

October 25, 2012

The regular Board meeting of the Board of Education of the Oak Park and River Forest High School was held on Thursday, October 25, 2012, in the Board Room of the OPRFHS.

- Call to Order** President Pro-tempore and Vice President Phelan called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. A roll call indicated the following Board of Education members were present: Terry Finnegan (arrived at 7:43 p.m. telephonically, and in person at 8:30 p.m.) Valerie Fisher, Dr. Ralph H. Lee; Sharon Patchak-Layman, and John Phelan. Also present were Dr. Steven T. Isoye, Superintendent; Michael Carioscio, Chief Information Officer, Dr. Tina Halliman, Director of Special Education; Amy Hill, Director of Assessment and Research; Philip M. Prale, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction; Nathaniel L. Rouse, Principal; Karin Sullivan, Communications and/or Community Relations Coordinator, Cheryl L. Witham, Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations and Treasurer; James Paul Hunter, Faculty Senate Executive Committee, and Lauren Richardson, Student Council Liaison and Gail Kalmerton, Executive Assistant/Clerk of the Board.
- Visitors** The Board of Education welcomed the following visitors: John Rossi and Nick Cavalleri of Baker Tilly, Mary Haley of the League of Women Voters, Jay Lind and David Gilmore of OPRFHS Spoken Word; Natalie Richardson, student; Craig Chesney, John Bokum, and Melanie McQueen, community members; and Vernecia Davis, University of Illinois intern.
- Secretary Protempore** In Secretary McCormack's absence, Mr. Phelan moved to approve Dr. Lee as Secretary Protempore; seconded by Ms. Fisher. A voice vote resulted in all ayes. Motion carried.
- Student Recognition** Natalie Richardson was recognized for being selected as a United States Student Poet Laureate by The Alliance for Young Artists & Writers as part of its Scholastic Art & Writing Awards. She was the only one of the five selected that came from a public school. OPRFHS had four semi-finalists. John Lind and David Gilmore, co-sponsors of the Spoken Word Club, spoke about how beautifully and thoughtfully Ms. Richardson wrote.
- Board Member Comments** Ms. Patchak-Layman commended the OPRFHS staff who attended the Courageous Conversations about Race Summit in San Antonio, Texas. Three staff members presented to over 600 attendees over the country. The summit had great information and it fits with the Board of Education's goal of equity and excellence. She attended one session for superintendents, noting that the Portland School Districts was far along in its work of excellence and equity. She will make a report on how this work can direct the District and what can be accomplished soon with the training that the staff has received on Courageous Conversations.
- Status of FOIA Reports** Ms. Kalmerton noted that one FOIA request had been received and one was resolved.
- Student Council Liaison Report** Ms. Richardson reported on student complaints/suggestions that had been added to her Facebook page.

- Additional doors should be opened before school and at the end of lunch periods. Many students find it unnecessary to come through the main entrance. It would help eliminate being late to first class. The administration will have further discussions on this with students;
- The locker rooms should be air conditioned;
- Seniors should be required to take a study hall in which counselors would instruct them on the college application process and English teachers could provide feedback; and
- Students not participating in an IHSA varsity sports, such as Orchesis and Hockey, should be allowed to take an athletic study hall, as they do get much physical activity. Mr. Rouse noted that this was an issue of PE waivers, a subject discussed by the Board of Education at its Policy, Evaluation, and Goals Committee meeting. State law does not allow PE waivers for clubs or activities that are not recognized by the IHSA.

Positive comments were received on the late-arrivals Wednesdays. Student Council is happy with the Homecoming results, the VIP section, and the new layout, which will be used in future years.

Future events include the November 12 Blood drive, the November 30 Tradition of Excellence event, and the Coat Drive.

**Faculty Senate Report**

Mr. Hunter, in keeping with the pace of the meeting, noted that he would see the Board of Education at its next meeting.

**Audit Presentation**

It was the consensus of the Board of Education members to accept the FY 2011-12 Audit Report and Comprehensive Annual Financial Report under the Action portion of the agenda. John Rossi and Nick Cavalleri presented the FY 2012 Audit Report prepared by Baker Tilly Virchow Krause. Included in the packet was a draft copy of the June 30, 2012 Comprehensive Annual Financial Report.

Baker Tilly explained that auditing standards define deficiencies in internal control to be of two types:

- 1) A significant deficiency is a deficiency, or combination of deficiencies, in internal control that is less severe than a material weakness, yet important enough to merit attention by those charged with governance.
- 2) A material weakness is a deficiency, or combination of deficiencies, in internal control such that there is a reasonable possibility that a material misstatement of the District's financial statements will not be prevented, or detected and corrected on a timely basis.

Baker Tilly also provided two letters to the Board of Education. They were:

- 1) Independent Auditors' Report on Compliance with Requirements that Could Have a Direct and Material Effect on Each Major Program and on Internal Control Over Compliance in Accordance with OMB Circular A-133 and the Schedule of Expenditures of Federal Awards.

Under the Internal Control Over Compliance section, they noted that they had not identified any deficiencies in internal control over compliance that they considered material weaknesses.

Under the Schedule of Expenditures of Federal Awards, they felt that the schedule of expenditures of federal awards is fairly stated in all material respects in relation to the financial statements as a whole.

2) Independent Auditors' Report on Internal Control over Financial Reporting and on Compliance and Other Matters based on an Audit of Financial Statements Performed in Accordance with Government Auditing Standards.

Under the Internal Control over Financial Reporting section, they did not identify any deficiencies, significant deficiency, or material weaknesses.

Under the Compliance Other Matters section, they stated that the results of their tests disclosed no instances of noncompliance or other matters that are required to be reported under Government Auditing Standards.

Baker Tilley felt that ORPFHS was in excellent state, and it has received the state's highest status.

Ms. Witham and Mr. Willey were complimented for having monitoring controls and being at the lowest possible risks. No adjustments were made to Mr. Wiley's work with regard to the financial statements. The IT Department was also commended on its testing. Baker Tilley was pleased that OPRFHS provides access to its financial reports annually.

The State has a predetermined Average Daily Attendance (ADD) and that is why it is used versus the number of students enrolled. When the question was asked if there were a common website to compare financial data from other schools, the response was that there is, but it is not user friendly. Ms. Patchak-Layman appreciated the extra explanation included in the audit. The Board of Education would accept the audit under the action portion of the agenda.

## **Strategic Plan**

Dr. Isoye reported that the survey was opened on Monday, October 22 for faculty and staff. Soon the student survey will be open. The District is waiting for the postcards to be sent out, but parents received an email letting them know that if they wanted a second person in their household to respond, they could receive a second access code by calling Ms. Kalmerton. All community members past or present are invited to respond to the survey, including graduates. The District's current database of parents was used to send postcards to every address, parent, or guardian in the two communities. Parent groups will also be informed of this opportunity.

More people attended the last Steering Committee meeting. Many questions regarding the student achievement data exist. Dr. Isoye was most appreciative of the members' willingness to commit their time and interest to the high school.

## **October 1 Annual Enrollment Data**

Mr. Carioscio presented the annual October 1 Official Enrollment Data and School Housing Report Year Statistics. It included:

- Total October 1 enrollment numbers with a racial breakdown
- Student racial distribution by year
- Average class size with historical data
- Division enrollment, class size, class size excluding basics/transition
- Associate school student enrollment sources for freshmen
- Registrations by student per year

Discussion ensued about the variance in the projected enrollments of each class and the actual numbers. The reason for this is undetermined. The number of registrations continues to increase for all classes, now at 6.57. Academic classes have also increased but not at the same rate. Classes are scheduled with target enrollments for basic, college prep, and honors classes. Mr. Carioscio will do an analysis on the disaggregation of these classes.

Mr. Carioscio will include in future reports the enrollment statistics for Physical Education, Music, and Special Education.

**Transfer Student**

The Board of Education received the annual student Entry and Withdrawal Report as an informational item. More information was requested about why students dropped out of school. The word “dropout” may not be derogatory if there is an understanding as to what occurred. One member stated that if a student is not able to graduate in four years, the onus is on the high school to get that student the support they need to graduate. An item that was missing was the gender or race in the classification of withdrawal. A national discussion is occurring about high schools graduating all of the students that enroll.

**Non-Tenured Faculty Report**

The Board of Education received the Non-Tenured Faculty Report for 2012/13. The list indicated the employee’s name, assignment, and the year of service. The following categories were added to this annual report based on conversations about nonrenewal. They were:

- FTE Hired to Fill New Positions
- FTE Hired as Replacement Personnel
- FTE Hired on One-year Contracts (employee leaves)
- FTE hired as part-time based on Student Enrollment

All non-tenured FTE, except fourth year FTE, are subject to non-renewal. Fourth year teachers may only be released for cause or due to a reduction in force. Dr. Isoye stated that the District is making changes to the process and the goal is to have as many people placed before having to meet contractual obligations with regard to notification of nonrenewal. A question was raised as to whether evaluations were aligned with this timeline.

**Sabbatical Report**

Avi Lessing thanked the Board of Education for allowing him to take a sabbatical last year, as it had culminated in the writing of his dissertation. He saw a difference in his teaching this year because of the sabbatical. The focus of his doctoral work was the social emotional learning strand. His focus that evening was about the point that relationships are essential to learning. Relationships between all entities are just as important as writing and reading and they are probably not separate. He shared why he believed in this. He was raised in Highland Park. His father was a doctor of philosophy and his mother was a therapist. He went to college at the University of Colorado in Boulder. Several things happened while he was in college. Two of his

classmates were in a car crash, one died. His dad was diagnosed with cancer when he was a freshman. Mr. Lessing himself had developed a benign tumor in the neck. He studied at Second City. He began his teaching career at Waukegan High School. He felt it important to know what others were doing. He studied mediation, which became a powerful part of what he did as a teacher. These ideas can be coalesced as the I/You relationship, when a person is a person, versus the I/It relationships, when a person becomes a thing. He sees education, health care, and social work as care institutions, not efficient businesses. Students often referred to Mr. Lessing's class as the "feelings class." It used to be called "Avi's World," but social /emotional learning is not Avi's World.

Some non-cognitive skills are just as important as ACT scores. Author Angela Duckworth wrote about "grit." A grit scale is being considered for use at the high school. Mr. Lessing felt that grit was just as important as an IQ. Teachers can shape the brains of students. Mindsight, a neurobiologist organization out of UCLA, says that the energy of the room is extremely powerful and it can be measured. People learn through the connections and relationships. Mediation is a practice of becoming aware, a reflection, the ability to write down one's thoughts, storytelling, allowing students to make sense of who they are, person-to-person conversations, student-to-student relationships, and getting more students to talk.

Mr. Lessing has shared his work in his department and through the learning strands, which are powerful because they are systemic. He continued that the piece he wrote was autobiographical about one day in the life of a teacher because everything happens in one day. So much drama occurs, and yet there is a tension with the idea that the high school can carry out this work. That is why it is crucial for him to be explicit that relationships are at the forefront of learning. He wanted students to live well and have valuable experiences at the high school. The work being done on race is important. His job is to implement this into his classroom, collaborate with colleagues, and focus on learning strands.

Mr. Hunter stated that the members of the TCT are beginning to examine grit. Students with grit show characteristics of being able to complete tasks.

### **Amendment of School Calendar**

It was the consensus of the majority of Board of Education members to approve the recoding of the late start Wednesdays as half-day professional development days under the Action portion of the agenda. This will be accomplished by labeling them as half-day school improvement days so that the District will get full credit for Average Daily Attendance. OPRFHS has more than the 300 minutes of daily instruction required by the state. It was clarified that while these are being characterized as half days in the coding for the state, OPRFHS receives credit for the full day.

Mr. Phelan asked that this be removed from the Consent agenda.

There was consensus to remove the acceptance of the Audit from the Consent Agenda.

### **Consent Items**

Dr. Lee moved to approve the consent item as follows:

- Check Disbursements and Financial Resolutions dated Thursday, October 25, 2012
- the Monthly Treasurer's Report

- Gifts & Donations
- EAP Contract for FY '14
- Keying Contract
- Approval of Contract for Online Registration Software

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

**Acceptance of Audit**

Mr. Finnegan moved to accept the FY 2011-12 Audit Report and Comprehensive Annual Financial Report, as presented; seconded by Mr. Phelan. A roll call vote resulted in all ayes. Motion carried.

**Amendment of School Calendar for 2012-13**

Mr. Finnegan moved to approve the recoding of the late start Wednesdays as half-day professional development days; seconded by Dr. Lee. A roll call vote resulted in four ayes and one abstention. Mr. Phelan abstained because he had not supported the original movement to extend time for professional development because it was at the expense of lost instructional time.

Faculty experience has been successful with the late start Wednesdays. The District is listening to the feedback. Mr. Finnegan stated that the TCTs provide time for teachers to share with each other. They are well worth the time spent.

**Personnel Recommendations**

Dr. Lee moved to approve the personnel recommendations (New Hires, Transfers, Stipends, and Leaves of Absence); seconded by Mr. Phelan. A roll call vote resulted in all ayes. Motion carried.

**Open & Closed Minutes**

Mr. Finnegan moved to approve the open and closed minutes of September 27 and October 16, 2012 (Instruction, Finance, Technology, and Special); seconded by Dr. Lee. A roll call vote resulted in six ayes and one nay. Ms. Patchak-Layman voted nay. Motion carried.

**Closed Session**

At 9:10 p.m., on Thursday, October 25, 2012, Mr. Finnegan moved to enter closed session for the purposes 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 Dr. Lee. A roll call vote resulted in all ayes. Motion carried.

At 10:32 p.m., the Board of Education resumed its open session.

**Adjournment**

At 10:34 p.m. on Thursday, October 25, 2012, Dr. Lee moved to adjourn this meeting; seconded by Mr. Phelan. A voice vote resulted in motion carried.

Dr. Ralph H. Lee  
Secretary Protempore

Gail Kalmerton  
Clerk of the Board