

February 28, 2013

The regular Board meeting of the Board of Education of the Oak Park and River Forest High School was held on Thursday, February 28, 2013, in the Board Room of the OPRFHS.

Call to Order

President Finnegan called the meeting to order at 6:55 p.m. A roll call indicated the following Board of Education members were present: Terry Finnegan, Valerie Fisher, Dr. Ralph H. Lee, Dr. Dietra D. Millard, Amy Leafe McCormack, Sharon Patchak-Layman, and John Phelan. Also present were Dr. Steven T. Isoye, Superintendent; and Gail Kalmerton, Executive Assistant/Clerk of the Board and FOIA Officer.

Closed Session

At 6:56 p.m. on Thursday, February 28, 2013, Mr. Finnegan moved to enter 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; seconded by DM. A roll call vote resulted in all ayes. Motion carried.

At 7:28 p.m., the Board of Education recessed its closed session and resumed its open session at 7:30 p.m. and moved to the Tutoring Center

Joining the session were: Dr. Tina Halliman, Assistant Superintendent for Pupil Support Services; Amy Hill, Director of Assessment and Research; Philip M. Prale, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction; Michael C. Carioscio, Chief Information Officer; Nathaniel L. Rouse, Principal; Karin Sullivan, Communications and Community Relations Coordinator; Cheryl L. Witham, Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations and Treasurer; and James Paul Hunter, Faculty Senate Executive Committee.

Visitors

The Board of Education welcomed the following visitors: Jeannie Affelder, Catherine Amato, Bonnie Andorka, Mike & Karen Baldwin, Mary Bodlak, John Bokum, Jr., Mena Boulanger, Patti Com, Sarah Corbin, Ann Courter, Eric Davis, Valerie Doherty, Duane Dowell, Amy Felton, Wendy Gardina, Thomas Gary, Eric and A. Gershenson, Steve Gevinson, Lindy Harris, Alec Harris, Gabe Harris, Michelle Harton, Sandra Hess, N. Hirsch, Carolyn Kalina, Kathy Kern, Stephanie Kiesling, Joanne Kinoy, Sarah and Dan Knight, Dr. Barb Langer, Dan Lesser, Elizabeth Lippitt, Julie MacCarthy, Ruth Martin, Melanie McQueen, Pam Meyerson, Cynthia Michul, Jackie Moore, Steven Nations, Caroline Newberry-Schwartz, Ade & Kathy Onayemi, DeeDee Parnell, Jim Peters, Jennifer Quinlon, Diane and John Rosenbrock, Pam Runio, Kathy Schroer, Kathy Shroes, Carollina Song, Bob Spatz, Sheryl Stoller, Peter Traczyk, John Walk, Geoff Watts, Leslie Watts, David Weindling, Kyung Weisbrod, Jeff Weissglass, Jeff Whalen, Joan White, Charlie Wolf, Kirstin Gloor, Peter Barber, District 97, Naomi Hildner, OPRFHS Faculty, Mary Haley of the League of Women Voters, Camille Wilson White of the Oak Park Area MB Council, Deborah Kadin of Patch.com, Julie MacCarthy, PTO/P4SS, Angelica Haennicke and Nia Smith of the OPRFHS Trapeze, Steven Piper of Student Council, Ray Johnson of the Village of Oak Park, Terry Dean of the *Wednesday Journal* and Bill Dwyer of the *Oak Leaves*.

Change in Agenda

Mr. Finnegan moved to alter the agenda to allow the vote on the Collaboration for Early Childhood Care and Education (CEC) resolution to follow the discussion; seconded by Dr. Lee. A voice vote resulted in all ayes. Motion carried.

Public Comments

Eric Davis, resident of 1112 N. Lombard, Oak Park, spoke in support of the collaboration with the CEC and he congratulated the Board of Education for moving in this direction.

Kathy Stohr, resident of 320 N. Harvey, Oak Park, parent of 3 students in 97, long-term volunteer for the CEC, worked for the Illinois Action for Children, noted that collaborations all over the state were looking at Oak Park because of the work it had done over the last ten years in putting together an integrated child system unlike any other. The CEC has articulated what will be a model for the rest of the state with benchmarks for being ready for kindergarten, from both public and private funding, etc. Every jurisdiction in Oak Park has been engaged. It is necessary for the CEC to succeed. She thanked the Board of Education for its leadership and vision.

Dr. Langer, resident of 415 Franklin, River Forest, advocated for the repeal and refund of 2002 property tax referendum, which was the basis for the tax levy in December 2012. She asked the Board of Education members to respond individually if he/she would promise to repeal and refund up to the 180-day state recommended reserve.

Angelica Haennicke and Nia Smith, OPRFHS students, spoke on behalf of the student body with regard to the CEC. From their standpoint, the Board of Education must determine what funding will be necessary to complete the goals and opportunities at the high school. Are there issues that could be at risk if the funding of the CEC were implemented? As students, she hoped these issues would not be affected by a commitment to the ECE. If the high school made the commitment, the question was asked as to how the results would be measured.

Naomi Hildner, resident of Oak Park and an English teacher at the high school reported that her Humanities students were reading everyman stories inspired by the medieval morality plays that proceed from the four-point premise that all of life is a pilgrimage—we will all die, we can all be redeemed, but we ARE what we DO. A recent New York Times article about the success of Union City N.J. schools was interesting and pertinent article for two reasons – their astounding success can be traced to two commitments, early childhood education, and the three part “instructional core” of Harvard’s Richard Elmore, which includes highly qualified teachers, engaged students, and rigorous curriculum. She then listed what the high school was doing as everymen to achieve success and maintain a top-notch institution that includes that instructional core.

1. Eliminated CP REI classes that were proven to work and that addressed Board goals.
2. Remained intransigent about increasing FTEs even though enrollment has increased resulting in larger class sizes while thwarting its own goals.
3. Continue the RiFing of highly qualified teachers, including an excellent African American female English teacher.
4. Provided no Tier Three Intervention while continuing to add more administrators.
5. Ignored the instructional core of highly qualified teachers, engaged students, and rigorous curriculum to accommodate a new approach to summer school and credit recovery.

6. Plugged holes in the divisions rather than insist on the most qualified teachers.

She continued that the nascent reading program needs personnel expansion and more social workers were needed for troubled students. While she supported early childhood education, as her mother was a pioneer in the field, she questioned whether the high school had money for the CEC. “The teachers at OPRFHS did not take a pay freeze to finance a program that is riddled with elusive details and ambiguous fiduciary accountability.” As everymen, the high school needs to be doing for the current students.

Sheryl Stoller, resident of 827 Forest Avenue, Oak Park, hoped the District’s reserves could cover the CEC, as well as other needs. She and her husband, Walter have been residents of Oak Park for 26 years. Her two sons graduated from OPRFHS and her daughter is a senior. All of them went through District 97 for their elementary and middle school education. She read a letter that she had sent to the Board of Education.

“Know that this letter is not a restatement of facts. It assumes as fact that the best time for establishing the building blocks for higher level learning is during early childhood. It also assumes, rather than attempts to prove, that the greatest challenges facing the high school students - from academic to social and emotional - link back to lack of the basic skill set necessary for high school level learning.

“Each of us is asking you to vote “yes” for OPRFHS to financially support the CEC. It is the best use of taxpayers’ money. Its high return on the dollar, as documented by the rigorous research presented in the CEC’s presentations, makes this investment a financial imperative, a pragmatic imperative, and the most meaningful act this board will contribute to generations to come.

“This letter addresses why we believe the board will fulfill its desires, mission, and obligations by acting on those facts. Please read on.

“OPRFHS’s current use of money is a testament to the well-placed intention to ensure that each child is equipped to learn and grow to make full use of his or her potential. Day in and day out, OPRFHS is doing all it can to remedy the cognitive, emotional, and social deficits with which many students are burdened. A lot of OPRFHS resources are being devoted to providing the basic building blocks necessary for these life skills.

“How great will you, the OPRFHS Board, feel when all of the work that is done in the high school building is focused on advancing high school level learning rather than on herculean efforts to teach rudimentary building-block-skills necessary for higher-level learning?

“Imagine if twenty years ago the OPRFHS School Board had allocated a meaningful portion of its budget to providing early childhood services and support. What a different set of challenges you, the students and the citizens of OPRFHS would be facing today. Imagine what a meaningful contribution that board would have made.

“When you vote “yes” today for financially contributing to the CEC, you are helping ensure that fifteen years from now, one of the biggest challenges the school personnel will face is choosing whom to honor for the Wall of Excellence.

“The citizens of Oak Park voted you onto this board, trusting you to do nothing less. What you do matters. And we, the Stollers, have confidence that you will vote “yes” not because we ask, but because it brings the most good to the most people and because you know you will be glad you did. This is your chance to make an extremely meaningful contribution that will pass through generations.”

John B. Bokum Jr., resident 629 S. Home, Oak Park, resident of the District for 34 years, and raised his four children with his wife in Oak Park stated that his first child excelled and his last child had many disabilities, disabilities that can be addressed by the CEC. He referred to an article in the March issues of Time Magazine relative to early childhood. “...A 2012 report from the Organization of Economic Co-operation and Development OECD concludes that early childhood education “improves children cognitive abilities, helps to create a foundation for lifelong learning, makes learning outcomes more equitable, reduces poverty and improves social mobility from generation to generation. This conclusion is based on data from rich countries, many of which outperform the United States in educational achievement and now—economic mobility. In many of the countries, 90% of 3-year olds get early childhood education. The OECD average for 4-year olds is 81%. In the US, it is only 69%, and those children tend to be from middle- and upper-middle-class families...” He strongly urged the Board of Education to support the CEC.

Jennifer Qualin, 1014 N. Harvey, Oak Park, spoke about her son who is autistic had qualified for and received CEC services until he was mainstreamed into Hatch School. Because of that early intervention, he attains all A’s and is a fine example of what the CEC program does.

Collaboration

Ms. McCormack read the resolution before the Board of Education.

“RESOLUTION DIRECTING DISTRICT 200 TO COORDINATE WITH LOCAL GOVERNING BODIES TO DEVELOP AN INTERGOVERNMENTAL AGREEMENT AND CONTRACT FOR SERVICES WITH THE COLLABORATION FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION”

Discussion ensued about the intent of the first WHEREAS:

“WHEREAS, the Board of Education of Oak Park and River Forest High School (District 200”) finds that students entering kindergarten in its communities are inadequately prepared, resulting in remediation expenses at the high school level;”

The Board of Education agreed that the intent was that “some” students were found to be entering kindergarten inadequately prepared, not “all” students. It was the consensus of the Board of Education to leave the language stand as presented with this understanding.

Dr. Millard read the following statement:

“There is no one in this room that can doubt the merit of early childhood education as beneficial to the long-term success of an individual child. In fact, in my professional work, caring for high-risk infants, I would say that the investment should be very early childhood, starting with parental education and include pregnancy, too. I believe in the goals of the CEC, and I admire the passion of Eric Gershenson and Carolyn Newberry-Schwartz for their dedication to these goals.

“However, as an elected steward of District 200, it is difficult for me to vote in favor of a substantial allocation of District 200 tax dollars to the CEC. First, I do appreciate the importance of long-term investments, with the District 200 return on this investment likely to be at least 10 years ahead. Until there is confirmation the CEC interventions will benefit students in Oak Park, I believe District 200 should focus our dollars on what we are doing for students that are here and now and those who will pass through the high school during that time to enhance their achievement potential. While we have achievement initiatives in place, added dollars designated for CEC could be allocated for much such interventions aimed at our students. If CEC outcome data at grade 3 and 5 show benefit expected, then the high school could consider their involvement.

“Second, assuming the CEC is successful, how do we ensure continuing educational emphasis after age 5 until the child reaches high school? As the child enters elementary school, there will need to be ongoing wrap-around supportive services to maintain the progress started earlier. It will be extremely crucial that our feeder elementary schools match the caliber and variety of comprehensive services of the CEC to ensure the ongoing value of the investment in the 0-5 years. For District 200, it is a long way from kindergarten and first grade to ninth grade.

“Third, a recent survey of our current high school students, conducted at the Board’s direction, indicates that about half lived in Oak Park or River Forest when they were three to five years of age. This suggests that whatever our investment in the CEC, we at the high school will need to continue our concerted efforts towards remediation and catch up skills to enhance achievement for all students, many of whom will not have had early childhood services from either the CEC or elsewhere.

“Fourth, incorporation of River Forest taxing bodies into this collaboration deserves emphasis. We, at District 200, remember that River Forest contributes a disproportionate amount of our funds—about 21% of our tax dollars, but only about 17% of our students.

“Finally, I need to know the specifics of CEC programs and the outcome measures that will be used to evaluate the value of the programs before I am comfortable committing \$215,000 to the CEC. Those are the dollars in the first years; this rises to \$330,000 in year two, up to about \$430,000 in year three. That is nearly a million dollar payout before we are likely to have any data to assess the impact on the students entering kindergarten, still 8 years away from the high school.

“If this resolution passes, in my view, it will be key for the District 200 Board of Education to monitor the outcome of these dollars very closely throughout the elementary school years leading into high school. The oversight committee and the District 200 Board of Education will be charged with ensuring the investment reaps the projected achievement value from the CEC. The District 200 Board of Education

should insist that the proposed intergovernmental agreement with CEC allows for a redirection, even a withdrawal of the monies from District 200 in the event that either outcome information or conflicting, urgent financial needs within our District warrant such action.

“Creation of the proposed IGA between the Village of Oak Park, plus Districts 97 and 200, for the services of the CEC will generate a gigantic challenge to District 97, to review their supportive academic, co-curricular, social, and family services to ensure that the value of the early childhood investment continues as the child shifts into the public elementary educational services to guarantee no loss of the momentum in the child’s educational progress, to ensure that there is a no gap that evolves during the elementary and middle school years to the child’s educational progress stimulated in younger years.

“My final challenge is to the District 200 Board of Education. I challenge it to match dollar for dollar any amount allocated to the CEC toward additional or expanded educational interventions within the high school for our current students and those that will enroll here over the next 10 to 12 years—to ensure that each District 200 student, whether a participant in the CEC or not, can attain her or his long-term success, beyond the high school. Hopefully, after another 10+ years, these additional funds may not be necessary if the CEC and the elementary and middle schools of Oak Park and River Forest provide what is needed for students entering ninth grade to be prepared for the rigor of high school and life beyond.

“And so, as a steward of District 200 and our students, I have tried to explain my concerns about using District 200 tax dollars for CEC funding.”

Mr. Phelan stated that for many nights, he had been reading Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone to his first grade daughter. It was new and exciting for her – less so for him, as it was his sixth child and fifth read (twins). He did not do it because he was so enthralled with the books, though he is. He had plenty of other things he should have been doing, including preparing these comments. However, education is a priority in his family and he believes strongly in the importance of early childhood education. He therefore expects that he will read that book with each of his grandchildren as well, because he knows that educating children in their earliest years is critical to their futures decades down the road.

Mr. Phalen had known nothing of this when his first child was born. His wife, who had obtained her master’s in education and had instructed him, provided more support for their children. He was sure she was on reading duty tonight. He was concerned that too many parents are more like he was, not intuitively aware of the importance of nutrition, exercise, reading and medical screenings in those early years.

The goals of the CEC are some of the high school’s most important aspirations: address achievement gap, improve achievement for all students, and spend our resources in a cost-effective way. He believes the CEC will further those goals like no high school program can.

Mr. Phelan continued, “Some have said that the high school will be sued by its neighbors who do not want the money to be spent on this. Having read the cases set forth by lawyers in opinions leading up to this decision, Mr. Phelan was confident that

if the District is challenged it will prevail. There is a demonstrable connection between the District's mission and the work of the CEC, and that connection empowers the District to make this investment. The District has the right to purchase these services if it reasonably believes they will forward its mission. The connection is logical and data based, and only time separates the investment and the reward.”

Mr. Phelan noted some concerns about dilution and that the District would squander money on the students that the CEC helps who leave the District prior to coming to the high school. The high school's survey showed that up to 60% of those touched would be here in future years. That said, though, it simply means that the potential down side of that impact is that instead of addressing the achievement gap and student achievement in general in a manner that costs ten cents on the dollar, maybe it costs fifteen cents on the dollar. However, it is still a cost effective way to further our mission and, at worst, the county will be scattered with children who have a better chance in life because they lived here in their early years.

Mr. Phelan continued that the Board of Education has discussed the financial impact of this investment. Will it divert money from programs for existing students? Will it halt the growth of its existing remediation efforts? The high school should always be evaluating its remediation programs to determine whether its money is well spent and it should continue to do that. However, he believes that the high school is in a position where it does not have to rob the current students in order to help its future students, and it will reap the financial rewards in years to come, when the District can reduce expenditures on remediation programs because they are not as necessary.

The high school must consider future sustainability of this funding mechanism, but Mr. Phelan did not have to be a permanent means of funding the CEC. Its strategic plan initially called for State support and private investment that has been impaired due to the fiscal challenges of Illinois. The local needs to support this effort while it has momentum, a window of opportunity to get this ripe and critical project off the ground. The work has begun to invent the CEC. Now is the time to execute it until it is time to turn the responsibility back over to the State or federal government, who should be funding this effort across the land. By then, Mr. Phelan predicted that the CEC will have proven its worth and will be a model for others on how to stop cycles of poverty and suffering.

As the high school students so capably pointed out that evening, the Board of Education needs to make sure that the CEC keeps its promise. The Board of Education is being asked to authorize the negotiation of an inter-governmental agreement and a contract with the CEC. Those agreements must set a term and a regular opportunity to measure progress. That is something it does not do enough for the current remediation programs, but it is critical. Moreover, Mr. Phelan remembered River Forest being from there. The majority of his neighbors to whom he has spoken have expressed to him not only comfort with this expenditure, but enthusiasm for it.

Mr. Phelan closed with a quote from President Obama in his second inaugural address on February 21, 2013: “Every dollar we invest in high-quality early education can save more than seven dollars later on – by boosting graduation rates, reducing teen pregnancy, even reducing violent crime. In states that make it a priority to educate our youngest children, like Georgia or Oklahoma, studies show students grow up more likely to read and do math at grade level, graduate high school, hold a job, and form

more stable families of their own. So let us do what works, and make sure none of our children start the race of life already behind. Let's give our kids that chance.”

Mr. Phelan believed that the CEC would fulfill this promise and for that, he supported this initiative. The benefits of an IGA are 1) transparency for taxpayers, 2) operational capacity; and 3) comprehensive monitoring systems and shared benchmarks. The real racial equity issue lies in this area.

Dr. Lee commented on an aspect that he felt had not been adequately addressed previously. Comments on the *Wednesday Journal* website stated that it was not the Board of Education’s responsibility to spend money on things that might happen ten, twelve, or fourteen years in the future. The comments indicated that it was the Board of Education’s job to spend money only within the walls of the high school. He disagreed. He believed it was the job of all of the public bodies of Oak Park and River Forest to deal with the quality of education in Oak Park and River Forest. What was important to him is that the high school has the ability to do things that most school districts in the United States cannot. OPRFHS can show the rest of the country what can be accomplished. There are no guarantees that it would be right. Dr. Lee was serious when he said in the *Wednesday Journal*, “He might not be right, but he was willing to bet the taxpayers money on it,” as it was his heartfelt belief that this community had the ability to do things that have not been done by other communities. Evidence shows that the high school has been able to do things others have not. He believed that all elected officials were elected to make judgments, not to just do those things that were guaranteed. He supported the resolution as presented with no reservations.

Ms. Patchak-Layman not only had been an early childhood teacher, but she had run an early childhood program. She believed in it. Her difficulty with this concept was in the details of understanding what new services would be provided. Will the new services be a substitute for other taxing bodies? How will the dollars work together? She appreciated the additional information that the CEC had put forward, as both the budget and the plans for soliciting money were much clearer. She still believed that the Village of Oak Park and District 97 should carry out some of the things that the CEC would assume, i.e., screening procedures once provided by the Village, and those done by District 97, etc. She believed that encouragement should be given to those agencies that were already providing the services or those that wanted to increase their services. She felt the Collaboration CEC representing that it will pick up all of the activities.

Ms. Patchak-Layman had reviewed the information as if she had submitted an RFP for a grant. The grant process includes answering difficult questions: What will the CEC do if it does not get all of this money? What if things change in the near future? What would change because of the funding mechanics? She was unconcerned about the intent, as she believed that the work should be accomplished even if there were no return on investment, as it is the right thing to do to help families. Her concern was the use of tax dollars received by District 200 before the vetting of the Strategic Plan Steering Committee was completed and the other incomplete activities in the high school.

Ms. Patchak-Layman supported a resolution that stated that a portion of the dollars the high school received from the Madison Street TIF be used for this purpose. Those dollars were not included in its budget. This would allow the District to do larger

budgeting at the conclusion of the Strategic Plan. Ms. Patchak-Layman moved to amend the motion to say that the dollars will be incorporated as part of the fiscal year's operating budget, but that disbursements would come from the Madison Street TIF proceeds. No second was offered.

Ms. Fisher supported the motion as originally presented. She felt the merit of it was the Board of Education's driving force. She also respected some of Dr. Millard's comments. She hoped that the CEC would continue to work with the taxing bodies in River Forest, as it was important to the District because it recognizes that it is the Oak Park and River Forest High School. The District operates with tax dollars from both communities and serves the students of both communities. As the District goes forward with the negotiating of a contract for services, she will look for an annual assessment opportunity. The District needs to be aware of its own obligations in that regard.

Ms. McCormack appreciated everyone's comments at this meeting and at previous meetings. This is a contract for services that has an enormous financial impact and the Board of Education has a fiduciary responsibility to the District. It is appropriate and difficult for those in support of the CEC to understand the volume of the questions and the depth and breadth of the questions. She did not believe this was an either/or situation. To support the CEC, the Board of Education must take from the current students, and that was not her goal in supporting this effort. She hoped that no future Board of Education would affect existing programs that work with underachieving students. As a River Forest resident, she heard nothing from her neighbors except for strong support for the CEC. She wanted involvement of the Village of River Forest and District 90. Those to whom she has spoken have recognized that River Forest children would benefit from this and that raising the performance of nonperforming students will raise all performances in the end. She also urged the CEC in its plan to move forward to consider different variations of its model for financial sustainability, i.e., private funding, becoming a taxing body, etc., as she worried about a vulnerability in future funding. While the high school has struggled with the achievement gap and underperforming students for a long time, she strongly believed that identifying these students from birth was the answer. It is a strong tool in the toolbox that will, hopefully, affect the achievement gap. The questions have been answered and thus she supported the CEC and the high school's commitment of funds.

Mr. Finnegan was honored to be on the CEC committee of the three taxing bodies, as he had always been a supporter of the CEC. This is a momentous decision. The timeline for reviewing this proposal was purposeful. Issues were raised for the larger community to address. This Board of Education served the role of raising issues and levels of awareness that will make the operation more successful. When he was first asked to run for the Board, his youngest was a senior and it allowed him to advocate for every Huskie. At this point, he advocates for every student whether he/she is presently here or not. While research supports this work and the talent to do so is available, this is a leap of faith. It is exciting to work with CEC. As the District continues the discussions on the IGA and a contract for services, it will also look to have other entities join. He felt the return on investment would be big and that working collaboratively with the taxing bodies was important. While the process has taken some time, many questions have been answered. There is a higher level of awareness and acceptance. The comments from all sides have been enlightening, moving, and he feels that this commitment is the right thing to do.

Dr. Isoye thanked the members of the Board of Education for the time and effort they put into this deliberation and its many considerations. As the members move forward with their decisions and future work, Dr. Isoye looks seriously at the work with the current students. He hopes that the Board of Education will recognize that the District will continue to have an achievement gap because of the pipeline of the students into the high school. Not all students come from Oak Park and River Forest or have they attended from kindergarten to eighth grade and it is important to push everyone. The District will have a responsibility to monitor this investment. If it goes well, everyone will be happy. However, it may not solve all problems. It may change the questions. He hoped that in 10 to 12 years the public remembers why the high school had not done anything about the achievement gap. While the data shows that the District has made some improvements, many challenges still exist. He hoped that the Strategic Plan would challenge the District, and offer some strong recommendations as to what to do systemically. This will challenge everyone because it will be about thinking about everyone. He hoped the advocacy for all children would continue and would be there for the high school, as it needs to support the students and its faculty.

Dr. Lee moved to approve the Resolution directing District 200 to coordinate with Local Governing Bodies to develop an Intergovernmental Agreement and Contract for Services with the Collaboration for Early Childhood Care and Education; seconded by Mr. Phelan. A roll call vote resulted in all ayes. Motion carried. Dr. Millard and Ms. Patchak-Layman supported this resolution with reservations.

At 8:45 p.m., the Board of Education recessed its meeting to move back to the Board Room. It resumed its meeting at 8:55 p.m.

Status of FOIA Reports

Mr. Finnegan reported that four FOIA requests had been received and two were resolved.

Student Council

Student Council President Steven Piper reported to the Board of Education. He thanked both Ms. Hill and Mr. Prale for responding to concerns/complaints at a recent Student Council meeting. He also reported the following:

1. Student backlash has occurred to entrance and ID policies, as they are too restrictive. Students are not happy with the doors that are open in the morning. Students also felt that not enough notice was given as to when the rules would be applied which caused much confusion.
2. Students were appreciative that all faculty members are wearing their IDs.
3. Students taking AP and art courses are not allowed to visit their teachers during lunch and yet they need that time to work on projects.
4. Students feel the Internet proxy is too strict. He personally felt there were enough research tools.

Mr. Piper also reported on the Valentine Day fundraising activity. Twenty-five percent of the proceeds will be sent to United Against Infectious Diseases (UAID), which invests in incubators, portable air/oxygen tanks, etc. Student Council will sell raffle tickets, hold performances, etc. to raise money for United Against Infectious Diseases (UAID), which invests in incubators, portable air/oxygen tanks, etc.

Mr. Piper also noted 1) Ms. Milojevic was assisting with the campaign on RESPECT, 2) the theme of the spring assembly is “Hunger Games.” Two boys and two girls from

each grade will compete in different events throughout the day; and 3) increased effort is being made to engage those students who previously felt removed from assemblies.

Faculty Senate

No report.

Superintendent Report

Dr. Isoye reported 1) Safety & Security staff member Jesus Morales saved a student's life by performing the Heimlich maneuver; 2) Senior Joe Ariola won the individual state wrestling championship, Larry Early was second, Davonte Mahomes and Isaiah White tied for third, and Kamal Bey was fifth; 3) The Boys Basketball team defeated Glenbard North High School 61-55 in the Illinois High School Association (IHSA) regional semi-final. March 1 is the regional championship game; 4) the OPRFHS's Special Education TEAM basketball players beat Leyden High School at the annual TEAM basketball game by 39 to 27; 5) the Boys' Swim Team was tenth in the state meet, breaking four school records and outscored Fenwick who finished 11th; 6) the Varsity Drill Team qualified for state competition with the best scores in OPRFHS's cheer history; 7) the Oak Park-River Forest Community Foundation's annual award for Outstanding Philanthropic Youth Group went to the Hephzibah Huskies. These students mentor the children at the Hephzibah's group home and throw an annual rodeo, an event for which they do all the planning and \$7,000 worth of fund-raising; 8) the Chess team placed fourth out of 135 teams at the state competition; 9) Conrad Manaugh placed first putting him in the top 35 Illinois high school chess players; 10) Student John Stankovich won honorable mention for the delegate awards for his passionate portrayal of the Minister of Finance for the Cabinet of Egypt at the largest delegations to 25th Model United Nations of the University of Chicago; 11) Senior Hannah Rand was chosen as the third place winner in the third annual Grammy Foundation and MusiCares Teens! Make Music Contest and, thus, attended the 55th annual Grammy Awards Backstage Experience. He also congratulated Spoken Word on its achievement that evening.

Tax Abatement And Financial Advisory Committee

It was the consensus of the Board of Education members to discuss the issue of tax in conjunction with the discussion of the Financial Advisory Committee.

The Board of Education discussed abating the \$2.5 million or \$1.6 million for one year in order to lower modestly the high school's portion of the property tax bill or leaving it status quo. Mr. Phelan felt it was important to look not just at the long-term finances of OPRFHS in terms of how long a referendum can be postponed but also to compare itself with similar communities as to fund balance, reserves at time of referendum, how big of a referendum etc. Mr. Phelan felt the District should take this step in order to have productive discussions with a finance advisory committee. Dr. Lee noted that the terms "debt service fund" and "bond and interest fund" were used interchangeably and meant the same. The Finance Advisory Committee could be structured one of three ways: 1) a Board of Education committee, 2) a Superintendent's Committee, and an 3) Advisory Group. Mr. Phelan felt having transparency would allow the Board of Education to understand the public's perspective and the public to understand the Board of Education's perspective.

Dr. Millard concurred that the discussion of additional financial matters is a result of a public misunderstanding, even from those who have served on the Board and understand school finances. What is an appropriate fund balance and what is the opinion of the integrity of the financial budgeting that is done in the school and what it means for the future. Before 2000, the District was in an entanglement with little

understanding of its resources. The work in the Business Office has been wonderful. One cannot understand fund balances if one does not understand school finance and the impact on what happens in the classroom. She thought the Board of Education had wanted to discuss the question of what was an appropriate fund balance. She felt the focus should be the Board of Education's questions. Is it a fund balance question? If so, then the Superintendent should be given direction as to how to collect the information for the Board of Education, i.e., forums, talk with different constituencies, etc. She was concerned with the enormity of the job, the complexity of the situation, and how it will go forward. While she believed in an open process, this is a very complicated topic and that the people exploring it needed to know about school finance.

Dr. Lee believed that the high school had a number of different jobs to do and it would be a mistake to do all at once. He believe that the issue of the tax abatement and the committees that should be used and the type of committee to deal with those issues is wrapped up in another issue the public's understanding of the components of the fund balances, their reasons, and which parts of the components are morally and financially justified. He felt the high school had not done a good job of communicating with the public about this. Many people feel the high school is dealing with the issue of a tax abatement because it has significant amount of uncommitted cash, and something be given back to the taxpayers because the District recognizes it was unjustified in the first place. He did not believe that was the case. In the last two weeks, the high school presented a chart, which he believed would be understandable to the average person. He believed that the fund balance was justifiable. Even though a chart cannot explain the pain people are experiencing, Dr. Lee believed the high school needed to be able to explain fund balances in a way that ordinary citizens can understand.

Discussion ensued about using already existing groups to do this work. Mr. Phelan explained the purpose of the present Finance Advisory Committee. It looked at the District's business and took into the concept of a soft landing. The ALT looked at the parameters used to look at the forecasting of finances. Its membership consisted of all of the bargaining members, three members of the community, and the administration. In addition, QRCs and working committees examined what was occurring in the school and considered cost containment, being mindful that the District must maintain a quality education for students. These ideas were vetted through the DLT/BLT and then through a QRC, consideration was given to the unintended consequences, and ultimately the final recommendations were reflected in the budget. The FAC was charged to develop a model. The proposed FAC would be charged with researching the communities' feelings. It allows for flexibility. This is an opportunity to build a relationship with the people in the community regarding school finances by having frank discussions about a way to move forward.

Dr. Isoye noted that the District was tackling a number of hard topics. He recommended a superintendent's committee format, increasing the number of members, including community members with business backgrounds, as well as all of the bargaining units, the administrators, and board members.

Mr. Finnegan wanted the Board of Education and the administration to remember that in the five-year plan documents, it was stated that it would pay off \$22 million in bonds by taking action in November and thus save over \$1 million in interest over the life of the bonds.

While a motion was made and seconded to approve the recommendation of a FAC and that it be a Board of Education committee, it was withdrawn, as the vote would take place later in the meeting. Mr. Phelan continued that he felt there was a communication problem and he wanted this committee to be open to the public. Ms. Patchak-Layman offered her support for a Board of Education committee, as it was her belief that almost everything should be a Board of Education committee. She believed people looking at the fund balance now are feeling the effects, and whatever was said before to the community was just a theory, i.e., extending the need to go for a referendum out 20 years, etc. A community discussion is needed. She personally felt referendum timelines should be shorter and school districts should not have large fund balances that would delay a referendum for 20 years.

Dr. Lee added that long-range planning had to be updated every year. Thus, the plan 10 years later would not be the same based on what has occurred. While the plan may not reflect the original plan, it will be closer if it were changed every year. While one cannot foresee the future, one will be in a better place 20 years later if the plan has been reviewed every year. He also supported the FAC as being a Board of Education committee in order to build public credibility as to the high school's action and constraints. He believed this was a political issue and the Board of Education needs to be initially involved in this committee.

Ms. Fisher agreed with Dr. Lee's analysis of long-range planning combined with shorter-term adjustments, i.e., the abatement. The Board of Education is considering an abatement as an adjustment to its long-term planning. The reason for linking a consideration of an adjustment with an FAC is because questions exist as to what is an appropriate amount of reserves to have and to maintain. Future boards will answer to these questions. She felt the important point was to have work-study groups, not the format. She felt this was the same as in the past; volunteers who specialize in areas of finance have been able to understand the nuances. She supported a committee in any format and that it starts in a timely way so that the Board of Education can have answers quickly.

Ms. McCormack did not prefer one committee format to another. She did not believe the District had a fund balance issue. She believed the state had set up a funding system for students that jeopardized financial stability. She was uncomfortable with an abatement at this time. While she will not be on the Board of Education after April, she was comfortable with the Board of Education studying and listening.

**Advisory Leadership
Team Report**

Ms. Witham reviewed the Advisory Leadership Team report with the Board of Education. She reviewed projects, cost savings of approximately \$200,000, etc., and noted that the District attained the targeted cost containments mainly due to the Faculty Senate's contract renewal. Added expenditures included a significant investment in technology infrastructure and several new educational programs. The increase in Capital Outlay budget of \$490,000 was due to network upgrades and VOIP. The District has invested in a new staff development at an additional \$53,000. The District invested in a Strategic Planning Process at a cost of approximately \$65,000. A new tutoring/homework center was created and net additional costs were approximately \$51,000.

The District reduced its health insurance renewal to 7% from 10% and it was successful. The MA-5 budget target for teacher hiring proved to be controversial last

year. This year the MA-5 criterion is taken as a pool of money and no particular individual is limited to a MA-5 degree or below.

Diversity has increased over the last ten years. Even though there is greater diversity and more students with low income, the District continues to increase its composite ACT scores.

Ms. Witham stated that revenues do not increase with enrollment.

This year a large committee met one afternoon and brainstormed ideas. They passed their ideas along to see if they were workable and the DLT talked through them. In the analysis, the administration read "Stretching the School Dollars," which generated much conversation between faculty, staff about future cost savings and maintaining quality education in the building. This conversation included staff development and how the District invests in staff and student outcomes. The model included what if there was a 0% levy in December, the TRS proposals before legislators, the CEC, and the combination of all of them. The Steering Committee's ideas are yet unknown. A pool committee was formed to discuss options, as the pools are very old. While everything was modeled, no projections are before the Board of Education, because of the unknowns. The Board of Education was presented with the model as in the past without adding anything. It was suggested that the reduction targets be reduced as the District has already gone through a decade of cost savings and it becomes more difficult to find cost savings ideas operationally without affecting the classroom. The DLT met four times in all day or partial day retreats and have set parameters and targets, but there are no mandates and thus it is difficult to make targets.

Ms. Witham suggested discussing student enrollment and considering when additional courses, SROs and/or psychologists, speech therapists, etc. should be hired. These determinations need to be made by the DLT and a team within the building. The actual projections by fund were presented. She recommended sustained reduction target, which will become more challenging. If the reduction targets are not met, the deficit will occur sooner. The CEC will change this model. Pensions may also change the model.

Dr. Lee felt the data being presented to the Board of Education had significantly improved within the last five years. Discussion ensued about the presentation of the charts, noting that the differences in the axis are very common in scientific literature. One has to look at the absolutes.

Mr. Phelan took this opportunity to note that Ms. Witham was leaving and that he had been most appreciative of the accuracy of the information she provided. This was seconded by the rest of the Board of Education.

Discussion of Madison Street

Ms. Patchak-Layman reviewed why the Madison Street TIF was implemented. It started in 1995. Twenty-five percent of the funds were to be dispersed back to the taxing bodies based on a loss formula that District 97 had for property taxes and after 15 years, 100% of the funds would be dispersed to all of the taxing bodies. That went forward until 2006, when District 97 went to the Council of Governments of Oak Park and asked for help. A lease back arrangement for District 97's administration building was agreed to and an agreement was reached between Village and D97 for the Village

to use TIF dollars to buy the administration building and lease it back to District 97 for \$1. That \$2.3 million has been paid back and it is time for funds to be disbursed back. The amount of the taxing bodies contributed to this endeavor to keep District 97 whole until it had a referendum. She felt this was an opportunity to provide CEC with not-yet-budgeted monies and agreed upon by all governing bodies in Oak Park through their work on the Council of Governments. District 97 and District 200 are each to receive about thirty-three percent (33%) of the \$2.3 million. The high school would receive approximately \$800,000. She felt that 25% could be collected now and that this was a transparent way to show where the dollars came from where they were going and provided time to work on projections and future budgets.

This was an informational item.

Rank in Class

It was the consensus of the Board of Education to approve the Rank in Class transition plan under the Action portion of the agenda. It would include:

- Beginning with the current sophomore class, the Class of 2015, students will no longer receive individual rank. Class rank will not appear on student transcripts nor be available.
- All recognitions related to student grade point average remain in place.
- Beginning in the fall of 2014, the school profile will show the highest and 90th percentile GPA averages for the previous graduating class.

While Mr. Finnegan applauded this plan, his preference would have been for no class rank but he understood that no class rank would have hurt some of the highest achieving students. This recommendation will allow universities to look at students individually to see what they can bring to the schools. Dr. Millard asked that the District continue to track acceptance rates. Ms. Patchak-Layman asked if there were value to tying a percent to an A grade, when colleges look at the top 10% or 25%. The response was that schools compare OPRFHS students' standardized test scores to those at other schools. They have experience with OPRFHS and what would constitute an A grade at OPRFHS versus another school.

Calendar for 2013-14 School Year

The administration outlined the reasons for bringing forth the calendar for the 2013-14 school year, as presented. It supported retaining exams before winter break. Semester exams are December 18-20. August 16 is scheduled for freshmen only as a Huskie Kick-off day with the other students returning August 19. The calendar represents an imbalance of six days versus nine days this year. Winter break is determined by the placement of Christmas and New Year's. This year both fell on a Wednesday, and next year they will fall on Thursday. The Friday before is even earlier. Eventually, Christmas will fall on the weekend and alternative decisions will have to be made about when to schedule the winter break. Wednesday, August 14, 2013 is the first day that the IHSA allows athletes to practice.

Concern was raised by several Board of Education members that parents had planned for an August 19 start date, not an August 16 date as that would allow 3 more days of summer—Friday, Saturday and Sunday. It was suggested that the administration continue with an imbalance of days to each semester this year. Direction was given to bring forward the calendar earlier so that families could plan. Dr. Millard suggested having a half day for freshman on August 19 and bringing back all students that same day. Dr. Lee and Ms. Fisher supported the administration's recommendation. Ms. Patchak-Layman suggested that having examinations before winter break did not

prevent the students returning to the same classroom to complete unfinished conversations, etc., taking the pressure off trying to even out the semester days. She suggested using the week to do other things.

Update on Strategic Planning Documents

The latest drafts of the values, vision, mission and goals from the 60-member Strategic Plan Steering Committee and a smaller writing committee was provided to the Board of Education. The important concepts were bolded and the order was important. Equity is first. The board was asked to provide feedback to move toward the goal statements, as they become the focus of strategic planning work, the organizing of task forces to move the goals forward and strategize responsibilities in the Strategic Plan. Of these statements, the goals may change over the course of a 5-year plan.

Ms. Fisher noted that the people who worked to revise down the statements by the whole group took on a thankless and difficult task of responding to 60 people's ideas, criticisms, and comments. She did not believe this work was finished. This may not be the final product of the group. This group has a lot of vitality and much about which to think.

Mr. Prale, Ms. Sullivan, Jessica Stovall, Cathy Yen, John Messina, and JP Coughlin worked on the writing committee. Each committee member comment was matched to the statements to ensure that everything was being reflected. The process continues and moves toward the task force phase. The next meeting is March 18, 2013.

Mr. Finnegan commented that the teachers and the teaching needs to be transformational. A suggestion was made to ensure that the value statements tracked through to the goal statements. The first value statement was important to Mr. Phelan. Ms. Patchak-Layman noted that sometimes there is an assumption that something is there but it is not necessarily mentioned. Dr. Isoye reported that they would be finalizing the task forces and giving them this document.

Mr. Finnegan noted that this was approached as something that was not Board-driven but a vehicle to inform the Board. He thanked Ms. Patchak-Layman and Ms. Fisher for stepping up for the Board of Education. This will be an important document to review regularly.

Change in Agenda

It was the consensus of the Board of Education members to pull Rank in Class, the school calendar and the FAC from the Consent Agenda and vote on them separately.

Consent Items

Mr. Finnegan moved to approve the consent item as follows:

1. Check Disbursements and Financial Resolutions dated February 28, 2013
2. Treasurer's Report
3. Monthly Financials
4. Approval of PTAB Resolution
5. Approval of Contract with Triton College
6. Acceptance of Superintendent's Advisory Leadership Team Report
7. Approval of Student Fees

seconded by Ms. Fisher. A roll call vote resulted in all ayes. Motion carried.

School Calendar for

Dr. Lee moved to approve the School Calendar for the 2013-14 School Year, as

2013-14

presented; seconded by Mr. Finnegan. A roll call vote resulted in three ayes and four nays. Ms. McCormack, Dr. Millard, Ms. Patchak-Layman, and Mr. Phelan voted nay. Motion failed.

Mr. Phelan moved to approve an August 19, 2013 start date for the 2013-14 school year; seconded by Ms. McCormack. A roll call vote resulted in all ayes. Motion carried.

The administration was directed to work on the remaining details of the calendar.

Rank in Class

Mr. Finnegan moved to approve the Rank in Class transition plan as presented by the administration; seconded by Ms. McCormack. A roll call vote resulted in all ayes. Motion carried.

Finance Advisory Committee

Ms. McCormack moved to approve the formation of a new advisory committee and to make it a Board of Education committee of which the composition will be determined at a later date; seconded by Ms. Patchak-Layman. A roll call vote resulted in all ayes. Motion carried.

Tax Abatement

While Mr. Phelan moved to approve transfer of \$113,480 of excess funds from the Education Fund to the 2005 Bond Fund and \$2,373,900 of excess funds from the Education Fund to the 2009 Bond Fund and approve the abatement of Working Cash Fund in the amount of \$2,487,380. And further to direct the school treasurer of the District to permanently transfer \$113,480 of the Abatement Amount to the 2005 Bond Fund and \$2,373,900 of the Abatement Amount to the 2009 Bond Fund, he withdrew it after clarification that the administration recommended taking this from the Working Cash Fund.

Dr. Lee moved to amend the motion to approve the abatement of Working Cash Funds in the amount of \$1,671,783. And further to direct the school treasurer of the District to permanently transfer \$113,480 of the Abatement Amount to the 2005 Bond Fund and \$1,558,303 of the Abatement Amount to the 2009 Bond Fund; seconded by Mr. Phelan.

Dr. Lee referred to a chart on the District's website that indicated how the \$117 million in fund balances was to be used. He felt it would be erroneous to vote on any tax abatement before discussing how the abatement would affect fund balances. Even with the present fund balances, \$46 million of projects were still unfunded. If these things are really needed and enrollment was increasing, then he questioned why the District was abating part of its income. Some Board of Education members felt these expenditures were estimates at this time and that this was a model. It was noted that an abatement would actually save taxpayers some money over the two year.

A roll call vote resulted in six nays, and one aye. Dr. Lee voted aye. Motion failed.

Mr. Phelan moved to approve the abatement of Working Cash Fund in the amount of \$2,487,380. And further to direct the school treasurer of the District to permanently transfer \$113,480 of the Abatement Amount to the 2005 Bond Fund and \$2,373,900 of the Abatement Amount to the 2009 Bond Fund; seconded by Ms. Fisher. A roll call vote resulted in four yeas and three nays. Ms. McCormack, Dr. Millard, and Dr. Lee voted nay. Motion carried.

Ms. Patchak-Layman thanked the community members for coming to the regular December Board of Education meeting to talk about the Levy, as it was their due diligence, follow through in making it an electoral issue, provide an opportunity to look at this issue and vote affirmatively on it. Dr. Millard added that if the Levy had not passed in December the District would not have been able to abate or rebate anything. It was necessary to pass the Levy before any other discussions occurred. Dr. Lee concurred.

Certification of Mid-Year Graduates Mr. Finnegan moved to certify the January 2013 OPRFHS graduates; seconded by Mr. Phelan. A roll call vote resulted in all ayes. Motion carried.

Minutes Mr. Finnegan moved to approve the Open and Closed Session Minutes of December 11, 2012 (Policy), January 15 (Instruction, Technology, Finance), January 24, January 29, and February 19, 2013 (Instruction, Finance, Special) and a declaration that the closed session audiotapes of March 2011 are destroyed; seconded by Dr. Lee. A voice vote resulted in motion carried.

Closed Session The Board of Education resumed closed session at 12:00 a.m. on Friday, March 1, 2013.

At 12:15 a.m., the Board of Education resumed open session.

Personnel Recommendations Mr. Finnegan moved to approve the personnel recommendations as presented, which included New Hires, Change in FTE, Retirements, Resignations, and Return from Leave; seconded by Dr. Lee. A roll call vote resulted in all ayes. Motion carried.

Adjournment At 12:20 a.m. on Friday, March 1, 2013, Dr. Lee moved to adjourn this meeting; seconded by Mr. Finnegan. A voice vote resulted in motion carried.

Amy McCormack
Secretary

By Gail Kalmerton
Clerk of the Board