersey School Boards Association will be done after the voting portion of the meeting.

Approval of Minutes: Upon motion by Mr. DeWinne, seconded by Mr. Evans, the Board approved the minutes from November 5, 2008 and November 12, 2008. All Members voted "yes."

Report of the
Secretary/Custodian
Of School Monies:

Upon motion by Mr. Spinelli, seconded by Mr. Franceschini, the reports of the Secretary and Custodian of School Monies for the month of October 2008, which are in agreement were approved as submitted and on file in the Minute Book, and the Board approved its monthly certification of budgetary major account fund status and the Board Secretary's monthly certification as on file with the Secretary. All Members voted "yes."

Solicitor's Report: None.

Public Comment on
Agenda Items: None.

Recommendations: See page 3

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

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
			1					2
				2				1
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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

A motion was made by Mr. Evans to table transfer A.1 (e) name #1. All Members voted “yes.”

All Members voted “yes” except transfer A.1 (e) name #1 was tabled. (9-0-0)

2. The Board authorize the assignments of the pupils, whose names are provided and on file with the Secretary of the Board, to special education programs outside the district with tuition costs to be borne by the Board.

Further, the Board approve the acceptance of the tuition pupil(s), whose names are on file with the Secretary of the Board, for placement in special education programs offered in Vineland with tuition costs to be borne by the sending district(s).

(Tuition payment and assignments shall be regulated by Chapter 46, Laws of 1966, as amended, and the rules and regulations of the State Department of Education.)

All Members voted “yes.” (9-0-0)

3. The Board approve budgetary transfers in accordance with the list provided and on file with the Secretary of the Board:

- a. General Fund
- b. Early Childhood Program Aid (ECPA)

All Members voted “yes.” (9-0-0)

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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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		2					1	
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4. The Board accept funding in the following amount(s):
- a. Cumberland County Office of Employment & Training
 GED Testing Services
 Through Vineland Adult Education Center
 August 1, 2009 – September 30, 2009
 In the amount of ----- \$ 4,000.00
 (additional funding)
 - b. Cumberland County Office of Employment & Training
 Workforce Learning Link
 Through Vineland Adult Education Center
 August 1, 2009 – September 30, 2009
 In the amount of ----- \$11,600.00
 (additional funding)
 - c. Cumberland County Youth Services Advisory Council
 Supplemental Educational Services (SES) Program in
 Middle Schools
 In the amount of ----- \$98,000.00
 (approximate)

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

**Mr. Spinelli asked if the field trips are all self funded.
 Mr. Ottinger said that is correct.**

All Members
 voted "yes."
 (9-0-0)

All Members
 voted "yes"
 except for Mr.
 Bernardini
 who voted
 "yes" on all
 travel except
 he
 "abstained"
 on his name
 listed on page
 2.
 (9-0-0)

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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6. The Board approve the 2007 – 2008 Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR) and Auditor’s Management Report by Romano, Hearing, Testa & Knorr.

(A summary of the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR) was presented by Stephen Testa of Romano, Hearing, Testa & Knorr and discussed by the Board at the Wednesday, December 3, 2008 work session.)

7. The Board approve and direct the Secretary of the Board to implement each of the following recommendations from the 2007 – 2008 Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR) and Auditor’s Management Report in accordance with the Corrective Action Plan (CAP) which is provided and on file with the Secretary of the Board:

- a. *The Uniform Minimum Chart of Accounts for New Jersey Public Schools, 2003 Edition* and the Budget Guidelines will be referenced for proper classification as required by N.J.A.C. 6A:23-2.2(f).
- b. A Position Control Roster containing the required components in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:10A-7.1(c)9 will be maintained.
- c. Reimbursement for travel expenditures will not exceed the amounts approved by the Assistant Commissioner, if required.
- d. Disclosure forms required by P.L. 2005, c. 271, will be date stamped to document compliance with the ten (10) day requirement.
- e. Free and reduced lunch applications will be reviewed by district personnel and properly classified as free, reduced or paid.
- f. Related services consistent with those contained in the student’s IEP and qualified for inclusion will be properly reported on the A.S.S.A.

All Members voted “yes.”
(9-0-0)

All Members voted “yes.”
(9-0-0)

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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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			2				1	
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			2				1	

8. The Board approve the Addendum to the Vineland Administrators and Supervisors Association (VASA) Contract that is provided and on file with the Secretary of the Board.

All Members voted "yes." (9-0-0)

9. The Board approve the Uniform Memorandum of Agreement between Education and Law Enforcement Officials and the Vineland Board of Education.

All Members voted "yes." (9-0-0)

10. The Board approve the Teacher-in-Training Agreement between the Vineland Board of Education and The College of New Jersey.

All Members voted "yes." (9-0-0)

11. The Board approve the Agreement between SMILE New Jersey, PLLC and the Vineland Board of Education for the period from December 11, 2008 through June 30, 2009 to provide dental services to the students of Vineland Public Schools.

All Members voted "yes." (9-0-0)

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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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					2		1	

12. The Board approve the Clinical Education Agreement between Healthsouth Corporation and the Vineland Board of Education for the training of students for the career of Nursing from December 11, 2008 through August 31, 2009 in a form of contract approval by the Superintendent of Schools and Board Solicitor.

All Members voted yes.” (9-0-0)

13. The Board approve participation in the Casa PRAC Truancy Prevention Program.

All Members voted “yes.” (9-0-0)

14. The Board authorize the awarding of a contract to A-1 Entertainment, Inc. (Corrado E. Ruscica) in accordance with Board Policy #3230, Guideline #5, “Outside Activities.”

All Members voted “yes.” (9-0-0)

Mr. Fanucci asked if certificates of insurance have to be supplied for outside activities. Mr. Franchetta said depending on the value of the contract we have a form of contract that Mr. DiDomenico prepared to send to the vendor.

Mr. DeWinne asked if the attorney sends a contract out to each vendor. Mr. Franchetta said Mr. DiDomenico prepared a blanket contract that we use when vendors perform services in excess of a certain dollar amount.

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
						2	1	
						2	1	
						1	2	
						2	1	

15. The Board accept the donation of various items with an approximate value of \$510.00 from David R. Kotok for use in the library and in art and science classrooms at Veterans Memorial Middle School in accordance with Board Policy #7230, "Gifts, Grants and Donations."

Mr. DeWinne thanked Mr. Kotok for his donation.

All Members voted "yes."
(9-0-0)

16. The Board approve ten (10) new proposed courses at the high school level: Theatre Arts 2; Marine Sciences; Leadership 2; Forensics; Plant Ecology; Multimedia; Real Life Writing; Zoology; Honors English IV; and, Native Americans and the Natural World.

Mr. Ulrich noted that the same number of courses were deleted from the small learning communities.

All Members voted "yes."
(9-0-0)

17. The Board approve the Second Reading of revisions to the following policies for adoption:

- a. Policy #3216 Dress and Grooming (Teaching Staff)
- b. Policy #4216 Dress and Grooming (Support Staff)

All Members voted "yes."
(9-0-0)

18. The Board approve the Settlement Agreement for the former employee whose name is on file with the Secretary of the Board.

All Members voted "yes." except Mr. Ulrich who voted "no."
(8-1-0)

B. Proposed for review or discussion or adoption by Board Members: None.

Approval of Bills: Upon motion by Mr. Franceschini, seconded by Mr. Fanucci, the bills were approved and warrants issued for same. All Members voted “yes” (\$6,681,192.20).

Emergent Item(s)
(with prior approval) None.

Public: Valorie Francisci, Vineland Resident
Ms. Francisci expressed her concern in regards to an alarming safety issue at Landis Middle School. She said due to the dangerous environment at Landis she encouraged the board members to speak with the teachers, administration and Vineland Police Department. Ms. Francisci said the severity of this situation warrants the board’s immediate attention and she thanks them for giving it just that.

Denae Clark, Student
Ms. Clarke wanted to clarify that when she spoke at the October work session she came on her own will because she cares about what is going on in her school. She still believes that the small learning communities have impacted the school in a negative way and the people suffering the most are the students. Ms. Clarke said her advocacy class is something that truly bothers her. She feels that she wastes time in a class with a teacher who does not even know her name.

Mr. Giordano asked Mr. Ottinger if he was aware of any safety issue incidents at Landis Middle School.

Mr. Ottinger said there have been a lot of arrests at Landis School and most of them are pertaining to fighting between two individuals. He said that he spoke with the principal and assistant principal today and they are trying to get assistance from the students. Mr. Ottinger said he along with the administration is aware of the issues at Landis School and he is certain the police department is also aware. He does not think it is a dangerous situation in the regard that most of the situations have involved one on one confrontations between two students. Mr. Ottinger said hopefully with cooperation with the teaching staff we will get this situation corrected.

Mr. Giordano said he will forward the email he received from Ms. Francisci in regards to statistics to Mr. Ottinger.

Mr. Ottinger said a few years ago Landis School had a discipline policy in effect. He said that he requested for the intermediate schools to have a consistent discipline policy throughout the district, which he had no input in. Mr. Ottinger said that discipline policy is working very well in all the intermediate schools except Landis.

Mr. Spinelli mentioned that having consistent discipline throughout the district was one of the goals the board gave to the superintendent.

Mr. Ottinger said Landis School is having more discipline problems than all three intermediate schools combined.

Mr. Spinelli said a staff member told him that in order to keep the Violence & Vandalism Report down they were told to watch what they write in their referrals. He feels if we are having issues at that school it would be prudent for teachers to put down exactly what happens. Mr. Ottinger said he does not believe that an administrator would tell anyone to do that. He knows that many of the teachers preferred the other discipline policy. Mr. Spinelli asked if there is anything else we can do as a district to try to help that school resolve some of these problems. Mr. Ottinger said the district is pretty proactive to discipline problems. He said Mr. Kohaut said they are working very hard in trying to get the students to come forth and notify them when they think there will be a confrontation. Mr. Ottinger said they are having difficulty in getting the students to do this.

Mr. Franceschini asked if discipline should be stronger in a school that has more violence. Mr. Ottinger said he does not know how it could be any stronger.

Mr. Bernardini asked if the police are going to Landis School regularly. Mr. Ulrich said the juvenile unit visits the middle schools regularly. He said when the police receive a call from a school they respond and take the offenders into custody. Mr. Ulrich said the police department has specific policies that are in place. He said if a student is arrested and it is not a first time offense the matter goes to family court where the charges are adjudicated. Mr. Ulrich said from a police stand point they are doing everything that they can. He said on a monthly basis they meet with representatives from the high, middle and elementary schools.

Mr. Bernardini asked if there is a particular police officer on call to go to the schools. Mr. Ulrich said the police department is connected to the school security radio system. He said the juvenile officers have that channel and go where they are needed.

Mr. Ottinger wanted to emphasize that all four intermediate schools use the same discipline policy code.

Mr. Giordano asked if we have an electronic reporting of these incidents. Mr. Ottinger said yes. Mr. Giordano asked if a principal has the discretion to not report certain incidents. Mr. Ottinger said they are not supposed to do that. Mr. Giordano asked Mr. Ottinger to please investigate that all incidents are being reported. He also asked Mr. Ottinger if he thought the new discipline code was watered down from the one that Landis previously had. Mr. Ottinger said speaking as a former principal he thought the previous discipline policy was ridiculous. He said the teachers were not to do any discipline and were supposed to send everyone to the administration.

Mr. Spinelli asked if there is Peer Mediation at Landis School. Mr. Ottinger responded yes.

Mr. DeWinne said we need to identify the problem as to why this is happening at Landis School and make a fundamental change to correct it.

Mr. Ottinger said he has confidence with the teaching staff at Landis School. He said Mr. Kohaut is experienced and knows how to handle and resolve problems.

Mr. Bernardini mentioned when Landis School had the previous discipline policy they were not hearing about problems there. Mr. Ottinger said the object is not to throw the students out of school every chance you get. He said it is to straighten out their behavior and try to keep them in school. Mr. Ottinger said at that time the Landis administration thought that was the best course of action to take and he is sure there were fewer problems in the school.

Mr. Ulrich said from a law enforcement standpoint the police should be the last segment of the problem.

Mr. Spinelli said discussed at the November Finance Committee meeting was the audit report given by Mr. Testa. He said they also discussed the vice principal position, taxes and a cap waiver with the new budget. Mr. Spinelli said Mr. DeWinne requested to attend the principals meetings. He said they reminded the administration of the timeline for budgets. Mr. Spinelli said discussed at the December Finance Committee meeting were the new state regulations regarding procedures to save money. He said they discussed the duties of the athletic maintenance department and the possibility of staggering them to cut back on some overtime. Mr. Spinelli said the school based budgets were discussed and the reverse priority. He said they discussed a supplemental budget and all the Abbott districts are allowed to reapply for the supplemental aid they previously received. Mr. Spinelli said Mr. Sciarra, from the Education Law Center, stated that all the mandates would have to be put back in. He said they discussed a tax increase and did not think it would happen this year. Mr. Fanucci brought up technology issues and finances in dealing with them. He said they are going to look at possibly upgrading our servers. Mr. Spinelli said they discussed various transportation issues such as whether or not drivers should be allowed to leave the city with their bus in between routes. He said they discussed fuel costs and if it might be a better deal if we could get someone to deliver the fuel to our yards rather than have our buses go across town. Mr. Franceschini asked if this was looked into already. Mr. Franchetta said yes but we can not do anything until the current bid is expired. Mr. Spinelli said in the new specifications we may put out to see if it would be better for us to have the fuel delivered.

Mr. Franceschini asked if we made a slight profit last year from food service. Mr. Franchetta said it is difficult with the labor costs that we incur in food service but he can look at the numbers. Mr. Franceschini asked where we are with the central kitchen where we were going to provide services to other districts. Mr. Franchetta the state is looking into methods of cost saving measures for all districts with the new regulations that have been issued. He said we will be exploring the possibility of utilizing the central kitchen to service more school districts.

Mr. Spinelli asked if Mrs. Holt can attend the next Finance Committee meeting to discuss this. Mr. Franchetta said yes.

Mr. Bernardini asked if the new regulations will allow districts to handle their food service through Vineland. Mr. Franchetta said the regulations are encouraging shared services amongst districts.

Mr. Giordano asked where we are with Blackboard versus K to 12. Mr. Franchetta said we were prepared to put Blackboard on this month's agenda then an issue arose as to whether or not we should host the data or have Blackboard host the data.

Mr. Spinelli asked who was involved in the decision making to choose Blackboard over K to 12. Mr. Franchetta said a group of members from the high school administration.

Mr. Evans asked if anyone has ever considered open source software, which is usually free and a better alternative to commercial software. Mr. Franchetta responded no.

Mr. Giordano asked if there was a timeline for this. Mr. Franchetta said he needs to meet with the company to discuss the issues of hosting versus us hosting the data.

Mr. Spinelli said because of security risks he does not believe there is any open software. Mr. Evans said that should not be an issue as long as it is held on a secure server. He would like to see on all levels if we are utilizing office applications such as Microsoft Office.

Mr. Ulrich said although Blackboard was more expensive it is an integrated system and we could possibly be put on the county college license to have a reduced fee, which is what was being explored. He thinks if we are going to invest in a system we should take our time and do it right.

Mr. Franceschini thinks we should move cautiously on how we are going to train teachers without overwhelming them.

Mr. DeWinne said the question was how much the annual maintenance cost would be. He said if they are comparable why spend the extra money.

Mr. Spinelli asked if we planned staff development for helping people understand how this works. Mr. Ottinger said no we cut all the building level technology coordinators and we are limited as to what we can do.

Mr. Spinelli asked if it would be possible for a small group of teachers from the various schools to learn how to use this well and turnkey it into the buildings. Mr. Ottinger said he guesses it would be.

Mr. Giordano asked where the money goes for the sponsorships that are sold at Gittone Stadium. Mr. Spinelli said it goes into the athletic account to be used for athletics. Mr. DeWinne mentioned that the money went into miscellaneous revenues this year and was used for a sprinkler system.

Board Member

Remarks:

Mr. Spinelli wished everyone a happy holiday. He thanked the student who spoke tonight.

Mr. DeWinne said last week they met on advocacy and the small learning communities. He said that they were told that everything is going swell. Mr. DeWinne wished everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Mr. Ulrich also thanked the student who spoke tonight and said it is important to hear both the negatives and positives. He congratulated the six individuals who are retiring and wished them the best of luck. Mr. Ulrich said these positions and individuals will be missed. He said that he first met Mr. Rochetti when he was the comptroller for the City of Vineland and knows from personal experience that he will be missed in the district. He wished Mr. Rochetti the best of luck in his future endeavors.

Mr. Franceschini thanked the ladies who spoke tonight. He wished everyone a Merry Christmas.

Ms. Rios thanked the choir for their performance and wished everyone a happy holiday.

Mr. Evans said the choirs were outstanding and wished everyone a happy holiday.

Mr. Fanucci said there have been a lot of difficult circumstances this year then in years past for a variety reasons. He thanked the board, administration and central administration for all the hard work that has been put into trying to rectify these problems.

Continued

Mr. Fanucci said it is important for the community and staff to know that being fair and equitable across the board with everything is the most significant accomplishment you can make on a daily basis. He hopes that we can continue to strive in the new year to make the district better, boost moral and make our schools safer for our students. Mr. Fanucci said the choirs were fantastic and wished everyone a safe happy holiday.

Mr. Bernardini thanked the choir for their performance and the ladies who expressed their concerns. He wished everyone a Merry Christmas and a safe happy new year. Mr. Bernardini told the retirees to enjoy life.

Mr. Ottinger congratulated Dr. Figgs and thanked him for all the help that he has given him. He said that he will always appreciate what Dr. Figgs has done for him and the school district. Mr. Ottinger said Dr. Figgs is recognized as one of our most outstanding principals and an excellent leader at the central office who will be sorely missed. He mentioned that for the first time in many years Landis School reached AYP, which is a tremendous accomplishment. Mr. Ottinger said the students and teachers at Landis are working hard in accomplishing goals that they never accomplished before. He said the incidents that were discussed tonight are incidents that could happen at any school and we will address them. Mr. Ottinger said Landis School is a good school and will remain a good school. Mr. Ottinger wished everyone the best of health over the holiday season.

Report/Remarks by
Board President:

Mr. Giordano announced that the Ad Hoc Committee will be meeting at Vineland High School South on Monday, December 15 from 2:30 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. He said a full report will be given to central administration. Mr. Giordano wished all the staff members, administrators, parents and students the very best holiday season and a happy, healthy, prosperous new year.

Resolution:

Mr. Franchetta read a resolution to recess into executive session on **Wednesday, January 14, 2009** regarding personnel matters and pending litigation.

Motion: Upon motion by Mr. Spinelli, seconded by Mr. Franceschini, the resolution was passed. All Members voted “yes”.

Mr. Giordano introduced and welcomed Charlene Zoerb, Field Service Representative for New Jersey School Boards Association.

Ms. Zoerb said she has been a board member for sixteen years and has held practically every position except finance chair. She said prior to that for the last four years she worked as a consultant for the Department of Education in the CAPA unit. Ms. Zoerb said that New Jersey QSAC requires every year for boards to review and discuss the Code of Ethics. She said board members are held accountable more then ever and it is very critical that you understand exactly what is expected of you. Ms. Zoerb said the NJ QSAC requirements are embedded in the Board Responsibilities 12-Month Agenda Planning, calendar that was distributed. She said that she will be sending out quarterly reminders to the board on items that need done. Ms. Zoerb said there is a new legal deadline for the superintendent’s evaluation. If your superintendent has a three year contract you have to give them three month’s notice for non-renewal. Ms. Zoerb said currently in the news is the bill that passed the assembly to change the school board elections to November and to not vote on budgets on unless they were over the cap. She said we should know something the next week or two in regards to this. Ms. Zoerb said on any type of update like this it is her plans to send out an email or notice to keep everybody current. She said the accountability act in the first three paragraphs lists the training that is required. Ms. Zoerb reviewed with the board the roles of being an effective board member. She said the role as a board member is to care and provide the best education possible for the students in the community. Ms. Zoerb said every board member is elected to represent all the people of the school district. She said board members need to remember that it is the board of education that has the authority not an individual member. Ms. Zoerb said board members need to understand policy development and how important policies are. She said leave the execution of policy to the superintendent. Ms. Zoerb said having a good communication plan is an asset for every board. She said to be good listeners really helps board members to make good decisions. Ms. Zoerb said she could tell tonight that the entire board was sincerely listening and taking to heart some of the comments that were made. She said that she has never heard board members at the end of a meeting thanking the audience for their participation.

Continued

Ms. Zoerb said a highly effective board member recognizes that staff members and students (of appropriate age) should have an opportunity to give input to the full board concerning policies and programs that affect them. She said the best policies that she ever set were the ones where the input was received from staff, community, administration and other board members. Ms. Zoerb said being a board member is a tough job and they are not thanked enough for their time and dedication. She wished everyone a happy holiday and told the board to call her anytime with questions.

Mr. Giordano said the board planning calendar states in January that the board is supposed to begin discussion of the superintendent's evaluation. Ms. Zoerb said she would send the superintendent's evaluation to Mr. Giordano to send out to the board members in January. She said the evaluations need to be filled out in February.

The board decided to hold the next retreat on **Wednesday, January 28, 2009 at 6:30 p.m.**

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned by voice vote at 9:01 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kevin J. Franchetta, CPA
Board Secretary

KJF:df