

VERNON TOWNSHIP BOARD OF EDUCATION
WORK SESSION

November 3, 2011

PUBLIC IN ATTENDANCE 20

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by the Board President on November 3, 2011 at Lounsberry Hollow Middle School, 30 Sammis Road, Vernon, NJ.

The roll call was taken and the following members were present: Mrs. Auberger, Mr. Castellana, Mr. DeYoung, Mr. Gilson, Mr. Hughes, Mr. McGowan, Ms. Parrott, Mr. Sparta and Mr. Zweier. Also present were Dr. Alfieri, Superintendent of Schools, and Ms. Linkenheimer, Assistant Superintendent. Mr. Kepnes, Business Administrator/Board Secretary was absent.

Following the Pledge of Allegiance, the following statement was read by Dr. Alfieri.

The New Jersey Open Public Meetings Law was enacted to ensure the right of the public to have advance notice of and to attend the meetings of public bodies at which any business affecting their interest is discussed or acted upon. In accordance with the provisions of the Act, Vernon Township Board of Education has caused notice of this meeting to be published and adequate notice has been provided.

Dr. Rosalie Lamonte, Executive County Superintendent, gave a presentation on NJ QSAC and shared the results of the Vernon Township School District.

She explained that there are five areas monitored in QSAC.

- Instruction and Program 73%
- Fiscal 91%
- Operations 100%
- Personnel 100%
- Governance 100%

The County Office will continue to visit the district until the 80% is achieved in Instruction and Program. In our case the County Office has been back twice and still there is not a substantial improvement.

The first review was done in January 2011. The Instruction and Program increased slightly, but only to 75%. The scores are as follows:

- Student Performance 29/59
- Curriculum 17/17
- Instruction 24/24
- Mandated Programs 6/6
- High School/Graduation 16/16

Student performance includes AYP (Adequate Yearly Progress) and SINI (School in Need of Improvement). In this event, parents are notified and programs must be created in an attempt to improve.

The County Office was impressed with Vernon's initiatives to improve.

The second evaluation was done on September 15, 2100. There was still no change – 75%. Our areas of concern were in language arts and mathematics.

Dr. Lamonte shared the steps that have been taken by Vernon in order to make improvements and also gave many suggestions. She also suggested various programs used in other districts that may be helpful. She stated that at this point in time the State is now focusing more on student success and college/career readiness than on compliance and regulations.

The meeting was opened to a question and answer session.

Board Member, Lori Parrott:

Q: How does Vernon Township compare to other districts in the County?

A: Only Vernon and one other district are in the same category.

Q: Are you suggesting that it is ultimately the teachers' responsibilities to raise the bar?

A: Yes, with the support of the Administrative Team and Board of Education.

Board Member, John McGowan:

Q: Where/who did the information come from in the article in the newspaper indicating that the Board of Education is not focused enough on the students' performances. Who informed you that the Board was not acting favorably?

A: It's not a question that the Board is not acting favorably, the information is based on the QSAC results.

Q: As a member of the public/parents, after reading the article one would think that the Board of Education "is sorely lacking".

A: It is known that the Board works tightly with the administration/staff/parents; however there is much work to continue.

Parent, Martin Pirringer, stated that the Board has come a long way. However, he feels that communication is key. Parents, staff, and administration need to continue to work together.

Mr. DeYoung stated that we need to continue to adjust the strategies to improve. He believes that these issues ultimately are the responsibility of the Board of Education.

Dr. Lamonte suggested that the Board continue it best efforts and stated that the County Office was pleased with the initiative taken by Vernon.

Board Member, David Zweier

Q: Would it be possible for the County Office to assist us by looking at other districts to see what they have done to improve?

A: They would be willing to help.

Faculty Member, Mrs. Guilfoyle

Q: Is there a component linking teacher performance to student outcomes?

A: The state waiver will include teacher evaluations vs. test scores.

Dr. Lamonte ended the presentation at 8:15 p.m. A short break was taken and the meeting resumed at 8:30 p.m.

Mr. Sparta made a motion to enter closed session to further discuss the topic of leasing the CST Building, Mr. DeYoung seconded the motion and the motion carried on a unanimous voice vote.

The meeting entered open session at 8:45 on a motion by Mr. Sparta, seconded by Ms. Parrott and carried on a unanimous voice vote.

The meeting was opened to the public for comments on items listed on the agenda.

None heard.

Upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, the Board approved the CST Building Lease to the Township on a motion by Mr. Sparta, seconded by Mr. McGowan and carried on a unanimous roll call vote.

Upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, the Board approved the following appointment on a motion by Mrs. Auberger, seconded by Ms. Parrott and carried on a unanimous roll call vote.

Ashley Blanchard

WRPS special education teacher, non-tenure interim replacement; BA Step 1 - \$50,554; eff. 11/16/11-4/16/12 (Repl/Cook)

Upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, the approved professional development travel that complies with the provisions of the School Ethics Act (SEA)N.J.S.A. 18A:12-24 and 12-24.1 (Attachment WS-1). Motion by Mr. DeYoung, seconded by Mr. McGowan and carried on the following roll call vote: YES: Mr. Gilson, Mr. McGowan, Ms. Parrott, Mr. Sparta, Mr. Zweier, Mrs. Auberger, Mr. DeYoung, Mr. Castellana. ABSENT: Mr. Hughes

Mr. DeLaRosa, Director of Facilities, shared information regarding the Rolling Hills Primary School boiler. He stated that the boiler is thirty-nine years old and repairs would take about two weeks.

Ms. Linkenheimer shared her personnel report. She also discussed instructional updates. She stated that a survey will be sent to parents regarding their decision to have their children remain in the district versus sending them out of district. She also shared plans to implement a transition program for 8th graders entering the high school which may include various activities as well as information for the parents.

Mr. Castellana suggested using the same type of program for 4th graders entering 5th and 6th graders entering 7th.

Dr. Alfieri stated that the Middle School Team was sent out to view other districts and how they handle transitioning from one level to another.

Ms. Parrott stated that she felt Vernon had too many transition years and the Board needed to be proactive in improving the situation.

Dr. Alfieri stated that discussions will be held after the first of the year regarding redistricting.

Ms. Linkenheimer stated that Mrs. Gebhardt has requested the implementation of an After-School Library Program. It is suggested that the Program will run two days each week and the

stipend amount would be approximately \$1,400 for each season (fall and spring). Ms. Linkenheimer will send out an e-mail regarding this.

She also discussed NovaNet Courseware, an on-line program of high school courses available for students to gain or retrieve credits missed due to various reasons including excessive absences. She suggested that the program start with the Project Plus Program and then possibly be available to others if it is successful. The cost for twelve licenses would be \$14,000 for one year. There is also a special, offering a three year contract for \$28,000.

Mr. Lascar shared information on the High Point Solutions Service Agreement. He stated that the cost of \$35,000 was included in the budget; however, the actual cost is now only \$33,000. When asked why the need for this agreement, he indicated that due to the loss of Mr. Diallo and his expertise in the networking field, this program will be very beneficial and will create a higher level of networking.

The meeting was open to the public for items on the agenda and other matters.

Mr. Pirringer re-iterated what he had stated earlier indicating that everyone needs to work as a team for student performance to improve, including the Board of Education, parents, staff, and administration. He also shared many of his opinions and thoughts on the matter.

The meeting was closed to the public and the Board entered into Closed Session at 9:38 p.m. for discussion on a personnel matter. Motion by Mr. DeYoung, seconded by Ms. Parrott and carried on a unanimous voice vote.

The meeting adjourned at 9:46 p.m. on a motion by Mr. Zweier, seconded by Mr. DeYoung and carried on a unanimous voice vote.

Board President or Delegate

Board Secretary or Delegate

Superintendent or Delegate