

A special meeting of the Board of Education of the City of Vineland was held Tuesday, December 21, 2010 at 5:31 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, Ms. Rios, and Mr. Ulrich. Absent: Mr. Fanucci.

Also present: Dr. Banks, Superintendent, Mr. Franchetta, Board Secretary. Absent: Mr. DeSanto, Board Solicitor.

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:

Public Comments: None.

Recommendations:



## Special

Presentation: Mr. Franceschini introduced Ms. Charlene Zoerb, NJ School Boards Association Representative, to present the Professional Development Workshop.

Ms. Zoerb said the reason for tonight's presentation along with the next three scheduled workshops goes back to the board's previous QSAC monitoring. She said according to the scores received there was a corrective action plan. Ms. Zoerb said the corrective action plan that was put in place indicated that the board would benefit from workshops on various topics. She said in working on this corrective action plan with the Executive County Superintendent items were highlighted that needed to be covered and a schedule was made. Ms. Zoerb said the major function of the New Jersey School Boards Association is training and resources; we are not the school board police. Ms. Zoerb said our job is to make the school board's job easier and more productive. She said tonight's primary topics will be Roles & Responsibilities and Ethics. Ms. Zoerb said when you are elected as a Board of Education member you are an elected official and held to a hire authority. She said your performance as a board member is highly governed by different facets such as state laws, local bylaws and policies. Ms. Zoerb said you have to listen carefully and have respect for your fellow board members, their opinions and what perspective they come from. She said learning to build consensus on a board is the hardest thing to do especially if there is a turnover. Ms. Zoerb asked the board to review Bylaw #0146 Board Member Authority and Policy #1100 District Organization along with Policy #1210 Board-Superintendent Relations, which she included in the packets that were distributed. She said a board member's major job is to make sure there is a short and long range plan for your district, oversight and hold the superintendent accountable for what you are asking the superintendent to do. Ms. Zoerb said board members govern through their policies. She said if there is something that you think is not going correctly in the district the first question you should be asking is "What is our policy on that?" Ms. Zoerb said the board's primary allegiance is to the children. She said board members are elected to represent all the people of the school district and should avoid special interest representation and personal agendas. Ms. Zoerb said a board member has to recognize that they have no authority unless they are seated in a legally constituted meeting and only a board as a whole has authority.

Mr. Zoerb said any information that is requested should go through the board meeting first then the board gives direction to the superintendent or business administrator.

Mr. DeWinne said he was told by the board solicitor that board members can ask the board secretary for any information they would like provided. He asked if there are any issues in doing this. Ms. Zoerb said not in his capacity as the board secretary only as the business administrator.

Mr. DiGiorgio asked if information requests should be asked for at board meetings. Ms. Zoerb said if you have questions in regards to something that will be on the board agenda you can send them to the superintendent, business administrator or board president in advance of the meeting. She said if the questions are on a different topic it should be brought to the board table.

Dr. Banks said when she receives individual questions from board members she always forwards them to the board president. If it is an item that she believes would be of interest to everybody she would send the answer to all board members.

Ms. Zoerb said if a board member has something they are concerned about or would like more information on let the board president know and discuss it at a board meeting.

Mr. English said when he asks questions he always copies the board. He said a couple questions that he asked in early December have some direct impact on some major decisions for January. Mr. English said he has not received feedback on those questions and asked if he should send in his questions again. Ms. Zoerb said to call the board president. Dr. Banks asked Mr. English to resend his questions.

Mr. Ulrich said there are times when you ask Dr. Banks to investigate specific things you hear. Ms. Zoerb said if you are approached by somebody about something then you should let the superintendent know what is being said. She said there has to be some understanding and respect that you have one person who is basically responsible for the entire district. Ms. Zoerb said you need to protect your administrator's time in making sure she is able to attend to the things that she absolutely has to attend to.

Mr. Ulrich said he thinks what has happened with the board is the superintendent has made a recommendation to proceed with Small Learning Communities and the board wants to now have a roll call vote on whether or not to proceed. He asked if a board should over rule on a major decision involving an educational issue that the educational person was hired to do. Ms. Zoerb said you hire the superintendent and have respect and faith in that person's professional abilities. She said most board members are not educational professionals so you need to have respect for the recommendations that come from your superintendent. Ms. Zoerb said this does not mean you cannot ask questions. She said you hire a superintendent and hold her accountable for what you set out as your mission, goals and plans. Ms. Zoerb said if you are going to hold the superintendent accountable then she is the "how." In this instance the board can request for the success of the students at the high school to be better next year than it has been in the past five years, which is the "what" and the board's job. Ms. Zoerb said you hand that over to the superintendent letting her know the board is behind her but believe our students can do much better at the high school. She said it is up to the superintendent along with her administrative team to develop a plan to move forward. Ms. Zoerb said the board will hold the superintendent accountable. If board members start doing the "how" then you cannot hold your superintendent accountable any longer because it is now the board's plan not the superintendent's plan. Ms. Zoerb said there is going to be a CAPA visit at the high school done by five or six professionals that are top in the state in their jobs. She said the board will have the ability to review the CAPA report along with the findings and recommendations with the superintendent. Ms. Zoerb said she would do this before moving forward with anything. Mr. DeWinne asked when this report will be ready. Ms. Zoerb said in January. Mr. DeWinne asked how long it takes to generate the report. Ms. Zoerb said they will be at the school Monday through Thursday and will have a summary conference at the end of the week. Mr. DeWinne asked if they were coming in early January. Dr. Banks said she will find out but thinks they are coming the second week of January. Mr. English asked what CAPA looks for. Ms. Zoerb said they look at everything. She said they are professionals that are divided into different areas such as special education, mathematics, curriculum, instruction, student work, policies, leadership, school culture, community involvement and student/staff interviews. Ms. Zoerb said at the end of the week each individual writes on their findings, which are then made into one final report. She said all the professionals collaborate together to come up with recommendations.

Ms. Zoerb said the CAPA team holds a conference the last day that is open for people to attend and board members are urged to attend.

Mr. Ulrich said one idea that Dr. Banks immediately brought to the table was that we should have Title I funding at the high school in order to get the extra funds and CAPA visits as a requirement to help approve. He said the previous administration and superintendent was against Title I funding. Mr. Franceschini said during the past three or four years the only person who was pushing Title I was Dr. Gruccio.

Ms Zoerb said the board governs through policy. She said it is very important that board members understand that policies are the tools that administration uses to provide the management oversight of the district. Ms. Zoerb reviewed each of the following board roles: Develop the Mission for the district, Plan, Monitor, Communicate, 11 Member Team, Develop Policies, Act Legally/Ethically, Secure Resources, Local Control and be Self-Reflective. She said the board's job is not to micro-manage or run the district but to see that the district is well run.

Mr. English said he is all over town during the day and he hears a lot. When he hears things he likes to make Dr. Banks aware of what is going on. Mr. English said there was an incident in October that he did not make Dr. Banks aware of and he regrets it. The attitude that he is taking is to keep asking the questions. Dr. Banks said you should always let her know. Mr. DeWinne said for fear of micro-managing we have the oversight of the superintendent. Mr. Franceschini said this was also a parent issue. Ms. Zoerb said we will discuss chain of command next month. She said if there is a parent issue you always want the problem to be solved at the source closest to it. Mr. DeWinne said what if the parent says I am bringing the problem to you because you are one of our elected officials. Ms. Zoerb said you have to educate that parent. Tell the parent you are a board member and your job is oversight but you will let the superintendent know. Dr. Banks said once she knows there is an issue the first question she asks was the teacher, principal or supervisor spoken to. She said from her perspective she wants to make sure administration is handling the situation properly.

Ms. Zoerb said also included in the board packets tonight was the superintendent roles. She said the superintendent is the C.E.O and the person who brings the professional, experience and expertise in education to make the important decisions for your children.

Ms. Zoerb said your superintendent is the educational/management expert who is the chief advisor to the board. She said the board depends on the superintendent for good public relations and to be the person that is making sure communication is going out from the schools to the parents and community. Ms. Zoerb said the board depends on the superintendent to hire the best staff and do the best evaluations to ensure accountability. The superintendent is the educational expert who is advising in the budget development process. Ms. Zoerb asked the board to review the questionnaire “Is This Your Role?” She also asked the board to review the “Theory Into Practice” paper to be discussed at the next meeting.

Ms. Zoerb said the following are some basic guidelines for board members to keep in mind:

- Not taking action without consulting the superintendent and getting his/her recommendations
- Recognizing the superintendent as the district’s education leader and listening to him/her as such
- Not confusing the role of setting policy for the district with that of running the schools
- Not surprising the superintendent

Ms. Zoerb said the following are some basic guidelines for the superintendent:

- Keep the board fully informed at all times
- Implement policies of the board in the most effective and efficient manner and evaluating the results
- Recognizing the board as the final authority in the school
- Not surprising the board

Ms. Zoerb said chain of command will be discussed in January.

Mr. Franceschini thanked Ms. Zoerb for her help and support. He encouraged the board to contact Ms. Zoerb with any questions they may have.

Mr. DeWinne asked for an explanation on the committee as a whole process for the budget.

Mr. Franceschini said we are coming up with an agenda for the January meeting before the work session. He said Mr. DeSanto will have a blue print on how we will conduct the 45 minute meeting. Mr. Franceschini said each board member will have a certain amount of time to ask questions. He said the public will have an opportunity to ask questions during the work session.

Respectfully submitted,

Kevin J. Franchetta, CPA  
Board Secretary

KJF:df