

May 22, 2008

The Board meeting of the Board of Education of the Oak Park and River Forest High School was held on Thursday evening, May 22, 2008, in the Board Room of the high school.

Call to Order

President Jacques A Conway, called the meeting to order at 7:33 p.m. A roll call indicated that the following members were present: John C. Allen, IV, Jacques A. Conway, Valerie J. Fisher, Dr. Ralph H. Lee, Sharon Patchak-Layman, and John P. Rigas (arrived at 7:40 p.m.). Also present were: Dr. Attila J. Weninger, Superintendent; Jason Edgecombe, Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources; Amy Hill, Director of Research and Assessment; Jack Lanenga, Assistant Superintendent of Operations; Philip M. Prale, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction; Don Vogel, Interim Principal; James Paul Hunter, Faculty Senate Executive Committee Chair; Christian Fernandes, Student Council Representative; and Gail Kalmerton, Executive Assistant/Clerk of the Board.

Election of Officers

Mr. Conway declared that the nominations for President of the Board of Education were in order. Ms. Fisher nominated Mr. Conway for President because of his service to this community in many areas, e.g., boys and girls' athletics, religious organizations and various governments. Hearing no further nominations, Mr. Conway declared the nominations closed. Ms. Fisher moved to cast a unanimous vote for Mr. Conway for President of the Board of Education for a one-year term; seconded by Mr. Allen. A roll call vote resulted in all ayes. Motion carried.

Mr. Conway declared that the nominations for Vice President of the Board of Education were in order. Ms. Patchak-Layman nominated herself. Having the time and the energy, Ms. Patchak-Layman wanted to serve in this capacity for the citizens of Oak Park. Mr. Allen nominated Dr. Millard for Vice President for a one-year term, because she had done an honorable job, had shown great leadership, and brought a compassion and warmth to the Board of Education. Hearing no further nominations, the president declared the nominations closed. A roll call vote resulted in one Aye for Ms. Patchak-Layman and five Ayes for Dr. Millard. Dr. Millard was elected as Vice President for a one-year term.

Mr. Conway declared that nominations for Secretary of the Board of Education were in order. Mr. Rigas moved to nominate Dr. Ralph Lee for Secretary of the Board of Education for a one-year term; seconded by Ms. Fisher. Hearing no further nominations, Mr.

Conway declared the nominations closed. A roll call vote resulted in all ayes. Motion carried.

Visitors

The Board of Education welcomed the following visitors: Kay Foran, Director of Community Relations and Communications; Cindy Milojevic, Assistant Principal for Student Activities, Sheila Hardin, Joe Kostal, Nikki Paplaczyk, Peggy Markey, Daphne LeCesne, Meghan Kennedy, O.P.R.F.H.S. faculty members; Dick Chappell, executive director of River Forest Community Center, Kathi Kyrias, John Gann, Wyanetta Johnson, Burcy Hines, Meg Reynolds, Kimberly Werner, Barb Nelson, Robert and Becca Bloch, Barbara Kahn, Ixtla Arleo-Witzl, Shannon Wyatt, Catherine Malin, Joyce Willenborg, Emma Lewis, Brittany Smith, Bob and Eric Hallman, Gini Flery, David Harris, Marion Baumgarter, Susan Carter, Dr. Anthony Przdada, Evone Wangh, Bill & Laine McCarthy, Beth, Bill, and Sarah Streit, John R. Allen, M. Gonzalez, Hedi Belkaoui, Kevin and Mark Holloman, Patrick, Eddie B. Patchry, students, parents, and community members; Sandy Williams, Co-Chair Concert Tour Association; Ryan Mullin, Student Council Board of Education Liaison-elect, Terry Dean, *Wednesday Journal*, and Bridgett Kennedy of the Oak Leaves.

Student Recognition

The Board of Education recognized the following students for their respective accomplishments:

- Brittany Smith for breaking the West Suburban Conference record for discus at the WSC Silver Division Girls' Track and Field Championship;
- Hannah Decker for placement on the Great Lakes Team for the National Girls' Lacrosse High School Tournament;
- Sophianna Banholzer, Peter Baumgarter, Rachel Brade, Helen Beilison, Erik Eggersten, Matt Goodsmith, Eric Hallman, James Hanley, Robin Jia, Sarah Streit, and Evangeline Zachose for their performance at the Illinois Council of Teachers of Mathematics State Competition;
- Christian Harris for his leadership in the presentation of the oral history of the Catholic Chicago exhibition at the Chicago History Museum; and
- Lauren Gonzalez and Catherine Malin for their effort on behalf of the American Cancer Society Relay for Life.

SEAstA Awards

Kimberly Werner, on behalf of SEA, awarded the following individuals the SEAstA in recognition of being individuals who were making a positive difference in the lives of students with special needs in Districts 97 and 200.

John Gann, Head Coach, OPRF Special Olympics Basketball Team
Meghan Kennedy, CITE Facilitator
Daphne LeCesne, School Psychologist
Joe Parenti, Resource Teacher

The Story of the SEAstar is as follows:

“Just before dawn, a young man was walking down a deserted beach that was covered with stranded sea stars. In the distance, he saw a frail old man. As he approached the old man, he saw him picking up a sea star that had been stranded on the beach and throwing it back into the sea. The young man gazed in wonder as the old man again and again picked up a small sea star from the sand on the beach and threw it into the water. Finally, he asked, ‘Old man, why do you spend so much energy doing what seems to be a waste of time?’

“The old man explained that the stranded sea star would die if left out on the beach in the morning sun. ‘But there must be thousands of beaches and millions of sea stars!’ exclaimed the young man. ‘How can you make any difference?’

“The old man looked down at the small sea star in his hand and as he threw it to the safety of the sea, he said, ‘I make a difference to this one.’

FOIA Requests

Mr. Conway reported that one FOIA request was received and was being resolved.

Visitor Comments

Bill McCarthy, resident of 325 N. Oak Park Avenue, read the following statement to the Board of Education.

“Good evening and thank you for giving me this opportunity to speak. My name is Bill McCarthy I am a parent of a junior enrolled in the OPRF TEAM program.

“Three years ago the Board approved the formation of a Special Olympics basketball program here at OPRF. I’d like to thank you for supporting this program and give you a very brief update on its progress.

“The team has just finished its third season of play, and I feel that it has lived up to the hopes and expectations which we envisioned three years ago.

“At that time we felt that, as wonderful as it was that some of the teams at OPRF welcomed the participation of students with special needs, it was equally important for their development that our students be given an opportunity to participate on a team in which they could excel, where they could be the stars.

“We had hoped that they could represent their high school in team competitions and experience themselves as an integral part of their school community. We thought they could learn leadership, communication, and social skills, which would extend beyond the basketball court to their interactions in the classroom, the home and the community. And I believe the Special Olympics basketball program has enabled them to accomplish much if not all of that.

“But we had also hoped that a Special Olympics program could benefit the entire school. We thought that other students could get to see the Special Olympic athletes as kids much like themselves—trying as hard as they can to reach their potential. The response by OPRF students, and in particular the students in Best Buddies, has surpassed our expectations.

“We started out in our first season with (thirteen) 13 players, grew to seventeen (17) in our second season and had eighteen (18) this past season. We’ve had twenty-five (25) different players on our teams over the last three years and perhaps twice that many if you include our summer basketball camps and practices.

“We’ve played home and away games against more than thirteen (13) different high school and Special Rec teams.

“We’ve represented OPRF at the Special Olympics Area games in each of the last three years. This past season we sent two (2) teams to the Special Olympics Area games and one qualified to go downstate to compete in the Special Olympics state games in Normal where they won silver medals in their division!

“We are very fortunate to have a great coach who will be honored this evening with a SEAstar award, and several dedicated, hardworking & enthusiastic assistant coaches and volunteers.

“On behalf of the parents and players who are here tonight in support of Coach Gann, and on behalf of all of us involved in this program I’d like to thank you for your support of the OPRF Special Olympics program. This program makes a difference in many people’s lives: the players, their families, their coaches, and the OPRF students,

teachers & aides who are inspired by the efforts and achievements of the team.

“I’m leaving behind a short 15 minute DVD slide show for you which celebrates our past season. I hope you will enjoy viewing it and can see the results of your support in the determination and smiling faces of our players. Our players are truly living out the Special Olympics Athlete oath: “Let me win, but if I cannot win, let me be brave in the attempt.”

“And I invite you to join us next season and experience one of our games first-hand!

Burcy Hines, resident of 1221 Fair Oaks, Oak Park, addressed the Board of Education.

Ms. Hines reported that she accompanies many parents to staffings; as a result, Ms. Hines asked the Board of Education to consider a position of parent advocate to sit in on staffings, help the parent through the school’s processes and the community processes.

Becca Bloch, senior at O.P.R.F.H.S. and resident of 325 N. East Avenue, Oak Park, read the following statement.

“As a senior, I have been looking forward to graduation since August. This ceremony marking the completion of my high school academic studies and my entrance into the collegiate world has always excited me, as it has my fellow classmates, and as the year winds to a close, my excitement has only grown. Naturally, I was looking forward to participating in one of the first formal ceremonies of my life – walking across the stage in my white dress, a bouquet of roses in hand, accepting my diploma and sitting down with the rest of my class as a high school graduate.

“And yet, as I prepared to purchase my floor-length white dress, it occurred to me that this tradition I had been looking forward to all year – the tradition that serves as the culmination of the last four years – clashes with my principles. The graduation dress code that clearly spells out the appropriate attire for men and the appropriate attire for women is, in its essence, defining gender roles for the graduating students of Oak Park and River Forest High School – a practice to which I and other OPRF students take offense.

“OPRF graduation protocol requires that boys wear dark suits or a dark sport coat and dark dress pants. The dress code for girls requires that they wear white dresses, white pantsuits, or white skirts with

formal white tops. In addition, the girls carry one dozen red roses and the boys wear a boutonniere.

“This arrangement is problematic for many reasons. First and foremost, by creating distinct guidelines for boys' and girls' attire, the school is assigning gender roles to the student body. This dress code excludes transgendered students or those who do not identify with a specific gender. By forcing students to dress either in the attire designated for "gentlemen" or for "ladies," the school is excluding several groups of people. Graduation is supposed to be a momentous occasion for all graduating students – an occasion where every member of the senior class is recognized for his or her achievement of graduation high school. And yet, the dress code that delineates between boys and girls prohibits certain members of the student body from enjoying and participating in this ceremony to the fullest extent.

“Additionally, the gender roles the dress code prescribes are problematic. The white dresses girls are forced to wear hark back to an era when girls were expected to be pure, virginal, and chaste. Putting girls in white dresses that look like - and in many cases actually are - wedding dresses draws a clear line from their high school graduation into the marriage pool. The school claims that girls wear white because of "tradition," but this antiquated tradition emphasizing a girl's virtue and purity is not one OPRF should continue to support.

“I understand that tradition holds an important place at OPRF. However, in a progressive village such as Oak Park, and at a phenomenal school – from which I am proud to graduate – such as Oak Park and River Forest High School, it is astounding that an antiquated and discriminatory practice continues simply because of tradition.

“The dress code raises socio-economic issues, as well. Buying a white dress and the accompanying white shoes - which a girl will probably never use again - is a very expensive endeavor. While a boy could use his graduation suit many more times in his life, the dresses/suits girls must buy will rarely - if ever - be used again. Although the school offers used dresses to students in need, the tradition places an undue and unnecessary economic burden on students.

“Thus, I propose that OPRF changes its graduation dress code.

“Although this is not the only option, one alternative to the problems discussed above would be wearing caps and gowns. It would maintain

the "pageantry" of the event while eradicating the problematic gender norms the current dress code prescribes to students, as well as relieving the economic burden it places on students.

"I understand that a solution to this problem - and hopefully a change in the dress code - will be a lengthy process. Please understand: It is not my intent to change the dress code for this year's graduation - I understand not a feasible option. Rather, I want to change the dress code for future students, and in doing so hopefully eradicate the dress code's institutional discrimination.

"I assure you, I am not alone in this endeavor. As evidenced by my supporters in this room, as well as the signatures on this petition, many people in the OPRF community – students, faculty, staff, parents, community members – find this "tradition" problematic, and believe it should be changed.

"The petition reads as follows:

"While we agree with maintaining the pageantry and solemnity of the graduation ceremony, we the undersigned do not agree with the current OPRF dress code for graduation and believe that it should be changed to reflect equality and uniformity among all the graduates."

"I love Oak Park and River Forest High School – I truly do. But I cannot stand by while institutional ignorance is practiced, all in the name of tradition. This issue can be easily solved, by simply changing the dress code to reflect equality and uniformity among all graduates – male or female.

"I know, just as you do, that equality – and not necessarily tradition - is among "Those things that are the best."

Barbara Kahn, parent and resident of 325 N. East Avenue, Oak Park and mother of Becca Bloch.

Ms. Kahn added her comments to that of her daughter's, noting that Becca had elected not to participate in the ceremony this year and she and her father stood firmly in Becca's decision. The only other high school that has the same graduation dress requirement is New Trier, which puts it to a vote of the students. If the students at O.P.R.F.H.S. wanted this, it would sadden her as she felt it was archaic tradition.

Diane Reddy, parent and resident of 801 Fair Oaks, Oak Park, addressed the Board of Education.

Ms. Reddy stated that she was the parent of two children and had not planned to speak; she had only wanted to support Becca and her proposal to change the dress code. Two years ago her son, Brian, graduated. When the family came to the ceremony, she found it shocking that the girls were wearing dresses even though the outside temperature was cold. The boys, in their suits, were more comfortable and able to enjoy the graduation. The roses surprised her. Both of her sons are debaters and her older son was a founding member of the O.P.R.F.H.S. Debate Team. Under Coach David Song, the Debate Team has become an outstanding team; the freshman won a New Trier tournament and the students qualified at every level. So much money is spent on the roses, yet the budget for the Debate Team was just \$5,000. While she admitted it was a beautiful ceremony, she suggested having a beautiful and affordable tradition. She felt the money would be better spent on recognizing tradition and academics.

Jon R. Allen, senior, president of O.P.R.F.H.S.'s club A Place for All, the gay straight alliance representing a safe place for all, addressed the Board of Education regarding the dress code and gender rolls to which students are required to adhere. He stated that rarely are transgender students able to be themselves in the school and rarely are they allowed to be who they are naturally. A change to the dress code would make many students more comfortable at the end of their high school career. Although he knew nothing could be done at this point to change the current dress code, he asked the Board of Education to consider a change for the future.

Ixtla Arleo-Witzl, student and resident of 836 S. Ridgeland, Oak Park, addressed the Board of Education.

Ms. Arleo-Witzl too talked about the graduation dress code. She felt the connotation of white dresses and white pantsuits were symbolic of weddings, chastity, girls becoming young women and debutants to society, which was the sign of being ready for marriage. She commented on the cost of the graduation dresses and suggested that some students could not afford them. She continued that while the District loans dresses to students, it is rumored that they are ill fitting and undesirable. She asked the Board of Education to join the 21st century. Graduation is not nor should be a pageant; it is an academic event.

John Rigas stated that this was the first time during his tenure that the graduation dress was an issue with regard to white dresses/pant suits and dark suits. During his tenure, the issues that arose were 1)

pantsuits and 2) the move of the ceremony to a different location, which was put to a student vote. The Board of Education cannot change the process now. He graduated thirty years ago with the suits and dresses; at the time, all the students thought about was leaving the building. He encouraged Becca to think about not attending from a personal standpoint because high school graduation is an outstanding day; graduating from college and law school paled in comparison for him. Mr. Rigas told Becca that she had made her point, but the Board of Education cannot change the decision at this time. If dialogue had happened sooner, it might have changed things, as the school has traditionally listened to students.

Ms. Bloch stated that a dialogue with the students would be difficult because students are apathetic and she felt it was the school board's obligation to create a forum, as this was imposing gender roles on the student body.

Dr. Lee noting that he was chair of the Board of Education's Policy Committee offered to help her write a policy statement about what she felt the policy should be and he was willing to discuss it before drafting it with her. He stated that the Board of Education would seriously consider this request.

**Board Member
Comments**

Ms. Patchak-Layman asked that Agenda Items XI A, B, and C, and Agenda Item VIII. F be moved to executive session.

Ms. Patchak-Layman stated that the Board of Education has discussed going out for an RFQ for legal services and she wanted to reiterate the need to do that, as it is timely.

Ms. Patchak-Layman reported that she has received calls from community members regarding the artificial turf; The Consumer Product Safety and the US Protection Safety are doing work on artificial turf and she hopes to provide that information to the community. The tests are being conducted in New Jersey over the summer and at the same time the turf is being installed. Ms. Patchak-Layman stated that an opportunity should be allowed to inform the community of the results of that testing. Mr. Lanenga reported that the fields were tested for lead and O.P.R.F.H.S.'s bid requirements for certification was included as part of the lead packet.

Mr. Allen reported that he would be working with Ms. Witham on an RFQ for professional auditing services and he would be bringing forth appropriate names of firms who would best serve this high school in the March or April timeframe. That was his only interest in RFQ's for professional services.

Ms. Witham was instructed to place on the June Finance Committee agenda discussion of an RFQ for Legal Services.

Mr. Conway thanked the Board of Education for its support of him being president of the Board of Education. Mr. Conway continued that he attended the Orchestra Concert last week and noted that the talent in this building is “worth its weight in gold” and that the award ceremony was wonderful too. Last night he attended the orientation for first year Project Scholar students and their parents. A record number of parents and students attended. He commended the staff on their presentations. It was very informative and he was excited about what is going to happen this year for the freshmen.

**Report from
Student
Council**

Mr. Fernandes reported that Student Council elections were held April 31 and May 1 and Ryan Mullin would be the new Student Council Board Liaison Representative. Regarding dress code, Student Council has had some internal discussion but has not come to any conclusions, because not everyone is on the same side of the issue. He spoke that this merits a Board of Education review and should the Board of Education facilitate an open forum, Student Council would assist.

Mr. Fernandes thanked the Board of Education for the wonderful year he had as the Student Council Board of Education Liaison. He noted it had been a quiet year for the Student Council Board. He would graduate from O.P.R.F.H.S. in June, take the lessons he learned here, and apply them to the future. Mr. Fernandes stated that he would attend the University of Michigan next year.

Principal’s Report

Interim Principal Vogel gave the following report.

1. 800 students attended Prom, 200 students attending post prom;
2. Memorial Day convocation in the stadium held today;
3. The Biology/Environmental Club adopted ten acres of the Osa Peninsula in Costa Rica to support the work of the Nature Conservatory to protect this land from future development.
4. Over 100 OPRFHS students participated in the American Cancer Relay for Life and who through their efforts raised \$26,604.00.
5. Science teacher Jeremy Colquhoun was awarded the Distinguished Service Award from the Illinois School Health Association.
6. The Math Team placed 11th place at the ICTM State Competition.
7. Brittany Smith placed 5th at the State Track meet in Discus with a throw of 143’2”- a new school record. She also finished eighth in the Shot Put with a throw of 41’ $\frac{3}{4}$ “.

8. Katherine Rack (So.) placed 8th at the State Track meet in the 3200-meter run of 10:59.14- a new school record. She also finished eighth in the 1600 meter run with a time of 5:04.45 – her best effort ever.
9. Jack Buckley and Seth Molke were selected first team All-conference and Mike Slovak was selected first team all conference and All-State in Lacrosse.

Commencement

Regarding the earlier comments about the graduation dress, Mr. Vogel commented that the students used to vote on the graduation dress every fall. The overwhelming desire of the students was to have the white dresses, and thus, the school just stopped holding the vote in the 1980's.

He referred to the commencement information in the packet and asked if there were any changes to be made by the Board of Education members. He anticipated having the ceremony in the stadium.

Mr. Vogel also suggested a review of the entire commencement ceremony next year.

Mr. Conway thanked Mr. Vogel for his work this year. His dedication, insight, and historical perspective enabled him to quietly do a wonderful job.

Superintendent's Report

Ms. Sandy Williams, chair of the Concert Tour Association (CTA), noted that this organization is the music boosters of the high school. It is named the Concert Tour Association because when it incorporated as a 503C organization, the primary reason for it was to run concerts over the summer. However, CTA tries to be known as the music boosters. It was incorporated in 1969, but after a time disbanded and lay dormant until 1999, when Dr. Bridge hired Scotty Jones. Mr. Jones was told to start a marching band program and he realized he needed extra hands. The Music Department has three music teachers with over 500 students. There was a half-time teacher, but because of budgeting limitations, that position was eliminated. These teachers do amazing things with the students, e.g., they have student teachers work with the students, they are in charge of six to eight different orchestras, bands, chorus groups, etc. One thing CTA advocates for the teachers and explain the program to the parents. CTA's wish list includes for more storage. Mr. Lanenga and she have talked about making use of the lockers outside of the music rooms in the hallways. As seniors graduate, those lockers could be retired and given to the Music Department. Second on the wish list would be for the Board of Education to consider giving music

students credit for their performance work. At some point in the mid 1980's, the GPA was taken away from the students who took any kind of music, except for music theory. Music students are some of the hardest working students in the school; a great portion of them is honors and AP students; they do this for the love of music. They are not getting any benefit for putting their time into the music department.

Ms. Williams continued that there is a core group of about fifty (50) parents who work very hard. She gave credit to Carrie Collie for running the benefit the last couple of years. CTA runs the receptions with punch and cookies after all concerts so that people can congratulate students on their work. The big benefit is the instrumental showcase and it is scheduled for September 26, 2008. It is open to the public for a fee of \$5 and one can go from room to room and listen to some of the choruses, chamber orchestra groups, jazz bands, etc. It highlights the students and the CTA tries to get the community involved.

She handed out packets to the Board of Education members that included a list of meetings, officers, bylaws, and an example of trying to get parents to see how music would benefit their students. Copies of minutes are available through Winnie Bowman in the Superintendent's Office. The one thing CTA has found is that students cannot be just a piece of something. They have to buy into something, which helps them interact with the other students. Three or four fundraisers are organized per year and 95 percent of that pays for what is being sold. The remaining money goes into students' accounts to be used for any music-related trip, e.g., Austria, etc. Students who have ambition can earn money on their own, the teachers use the Federal Free and Reduced Lunch Program with students' families having financial issues, and a work-study program can be used to help students pay for their trips by updating music files, etc. By letting the teachers work with the students, it builds a stronger relationship with another adult in the building. Should they have problems about things out of their control, they may use this avenue to express them.

The Board of Education thanked Ms. Williams for the report.

Dr. Weninger then introduced Shannon Wyatt, a trainer with AthletiCo, as the fourth Courageous Huskie Award Recipient. Ms. Wyatt joined AthletiCo and to OPRFHS in the fall of 2006. She graduated from Taylor University in Indiana. She was a social worker for adults. She is a volunteer in the TEAM program. If one

would talk with the athletes, they would attest to her care for them. She has embraced O.P.R.F.H.S. as her own.

Ms. Wyatt is also an organ donor. Someone was in need of a kidney and she vowed that she would give him her kidney. Subsequently, she found that she was a perfect match. This was actually a friend of a childhood friend who she did not know very well, but she wanted to be able to help another person and, thus, saved that person's life.

Mr. Conway knows personally the great job she had done in the building. Mr. Conway stated that the story was unbelievable and that if she ever decided to leave AthletiCo, she had a job as an O.P.R.F.H.S. employee.

Dr. Weninger also thanked Christian Fernandes for his work as the Student Council Liaison to the board as he did a great job and Dr. Weninger enjoyed getting to know him.

Dr. Weninger reported that O.P.R.F.H.S. would participate in an Emergency Preparedness Drill at the high school on May 23, 2008. He invited any Board of Education members to attend the drill.

Dr. Weninger reported that letters were sent to the Democratic House Representatives requesting a) full funding of mandated categoricals, especially in Special Education; b) a second year increase in reimbursements for Special Education personnel, which were increased this fiscal year for the first time in 22 years; and c) an allowable increase in GSA funds toward the EFAB goal.

Dr. Weninger expressed appreciation for the DLT members who helped write a grant application to ATT, which, if awarded, will give O.P.R.F.H.S. \$100,000 for each of four years.

Dr. Weninger reported that the District was working on an application to the Work Force Investment Act Grant.

Dr. Weninger reported that a formal application for a text amendment and a special use permit to have lights in the stadium was submitted to the Village, and would appear on the May 27 Village of Oak Park's meeting agenda; a Plan Commission Hearing will be held July 17.

District Liaison & Community Reports Citizens' Council—Mr. Allen reported that Citizens' Council had a social rather than a meeting. He thanked the co-chairs for a productive year.

Huskie Boosters—Dr. Millard reported that the number of tickets sold for the Huskie Booster auction was a record at 554.

Tradition of Excellence—Ms. Patchak-Layman reported that the Tradition of Excellence Committee was meeting next week.

Faculty Senate—Mr. Hunter reported that he was happy to see teachers honored with the SEAstar Awards. He also reported that Newsweek listed O.P.R.F.H.S. as one of the most outstanding high schools in the country in its ability to educate students. He was pleased that parents were saying good things and organizations were recognizing O.P.R.F.H.S.; he continued by saying that the greatest work can be found in the endeavors of the students. He was impressed with the thoughtfulness of the student arguments made earlier, as they did not sound like everyday high school students. They illustrated their depth of passion and energy. The high school does not get enough children in the front of the Board of Education talking about and showing their successes. The end of the year is always an exciting time. He wished the seniors the best in their future journeys.

He also reminded the Board of Education of the invitations they received regarding the June 4 Faculty Senate after-school event, to which they were invited.

External Reports

West 40—Ms. Patchak-Layman reported that West 40 was moving from LaGrange Park to Bellwood, at 25th Street and Washington. The move should be complete by September.

Ms. Patchak-Layman reported that the Regional Office of Education stated that emergency and crisis plans need to be updated annually, and they need to include verbal and written threat plans.

In regards to MSRA, West 40 will have an interactive website connected with the Cook County Board of Health to help schools regarding this infectious disease.

West 40 is on a three-year cycle for compliance visits, so next year they will commence these activities. Currently, it is compiling packets for staff in this regard.

Collaboration of Childhood Care and Education—Dr. Lee reported that the CECCE board was introduced to the two people who would be conducting the needs and resource assessment, of which O.P.R.F.H.S. contributed \$15,000. This team will put together a five-year plan for the development of that plan in Oak Park.

Consent Items

Mr. Rigas moved to approve the consent items as follows:

- Open Minutes of April 17, and 24, 2008, and the Closed Session Minutes of April 24, 2008 and a Declaration that the Closed Session Minutes dated January 1, 1989 through May 1, 2008 shall remain closed;
- Personnel Recommendations (attached to and made a part of the minutes of this meeting);
- The Resolution Ratifying and Confirming Execution of certain vouchers and payment of certain bills and expenses, fund transfers and list of bills for April 2008 (attached to and made part of the minutes of this meeting);
- The Resolution Authorizing Execution of Certain Vouchers for the Month of May (attached to and made a part of the minutes of this meeting);
- The Check Disbursements dated May 22, 2008, (attached to and made a part of the minutes of this meeting);
- The Monthly Financial Reports;
- The Monthly Treasurer's Report;
- Institute Day Plans for 2008-09;
- PTAB Resolution;
- Printing Contract to MECK Printing;
- Spring Athletic Uniform Bids;
- Class Ring RFP to Jostens; and
- Resolution to Transfer Funds.

seconded by Dr. Lee. A roll call vote resulted in all ayes. Motion carried.

Mr. Prale reported that conversations were occurring with District 97 regarding Institute Days for next year.

Textbooks

Ms. Patchak-Layman referenced the discussion at the Instruction Committee meeting regarding textbooks. It had been an opportunity for her to think through the curriculum, particularly that of Special Education, e.g., attempting to understand the goals of the programs and whether students were being moved forward by the selection of these textbooks or were they in some way standing still. She continued that the LD program's goal is to move students into the mainstream and, thus, asked whether these textbooks would facilitate doing that and readying them for the mainstream's goals the following year. She had been surprised that some textbooks had a reading level of 2.6 or 2.7. Ms. Patchak-Layman did not see how this flowed together in terms of the content in the division and what kinds of impact they have within special education and the mainstream. Students should be able to answer the same questions whether they

are in special education or in the mainstream. Mr. Prale noted that the school has a range and a variety of reading levels in self-contained classes. The books referenced are not the only books used in class but are detrimental to meeting the needs of the student as part of a continuum. Ms. Patchak-Layman asked if all of the students in that class would read these books. She did not understand why the same books were not part of the basic transition level and the regular education level. Mr. Prale reported that they were available as supplements whose learning goals are supplementary. He was not sure that every student would read the book. He would explore that answer.

Mr. Rigas moved to approve the following textbooks as presented; seconded by Mr. Allen. A roll call vote resulted in five ayes and one nay. Ms. Patchak-Layman voted nay. Motion Carried.

- The following textbooks: The Blind Side: Evolution of a Game; and Sports and Literature for the English Division; Refugee Boy, Skellig, and The Whale Rider; Invisible Allies: Microbes That Shape Our Lives, Flush, Clan, Apis, and Double Helix, Tears of a Tiger, Stargirl, and American Literature: Pacemaker for the Special Education Department; French: First Year workbook, French: Two Years workbook; French: Three Years workbook; L'enfant Noir; Eres Tu, Maria? video workbook, En Busca de la Verdad video workbook; Encuentro Inesperado!, La Casa Embrujada; Cajas de Carton: Relatos de la Vida peregrine de un Nino Campesino, La Catrina: El Ultimo Secreto video workbook, A Toda Vela! Textbook and workbook, Graded German Reader for 431, Grundlage Deutsch 2: Fundamentals of German, Emil und die Detektive, Der Kleine Prinz, and Grundlage Deutsch 3: Fundamentals of German, A Song of War, Everyday Listening in 50 Days 1 workbook, Crescendo for the World Languages Division; and The Art of Writing About Art, Gardner's Art Through the Ages, The Annotated Mona Lisa, Music in Theory and Practice, 7th Edition, Volume I and Parenting: Rewards & Responsibilities for the Fine & Performing Arts Division; and Ethnic Chicago: A Multicultural Portrait for the History Division; and

**Policy 1140,
Gifts to the
District**

Dr. Lee moved to approve Policy 1140, Gifts to the District, for First Reading, seconded by Ms. Fisher. A roll call vote resulted in all ayes. Motion carried. A roll call vote resulted in all ayes. Motion carried.

The changes to this policy were editorial changes.

**Policy 1200,
Board of
Education**

Dr. Lee moved to approve Policy 1200, Board of Education of Education, for First Reading; seconded by Mr. Allen. A roll call vote resulted in all ayes. Motion carried.

Ms. Patchak-Layman asked if this proposed amendment were being submitted because of a change to state law and a necessity for bringing in TV coverage. The response was no.

**Policy 1230,
School Attendance
On Days of
Religious Holidays**

Dr. Lee moved to approve Policy 1230, School Attendance on Days of Religious Observances, for First Reading; seconded by Mr. Rigas. A roll call vote resulted in all ayes. Motion carried.

**Policy 1250
Internet Safety**

Dr. Lee moved to Approval of Policy 1250, Internet Safety, for First Reading; seconded by Mr. Rigas. A roll call vote resulted in all ayes. Motion carried.

**Policy 5115-4,
Hazing, Harassment
& Cyberbullying**

Dr. Lee moved to approve Policy 5114-4, Prohibition Against Bullying, Hazing, Harassment, and Cyberbullying, For First Reading; seconded by Ms. Fisher. A roll call vote resulted in all ayes. Motion carried.

Mr. Edgecombe reported that this was a replacement of the current policy to satisfy new requirement by state law to have a policy on bullying and hazing. Counsel has received approval by the ISBE

Recess

The Board of Education Recessed at 10:05 p.m. and resumed at 10:15 p.m.

**Acceptance of
Donations &
Gifts**

Mr. Rigas moved to accept with gratitude the gift as presented (attached to and made a part of the minutes of this meeting); seconded by Mr. Allen. A roll call vote resulted in all ayes. Motion carried.

**Hearing on
Amended Budget**

Mr. Rigas reported that the amended budget had been on display for more than thirty (30) days. It was a requirement of law that the District hold an open public hearing. Mr. Rigas called the hearing to order at 10:18 p.m. Receiving no oral or written comments, the hearing was closed at 10:19 p.m.

**Adoption of
2007-08 Amended
Budget**

Dr. Lee moved to adopt the amended budget, as presented; seconded by Mr. Allen. A roll call vote resulted in all ayes. Motion carried.

**Intergovernmental
Agreement with
West 40 regarding
The Regional Safe
School Programs
For 2008-09**

Dr. Lee moved to approve the Intergovernmental Agreement with West 40 regarding the Regional Safe School Programs for 2008-09; seconded by Mr. Rigas A roll call vote resulted in all ayes. Motion carried.

**Space Sharing
Agreement and**

Ms. Fisher moved to approve the Space Sharing Agreement and the Childcare Services Agreement with the River Forest Community

**Childcare Services
Agreement with
RFCC**

Center; seconded by Mr. Rigas. A roll call vote resulted in all ayes. Motion carried.

Ms. Witham distributed the revised Exhibit 3, noting it was the agreement between the River Forest Community Center (RFCC) and O.P.R.F.H.S. to share space in order to provide space for the CITE Program at the RFCC and enable OPRFHS to have use of an expanded childcare facility.

Ms. Witham reviewed Exhibit 3 with the Board of Education.

Mr. Chappell, executive director of the RFCC, was at the meeting to answer any questions from the Board of Education. He reiterated that the salary and benefits of the child care workers would be status quo, other than they would not be a participant in IMRF.

Ms. Fisher stated that this was a great example of a win/win situation where the high school can partner with the RFCC and have professionals running the day care center. The child care center is a wonderful asset for the faculty as well as having a place for the CITE program. She was very pleased to have this come before the Board of Education.

Ms. Patchak-Layman asked who holds the lease for the building. Mr. Chappell reported that the owner is the River Forest Civic Center Authority, based on a grant received from the State of Illinois. As part of its grant application and project submission, the Civic Center is the owner. Ms. Patchak-Layman asked if the RFCC were able to grant changes to the building. The response was yes. Ms. Patchak-Layman was informed that this was a space-sharing agreement, not a lease. She asked what would happen to the agreement if either of the parties decided that something was not working, e.g., the RFCC decided it did not want to continue doing the child care center. Mr. Rigas noted that the agreement was mutual and is a contract. If there were a change to the agreement by one of the entities, it would be a breach of the agreement.

Ms. Patchak-Layman originally thought the District should have gone out for a request for proposal. But because this is between governmental bodies, it is an intergovernmental agreement. To her it was confusing as to why this arrangement did not go through a bidding process or research conducted on other available 5013C organizations to manage the childcare center. She asked what kinds of marketing is done so that people know that this facility is available. Mr. Chappell responded that until he knew of available openings, it would be difficult to respond. However, word of mouth has been productive, as

well as advertisement at the open house for the early childhood pre-school and summer programs, and advertisement in the *Chicago Parent Magazine*. Ms. Witham stated that there would be \$18,000 in upgrades to expand the child care program space and those costs will be shared fifty/fifty. If the RFCC were to withdraw from the agreement, the high school would still have the benefit of those facilities updated for the Child Care Center. Any work done in the first few years would be mutually agreed upon by the high school and the RFCC. In terms of buildouts at the RFCC, the only thing needed would be making a sink handicapped accessible. It was noted that the Director of Special Education does not foresee higher enrollment in the new CITE program. The CITE Program area will be somewhat smaller, but will be accessible for two wheelchair students. In addition, the RFCC affords a number of activities in other areas that students can access. The District will save \$3,600 per year in rent and have a handicapped accessible program.

Mr. Edgecombe will be the liaison for the school and the childcare program. The RFCC has also participated in some of the CECCE's activities as time allows.

Ms. Patchak-Layman asked if changes could be made to the contract relative to priorities given to special interests. She wanted to add an addendum that would list priorities given to special education students, students who are receiving subsidies from the state, and the implementation of a parent committee to provide an avenue for parents to meet and work with the staff.

Mr. Edgecombe stated that creating a priority for students with special needs is not an appropriate request for a day care center, as the staff is not appropriately trained. Currently, a parent committee exists and meets with the director. While he felt that would continue, he did not believe it had to be a stipulation of the contract. While he did not know how to provide for low-income, the high school does serve TAPP students and students of the faculty. Mr. Allen stated that if low income were included, then it could be a situation with issues of immigrant funds which could cause bigger problems. The burden would shift to the provider. One may not be able to do this logistically.

Ms. Fisher stated that since O.P.R.F.H.S. has had this Huskie Pups on the premises, by and large, the people who have used it have been students and faculty. There were a few other employees from District 97 and a professor at Concordia. The hours of the center reflect the hours of the school day. It has always been a priority that the current

high school students with babies be able to graduate and have a diploma.

Mr. Conway asked if there were any support for the addendum Ms. Patchak-Layman proposed. The response was no.

**Ombudsman
Contract**

Dr. Lee moved to approve the contract with Ombudsman Educational Services (attached to and made a part of the minutes of this meeting; seconded by Mr. Rigas.

**Adoption of
Resolution of
Prevailing Wage**

Ms. Patchak-Layman moved to adopt the Resolution for Prevailing Wage for the 2008-09 school year; seconded by Ms. Fisher. A roll call vote resulted in four ayes and two nays. Mr. Rigas and Mr. Allen voted nay. Motion carried.

The dissenting voters reported that the prevailing wage is an unfunded mandate from the State of Illinois and that was why they did not support the adoption of this resolution.

**DWC Governing
Board**

Mr. Rigas moved to approve the Resolution Appointing the Special Education Director as OPRFHS's Representative to the DWC Governing Board; seconded by Mr. Allen. A roll call vote resulted in all ayes. Motion carried.

It was explained that the only person in the District that could be appointed to this position was the Special Education Director or the Superintendent; Dr. Weninger's work schedule would not allow him to participate with any regularity. Ms. Patchak-Layman noted that she was voting for the position of the Special Education Director only.

**Co-Curricular
Stipends for the
2008-09 School
Year**

Mr. Allen moved to approve the Co-curricular Stipends for the 2008-09 school year; seconded by Mr. Rigas. A roll call vote resulted in five ayes and one nay. Motion carried. Mr. Conway voted nay.

**Discussion on
Non-Agenda Items**

Ms. Patchak-Layman asked if students who disagreed with the dress code could be included in the ceremony some way. Mr. Vogel said that they would have their diplomas presented by the principal in his office. This procedure cannot be changed this year. Dr. Weninger reported that he met with Becca almost every other week during the year and this was a new topic for him. To bring this forward just two weeks before graduation ties the administration's hands. He continued that the high school has a forum to bring this item up and the Board of Education does not have to create one. He wished she had brought this

up earlier, even by bringing the subject up in the *Trapeze*, as she is the editor.

**Next Discussion
On Race and
Student
Achievement**

It was the consensus of the Board of Education members that the next discussion on race and student achievement would be held in June. Ms. Kalmerton will send out possible dates as well as an agenda to the Board of Education meeting. Mr. Allen would like to continue the difficult part of this discussion before moving forward on other items.

**GALA
Fourth of July
Fireworks**

Mr. Rigas moved to approve the GALA Fourth of July Fireworks Show at the high school; seconded by Dr. Lee. A roll call vote resulted in all ayes. Motion carried.

**Abatement of
Emergency
Days**

Dr. Lee moved to approve the abatement of Emergency Days for the 2007-08 school year as noted below; seconded by Mr. Rigas. A roll call vote resulted in all ayes. Motion carried.

June 9, 10, 11, and 12, 2008

**Superintendent
Evaluation
Instrument**

Dr. Lee, as chair of the Committee to set up an Evaluation for the Superintendent, asked the Board of Education to choose between the two options presented to them. The major difference was in the type of evaluative scale being used. It was the consensus of the majority of the Board of Education members to use Option 2. Ms. Kalmerton was asked to submit this instrument to the Board of Education electronically and the Board of Education members were asked to return it to her by June 13 for compilation. The Board of Education will discuss the results at its Special Board meeting June 19 in closed session. It was agreed that each agreement be given a number and that N/A would count.

Both options contained the superintendent's goals and indicators with one exception, the committee added another area of evaluation. The difference between the two documents was that Option I had both a quantitative evaluation measure, as well as a qualitative evaluation measure, a mechanism that Ms. Patchak-Layman felt would be most useful. Option II uses only one kind of evaluation measure on a five-point scale. The key to both of them, however, would be to read the instructions first.

Ms. Patchak-Layman added that some clarification was needed on Goal 5. Dr. Lee stated that Goal 5 was not in the contract, as stated. Mr. Conway stated that people could share their opinions on the instrument.

The Board of Education members considered Ms. Patchak-Layman's questions as to whether the instrument would be expanded to include goals and job responsibilities, not listed in Appendix B. Mr. Allen felt the instrument in hand was a good tool for this year but there does need to be a way of measuring job characteristics. At the State, he uses a form that has a block of objectives and he determines if the person has met the objectives; categories include leadership, teamwork, etc., they are rated exceptional, accomplished, acceptable, or not acceptable. A person can meet all of the objectives, have horrible relationship skills, and be horrible for the environment. Going further, the Board of Education can identify characteristics for superintendent.

Ms. Fisher thanked the committee for the work it had completed well.

Dr. Lee felt the Board of Education could do one of two things: 1) state as a goal everything that the Board of Education would want a superintendent to do; or 2) state the goals that stand out as being the most important now and the rest would follow. That is what the committee tried to do this year; everything else falls under Goal 5 of the instrument. He agreed the instrument was too truncated, but it was the most practical for this year.

Ms. Patchak-Layman asked where District goals and the evaluation of District goals fit into this process? The District approves the set of District goals that were applicable to staff, administration; where do those indicators listed in that get evaluated.

Dr. Weninger stated that this was the best option at this point and the District needs to develop an instrument moving forward. He agreed with other Board of Education members that the District and Superintendent goals need to be the same. This instrument must be completed before the next school year begins.

Names and Addresses Mr. Allen moved to approve the request by State Representative Deborah Graham Address labels for graduating seniors to send them celebratory certificates; seconded by Ms. Fisher. A roll call vote resulted in all ayes. Motion carried.

Closed Session At 11:23 p.m., on May 22, 2008, Ms. Fisher moved to go into closed session for the purpose of discussing the appointment, employment, compensation, discipline, performance, or dismissal of specific employees of the District or legal counsel for the District, including hearing testimony on a complaint lodged against an employee or against legal counsel for the District to determine its validity. 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(1), as amended by PA.93—57; Collective negotiating matters between the District and its employees or their representatives

or deliberations concerning salary schedules for one or more classes of employees. 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(2); Student disciplinary cases 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(10); Litigation, when an action against, affecting or on behalf of the particular District has been filed and is pending before a court or administrative tribunal, or when the District finds that an action is probable or imminent, in which case the basis for the finding shall be recorded and entered into the closed meeting minutes. 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(11); seconded by Mr. Allen. A roll call vote resulted in all ayes. Motion carried.

At 1:00 a.m. on Friday, May 23, 2008, the Board of Education reconvened its open session.

Student Discipline

Mr. Allen moved to drop residency student RES 5/22/08-05, from the rolls of O.P.R.F.H.S. as of May 22, 2008, due to non-residency and charge for tuition accrued (\$18,418.65.00): seconded by Mr. Rigas. A roll call vote resulted in five ayes. Motion carried. Ms. Patchak-Layman voted nay.

Mr. Allen moved to drop residency student RES 5/22/08-06, from the rolls of O.P.R.F.H.S. as of May 22, 2008, due to non-residency and charge for tuition accrued (\$11,883.00); seconded by Mr. Rigas. A roll call vote resulted in five ayes. Motion carried. Ms. Patchak-Layman voted nay.

Approval of the FY 2009 Salary Increases for Administrators And Non-Affiliated Employees

Mr. Rigas moved to approve the FY 2009 Salary Increases for Administrators and Non-Affiliated Employees; seconded by Mr. Allen. A roll call vote resulted in four ayes and two nays. Motion carried. Ms. Patchak-Layman and Mr. Conway voted nay.

Ms. Patchak-Layman could not support this motion of blanket salary increases when the school and community were experiencing financial constraints. She stated that a better scale was needed and she preferred the use of dollar amounts.

Appointment of the Division Heads, Deans, Counselors, Athletic Director, And Special Education Director

Mr. Allen moved to approve the Appointment of the Division Heads, Deans, Counselors, Athletic Director and Special Education Director for the 2008-09 school year; seconded by Mr. Rigas. A roll call vote resulted in four ayes and two nays. Motion carried. Ms. Patchak-Layman and Mr. Conway voted nay.

Directors	Athletics	John Stelzer
	Instructional Technology	TBD
	Special Education	Linda Cada
Division Chairs	English	Steven Gevinson
	Fine & Applied Arts	Bill Boulware
	History	Richard Mertz
	Mathematics	Deborah Neuman

	Physical Education Science World Languages	Dale Craft William Grosser Claudia Sahagun
Asst. to the Division Chairs	Science	Michele Bayer
Department Heads	Business Driver Education Family & Consumer Science Speech	TBD Daniel Kleinfeldt Pamela Erickson Joseph Hallissey Brandi Ambrose Deborah Bluminberg Julie Fuentes Fred Galluzzo Jacqueline Hanson Joseph Herbst Kristina Johnson Heidi Lynch Catherine Marshall Peter Nixen Carolyn Ojikutu Sarah VenHorst
Dean/Counselors		TBD James Goodfellow TBD TBD
Deans		

Ms. Patchak-Layman did not believe the Director of Special Education should be appointed next year because for one to have the optimal special education experience at the school, one needs the combination of parents being supportive and that the direction from the leadership to provide an optimal experience for their students. It is important for the staff to have high morale in order to be able to concentrate on students. She felt another director in that program would be an opportunity to move forward and to meet the NCLB requirements.

Adjournment

At 1:15 a.m. on Friday, May 23, 2008, Mr. Allen moved to adjourn the Board of Education meeting; seconded by Ms. Fisher. A roll call vote resulted in all ayes. Motion carried.

Jacques A. Conway
President

Dr. Ralph H. Lee
Secretary