

The Board meeting of the Board of Education of the Oak Park and River Forest High School was held on Thursday evening, December 20, 2007, in the Board Room of the high school.

**Call to Order**

President Jacques A. Conway called the meeting to order at 7:34 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, Dr. Dietra D. Millard, 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; 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; Joe Kostal, Jim Giovanni, College Biggins, O.P.R.F.H.S. faculty members; Dr. Carl Spight, O.P.R.F.H.S. Institutional Researcher; Joe Beard, O.P.R.F.H.S. Security; Lisa Vincent, OP/OT Therapist; Wyanetta Johnson, Burcy Hines, Kimberly Werner, Julianne Sebastian, Carl Hill, James and Meagan and JP D'Amico, Mary Kay and Ann Maloney, Citizens; and Terry Dean of the *Wednesday Journal* and Bridgett Kennedy of the *Oak Leaves*.

**Board Member Comments**

Dr. Lee said that the rest of the Board of Education had read and heard criticisms on the way school handled the death of an employee. For the record, he felt it was handled quite well and very appropriately.

Mr. Rigas was aware of discussions regarding penalties or issues related to student athletes and the *Code of Conduct*. He was surprised to learn that sanctions that applied to athletes did not apply to students in activities. The Board of Education had discussed this issue prior to Dr. Weninger's tenure and Mr. Rigas thought that if someone were caught at a party with illegal substances or alcohol and involved in either activities or athletes, he/she would receive the same consequence. The *Code of Conduct* actually is not applied that way; he felt the District needs to put this on the agenda of the Policy Committee for discussion soon.

Mr. Rigas also felt that the Policy Committee meeting should be moved to Tuesdays following the Finance Committee meeting. Dr. Millard concurred.

Ms. Patchak-Layman disagreed with Dr. Lee's comments regarding informing the community about the case of meningitis in the school; she felt a letter about the situation should have been sent immediately to the parents. When it was discovered that the illness was not contagious, a second letter should have been sent. She believed reading about this in the newspaper was not to the school's best advantage.

Ms. Patchak-Layman suggested that the Board of Education rethink the stadium lights issue based on the report given at the Finance Committee that the District will have to pay over \$500,000 to redo the Stadium turf. While the Board of Education cannot designate funds from Boosters, Boosters' members have an interest. This may be a time for the Board of Education to review the discussion of Stadium lights and to review the Board of Education policy on gifts and procedures.

Ms. Patchak-Layman renewed her request for a report on freshman students' grades by class with a breakdown on both gender and race in order to review and reevaluate what is offered.

Dr. Millard, speaking as a doctor regarding the case of meningitis, noted that it is a difficult decision as to how to balance the protection of a patient's right to privacy against public health concerns. Not knowing all of the details, she trusted that decision to the offices involved. She respected the advice of the Public Health Department.

Dr. Millard reiterated the comments she made at the Instruction Committee meeting. She had not attended the November 5 Instruction Committee meeting or the November 15 regular business meeting, as she was on a memorial trip to India beginning November 1. Because she knew she was not going to be at those meetings, she met with Mr. Prale, as the chair of the Instruction Committee about the agenda. Not only was she absent but Ms. Fisher and Mr. Allen were also absent. At the time she left she was unaware that Dr. Lee's Resolutions would come to the Board of Education for a vote. She learned about them when she returned. Each of the seven Board of Education members is an elected member. It is critical that all members have an opportunity for input. In this case, this was ignored. The role of the Board of Education is to govern, to establish policy, and to guide and direct the administrators in this. There are specific procedures that allow a First Reading of a policy for discussion at its initial presentation or review and then to receive input from all stakeholders in the communities, and a Second Reading as well, typically the following month. This is designed as a democratic and inclusive means for conversation and input from all stakeholders. Short of a major emergency that threatens the integrity of this school, there is no reason to deviate from these well established procedures. Process was not followed in this case. She reminded the Board of Education members that they were elected to govern by policy, not dictate by resolution.

While she did not disagree with the basic premise of Resolution 1, the promoting of academic achievement for those students not achieving, with an emphasis on African-Americans, she reminded everyone that hiring a new superintendent emphasized that role and it was his contract's number one goal. She is concerned that the wording of the Resolution was divisive and does not convey the true intentions. It is essential that the Board of Education considers policy statements or any other written guidelines for this school community to communicate in the precise message that is intended. She personally believed that the Resolution was not inclusive enough. While she believes that race is a key factor for this school to focus on in addressing achievement discordance, the Board of Education needs to give careful attention to non-black students who are not achieving, whatever their race, age, gender, or special needs. That is a mandate of a public school and the mandate and top goal of O.P.R.F.H.S.

The second resolution says the school must promote reading as its top priority to address Resolution 1. Certainly reading needs special attention for many students not achieving, but those students have an equal need for other support programs to ensure their success. She reminded the Board of Education of the multi-factorial nature of achievement.

She urged each of the seven Board of Education members and each member of the community to remember that all-inclusive input is critical for proper governance. She would have been pleased to have had extensive conversation of the resolutions, so that the Board of Education vote would have been 5-2 or 6-1, or better yet, unanimous. That would have sent a different message to the community than the split vote of 4 to 2, completely excluding one Board of Education member.

The Board of Education is a democratic unit, not a doctoral body, and it must not, either as individual members or as a whole Board, pursue methods of set policies that indicate otherwise.

Mr. Conway commended the administration for its sincerity and support of Marilyn Strong, whose husband is employed and respected at O.P.R.F.H.S.; it showed respect to the family in its time of need.

Mr. Conway stated that last month there was discussion regarding the perception of a conflict of interest with one of the Board of Education members because she advocated for a parent. He asked to bring the discussion before the Policy Committee so that the Board of Education could discuss this in further detail and, if need be, sanction that Board of Education member. A Board of Education member has a relationship/responsibility to the entire community.

**Principal's Report** Principal Vogel announced that over 2,000 students attended Pack the Place on November 30 and the Huskie Athletic Council Winterfest and over \$300 was raised for cancer charities.

Principal Vogel stated that students and staff adopted 48 families from the Township's Adopt-A-Family Program, enough gifts to fill a yellow school bus.

Principal Vogel stated that Tau Gamma made and donated Welcome Baskets for Sarah's Inn for families entering the shelter.

Principal Vogel announced that Lillashawn Coleman was selected as the Toyota Athlete of the Week for which the high school will receive a \$500 donation in recognition of this honor.

Principal Vogel reported that Edith Kooyumjian, mother of Bob Gauger, retired Applied Arts teacher who passed away last year, established an annual college scholarship within the O.P.R.F.H.S. Scholarship Foundation in Mr. Gauger's memory.

**Superintendent's Report**

Superintendent Weninger reported on his proposal of Associate School Articulation with Districts 90 and 97, to be kicked off and implemented second semester. The River Forest Board of Education Committee of the Whole invited him and other administrators to a meeting on articulation in February.

Dr. Weninger reported that recruitment brochures and processes have been created for the positions of principal, assistant principal, and Physical Education division head.

Dr. Weninger reported that accountability discussions were held with the Early Childhood Collaboration for the annual grant plus the recent one-time grant for planning/research.

Dr. Weninger reported that effective January 2, 2008, the Village of Oak Park would run a 90-day pilot of charging parents, community, and visitors \$5 per vehicle to park in the garage after 4:00 p.m., modifications could be made after that time, including the raising of that fee.

The Village of Oak Park notified the school yesterday that due to budget cuts, the Oak Park Police Department would no longer provide police officers to direct traffic at the beginning of the school day.

**Recognition**

The Board of Education awarded the Courageous Huskie Award to the students noted below. This award is given to students, staff, parents and community members who

- Recognize integrity, courage, and/or conviction and
- Successfully overcome life's difficult challenges

Recommendations are made to the Superintendent for consideration.

**J.P. D'Amico**

- Is Junior student
- Exemplifies the purpose of the Courageous Huskie Award
- has Tourette Syndrome

According to the National Institute for Neurological Disorders and Strokes, Tourette Syndrome (TS) is a neurological disorder characterized by repetitive, stereotyped, involuntary movements and vocalizations called tics. TS occurs in people from all ethnic groups; males are affected about three to four times more often than females. It is estimated that 200,000 Americans have the most severe form of TS, and as many as one in 100 exhibit milder and less complex symptoms. Although TS can be a chronic condition, most people with the condition experience their worst symptoms in their early teens. A CNN video was shown at the meeting featuring J.P. attending a camp for people afflicted with TS.

According to one of his teachers, J.P. is a self-actualized person who learned to appropriately and successfully advocate for himself. J.P. has confidence in his abilities because he took on the challenges of Tourette Syndrome head-on. He is an example to all of us –students and staff alike – that achievement is all about heart.

J.P. thanked his mom and dad for being his advocate as he would not have had an IEP would not have learned that what he had about TS, or would he have gone to the camp without their support. His parents have tried to keep him away from the rough times and the problems as much as possible.

J.P. said that the owner of the TS camp featured in the CNN Video told him that the camp is one week out of 52 where he could feel free and not have to put up with the challenges of life. Mr. Giovanni gave him that same feeling one hour per day in math. Mr. Giovanni taught him how to relate to the other students. He thanked him. J.P. also credited Lisa Vincent, an OT/PT teacher who helped him organize himself.

**Joe Beard**

- began employment here at OPRF a little more than a year ago, in October 2006.
- is a member of the Safety and Support Team

- works second shift, and is often the first person visitors, students, and staff meet at the Welcome Center
- works part-time in the Proviso Township High School District as a School Resource Officer or SRO in conjunction with the Bellwood Police Department
- is retired from UPS after a 20 year-career

Dr. Weninger reported that Mr. Beard works at the high school second shift. Mr. Beard saw two staff members finishing lunch and as they were walking back, one of them could not stop coughing. Mr. Beard evaluated the situation and performed the Heimlich maneuver, which saved that person's life.

**Visitor Comments** Burcy Hines, resident of 122 Fair Oaks, Oak Park, addressed the Board of Education.

Ms. Hines commented that she thought the article in the *Wednesday Journal* titled *Race Gap Discussion at District 200 Meeting* could have been written differently as it provided a wrong tone and many people were disappointed. She suggested that since this was an issue she suggested taking the month of February, African American History Month, to have forms and workshops, e.g., Black and White Dialogue. She stated that this was not a racial issue; it was an academic issue.

Kimberly Werner, parent, resident of Oak Park and member of SEA, addressed the Board of Education. She noted that the link to the Board of Education agenda was broken.

Ms. Werner spoke on behalf of SEA and about the plan to raise student achievement. SEA was concerned that all students receive their highest potential and strongly supported giving attention to those subgroups in which student achievement is less than expected, i.e., African-American students, low income students, and students with disabilities. SEA was distressed to read the following on page 24 of the Plan to Raise Student Achievement the following: "You will note that very little, if any, reference is made to special education student achievement. The reason is two fold. 1) The Special Education Division is currently involved in several initiatives directly targeting student achievement." While it then lists those special initiatives, including ninth grade math, a second reason is not given. SEA believes that any plan to raise student achievement must include students with disabilities. It must begin with the identification of meaningful goals. This plan fails to articulate any measurable goals for student achievement. It identifies separate initiatives for community, school, parent, and student. SEA knows that it works best when all work on common goals. SEA urged that the plan be revised to focus primarily on goals. She urged the inclusion of the following goals:

- 1) Increase the number of students with learning disabilities who could be and should be taking AP Exams;
- 2) Encourage consideration of the full continuum of disabilities to set goals for those students whose ACTS indicate they are college ready;
- 3) Set appropriate goals for suggested transition to sheltered environment where that is an appropriate goal;
- 4) Begin with goals that focus on student achievement and then as programs and plans meet those goals, work together on specific goals. There are state initiatives already that started; one of these is the examining of disproportionality of minority students already underway that could be of great assistance and guidance. As many know, the IEP or Individual Educational Plan is based on measurable goals. As a result, the parents in the SEA organization have extensive experience with writing measurable goals and were offering to work on committees, i.e., the School Improvement Committee, etc.

As an organization, SEA looked forward to working with the school on this effort.

Wyannetta Johnson, A.P.P.L.E. officer and resident of 929 S. Oak Park Avenue, Oak Park, addressed the Board of Education.

Ms. Johnson noted her frustration of having asked the school to work with “we” for over thirty years and not being allowed to do so. The intention is not to be troublemakers. She was angry and saddened. She asked the Board of Education members who they represented and what were their duties. Is it the superintendent’s job to speak for the Board of Education or is it the Board of Education’s job to speak. She asked why, when Board of Education members were invited to a meeting, they had to get consensus on whether they should attend. She noted that many other factions from around the country were coming to this area to help since there was no active NAACP. Ms. Johnson tries to mitigate conflict between the parents and the school. She continued that every child should be able to learn. Ms. Johnson wanted to know who makes the decisions when there is an outcry from parents. If it is the superintendent who speaks, then why is a Board of Education needed. She wanted a response to her question in writing as soon as possible. She said the Board of Education is elected to represent all of the constituencies. Tax dollars are mounting with the attorneys, and “we” do not like to fight. She was not pleased with the Board of Education’s action and the way it talks down to its own members.

**District Liaison & Community Reports**    Student Council—Mr. Fernandes reported on Student Council activities:

- 1) Mr. O.P.R.F.H.S. Contest
- 2) Discussion of the Plan to Raise Student Achievement
- 3) Student Council members were encouraging their members to attend and help with other club meetings and activities

**District Committee  
and State Reports**

Citizens' Council: Mr. Allen reported that Citizens' Council discussed the past secretary/current secretary issue and the accuracy of minutes, i.e., one set had been changed but not passed back to the secretary. The secretary felt the minutes' credibility was at risk. A new secretary has been found. The balance of the meeting was devoted to the discussion of the Resolutions and the Plan to Raise Student Achievement.

A.P.P.L.E.—Dr. Lee reported that Dr. Edyth Young was the keynote speaker at the A.P.P.L.E. meeting and addressed the topic of eliminating the achievement gap.

Collaboration on Early Childhood Care and Education—Dr. Lee noted that he had attended the Collaboration's last meeting. The Village of Oak Park President Pope was present and significant time was spent by members of that board expressing their appreciation to the Oak Park Village Board and to the high school for supporting the grant that will enable it to go into its new planning venture. The action of this Board of Education was much appreciated.

West 40- Ms. Patchak-Layman reported that Dr. Flowers of the Regional Office of Education reported that there were concerns addressed to his office on residency and homelessness and it was working in a group committee to come up with common language for boards of education to use in these areas.

**Consent Items**

Dr. Lee moved to approve the consent items as follows; seconded by Ms. Fisher.

- Open Minutes of November 15 and December 3, 2007 and Closed Session Minutes of November 15 and December 3, 2007;
- Resolution Ratifying and Confirming Execution of certain vouchers and payment of certain bills and expenses, fund transfers and list of bills for December 2007 (attached to and made part of the minutes of this meeting);
- Resolution Authorizing Execution of Certain Vouchers for the Month of January 2008 (attached to and made a part of the minutes of this meeting);
- Check Disbursements dated December 20, 2007, (attached to and made a part of the minutes of this meeting); and



- Accepted the proposal from Konica Minolta for copy machines, as presented.

Discussion ensued. Ms. Patchak-Layman recommended amending the minutes on page 18 of the November 15 meeting to reflect her providing her recommendations on the IASB resolutions to the IASB Governing Council, not the superintendent.

Ms. Patchak-Layman asked why the school was hiring three additional staff mid-year and if these positions would continue as interim or permanent positions. Mr. Edgecombe responded that these were replacement appointments for the balance of the school year due to resignations, change in assignments, etc.; the Board of Education will see the names in these positions for release at the March Board of Education meeting. These positions will be posted for next year.

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

**Acceptance of Gifts & Donations**

Dr. Lee moved to accept with gratitude the gifts and donations, 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.

**Approval of Life Safety Amendments & the Ten Year Safety Survey Report**

Dr. Lee moved to approve the Life Safety Amendments and the Ten-Year Safety Survey Report, (attached to and made a part of the minutes of this meeting) as presented; seconded by Mr. Allen. A roll call vote resulted in all ayes. Motion carried.

Ms. Patchak-Layman asked if the offsite apartment for Special Education was considered an item for Life Safety. Mr. Lanenga will explore that option. Dr. Weninger informed the Board of Education that the current location is not handicapped accessible.

Ms. Patchak-Layman noted a concern that the Life Safety Survey was done by the same architectural firm doing the life safety work; she felt there should be two separate and distinct architectural firms involved.

**Hearing on Renewal of Drivers' Education Fee Waiver**

At 8:42 p.m., a Public Hearing was held on the renewal of the Drivers' Education Fee Waiver. Receiving no written or oral statements, the hearing was closed at 8:43 p.m.

**Authorization to Submit Application for Modification of**

Mr. Allen moved to approve the authorization to submit an Application of School Code 105 ILCS 5/27-23 for the authority to raise driver education fees to a cap of \$350 over the next five years; seconded by Ms. Fisher.

<b>School Code</b>	Ms. Witham explained that the purchase and licensing of the cars is done on a rotating basis and is included in the items under the “other” section. Ms. Patchak-Layman asked if Drivers’ Education were to become a summer only activity, would that reduce the amount of salaries paid. Ms. Witham noted that while it may, many more cars would have to be procured, modified, etc. Dr. Weninger stated that a survey was conducted of parents and students and the response to that question was overwhelmingly not to put Drivers’ Ed in the summer. It was also noted that the high school must teach Drivers’ Education to any resident of the District and that is also accomplished during the summer.
<b>Hearing on Renewal of Drivers’ Education Waiver (Behind-The Wheel)</b>	At 8:46 p.m., a Public Hearing was held on an amendment to the Drivers’ Education Behind the Wheel Instruction. Receiving no written comments or oral statements, the Hearing was closed at 8:47 p.m.
<b>Authorization to Submit Application for Modification of School Code</b>	Mr. Rigas moved to authorize the submission of an Application for modification of School Code 105/ILCS 5/27-24.3 for the authority to allow 20 hours of practice driving in a simulator system in lieu of 2.8 hours of instruction in a dual controlled car (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.
<b>Hearing on Tax Levy</b>	At 8:49 p.m., a Public Hearing was held on the adoption of the Tax Levy. Receiving no oral or written statements from the public, the Hearing was closed at 8:50 p.m.
<b>Adoption of the Resolutions Relating to Tax Levies 2007</b>	Mr. Rigas moved to adopt the Resolutions relating to Tax Levies 2007; (attached to and made a part of the minutes of this meeting); seconded by Dr. Millard. A roll call vote resulted in six ayes and one nay. Ms. Patchak-Laymen voted nay. Motion carried.  Ms. Patchak-Layman restated her belief that the Levy amount was too high and needed to be reduced.
<b>Local Ethics Committee</b>	Mr. Allen moved to appoint the John McCulloh, Sherlynn Reid, and Martha Trantow to the District 200 Local Ethics Commission for the 2008 calendar year; seconded by Dr. Lee.  Mr. Edgecombe explained that the recommendation for the names of the individuals above had been provided to the Board of Education for prior years. Participants are not solicited in a general sense. These people were recommended for reappointment for their third year. The Commission’s responsibility is to investigate claims of ethical violations on the part of the Board of Education members or O.P.R.F.H.S. employees. Several years ago, new regulations were adopted by the Board of Education regarding

ethical behavior and part of that was the establishment of this Commission. Should the Commission find that someone did not behave ethically; the Commission's authority would allow it to provide its findings and to make recommendations in terms of sanctioning. Mr. Rigas noted that someone would first need to make a claim to the District or to the Board of Education.

It was the consensus of the majority of the Board of Education members to move this discussion to closed session before taking a vote.

After closed session was held, the Board of Education voted on the above motion. A roll call vote resulted in six yeas. Ms. Fisher was absent for the vote. Motion carried.

### **Approval of Course Proposals**

Mr. Rigas moved to approve the course proposals as presented for the 2008-09 school year; seconded by Mr. Allen. A roll call vote resulted in all ayes. Motion carried.

The administration was praised for its decision to add Chinese to the list of languages students were able to study at O.P.R.F.H.S.

Regarding the Math section, Ms. Patchak-Layman asked if these course changes were a change in course name only. Ms. Hill stated that it was a re-integration of the course content, it would be sequenced differently because of state testing, and some of instruction would change. This is in response to the graduation requirements dictated by the Governor of Illinois.

Regarding the course Essentials of Biology or Biology, Ms. Patchak-Layman asked how it correlated with ISAT. Ms. Hill responded that the course description listed State standards and were the same standards as in the Biology I and II course. Ms. Patchak-Layman learned that there would be some change to the course instruction.

### **Board Workshops & Academic Achievement**

The Instruction Committee members had discussed setting meetings for community and school to join in the discussion on how to deliberate on enhancing the District's understanding and focus of its goals.

Dr. Lee suggested instead scheduling more frequent committee meetings routinely at a variety of times, i.e., days, evenings, Saturdays, etc., as two weekday mornings is inadequate for the necessary discussion, rather than scheduling Saturday only meetings. Dr. Millard reiterated that the intention of the workshops is to allow focused discussion on what this Board of Education is charged to do and how this superintendent will deal with the achievement gap. Dr. Weninger noted that the Board of Education had an agreement that the idea of "workshops" would be brought to the whole Board of Education for it to consider and review the

net effect of the resolutions passed by the Board of Education and their integration with the official goals of the Board of Education and the initiatives begun last year.

Ms. Fisher felt too much time was spent in committee meetings on questions that could be clarified by making a phone call. She suggested that if the Board of Education members made an attempt to get their questions answered prior to the meetings as an efficiency and the Board of Education supported John Allen's suggestion to hold special meetings for this single purpose, that time would be sufficient. Mr. Allen stated that his purpose was to give one major issue its own time and consideration. The Board of Education is committed to having the conversation. Mr. Rigas agreed with Mr. Allen's proposal of giving quality time to student and academic achievement. Dr. Lee noted that he was not opposed to quality time, but he was asking to routinely to give more quality time in the future.

Dr. Millard proposed moving Policy Committee meetings to Tuesdays, following Finance Committee meetings, which would allow more time for regular instructional discussions along with having additional meetings to discuss the plan. Dr. Lee was agreeable to that format.

Ms. Patchak-Layman noted that discussion had ensued about the timeline and the Plan and whether it would be ready for a vote in January; the discussion changed and she understood that the administration would not bring the entire plan forth in January, but would bring this it would work on for the next year. When the plan was originally put forward there was discussion about a doing strategic plan; she felt the plan did not meet the necessary criteria and needs. A strategic plan would take the District into the next three to five years. She supported doing a strategic plan, noting that it had been a year-long process for District 97. From what she was hearing about the timeline now, a few actions would come forward, but in terms of the overall plan, a decision cannot be made. She felt this would be a better of use of time if it all were related to a strategic plan.

Mr. Prale added that moving Policy to Tuesday would be positive but the work, the thinking, and the studying would need to be done in between those meetings. If that were not sufficient, then he suggested the Board of Education look at holding quarterly Saturday meetings. However, the Board of Education would have to spend 90 minutes on business and it could then consider the first question for engagement. Mr. Allen asked for a definition of the achievement gap. Mr. Conway also noted that getting answers to Board of Education members' questions prior to the meetings would be more efficient. Some Board of Education members have jobs and the Board of Education member is asking a lot of his/her employers to designate this time away from his/her jobs. The Board of Education needs to set exact time limits and not feel it has an endless amount of time to

conduct its business. In addition, staff has to be present and these meetings are taking them away from their duties; that is also an injustice. He asked the Board of Education members to agree on a time limit.

It was the consensus of the Board of Education members to move the Policy Committee meeting to Tuesdays following Finance Committee meetings and to focus the additional discussions on the plan so as to feed into the Instruction Committee meetings.

The Board of Education members scheduled additional meetings on the following Saturdays: January 26, February 9, and March 15, from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. Mr. Allen, Dr. Millard and Dr. Weninger will be in charge of engaging a facilitator for the discussion on academic achievement.

When asked how the Resolutions would impact the plans of the coming year, Dr. Weninger stated that there were two guides already in place, i.e., the Board of Education's number one goal of raising student achievement with emphasis on minority and special education students and the resolutions providing an exclamation that reading instruction be provided to African American and Special Education students. He asked the Board of Education to let the administration do its work and schedule meetings at the Board of Education level at the same time.

Discussion ensued regarding whether the meeting would be open to the community. Mr. Allen had advocated for time for the members of the Board of Education to discuss the issues of academic achievement and the initiatives. Yet, he said that the Board of Education needed public comment. This is being done for the high school, not the Board of Education.

Mr. Vogel noted that a strategic plan format used in 1995 divided the Board of Education members among groups of 10 or 12 community members and then the Board of Education members synthesized the information. People were invited from different areas to participate. Ms. Patchak-Layman asked about the strategic planning discussion and how it would fit into this. Dr. Lee was concerned about doing a strategic plan. The four that he was unfortunate enough to have been involved with took on a life of their own. They tended to sap the strength of time to produce a huge document that was unusable. He was mistrustful as to how they work in the real world, as opposed to the theoretical world.

Mr. Allen reported positively on one that he had personal experience with in the 1980's. One of two cities next to each other decided to do strategic plan; that city was the economically disadvantaged one. The city completed the plan in 1992 and implemented it. Today that city is by far the more prosperous of the two.

Another example Mr. Allen experienced was in the State of Illinois. Illinois had one of the worst child support systems in the country. Over \$1 billion was owed to the state and to mothers and only half was collected. The Lincoln Foundation reviewed the program, dissected it, and then reformulated it so that it worked. To do a plan right takes time, planning, and involvement by the people affected, e.g., Board of Education, staff, community members, parents, and students.

Mr. Rigas observed that the second example given by Mr. Allen was similar to what the school was trying to do with the achievement gap. A strategic plan would take two years to complete and it would be a massive document that sits on the shelf. If it, however, focuses on one thing, the success rate is ten fold. Mr. Allen concurred and said the school should go after the issue.

Dr. Lee felt Ms. Patchak-Layman was talking about all of the business of the District. One of the most important things would be when the District would go for its next tax referendum. Ms. Patchak-Layman noted that those issues would be addressed as the goals are set. The feeder school took about one year to complete its strategic plan, using action plans to set goals. Mr. Prale sat on an action committee so he had a hands-on experience. He said that as it was presented to District 97, in order to move in any direction, a plan is needed. The Plan to Raise Student Achievement included family, students, parents, the institution; it encompassed a lot of people, as well as other schools.

### **Closed Session**

At 11:20 p.m., on December 20, 2007, Mr. Conway 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); The purchase of lease or real property for the use of the District, including meetings held for the purpose of discussing whether a particular parcel should be acquired. 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(5); and 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 Mr. Allen.

Ms. Patchak-Layman stated that the discussion of the Parking Garage listed on the closed session agenda, should be held in open session. Mr. Rigas asked if she felt the Board of Education was violating the Open Meetings Act by having this discussion in closed session. She stated that the Open Meetings Act uses the word “may” when talking about exclusions. Mr. Rigas noted that the word “may” means the discussion could be held in open session. He reiterated his question of whether the Board of Education was taking illegal action. Ms. Patchak-Layman responded negatively and noted her preference to have public discussion. Mr. Rigas stated that the law allows the Board of Education to have this discussion in closed session if desired, and it was his opinion that a strategy of negotiation should be discussed in closed session.

Mr. Rigas and Ms. Fisher asked Ms. Patchak-Layman if she felt she had a conflict of interest with another matter for closed session. If so, she could recuse herself from participating in that discussion. Ms. Patchak-Layman reiterated that she did not have a conflict of interest as she would receive no personal gain. Mr. Rigas noted that she might be called as a witness and that would create a conflict immediately; it is an indisputable fact. Ms. Patchak-Layman did not know that she would be called as a witness; she had no papers to that end. Mr. Rigas noted that she had seen the information brought up in the complaint. The complaint was then moved to another entity and that is why it is on the closed session agenda. Even though Ms. Patchak-Layman has not yet been named as a part as an action against the school, the fact is, she could be. Mr. Allen reiterated his statements to Ms. Patchak-Layman before that she had a conflict of interest.

Ms. Fisher noted there was a legal opinion that there is a conflict. So she asked Ms. Patchak-Layman to bring a legal opinion stating that she did not have a conflict. Just continuing to say that she did not have a conflict did not make the case. At some point, Ms. Patchak-Layman needs to understand the pressure she was putting on the Board of Education not to be able to do business or discuss a matter involving a family which is detrimental to the people in this district. If Ms. Patchak-Layman wanted to take the position that she had no conflict, she needed to obtain an opinion to the effect.

Mr. Conway believes the Board of Education has reason to sanction a Board of Education member based on the information he was provided. The Board of Education members need to be on record as to whether they agree with what is on the table. Action will be called for next month. It is the opinion of the majority of the Board of Education members that there is a problem.

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

At 1:20 a.m. on Friday, December 21, 2007, the Board of Education reconvened its open session.

**Adjournment**

At 1:23 a.m. on Friday, December 21, 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