

The Board meeting of the Board of Education of the Oak Park and River Forest High School was held on Thursday evening, November 15, 2007, in the Board Room of the high school.

**Call to Order**

President Jacques A. Conway called the meeting to order at 7:35 p.m. A roll call indicated that the following members were present: John C. Allen, IV (departed at 11:00 p.m.), Jacques A. Conway, Valerie J. Fisher, Dr. Ralph H. Lee, Sharon Patchak-Layman, and John P. Rigas. 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; Cheryl L. Witham, Chief Financial Officer; 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.

**Visitors**

The Board of Education welcomed the following visitors: Kay Foran, Director of Community Relations and Communications; Jane Graham, O.P.R.F.H.S. Coach and the Girls' Varsity Field Hockey Team; Jason Dennis, Faculty member, Dr. Carl Spight, O.P.R.F.H.S. Institutional Researcher; The Gospel Choir and its sponsor, Latonia Brown; Lee Pulliam, Robin and Leonard Soffer, Richard Neuman, Angelika Kuehn, Margaret Luther, Emma Lewis, Jean-Luc, Martel, and Barbara Mosley; Patrick Geoghegan, Wyanetta Johnson, Burcy Hines, Lisa Hines, Stephen Allstead, Terry Lieber, Andrew Reuland, Ken Ptack, Katherine, and Anne Track; Margarita and Angel Guzman; Helen Smith; Nancy Leavy, Merry Beth Kowalczyk, Kristen Coe, and Regina Kwan Peterson, parents and community members; Linda Cada, Director of Special Education; Terry Dean of the *Wednesday Journal* and Bridgett Kennedy of the *Oak Leaves*.

**Recognition**

The Board of Education recognized the students as follows:

- **Jean-Luc Mosley** for participation in the People to People Ambassador Friendship Games—Amsterdam and taking second in Tennis Singles and Third in Tennis Doubles;
- **Katherine Rack** for finishing Fifth at the Illinois Girls' Cross Country State Meet;
- **Tiffany Smith** for being a Finalist in the American Co-ed Pageant and taking First Place in the Talent Division;
- **Patrick Geoghegan** for being a State Qualifier in the Illinois Boys' Cross Country State Meet;
- **Samantha Guzman** for achieving first place in Women's National Golden Gloves;

- the **Gospel Choir**; and
- the **Girls' Field Hockey Team** for placing 4<sup>th</sup> at State.

**Board Member  
Comments**

Dr. Lee stated that he was making the following statement at this point of the meeting because he and the rest of the Board of Education had received several letters regarding the resolutions to be voted on later in the meeting. What he had to say had less to do with the resolutions themselves than on race, fairness and reality in the District. He addressed them because the point of view expressed in many of the letters said that these resolutions were basically immoral, unfair, and had unfair favoritism of one student over another. He then read the following statement:

“I believe that we in this school district operate on the basis of the following statement of values:

“Each of our students has the right to access a program of instruction that meets two criteria: (1) it has been carefully planned to best meet the educational needs of that student to an extent that is judged to be at least acceptable by the school board; and (2) it has demonstrated its effectiveness at a level which has been judged to be at least acceptable by the school board.

“In acting on such a statement of values, we necessarily show favoritism to certain students. We show favoritism to the student who seeks deep involvement or aims for a career in music, by providing that student with talented teachers, access to instruments, and programs of a variety of musical experiences that are not particularly helpful to students who have no such interest. We show favoritism to students with an interest in competitive athletics, with a huge investment in such programs, in spite of the fact that the majority of our students have no such interest or need. We show favoritism by offering large numbers of advanced placement courses to meet the needs of high-achieving students who are bound for the nation’s best colleges and universities, in spite of the fact that the lowest achieving students will almost never be able to enroll in such courses.

“All such examples of “favoritism” are valid, moral and entirely ethical. They are valid, moral, and ethical because they represent our best effort at meeting the educational needs of each individual student. In other words, they meet the two criteria specified above for what is due our students.

“Why, then, when we try to better serve the educational needs of our lower achieving students, and a disproportionate number of those students are black—all of a sudden we are showing unwarranted favoritism? We are showing reverse racism? One letter writer said, ‘Mr.

Lee intends, by his resolution, that OPRF devote extraordinary resources to solving a problem that is largely beyond its control.’

“What I have proposed, on the contrary, is that we devote ordinary resources toward solving those parts of the problem that actually are under our control.

“When we talk about ordering our priorities, we do not necessarily mean addressing those aspects of what we do that are too weak to find acceptable, and give more attention to the consideration of ideas and the development of plans for programs that address those weaknesses. This means doing so at some expense to the time and attention that can be given to the further improvement of programs that have already been well planned, and have already proven to provide at least acceptable results for higher achieving students.

“It makes perfect sense to devote more time and attention to planning programs to meet unmet needs, even if it is at the expense of that same time and attention to the further development of currently satisfactory programs.

“And to those who say ‘If all you want to do is address the needs of the lower achieving students, then why do you have to mention race?’ I’ll tell you why. I refuse to pretend that race is not a significant factor that this community has to deal with in its education system, as well as other systems. I refuse to pretend that I am color blind. I’m not color blind. You are not color blind. And neither are those who feel that we should not set narrowing the achievement gap to be a top priority. Race is a primary factor in many, many of the issues that our school and community have to deal with. It is a major factor in how we are educated. It is true that we are not yet smart enough to know exactly what the precise mechanisms are that produce the disappointing results with which we are so familiar. That, however, is no reason for us to deny its existence as a factor that plays a role in most of what we do. Denial of the significance of race and how we deal with it will only impede our progress toward solving our problems. I therefore refuse to deny it. It is 2007, and we should be able to acknowledge a spade to be a spade.”

Ms. Patchak-Layman, while happy that the school provides and the staff accommodates parents with conferences, was concerned that the school does not have a system to reassess freshman students’ placements after nine weeks of classes. Each class has its own special needs and freshman students are unknown to the District. Parents of high achieving students in the College Prep and Transition Classes say they are told that their student(s) are in a four-year program, especially in math and science, and that nothing can be done to move the student to a higher level. Many students are comfortable with their placement and do not want to change

because they are happy with the routine. She asked what the school was doing for students who were at the top in College Prep and Transition Classes to insure they will have enough academic experience and instruction to be able to move into the next level of classes. Part of the plan to raise student achievement included the review of curriculum and instruction, yet one of the goals is to have high academic achievement for all; for some students, this is somewhat of an unfairness issue.

Mr. Conway appreciated Mr. Allen's attempt to attend the meeting after being ill.

Mr. Conway stated that parent-teacher conferences are very important in the lives of the students. If he compared "face time" between teachers and students to the "face time" between parents and students, teachers would have more time with the students than the parents. He tips his hat to those teachers that go beyond the call of duty and see students as complete persons. Mr. Conway wanted personal contact with his children's teachers and for those teachers to be advocates for his children in the classrooms. He saw nothing more important than education today; it should be the number one priority for every president of this country. It is the key to the community, to the country, and to the business world. The three most important people influencing children are the coaches, the ministers and the teachers. He stressed the need for parents and teachers to work together to see that every child receives proper training and care. It is like an emergency room triage; the people needing it the most need it the fastest. The high school needs to get the necessary operations and programs in place. If a child is not able to compete once he/she leaves the high school, the District has failed to address those areas in which students need help. He liked the enthusiasm shown for the lights and he hoped for the same enthusiasm for the achievement gap. He thanked everyone who attended the meeting and was a part of the process, as the Board of Education and the administration try to do its best to bring a solution to the every day problems.

**Visitor Comments** Lee Pulliam, resident of 719 N. Elmwood Avenue, Oak Park, IL 60302, two children who graduated O.P.R.F.H.S., former co-chair of the Citizens' Council, former Trustee of the Township, former President of Oak Park Mental Health Board, Viet Nam vet, and an attorney, addressed the Board of Education.

Mr. Pulliam criticized the Plan to Raise Student Achievement (The Plan) because he felt it lacked stakeholder input; it lacked a sense of history; and it used previous approaches.

It ignores that the Board of Education has designated, targeted the elimination of the achievement gap as its number one priority. It minimizes the attention, resources necessary to address achievement gap

in ORPLS. The plan treats the gap as if all of the children were on a level playing field. That is not true. It lacks input stakeholders, especially African Americans, both inside and outside the school. It is a plan without a sense of history in terms of referencing the lessons learned or aggregated issues unresolved and frustrated previous approaches. Dr. Weninger said, "There is no need to revisit the past or complain about it. Our time is too short and valuable." There is no explanation of what we have learned from the past as a guide for future actions. We have seen scores of plans of achievement over the decades and currently and yet we have a set of gap, different, index on race and ethnicity that have continued to slowly grow and as such it is a plan without an history, strategic vision that fully takes in account the realities of different matriculation experiences of key student population. The fact of life at O.P.R.F.H.S. is that we have two schools within the school. Although, those things that are best, one experienced by the majority on average and another experienced by the minority on average. Suggesting programs that raise the student achievement is like believing raising tides raise all boats, even those that are leaking. This plan proposes a score of new programs without establishing how they would achieve their effect they declare as their intentions, their theory of action, e.g., parents parent student outreach observes that student achievement and its success are heavily dependent upon timely, consistent, accurate school/parent communication relationships. Again, Dr. Weninger says, 'While observing that there are significant parents and guardians of underachieving students who for whatever reasons do not come to school. Yet the parents in this program are a key component to making the program work.' We know that a good many of the underachieving students do not have parents or guardians in their homes to make this work. It is a plan that is doomed to fail. When this plan was presented, I appreciated the time and effort that the Board of Education and volunteers put in, however, I take issue at a statement made by John Allen regarding, in words to the effect and I hope that he had not misquoted him, there is no place in life where one is not one responsible for oneself. Not in one's career, religion or in economics. What happens to someone depends upon his or her decisions and processes. He submitted to the Board of Education that many times, circumstances happen that are beyond the control of their children: parents leaving their children; children not being able to read; and the Board of Education implementing policies in the classroom, all beyond children the scope of children being able to control. Lastly, with respect to the children of the achievement gap, he paraphrased a poem by Langston Hughes.

They, too, sing America.  
They are the darker brothers.  
They are sent to eat in the kitchen when company comes,  
But they laugh,  
And eat well,  
and grow strong.

Tomorrow,  
They will be at the table  
When company comes.  
Nobody will dare say to them,  
Eat in the kitchen.

They will see how beautiful they are and they will be ashamed.

They, too, are Americans.  
They too are OPRF.  
They too are our children.

Thank you.

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

Ms. Hines stated that 1) she has been in education for 25 years, 2) she is a social worker, and 3) her son graduated from OPRFHS. She was concerned that the Plan to Raise Student Achievement does not direct its attention to African-American students. She saw lots of activities planned, but she wanted an instructional program directed to African American students to close the achievement gap. She hoped that the staff would have training and exposure to that type of program. Training means that one is involved with professionals and trainers that have developed those types of programs. She wanted the Plan to state that O.P.R.F.H.S. would direct its attention to closing the achievement gap between the African-American students and the white students.

George Bailey, resident of 724 S. Clarence, Oak Park, IL 60302, addressed the Board of Education.

Mr. Bailey, a resident and teacher activist, wanted to draw attention to the language of Resolution #1. He supported it. He felt the anxiousness was about the language “including priority over new initiatives to raise the academic achievement levels of the student body as a whole, provided that such prioritization does not substantially lower the academic achievement levels of any other group of students.” When he sees that he sees a lot of history that the school will not repeat or deal with at all.

Mr. Bailey thought African Americans wanted things best for their students on a continuum that they could afford. That has always been a struggle. That is a struggle now. He wanted to remind people that this was a long, protracted conversation in another guise. He did not see how voting for Resolution 1 would endanger high achieving students. In fact, it may bring about some inventiveness that would ramp-up achievement, as a culture, as a paradigm in the future. African-American children are viewed as “others.” They are viewed as “other” from the vantage point of privilege. While African-Americans tire of talking about race, it is perennial in everything they do. People who want to raise achievement scores of African-American students are not interested in lowering expectations. African-American families moved to this community to find a way to be a part of the high expectations of this institution. Revisiting the history, the anxiety, and the fears is a discussion about who is going to get the resources and who is not. A civil discussion is necessary about this and a global discussion should occur about not an African-American achievement gap in this community, but an American achievement gap compared against the world. This resolution should not endanger O.P.R.F.H.S.

Nancy Leavy, resident of 155 N. Ridgeland, addressed the Board of Education.

Ms. Leavy, a volunteer in the early 80’s on the Parent Human Relations Activity Council and later an O.P.R.F.H.S. Board of Education member for eight years, empathized with the Board of Education and the administration about what they were going through and she respected the process of discussing the African-American gap. She, herself, participated in countless hours of informal and formal discussions, both as a board member and as a community member, about this issue. It has been an ongoing and perennial conversation. She empathized that it has been the highest priority, the first goal of the Board of Education, to remediate and to mitigate the African-American achievement gap for at least twelve years or more. It is not a new concept; it has been part of the ongoing efforts of the Board of Education. In the many hours of walking around the school, the Board of Education members observed segregation by affinity, tradition, coincidence and circumstance, etc. She has never seen segregation by institutional design. The Board of Education has not created programs that were specifically segregated. She was philosophically opposed to that and she had the gravest reservations about Resolutions 1. She felt it was wrong for the school and the community.

Pragmatically, she is unaware of any model, any body of data, or any empirical evidence that says creating a program exclusively for African-American students has the potential to work. She did not believe the Board of Education’s adoption of it, which is controversial, would have

the desired effect. She could not find any empirical reason to adopt a race-based program.

She continued that the resolution was divisive to the student body, within the faculty, and the community. Once the Board of Education takes this step, if it should do so, it will never be able to take it back. Many programs have been developed to help students, e.g., the Academy Program. Some did not work and the Board of Education and administration maintained its maneuverability, there was nimbleness. If a program does not work, it can be changed. Once an entitlement is given, she believed the Board of Education would have that maneuverability. She noted the Resolution 1 ignores the fact that there is a gender component to underachievement; boys are more apt to underachieve in general than girls. The resolution says that this priority is higher than the raising the academic achievement levels of the student body as a whole. She also believed that if the Board of Education took this action, it was hitting the third rail of educational debate in Oak Park & River Forest. It has been an ongoing concern. A perception exists that when the board of education at the middle school did away with honors classes and did not differentiate the curriculum, it mitigated the gap and it retarded the growth of the higher achievement students. She stated that the Board of Education would lose support of the mission of the school.

She could not imagine using the word favoritism, as she knows, for a fact, that all of the classes that are designed to meet the needs. The academic deficit classes have much more lower enrollments than any honors or regular classes. It is not favoritism when students are provided with what they need. If there are fifteen students in a class of students with math deficits, it is not favoritism to have thirty-five students in an honors class. There is no favoritism. A general high school, it tries to provide what a student needs. She understands how intractable this subject has been, but the process has been ongoing. This resolution suggests that nothing has been done in the past.

In general, this resolution will not be to the benefit of this school. It is not what the community needs and she hoped the Board of Education would not pass this resolution.

Stephen Allstead and Terry Lieber, residents of 136 Frank Lloyd Wright Lane, Oak Park, and 147 Linden, Oak Park, and member of APRIL, addressed the Board of Education.

“To President Conway, the District 200 board members, and Dr. Weninger,

“I come before you on behalf of the neighborhood group known as APRIL to draw your attention to new information regarding the proposed

installation of stadium lights, and to present a letter offering a way to resolve at least a part of this controversy.

“A letter from our counsel to yours, Mr. Gene Armstrong, sent earlier today, concerns our appeal of the ZBA decision not to require a special use permit for stadium lights, as was required for the south field lights. We appealed that decision to the Circuit Court, just barely within the time required, largely because of the way the high school framed its variance request: not as a request to install lights and conduct night practices and games, but instead as a request to install higher lights than permitted by the zoning code in order to *reduce* the light intrusion on the neighbors that would result from lights lower in height.

“We felt that was a somewhat disingenuous way to frame the request for variance, since lower lights are not suitable for football and there was no intention to put them in. The way the high school stated its request made it possible that the issues of most concern to the neighbors, the noise and traffic from night activities and their impact on the character and livability of the neighborhood, would not be part of the variance proceeding and would never be fairly considered. We felt we had to appeal the decision to preserve our right to have the community’s interests weighed.

“In the letter sent today, we have offered to stay the proceedings in the Circuit Court until after the ZBA has finished its deliberations. And as an alternative, we have offered to dismiss the case completely if the high school will agree that the real issue is having stadium lights at all, and not just the height of the lights. We look forward to your response.

The letter referenced was sent to Gene Armstrong, the attorney representing the high school; it would be delivered to the Board of Education at a later time.

Ms. Terry Lieber, resident of Linden, Oak Park, addressed the Board of Education.

“Now, about the new information. This past Monday, the chairperson of the Oak Park Historic Preservation Commission testified before the Zoning Board of Appeals regarding its report of October 15, 2007. Chapter 9, Section 7.9.10 of the Village Code requires zoning actions affecting historic landmarks or historic districts to be reviewed by the Historic Preservation Commission. The high school stadium field lies within 250 feet of a historic landmark, the Bishop Quarter School Additions at 605 Lake Street, and part of the field is within the Frank Lloyd Wright-Prairie School of Architecture Historic District, as is much of the surrounding neighborhood. As required by the Code, the Historic Preservation Commission evaluated the anticipated effect of the zoning

action that the high school requested—the zoning variance to allow high light poles to be installed. The Commission found that ‘the installation of the stadium lights will negatively impact the surrounding neighborhood and goes against the purposes of the historic preservation ordinance.’ The Commission also noted that ‘The surrounding residential neighborhood has peacefully co-existed with the high school for 100 years. The balance that exists – outside high school activities occur in the day-time, allowing a quiet residential character in the night-time – would be removed with the variance approval by introducing high-intensity, noisy night-time activities on the exterior grounds and the intense glow of powerful lighting, possibly five nights a week. The lights (and associated activities) will change the character of the neighborhood, affecting its livability.’ Gene Armstrong noted in the course of his cross-examination that had the Historic Preservation Commission rendered its opinion to the high school board earlier, they might never have voted to approve the lights.

“We believe that if the high school had engaged qualified experts to assess the probable impact of night practices and games on the neighborhood, as community members requested you to do as long ago as 2005, the board may well have reached the conclusion that that the limited additional athletic practice time gained with lights was outweighed by the loss of community goodwill, the risk of eventual decline in property tax revenues for the school, and adverse changes in the character of the neighborhood in which the school is nested. We urge you to review this new information and to closely monitor the current proceedings before the Zoning Board of Appeals.

“We hope you will do whatever is necessary to ensure a fair, and full, and respectful discussion of the issues before the Zoning Board of Appeals, and will consider revisiting the decision to install stadium lighting.”

Hilarie Lieb, resident of 446 Lenox, Oak Park, addressed the Board of Education.

Ms. Lieb noted that she was a parent of two alumni and an educator at the Department of Economics at Northwestern and her areas of strengths are race, ethnicity and gender. She was concerned about achievement for all students, especially those who were underachieving. When she read the resolutions as they appeared in the paper, she read them as they stood. Everyone is reading something into them. What she read was that Resolution 1, focusing on a metric, is a ratio. The problem with focusing on a ratio is that there are different ways to change the ratio. It could have everyone performing less well or could have the students not performing as well as desired showing a slower decrease in performance. The resolution does not tell one anything but what the Board of Education will do; focusing on the metric. Any program that talks about

achievement needs to talk about race, ethnicity, achievement, gender, and economic factors and how they intersect with each other. She agreed with the focus, as Dr. Lee stated, on remedial classes by intensifying the District's focus on the group in which minority students are disproportionately represented. If successful in helping those students improve, the definition will narrow that gap. It was her understanding that the high school has not been as successful as it wanted to be in that endeavor. The implication is that dollars will solve this problem, but they will not. One must think about the issues of family, classroom, social, and economic factors, etc. The resolution is not clear. The resolution focuses on measurement and it is very dangerous to do that. She felt one of the things implied was the issue of segregation; literature says that segregating students to help them perform better usually backfires. This is not a good idea. Northwestern University does the opposite; programs have been created to get students in who need the help, they are encouraged, and their issues are explored; it is very time consuming. It is matter of saying: Do we have the right expectations for this classroom? Are we lowering expectations? While she was not sure what the issue was, the resolution did not address it.

With regard to Resolution 2, Ms. Lieb stated that as an educator she would never tell people the specific areas they had to focus on. Reading is important but there are so many facets. The Board of Education should leave it to the experts to focus on the issue. She then thanked the Board of Education for all it had done for the students at O.P.R.F.H.S.

Wyannetta Johnson, resident of 729 South Oak Park Avenue, Oak Park, addressed the Board of Education.

Ms. Johnson stated that what was needed was love and respect from everyone. When someone tries to help, they should be given support. During her 37 years as a resident of Oak Park, the gap has not only been not closed, but it has grown wider. The gap will affect everyone in the room. If the students do not read or write, everyone will be affected. Many students are doing well because they get outside tutoring at a cost of \$100 to \$200 per hour. River Forest parents tutor their neighbor's students. They do not have the support or the money. One can't blame the children; they need cooperation. How many people do not want to see the gap closed in the room? Every day, week, month, the gap is discussed. If everyone worked together, it would take one year to close it.

Mr. Allen stated that Mr. Pulliam misquoted the first part of what he had said. The first part of what he said was that he was happy students were part of the plan, because they needed to be part of their future. As they go on later in life, they will learn that they will be responsible for their choices. Mr. Pulliam missed a very important part of his statement. The

job of educators is to teach students how to make those choices correctly. That was his entire statement.

**District Liaison & Community Reports** Student Council—Mr. Fernandes reported that only two recipients were able to attend the Tradition of Excellence Award reception and convocations, which were well received. Consideration was being given to only two recipients next year. The Turkey Morp would be held November 16 and all proceeds would go to the co-sponsors Feminist Society and Sara’s Inn. The second annual winter fund fair will take place at Pack the Place. Student Council will have activities and proceeds will be donated to the American Cancer Society. In addition, Student Council is planning to hold another Mr. O.P.R.F.H.S. contest for boys. Any funds will be donated to a charity. Consideration is being given to ideas for a donation to the school for post prom, mall furniture, and/or lights.

The last meeting ended with a short summary of the Plan. Discussion will continue and Student Council will help in any way it can.

Mr. Rigas suggested contacting the Tradition of Excellence recipients about putting their videos on the O.P.R.F.H.S. website, as they were particularly moving.

**Principal’s Report**

Principal Vogel complimented the Huskie Palooka’s Planning Committee for accommodating approximately 750 students. The entertainment included listening to 10 student bands and participation in one of the forty-three dodge ball teams, etc.

Principal Vogel also complimented the students for their good behavior at the Tradition of Excellence Convocations.

Principal Vogel reported that there were 8,623 Parent/Teacher Conference registrations scheduled by 1,647 parents, in line with the 3-year average. He also complimented the students on their outstanding behavior at the Tradition of Excellence Assembly. Teachers stated that while many parents attended, the ones that needed to attend were not there. Mr. Conway was appreciative of a teacher going out of his/her way to accommodate meeting with him about his child when Mr. Conway forgot to register for a teacher conference.

**Superintendent’s Report**

Dr. Weninger referred to an article “High Schools Stack Up” in which there was a comparison of the ACT score versus the amount of money spent by a high school and then it was correlated and given a value based on those two indices; O.P.R.F.H.S. rated favorably in that example.

He announced that the Illinois House, Resolution 162, declared that November 15 was School Board Member Day, recognizing over 6,000

school boards serving 900 school districts. O.P.R.F.H.S. echoes the House resolution recognizing what Board of Education members do for the students.

Dr. Weninger provided the following first quarter student discipline statistics, as compared to the same period last year.

Detentions (issued by teachers or deans)	up 55%
After school detentions (3 hours)	down 45%
In School Suspensions (all day)	down 24%
Out-of-School Suspension (1 to 10 days)	down 56%
Expulsions	down 84%

Dr. Weninger spoke of the work that the deans, counselors and teachers are doing in a somewhat different way. He credited the staff and students for these statistics.

Dr. Weninger was very happy to report that this year there were no discipline incidents on Halloween. He made an announcement the next day over the PA acknowledging this fact. Subsequently, a student told him how good that statement made the students feel.

Dr. Weninger reported that Pat Quinn prepared a declaration for Cheryl Ruiz, a chemistry teacher, and her class on a mole project, naming the State Mole Day in Illinois, October 23, which coincides with the National Mole Day.

As a testament to O.P.R.F.H.S.'s music program, 75 students participated in the All District Festival, e.g., 14 students involved in Jazz Band, 2 in the Jazz Choir, 16 in the Orchestra, 2 in the Chorus and 13 in the Band. Earlier this summer 13 students participated in Momenta, a local dance troupe, which performed overseas.

## **District Goals Update**

Dr. Weninger provided the following update on the District Goals.

1. Improve academic achievement for all students with an emphasis on minority and special education students. We are in the midst of developing a plan to raise student achievement, obtaining input/feedback from a wide variety of constituents, and will seek Board approval for it at the regular January meeting.
2. Improve school climate among students and staff by
  - a. improving the transition of incoming freshmen from elementary/middle school to high school; We are in the midst of overhauling the transition to high school programs for students and parents and have implemented changes to it; we

- will continue to make these changes for the class of 2012, culminating in a freshman Paw Print Day in August;
- b. improving the transition of incoming transfer students from non-community based elementary, middle, and high schools; We began a Transfer Student Program this year, and are expanding and further developing it for fall 2008;
  - c. increase the participation of students in co-curricular programs (activity, athletic, intramural); We are in the midst of acquiring data re: student participation, and will be developing ways in which to market programs and increase participation;
  - d. assess the effectiveness of school initiatives (academic and co-curricular), make recommendations for change, and implement changes; This is one of the key and priority components of the plan to raise student achievement; it has already begun with the identification of programs, costs, targets, effectiveness measures, etc.;
  - e. develop a comprehensive professional development program for staff; Not yet begun, but it is part of the plan to raise student achievement; and
  - f. increase student and parent efficacy within the school not yet formally begun.
3. Expand recruitment and employment efforts, and increase the number of minority administrators and faculty. We have developed a framework for this with some specific activities. We are also in the midst of developing a Recruitment Handbook, and have presented to the Instructional Council (IC) the new process for same. Mr. Rigas noted that the Board of Education had committed, in its contract with the faculty, an additional \$10,000 annually for the recruitment of minority teachers.
  4. Develop and implement a new organizational structure. Completed.

Ms. Patchak-Layman made note that when the goals were first presented not all of the evaluators were present; she asked if more specific guidelines were now in place to evaluate the goals. Regarding No. 4, the school employed many interim staff, e.g., principal, assistant principals, etc. The format does not relate to the state's requirement. Thus she was confused by the statement that the organizational structure was complete. Dr. Weninger thought that the assessments were developed but he would review that. He continued that the school has completed the organizational structure. While the people are interim, the structure and the positions are in place. Regarding the principal's description, *The School Code of Illinois* says that one of the principal's primary responsibilities is instructional leadership, which is one of the primary position responsibilities of the interim principal. It does not say "in

charge of the educational programs,” but he does that. Ms. Patchak-Layman reiterated that there were approximately 15 things involved with instructional programming, working with teachers and professional development, etc., which have not been reflected in the job description. She could not see how the organizational structure works without those requirements. At this point the Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction does many of the things named in The Illinois School Code of Illinois. She did not understand how the structure was complete when some mandatory things have not been incorporated. Dr. Weninger stated that the position descriptions were being developed and that many responsibilities are shared, i.e., he has the responsibility of developing a plan to raise student achievement; clearly it is a major educational/instructional plan. He, as Superintendent, has taken the lead as opposed to the Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction or the Principal. While DLT job descriptions are being developed, the structure is in place. Dr. Lee asked if there were any reasons to believe that the ISBE was unhappy with the structure or with the way things were being accomplished. Dr. Weninger responded no. Dr. Lee asked, What then is the issue? Ms. Patchak-Layman answered the law.

Mr. Rigas asked if Ms. Patchak-Layman thought Mr. Prale and Ms. Hill should report to the principal. Ms. Patchak-Layman reported that if the positions were to keep their responsibilities and they were a part of the evaluation process, then that would be part of the organizational structure. Mr. Rigas stated that when the Board of Education looked at splitting the superintendent/principal position, several Board of Education members evaluated the organizational structures of many schools in Chicagoland area that were single high school districts. The vast majority of them if not all of them, have structures similar to O.P.R.F.H.S.’s structure. Ms. Patchak-Layman, while unsure of a date, suggested that the law might have changed. Mr. Rigas felt it might be an interpretation issue.

Dr. Weninger responded to Mr. Conway that he would present a comprehensive professional developmental plan for staff, as a part of The Plan. Mr. Conway asked if Faculty Senate would have input into the plan. Dr. Weninger responded that there was a Professional Development Committee who would work on The Plan in the future, Instructional Council, and last week the entire faculty reviewed it. Dr. Weninger also indicated that a discussion about cultural/diversity training would occur.

With regard to improving the transition of incoming students from non-community-based elementary, middle, and high schools, Mr. Rigas noted that Chris Ledbetter was excited about his participation this year in what John Stelzer and Cindy Milojevic and he were doing in the Transfer

Program. Mr. Rigas hoped that there would be follow up on the students who did not get into a program or activity this year.

**District Committee  
and State Reports**

Tradition of Excellence—Ms. Patchak-Layman referred to Mr. Fernandes' report.

Concert Tour Association—Ms. Patchak-Layman reported that the Concert Tour Association was finishing its fruit sale. The money would be used for an overseas concert in two years.

A.P.P.L.E.—Dr. Lee reported that the A.P.P.L.E. meeting attendance was large. Students came to visit with representatives from colleges in the area. He concluded that the meeting was very successful.

Faculty Senate—Mr. Hunter stated to Mr. Conway that the faculty enjoys Mr. Vogel as the principal and is happy about the split of the superintendent/principal position. The faculty believes Mr. Vogel is doing a fine job as principal.

Regarding the ideas associated with Plan, the faculty was concerned. He felt it was shortsighted to charge the superintendent with this task with such a short timeline. The faculty wanted the Board of Education to realize that this was a lot to ask. There are many things to sort. The faculty will be supportive, just as it was supportive of taking resources through the Levy to focus on achievement issues and the faculty would want the Board of Education to continue to focus on achievement issues through the discussion of The Plan, while allocating resources earmarked to tackle the problem. Faculty seeks input and will be happy to participate at both the divisional and faculty level. It is important to consider that the culture be taken into careful consideration. Part of The Plan, in some ways, leads the faculty to worry that the transitional and college prep levels are not as important as the advanced level placements; the faculty views that as a misperception. The faculty is interested in assuring that transitional and college prep levels are as rich as possible and that the notion that every child should be in an AP class insinuates that the other levels are not sufficient. Another area of concern is the view of standardized assessment. There is more concern with the process of education, as mentioned previously that evening, is being replaced with the idea of a product. The achievement plan view of standardized assessment is worrisome in that there might be some high stakes testing for all students, research says that it is not an effective way to increase achievement.

The faculty is also excited to talk about teaching and learning in the achievement network. The faculty asks that the Board of Education take into account what the school has done in the past and what it is trying to do.

Mr. Hunter continued that the Faculty is encouraged by the focus of hiring minority candidates. At the same time, it is concerned that a change in hiring procedures will minimize faculty involvement. The faculty wants to maintain the same level of involvement as it has had.

Mr. Hunter concluded by saying these days were busy times at the high school. The faculty looked forward to seeing the Board of Education members at the Holiday Tea in December.

Collaboration on Early Childhood Care and Education—Dr. Lee noted that he had attended the Collaboration's last meeting.

### **Consent Items**

Mr. Allen moved to approve the consent items as follows; seconded by Ms. Fisher. Ms. Patchak-Layman asked that items relative to the open and closed minutes and audio tapes and the IASB resolutions be removed from the Consent Agenda. Thus, the Consent Agenda contained the approval of the monthly financial reports and check disbursements.

- Open Minutes of October 25 and November 6, 2007 and Closed Session Minutes of October 25 and November 6, 2007; a Declaration that the Audiotapes dated April 2006 be destroyed; and a Declaration that the Closed Session Minutes dated January 1, 1989 through November 1, 2007, shall remain closed;
- Resolution Ratifying and Confirming Execution of certain vouchers and payment of certain bills and expenses, fund transfers and list of bills for November 2007 (attached to and made part of the minutes of this meeting);
- Resolution Authorizing Execution of Certain Vouchers for the Month of December 2007 (attached to and made a part of the minutes of this meeting);
- Acceptance of the Superintendent's Recommendation regarding the IASB resolutions; and
- Check Disbursements dated November 15, 2007, (attached to and made a part of the minutes of this meeting);

A roll call vote resulted in all ayes. Motion carried.

Discussion ensued. Ms. Patchak-Layman noted that she had requested the ability to review the closed session minutes of the April 2006 meetings as the Board of Education was being asked to destroy the audio tapes of those meetings so as to know whether the minutes reflected the conversation. Because the Board of Education has no policy on whether

Board of Education members have the ability to review the closed session tapes and/or minutes of meetings prior to their term on the Board of Education, there was consensus to table the declaration that the closed session minutes from January 1, 1989 through November 1, 2007 shall remain closed and the destruction of the April 2006 tapes.

Ms. Patchak-Layman noted that she had modifications to the superintendent's recommendations on the IASB resolutions. It was the consensus of the Board of Education members to authorize Ms. Patchak-Layman to provide Dr. Weninger with her recommendations.

**Approval of Minutes** Mr. Rigas moved to approve the open and closed session minutes of October 25 and November 6, 2007; seconded by Dr. Lee. A roll call vote resulted in all ayes.

**IASB Resolutions** Mr. Rigas moved to authorize Ms. Patchak-Layman to modify any of the resolutions and provide them to the superintendent; seconded by Ms. Fisher: A roll call vote resulted in all ayes.

**Amendment of The Meaning of the Seal** Dr. Lee moved to amend the Meaning of the Seal; seconded by Mr. Allen. A roll call vote resulted in all ayes. Motion carried.

**Amendment of Policy 12** Dr. Lee moved to amend Policy 12, American Flag; seconded by Mr. Rigas. A roll call vote resulted in all ayes. Motion carried.

**Amendment of Policy 103** Dr. Lee moved to amend Policy 103, Philosophy of Discipline; seconded by Mr. Rigas: A roll call vote resulted in all ayes. Motion carried.

It was noted that no public comment was received on this policy.

**Amendment of Policy 104-1** Dr. Lee moved to amend Policy 104-1, Change of Grade; seconded by Mr. Rigas. A roll call vote resulted in all ayes. Motion carried.

**Acceptance of Procedures for Policy 5114** Mr. Rigas moved to accept the procedures for Policy 5114, Student Discipline, as presented; seconded by Mr. Allen. A roll call vote resulted in five ayes and one nay. Motion carried. Ms. Patchak-Layman voted nay.

Ms. Patchak-Layman voted nay because she felt 1) the procedures should include that the Board of Education is responsible for holding hearings; 2) that the advisory committee should report to the Board of Education; and 3) there was no reference to continuing student's education in the procedures.

## **Approval of Resolution I**

Dr. Lee moved to approve the following resolution:

Resolution 1: Be it resolved, that this Board of Education considers the continuous narrowing of the academic achievement gap between black and white students in this District to be its top priority, including priority over new initiatives to raise the academic achievement levels of the student body as a whole, provided that such prioritization does not substantially lower the academic achievement levels of any other group of students.

Ms. Fisher appealed to Dr. Lee as the expert regarding the Roberts' Rules of Order and appreciated the chance to speak. She suggested, before the discussion of this item occurred, that the vote be postponed until the December Board of Education meeting. It was an important issue and one Board of Education member was absent from this meeting and three Instruction Committee members were absent from the original discussion at an Instruction Committee meeting. She felt the full Board of Education should have a discussion on the resolutions. She hoped during the month of this delay, something more could happen. Ms. Fisher referred to the passionate information the Board of Education had received essentially to all sides of the question. Some have seen this issue as a divide or an incompatibility with the resolution and the Plan for Academic Achievement. She proposed that during this month a subcommittee of the Board of Education, Dr. Lee and Mr. Conway or another designee, meet with Dr. Weninger to continue to revise this proposal and then bring it to the Board of Education's Instruction Committee of the Whole with what they have been able to add to the proposal. She felt another month would serve the Board of Education well to find parallel ground between The Plan and the issues Dr. Lee addressed.

Dr. Lee asked her to reserve such a motion until the discussion that evening. He felt the majority of the people in the audience came specifically because of this conversation. If at the end of the conversation a motion to table passes, then it will be tabled. He did not feel there was a reason to table this question. He asked her to be willing to listen to the conversation. He stated that there might be members of the Board of Education absent from subsequent meetings as well. He saw no conflict between the resolution and The Plan. He had not seen letters from the public stating that there was a conflict between the resolutions and the superintendent had not indicated that he wanted to postpone this discussion.

Ms. Patchak-Layman wanted to add more value to The Plan under consideration and this was a key element. There were unknowns about The Plan, e.g., whether it was addressing African-American achievement in the high school and whether the difference between African-American achievement and white student achievement was a top priority. Dr. Lee

stated that the proposal was never intended to eliminate anything. It was simply a resolution that states this Board of Education chooses as its top priority the narrowing of the academic achievement gap and chooses to do that without lowering academic achievement of any other group. It is that simple. He continued that many people have interpreted top priority to mean things that were never a part of this priority. To him, top priority means time and attention on the part of this Board of Education and administration. Time and attention never seems to be given to this issue, e.g. time and attention to doing things such as finding out what other schools have done to close the achievement gap. No one has presented to him evidence that someone has made progress somewhere else in the country. That detail is devotion to time and attention to get enough information to make decisions.

The motion was then seconded by Ms. Patchak-Layman. Further discussion ensued.

Ms. Patchak-Layman asked if the resolution would change in Dr. Lee's mind if the resolution ended after the word "priority." Dr. Lee did not feel it would damage the resolution and he was willing to accept it as such. However, he wondered what the other Board of Education members would think.

Ms. Patchak-Layman offered a friendly amendment to the resolution as follows:

Resolution 1: Be it resolved, that this Board of Education considers the continuous narrowing of the academic achievement gap between black and white students in this District to be its top priority.

Dr. Lee stated that the offering a "friendly" amendment put the onus on him to change the wording of the Resolution and for all he knew that could kill the resolution in the rest of the Board of Education members' minds. He did not want to take that chance. He would rather it just be an amendment, not a friendly amendment.

Ms. Patchak-Layman noted that in last year's goal number 1, it stated: "We will intensify our campaign to use data with increasing effectiveness and efficiency to eliminate the academic performance and discipline gap within O.P.R.F.H.S. and to assure that we sustain programs supporting the maximum achievement of each and every student we serve." She was offering other wording so that there was a set statement. Dr. Lee noted that there was a set statement already and no one had made a motion to change it. He asked for Board of Education members' comments regarding this change.

Ms. Fisher noted that she was not prepared to vote on this issue that evening. She reiterated her desire for Dr. Lee and Mr. Conway to meet

with the superintendent to talk further about the resolution. She had not indicated there were conflicts, but she was responding to comments she had received.

When asked why Dr. Lee had decided to bring this as a resolution rather than a policy, he responded that the Board of Education has always neglected to state whether the goals were listed in order of decreasing priority. If there are six goals, there is no way to tell if there is a priority. Something has to be listed as number 1. Given the fact that the Board of Education has neglected that, he assumed there was no order of priorities to the goals. He wanted the Board of Education to declare its stance. If the Board of Education is only lukewarm about closing the achievement gap, then it is only lukewarm. He felt the Board of Education was willing to make closing the achievement gap its number one priority.

Mr. Rigas noted that when Dr. Bridge spoke about the goals in the past, she spoke of this without resolve and referred to it as the Board of Education's number one goal. He believed the number one goal of the Board of Education was to improve achievement for minority and special education students.

Mr. Rigas continued that there were two issues: 1) the resolution states that the school says it does not care if there is a reduction of other people, i.e., "substantially." Why would Dr. Lee want any reduction? Dr. Lee stated that there was no way to assess substantially; it was a wise choice of words, because it does not mean "exactly." Mr. Rigas noted that it could be silent. Dr. Lee responded that he put it in to assure that the school would not do something to lower the achievement of white students. Mr. Rigas noted that white students are also low achievers. Looking at the bottom half, he would move the whole bottom up. He asked if that were a fair statement. He continued that no one wants their child to be in the bottom half and the racial makeup of the bottom half is almost equal.

Mr. Allen stated that the achievement gap involves both black and white students. African-American students in this District are not making AYP in the areas of reading and math. Nor are special education students making or exceeding state standards in all areas. What he has seen is that there is an achievement gap based on those tests most clustered in that group. He wanted to make this a top priority so that when one looks at the bottom half, it is not based on race. Mr. Rigas stated that from the GPA and standardized testing, racially it is almost half. There is a disproportionate number of African-Americans in the bottom half, but the District wants to help all the students not achieving. He continued that the number one goal is to improve African-American achievement. Dr. Lee stated that while that has always been the District's goal, it was not delivered. Ms. Fisher asked if the Board of Education were to reaffirm

that goal and went to the extent of saying that it is the number one goal in order of importance, which she had thought the goals were listed in order of importance, whether that would resolve this item of not having this resolution.

Dr. Lee stated that the wording in the resolution indicates that this Board of Education and its administration would be committed to giving attention and time that is just as serious as the attention and time given to raising the achievement level of all students. In other words, the things the District has been doing for the last 30, 50, 100 years, with no results.

Mr. Conway did not think the resolution would motivate the superintendent in this direction. Dr. Lee was not worried about the superintendent. This is a large organization and movement takes time in a large organization. The District is not going to do this in one year or five years, but it can make a start. This will take constant guidance in a specific direction. Mr. Conway asked who would be affected by the resolution. Dr. Lee stated that it was initially for the Board of Education and the Administration.

Mr. Conway asked where non African-American students fit in. Dr. Lee stated that the resolution would help the lowest achieving non-African-American students. This resolution would also help the District focus on raising the achievement levels of those students having the lowest achievement levels.

Erasing the gap means erasing the gap across the board, both at the high end and the low end. Mr. Rigas stated that the highest existence of the gap is at the top. Dr. Lee stated the District cannot offer courses just for African-American students, but it can offer help to those who need it in reading, organizing ideas, etc. The statistics reported earlier, hopefully, will receive statistical correlation between grade point averages. There are shocking correlations between grade point averages and discipline. The Superintendent has already started doing something that he thought would be instrumental in closing the achievement gap having to do with the discipline.

A roll call vote resulted in 4 yeas and 2 nays. Motion carried. Ms. Fisher and Mr. Rigas voted nay.

## **Approval of Resolution II**

Dr. Lee moved to approve the following below; seconded by Ms. Patchak-Layman.

Resolution 2: Be it resolved, that this Board of Education considers the improvement of the reading skills of those students whose levels of academic achievement are lowest, to be a primary and one of the more intense focuses of those approaches to be considered in raising student achievement.

Discussion ensued. Dr. Lee stated that the Resolution was not just a policy statement. It is a dramatic shift in the policy direction from the past 30 years. District 200 has a defacto policy of not offering substantial reading improvement other than in Special Education courses. There has never been for the substantial numbers of students needing reading skills a direct approach to improving their reading. He asked this Board of Education to approve a resolution which would have the effect of saying, Now the school is ready to consider reading. Now, we are ready to consider ideas of improving reading skills of students. It may not pay to teach them to read or it might be too expensive. If substantial information were available that would lead the Board of Education to those conclusions, at least it would have considered helping them to learn to read. He wanted the school to consider something never done before.

Mr. Rigas asked what presently was in place to assist with reading skills. Mr. Prale outlined the following:

Freshman Students scoring below 35<sup>th</sup> percentile on nationally normed test take Essentials of English & Elements of Reading. Freshman students identified as needing support are enrolled in English 1 and in Learning Support Reading, a course that teaches reading skills. Sophomore students who still struggle in reading take English Literature with Reading Connection, a course with a stronger focus on reading. Junior students who still struggle take American Literature Reading Connections.

In addition, two teachers with reading specialties are released from one period every day to provide literacy coaching across-the-curriculum. CRISS training is also provided two times per year (now for 3 years) and 45 percent of the teachers have received CRISS Level I training. O.P.R.F.H.S. has one CRISS trainer on staff and is sending two teachers to Level II training this winter.

Mr. Prale stated that the teaching of reading is not the purview of just the English Division, but of every teacher. In addition, teachers approach the Curriculum and Instruction Office requesting resources for the teaching of reading in their courses.

Dr. Spight and Mr. Prale have devised a system for sorting out the reading scores for many freshman students. That information will be given to all teachers by class section. Teachers will now know who is reading at what grade level in their class.

Dr. Lee asked Mr. Prale to describe the success rate of the enormous activity just described. Mr. Prale stated that a review and revamping of the Elements of Reading course is underway. Learning Support Reading does not have significant impact, and changes are being made. Spoken

Word has an impact, but it is difficult to measure. Spoke Word students tend to do better in their English programs. Mr. Kahn goes into the classrooms and works with the teachers teaching African-American literature. However, it cannot be stated that these programs have not been shown to provide ready bridges or accelerations for students to move from the seventh or eighth grade reading level to the ninth or tenth year level within a year. Dr. Lee asked if any of the programs described make a direct effort at improving the reading skills of that program to which Mr. Prale replied, yes. Both Literacy Coaching and College Prep do. Dr. Lee asked what percentage of students with serious deficits was enrolled in the programs Mr. Prale described. Mr. Prale responded that there were about 800 students enrolled in these programs. The students who have reading needs have multiple needs; they can be more social and/or emotional in nature. Many instructional strategies will fail until those needs are met. Students need to be made comfortable in order for instructional strategies to be effective; the primary needs which are social and emotional in nature need to be met first.

Ms. Patchak-Layman asked if the primary needs could be met by students working with staff that they trusted to work through those issues. Mr. Prale stated that it was possible through the District's team approach, i.e., PSS Teams. Ms. Patchak-Layman asked about the effect of tutoring. Mr. Prale stated that tutoring could be effective, but student support could also come from a coach, lunchroom monitor, teacher, etc.

Dr. Weninger suggested that the Board of Education not address the resolution as proposed. He suggested discussing it at the Instruction Committee and if the District needs a direct reading program, then the Instruction Committee may direct the administration to do so. A resolution as to the type of reading program is not a policy, but a procedure. Dr. Lee noted that the Resolution did not propose a particular strategy; it was reassuring the initial premise that the school has a policy of not addressing the reading skill needs of its students, as evidenced by only being able to talk about what is offered without being able to talk about the successes over the last four, five, or ten years. He was using the word policy in its broadest sense. He asked if anyone believed there were anything more important than a student's ability to read or finish high school successfully, except for, perhaps, student behavior. Not enough emphasis is placed on reading. To him, what the District has attempted to do is to teach the students chemistry by giving the English teachers a one-day workshop on how to teach chemistry, the same with PE teachers.

Mr. Conway, believing that reading was important, did not see this resolution requiring the school to do anything in particular, but emphasize that students who lacked the underlying reading skills needed help.

Ms. Fisher concurred that reading skills were a basic foundation and asked the superintendent and curriculum/instruction experts if there were anything in the resolution with which current programs are not in line with and in some way approach reading as a foundational skill differently.

Dr. Weninger noted that he had asked the same of both Resolution 1 and 2. What is the net effect? What will the school do differently as a result of these resolutions and what is it trying to do with the African-American achievement gap. If one identifies reading as being that important, it is a slippery slope. One would not get agreement from the 225 professionals and community members. He felt that the resolutions diminished everything else. He advised the Board of Education not to take this step.

Mr. Prale reported that one school board adopted a focus of improving literacy across its district which seemed to activate them. They passed a resolution but it felt different from this one. This resolution talks about reading skills. He did not know how this would prompt the school to do things differently. One division head is revamping the reading program. It seemed to have more of an effect when it was a focus vs. a resolution.

Kristin Coe, community member, asked the Board of Education to think about the IASB's instruction which delineates clearly between the ends which the Board of Education should consider and the direction of policy and achievement of those ends that are administrative in nature. The Board of Education may be considering something that is means-based vs. ends-based and policy should address ends-based activity.

Ms. Fisher did not understand the distinction between the Board of Education setting policy and these resolutions. That was the reason to call for a delay on Resolution I, as it is a weighty issue. She asked Dr. Lee to speak about why these were in the form of resolutions versus setting policy through the committee meetings. Dr. Lee responded that it was because of the Plan the District is on track to consider. The procedures for adopting policy would conclude somewhere between March and April. He wanted to start doing these things based on the resolutions. This was the first time the Board of Education had a discussion about the teaching of reading. The discussion would not have occurred if the resolution not been presented. It is through discussions like this that the Board of Education makes headway on items important to it.

Ms. Fisher stated that the Board of Education has always been a policy setting board and has, sometimes, delved into a micromanaging approach. She noted that she was not an educator, and while Dr. Lee may be more comfortable, she, personally, was more comfortable operating at the

policy-level, thinking about the issues under discussion. She appreciated and felt the benefit from the discussion of seven board members. She did not feel the issue of the first resolution had been vetted. She treasured the Board of Education's discussions. As a matter of procedure, she was uncomfortable doing things by resolution without full discussion at the various committee meetings. The Board of Education needs to be careful with a process that makes an end run with policy.

Mr. Allen stated that it was discussed at the Instruction Committee meeting and that reading is fundamental. A teacher cannot teach anything if a student does not have that skill. The test scores have shown that some students are not doing well at reading. The District is working on new programs, so in spite of what it has done, the programs have not succeeded. This resolution considers reading to be primary and one of those intense focuses. It does not limit or mandate what is done. There are environmental concerns no matter what is taught, including reading. The Board of Education feels that reading should be a primary consideration. It does not overstep bounds. He believed this approach should be taken for the betterment of the District's children.

Mr. Rigas did not believe the Board of Education should have a philosophical discussion on how to teach reading. Dr. Lee concurred. Mr. Rigas stated that the Board of Education gets reports on the things the District is doing on reading, some of which are not working and are being redeployed. The Board of Education gets reports every year and the programs change. By affirming this resolution, the Board of Education is telling curriculum to focus on reading. He felt the Board of Education was doing something that was outside of its purview.

The summer program has run for three years and each year the outcomes are reviewed in both reading and math. The District can add value in six weeks. Each year it is assessed and changed to get more out of it. The Board of Education received reports on reading in 2005, 2006 and would again in June of 2007.

A roll call vote resulted in 4 yeas and 2 nays. Motion carried. Ms. Fisher and Mr. Rigas voted nay.

**Presentation of  
Preliminary Levy**

Dr. Lee moved to approve accept the Preliminary Levy as presented and to be placed on display in the Business office, Room 270A; seconded by Dr. Lee. A roll call vote resulted in four yeas and one nay. Ms. Patchak-Layman voted nay and Mr. Allen had already departed.

The Board of Education will adopt the 2007 Levy at its regularly scheduled Board meeting on December 20, 2007. A Public Hearing meeting will be held at the regularly scheduled Board Meeting on December 20, 2007.

For the 2007 Levy the CPI used is 2.5% and EAV for new property is estimated at \$20,000,000 plus \$20,345,170 in TIF carveouts. The estimate of the 2007 aggregate tax Levy is 104.56 percent of the Preliminary 2006 Levy.

<b>Fund</b>	<b>Preliminary 2006 Levy</b>	<b>Preliminary 2007 Levy</b>
Education	\$ 43,075,463	\$ 44,612,278
Liability Insurance	1,113,616	1,141,456
Special Education	406,372	476,232
O&M	5,009,319	5,067,320
Transp.	810,790	831,060
IMRF	998,347	1,023,306
SS	998,347	1,023,306
Working Cash	310,640	997,029
Life Safety	1,015,930	1,024,058
Total	\$ 53,738,824	\$ 56,196,045
Bond & Interest	\$3,006,954	\$3,008,516
<b>TOTAL LEVY</b>	<b>\$ 56,745,778</b>	<b>\$ 59,204,561</b>

**The following is the Timeline for the Levy**

October 16	Finance Meeting	Estimated Levy
October 25	BOE Meeting	Estimated Levy
November 6	Finance Meeting	Estimated Levy
December 20	BOE Meeting	Truth in Taxation Hearing
December 20	BOE Meeting	Levy Adoption

Ms. Patchak-Layman felt the Levy figures were too high. She felt the school could reduce the levy and still have a financially stable school district and still have good will in the community. She suggested requesting only \$53,928,273, which was reduction of 5% over the 2006 levy because the Levy is only for half of the next school year. She looked forward to public comment within the month on this issue.

**2008 Board of  
Education Dates**

Dr. Lee moved to approve the meeting dates for regular Board of Education meetings as follows: January 24, February 28, March 20, April 24, May 22, June 26, August 28, September 25, October 23, November 20, and December 18, 2008; seconded by Mr. Rigas. A roll call vote resulted in four yeas and two nays. Ms. Patchak-Layman and Mr. Conway voted nay because they would have preferred a change in the March meeting date.

**Collaboration  
On Early  
Childhood Care  
And Education**

Dr. Lee moved to approve the Resolution in support of the Collaboration on early Childhood Care and Education, as presented; (attached to and made a part of the minutes of this meeting); seconded by Ms. Fisher. A roll call vote resulted in all ayes. Motion carried.

**A Plan to Raise Student Achievement**

This was a time for the Board of Education to continue its discussion on the Plan to Raise Student Achievement.

Ms. Patchak-Layman asked Dr. Weninger if he expected the Board of Education to select five or six priorities from the Plan, and what things would be considered deal breakers as noted at both the Citizens' Council and the Buzz Café meetings. She counted four or five things that would be "deal breakers" and she asked for clarification as to how that would fit in with the Plan.

Dr. Weninger stated that he was asked at the Buzz café if he thought some proposals were more important than others, i.e., deal breakers. Personally, he feels there are, e.g., the summer program was raising student achievement. He planned to provide the entire Plan at the January Board of Education meeting and that the Board of Education would indicate its priorities. At Citizens' Council, he proposed that the administration might propose five things from which the Board of Education could choose. The answer to both of these issues is that in January he would make a formal proposal based on the Board of Education's conversation of its priorities. Now, in addition, there are the resolutions which were just approved to consider. Ms. Patchak-Layman thanked him for his explanation.

Dr. Lee asked Dr. Weninger what kinds of things that he would like to have done that he would not be able to do by these resolutions. Dr. Weninger responded none. He is moving forward. The resolutions provide a backdrop, but do not prevent the administration from doing things.

**Closed Session**

At 11:20 p.m., on November 15, 2007, Dr. Lee 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); and to adjourn to the Board Room; seconded by Ms. Fisher.

Ms. Patchak-Layman noted that she had no conflict of interest with any of the closed session agenda items.

A roll call vote resulted in all ayes. Motion carried.

At 1:20 a.m. on Friday, November 16, 2007, the Board of Education reconvened its open session.

**Cicero Township  
Treasurer's Office** Mr. Rigas moved to approve the Settlement and Consent Agreement with the Cicero Township Treasurer's Office and Member Districts as presented; seconded by Dr. Lee. A roll call vote resulted in four ayes and one nay. Ms. Patchak-Layman voted nay.

**Adjournment** At 1:23 a.m. on Friday, November 16, 2007, Mr. Rigas 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

John P. Rigas  
Secretary