

## VALLEY STREAM UNION FREE SCHOOL DISTRICT THIRTY

Board of *Education*

175 N. Central Avenue

Valley Stream, NY 11580-3801

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*Maria A. Fletcher, Ph.D. President*

Tel: (516) 285-9881 Fax: (516) 285-9839

April 11, 2008

Dear Residents,

The purpose of this communication is for the Board of Education to update the community on the matter of our school attorney.

It has been reported in several Newsday articles that our school district's attorney, Albert O'Agostino, is one of several attorneys who is collecting a public pension from the New York State Employee Retirement System. We believe it is important to share specific information about this matter in the interest of full disclosure to our community.

The Valley Stream Thirty Board of Education has retained outside, independent legal counsel to help the district best comply with the New York State Attorney General's inquiry into school attorneys who have earned New York State pensions or pension credits.

Like all school districts, we have been asked to provide all documentation relating to our district's use of legal services, and other types of professional services, to the New York State Attorney General. In addition, the Attorney General has requested more detailed information about Mr. D'Agostino's relationship to our district. We are fully cooperating with inquiries and will continue to do so.

Mr. D'Agostino was maintained as an employee of the school district from 1977 through 2000, as our attorney. The practice of maintaining school district attorneys as employees existed for many decades and preceded Mr. D'Agostino. The practice ended in late 2000 when Mr. D'Agostino resigned and was thus no longer paid as an employee. Since that time, the district has appointed Minerva & D'Agostino, P.C. as the district's legal counsel, as a contract service.

The Board of Education understands that this matter raises concerns with our residents. We want to assure you that all attorneys, architects, auditors and school physicians doing work for the school district are independent contractors and not employees.

We will await further information and direction from the State Attorney General's office and any other related inquiries. The Board of Education will continue to keep the community informed on this matter.

Sincerely,



**Maria A. Fletcher Board President**

*The mission of Valley Stream District Thirty, through collaboration with parents and community partners, is to educate all students to their highest levels of performance in nurturing learning environments that are safe, inclusive, and student centered.*