

OAK PARK AND RIVER FOREST HIGH SCHOOL
201 North Scoville Avenue
Oak Park, IL 60302

Committee of the Whole Meeting
October 15, 2019

A Committee of the Whole Committee meeting was held on October 15, 2019. Dr. Moore called the meeting to order at 6:34 p.m. in the Board Room. Committee members present were Matt Baron, Tom Cofsky, Gina Harris, Craig Iseli, Ralph Martire, Dr. Jackie Moore (attended telephonically), and Sara Dixon Spivy. Also present were Dr. Joylynn Pruitt Adams, Superintendent; and Gail Kalmerton, Executive Assistant/Clerk of the Board of Education and FOIA Officer.

Also present were: Michael Carioscio, Chief Operations Officer, Karin Sullivan, Director of Communications; Greg Johnson, Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction; Chris Thieme, Senior Director of Technology; Roxana Sanders, Senior Director of Human Resources; Dr. Gwendolyn Walker Qualls, Director of Pupil Support Services; and Cyndi Sidor, Chief School Business Officer; and Lynda Parker, Assistant Principal of Student Services.

Visitors

Lisa Yefsky and Kurt Hines of Gallagher Bassett, and Mr. Bernstein, community member.

Public Comments

Mr. Bernstein pointed out that the UMOJA contract was valued at \$25,150, but the line item list for substitutes added \$15,000 to the cost. He wanted to see agenda items explicitly state the total spend as he did not want to be blindsided. While he had attended a practice session on Restorative Justice and found it interesting, he agreed with Mr. Martire and Dr. Moore that more information was needed in order to approve this program. He too noted that he had questioned another agenda item years ago, as there seemed to be monies for undefined items. While he was unsure if his comments made any difference, the item was canceled.

Approval of Minutes of September 17, 2019

Ms. Harris moved to approve the minutes of the September 17, 2019 Committee of the Whole meeting as presented; seconded by Mr. Baron. A voice vote resulted in motion carried.

New Courses/Academic Catalog Revisions

It was the consensus of the majority of the Committee of the Whole members to recommend to the Board of Education that it approve the course proposals for the 2020-21 school year at its regular October meeting, as presented. A total of proposed changes to the course proposals for the 2020-21 school year included 9 additions, 45 revisions and 1 deletion. The course documentation was provided in a link in the packet.

The course linked to the Grow Your Own Program has only one student enrolled in it because students were unaware of it when they went through the registration process last year. Counselors will be able to inform and recruit students during this year's registration process.

Summer School Report

Mr. Lee, summer school co-coordinator, provided the Summer School 2019 Program Evaluation for information and discussion. He reviewed the recommendations made in 2018 for this year.

1. Identify ways to close the opportunity gap by increasing access to Summer School for more students of color.
2. Explore alternative learning formats, including one that combines traditional classroom experiences with e-learning formats.
3. Continue to improve the accessibility of the registration process.

The following evaluation questions were identified to help achieve these goals.

1. What changes did we make from 2018 to 2019?
2. Who were we able to hire to teach our summer school courses?
3. What did we offer, and what did our stakeholders tell us about those offerings?
4. How effective was our registration process at providing equitable access to summer school?
5. Who was enrolled in our summer school programs, and how did they perform?

The administration set out to gather the following data:

1. Overall student enrollment data, compared to previous years
2. Prominent changes we made to what we offer
3. A comparison of courses offered in 2019 to those of 2018
4. List of internal and external teachers hired
5. Changes we made to our registration process
6. Student enrollment data, disaggregated by race and specific program
7. Grade rate distributions, disaggregated by race and specific program
8. Other program-specific outcome data, where available.

The results were: Feedback from Parent Focus Groups

- Very good communication to parents
- Everyone enjoyed having Friday off
- Everyone liked the idea of having an ID, Chromebooks, and book pick up before classes began
- Computer science - good experience
- Students had to miss out on other opportunities to go to the 23-day classes - some parents do want 12-day classes
 - Was challenging enough, but not stressful
 - Coming early, meeting new people makes students more at ease in August
 - Intro to computer - were learning new things, the first time they heard a kid say "I love" a class

Suggestions

- Create a possible waitlist; classes closed too quickly
- Create a schedule that is compatible with sport camps
- More Pass/Fail options: bump up classes, computer science, electives
- Consider "at home study" or e-learning
- Improve the quality of homework; not just busywork

- Provide grades in the summer musical
- School should have a parent/teacher meeting for credit recovery prior to the start of the class to discuss the purpose
- Desire more reminders of important dates via email, phone calls and/or texts.
- Efforts to increase access to summer school through revised course offerings, removing caps on classes, and changing the registration process resulted in only a slight increase in the overall enrollment.
 - Financial Literacy: In 2019, an increase of 32 Black and Hispanic students.
 - Digital Literacy: In 2019, an increase of 38 White and Asian/Pacific Islander students enrolled while Black, Hispanic and Multi-Racial students remained consistently the same.
 - Art Foundations: In 2019, an increase of 5% of Black students enrolled with a 6% decrease of Hispanic students as other racial groups appeared to have little change.
- Although there appeared to be increases in the number of students of color in credit-bearing classes in 2019, the overall percentages of enrollment in 2019 was almost identical to 2018 percentages.
- Students from different racial backgrounds are continuing to use our summer school programming in different ways.
 - White students predominantly attend summer school before freshman year, decreasing their participation each year after that.
 - Multiracial, Hispanic, and Asian or Pacific Islander students show little shift in how they attend summer school from year to year.
 - African American students predominantly attend summer school before their senior year, with their participation significantly lower in each of the preceding years.
- In 2019, More Equitable Grade Outcomes
- Overall grade rate distributions in two years ago demonstrated a significant achievement gap, as 93% of White students who attended summer school received an A or B, whereas 69% of Black students earn similar grades.
- In 2019, A or B grades for Black students increased to 78%, as White students continued steady at 94%.
- 12% of the students (137) had their summer school fees waived.
- From 2018 to 2019, there was an increase in credits earned for the ISCR program due to the increase of students in the program.
- In 2019, 324 credits were earned as part of our Credit Recovery program, with 67% of those credits earned by Black and Hispanic students.
- 8-9 Connections allowed 36 students to earn high school credit before entering their 9th-grade year; all students earned A's or B's.
- There was a significant decrease in the AP Summer Bridge program.
- Plan and respond to facilities challenges for 2020-2023
 - Drivers Ed changes beginning in 2020
 - Site availability beginning in 2021
- Continue goals from previous years:
 - Close the opportunity gap by increasing access to Summer School for more students of color.

- Limit the first come/first serve model for registration.
- Permanently implement changes from last year:
 - Provide tuition and fee waivers to all students who receive free or reduced lunch.
 - Remove caps on certain summer school offerings.
 - Offer breakfast and lunch for any students in need.
- Expand course offerings to meet the needs and interests of our students better.
- Evaluate the effect that online credit courses taken during the school year on summer school enrollment.

Full-session classes only:

Summer school classes will be held Monday through Thursday, June 8-July 16 (with a possible grading/make-up day on July 17 if needed). We will continue to offer only 24-day classes.

The daily class schedule will be as follows:

- Period 1: 8:00 – 10:15 a.m., one-semester credit
- Period 2: 10:25 a.m. – 12:40 p.m., one-semester credit
- Period 3: 12:50 – 3:05 p.m., one-semester credit

Programs such as Driver Ed, the summer musical, and 8/9 Connections will continue to schedule activities outside the times allocated for the regular summer school schedule.

- The course fee will remain \$250 per class, with some courses having additional lab fees.
- We will also continue to waive all summer school fees for all students who qualify for free and reduced lunch to help make summer school more accessible to all our students.

Open House for the class of 2024 will be on January 21 at 6:00 p.m.

Mr. Lee reviewed the material in his PowerPoint that included the Program Overview and what was offered in summer school. This year there was uncapped registration in Digital Literacy, Financial Literacy, Reading Strategies, Creative Writing, Beyond X- Math Adventure, and Exploration in Experimentation. Summer school was taught by 139 teachers, 81 internal and 58 external, and 1,138 students completed 1,557 credits, including 333 credits earned in the Credit Recovery program. The demographics of the teaching staff included 81 White teachers, 45 Black teachers, 5 Asian/Pacific Islanders, and 7 Hispanic teachers.

Discussion ensued about the decrease in enrollment in the AP Bridge Program. The administration stated that it valued this program and will address in the future how to get more students involved.

Driver's Ed will have changes to the construction of the south cafeteria.

The program overview of initiatives included:

- Increase in Summer School fees from \$210 per class to \$250.
- Eliminated the 12 Day Sections
- Free summer school programming for students who qualified for free and/or reduced lunch during the school year.

- Continued food service to include 2,748 breakfasts and 3,401 lunches for students in 8-9 Connections, ISCR, and ESY.
- Changed the registration platform to Skyward versus RevTrack to allow for easier access and flexibility.
- Ongoing registration throughout the school year up until the first day of summer school.
- Developed an online summer school student handbook that was more user friendly.
- Hired a robust and diverse staff that represented and reflected the student body

When all of the issues with the demolition of the South Cafeteria have been identified and resolved, the Board of Education will receive a proposed budget for summer school 2020. Other sites are being considered for the housing of summer school during construction. While online classes may be a part of the solution, online courses are very different and teacher PD is necessary.

Discussion ensued about the recruitment of students in AP classes. Mr. Johnson is ultimately responsible for the recruitment of students for these classes and orchestrates the maximizing of relationships with students through the division heads and teachers. The Student Services Department send the information to the students and has individual conversations with them about these opportunities.

[Presentation of Levy Timeline](#)

The Committee of the Whole received the Levy Timeline. Ms. Sidor noted that the Community Finance Advisory Committee has reviewed the options for the levy and the 5-year projections and will make a recommendation at the November 12 Committee of the Whole Meeting.

[Presentation of Pekron Environmental Consulting Contract](#)

It was the consensus of the majority of the Committee to recommend to the Board of Education to approve the Environmental Consulting Contract at its regular meeting in October. This includes the work in conjunction with the demolition of the south cafeteria.

[Presentation of Umoja Contract](#)

It was the consensus of the majority of the Committee members to recommend to the Board of Education that it approve the Umoja Contract at its regular meeting in October meeting.

Mr. Carioscio stated that, based on the feedback at the last meeting, additional items were included, the past work was detailed, and information about accountability issues and deliverables were included in the information. Discussion ensued about the statement, "By June 2020, increase the percentage of students who feel that they are welcome and belong at school to 60% across all demographic groups." The 60% target was based on the results of the culture and climate survey Hanover Research created for OPRFHS. However, next year, more data will be available. OPRFHS is no longer partnering with Hanover because the results could not be disaggregated. At the end of this contract, approximately 70 to 80 staff members will be using Restorative Justice practices. The entire English department is being trained (because all students take English), TCT leaders are being trained, and the deans are being trained. The administration stated that it has a way to evaluate to the fidelity of the trainings. The administration will know how many teachers are using Restorative Justice and if it is being used in a way to change the

culture by observations and teacher feedback. The trainers talk about how Restorative Justice can be used for both curriculum learning as well as social-emotional issues learning.

Presentation of Insurance Renewal Recommendations

It was the consensus of the majority of the Committee members to recommend that the Board of Education approves the Insurance Renewal Recommendations at the Special Board meeting following this meeting.

On September 23, 2019, the District Insurance Committee met to review renewal marketing results and projections for 2020 insurance renewals. The projected need for a unified increase of 7.4% for medical PPO and HMO plans is driven by:

- PPO Blended Trend of 5.7% / HMO Blended Trend of 5.8%
- Increase in total claims
- Five large PPO claims totaling \$1,114,543 over the \$130,000 specific deductible
- One large HMO claim of \$141,917 over the \$130,000 specific deductible

The Committee discussed several options for medical plan changes to mitigate the renewal increase and recommends implementing the following plan design changes that will result in dropping the unified rate increase from 7.4% to 4.8%:

- Increase Specific Deductible from \$130K to \$135K
- Increase Primary Care Provider (PCP) and Specialist Office Visit Copays from \$25/\$40 to \$35/\$50 on both PPO and HMO Plans

Budget Impact: even though a 4% increase for benefits was budgeted, the budget will not be negatively impacted because the insurance cost is split between two school years due to the insurance renewals being done on the calendar basis. For the 2019 calendar year, there was no increase in the insurance costs. Accordingly, funds are available to cover the 4.8% increase for the 2020 calendar year.

The marketing results presented showed the carriers that were contacted and responded with quotes for medical, dental, vision, LIFE/ADD & LTD.

The ancillary plan recommendations were the following:

Dental

- Remain with Delta Dental - no employee disruption –
- Gallagher negotiated a 1.8% reduction in admin fee and a 2-year rate guarantee –
- 6.6% increase recommended in dental rates for 1.1.20 based on 5% dental trend and increased in claims activity

Vision

- VSP Renewal increase of 22.4% requested
- Gallagher was able to negotiate the renewal 12% with a 2 year rate guarantee
-

Life and AD&D

- Basic Life/ADD: -25.3% Rate Reduction, savings of \$23,626
- Voluntary Life/ADD: No change in rates – Long-Term Disability: No change in rates

- Rates guaranteed for two years
- Met Life offered the most competitive package for the above lines of coverage

Medical Plan Recommendations

Medical

- Increase Office Visit copays across PPO and HMO plans from
 - \$25 PCP to \$35 PCP
 - \$40 Specialist to \$50 Specialist
- -1.53% savings

Stop Loss

- Increase the specific deductible from \$130K to \$135K
- -1.0% savings Experience Review

Claims

– Increase in total claims

Large Claimants over \$130,000 specific stop loss

– PPO

- 2018 = 4 totaling \$825,857
- 2019 = 5 totaling \$1,114,543

– HMO • 2018 = 1 totaling \$299,400

- 2019 = 1 totaling \$141,917

– Terminate \$1500 Deductible PPO plan and replace with PPO 750 plan.

Ms. Yetsky commended the insurance committee for the work it did to get to these recommendations.

Ms. Sidor noted that the insurance fund balance decreased to \$1.5 million. The Committee had not discussed whether the fund should be depleted or kept at status quo.

Mr. Cofsky asked what the process was for the options being recommended, noting that no individual employee is paying for any increase. One of the factors considered was the financial impact on employees. Employees on PPOs pay three percent more than those on other plans. The Committee felt for fairness that the District should not hit the same people twice. When the insurance committee looked at the deductible, it analyzed the risk exposure and the high claims, which were seven. And, the District would not lose the large payments through the stop loss. The other claims did not have enough of an impact.

The insurance company discussed all of the options. While finances were considered, it also considered the impact on employees and their morale. The other change was for a higher out-of-pocket expense for PPO Low plan users. The insurance committee was sympathetic to individuals who would be hit twice with higher costs next year and Ms. Sanders believed that it would be open for more discussion. There is an incentive for people to move from the PPO plan to other plans, and the administration is anticipating results. New people are taking advantage of the incentive. Additional educational about the PPO and HMO plans will be provided during

open enrollment. However, some people do not have a choice to switch to a lower priced plan because of their health. This information was being provided in order for the District to budget for its health plan. The specifics as to what drives the number is the number and the cost of the claims. If people are healthier, the cost will be lower. If not, the cost could be higher. Last year a wellness screening was held for employees. This year specific wellness initiatives will be provided to encourage good health for all employees.

Board of Education Goals

The Board of Education is committed to excellence in education for all of its students. The 2019-20 goals reflect the Board's commitment to the District's purpose and it is its responsibility to provide direction and oversight of the Strategic Plan with emphasis on viewing the strategic plan through a racial equity lens.

Oak Park and River Forest High School Board of Education Goals 2019-2020

1. Ongoing monitoring of goals and activities of Strategic Plan as prioritized by the superintendent, for the 2019- 20 school year.
2. Monitor implementation of Racial Equity Policy Develop Accountability Framework that outlines outcomes to be monitored and timeline for accomplishing outcomes
3. Board development on accomplishing racial equity goals As a part of our responsibility to view our work through a racial equity lens we will:
 - A. Work collectively through ongoing discussions to deepen our understanding of race and the effects of systemic and institutional racism, implicit bias, and White privilege on our school community.
 - B. Do individual work to increase racial equity literacy. Commit to ongoing relationship building and partnership in understanding our role in affecting system change and modeling a culture of community.
4. Continual oversight of district policies Substantive review and monitoring of policies by Policy Committee.

Discussion ensued. The accountability framework will consist of the Board identifying some big outcomes, the timeframe for accomplishing the goal as well as looking at measurable progress during that time. The administration will report on incremental progress to see if the needle is moving. Note that the racial equity policy charges the administration to develop the metrics for the twelve (12) components in the policy. Dr. Pruitt-Adams stated that an open and in-depth discussion was needed by the Board of Education and the administration. It was determined that first a standalone meeting will be scheduled for the Board of Education to discuss its goals, not the metrics, as to what it expects to see over time.

Another member noted that the goals require the Board of Education to think about the future. Is the Board of Education equipped to look at things through an equity lens? Will it require more readings and discussion time? It was suggested that the Board of Education hold a retreat, away

from the school on a Saturday, to do this work, as well as dedicate time at every meeting to ask questions using a rubric to make sure it is doing everything through a racial equity lens. The question was asked if more work should be done with the community rather than just the Board of Education. Perhaps an interactive and engaging meeting would be more positive than just the seven current Board members in order to make change. It is important to have something broader than just this Board.

Discussion ensued about whether the wording would alienate those in the community who are not in the same place and do not understand the terms. Given the recent events in Oak Park over language, would this fracture the community further? It is important to be clear and move collectively. Mr. Martire noted that the goals of District 90 included "Our equity initiative is designed to create an excellent and welcoming education for all of our students." Thus, no parent could feel it was a zero-sum game happening at the board level. It is important for people to understand that nothing is being taken away from anyone. If the language is divisive rather than inviting, this Board of Education may not get community support. Any parent will look at how this will affect their child. Yet, the school board is committed to ensuring all children are welcome, and they have the opportunity to achieve the best they can based on their skill sets. Dr. Moore stated that the work that the Board of Education does, in an open meeting, will model the expectations of the community. Talking about race will never be comfortable; it will disrupt and bring up feelings. This is part of the mission of the school to look at everything through an equity lens, and that is not necessarily talking about race. It is a racial equity literacy, i.e. racism, biases, and white privilege. Part of the reason for reading chapters 1, 2, and 3 in the book is that this is the time for the Board of Education to lead, not silo. The Board of Education has to continue to educate itself and be a model for the community and that does not detract from all the overall goals to all of the students.

Ms. Harris stated that if the Board of Education is to move in line with Oak Parkers that insist this is an integrated community, it needs to do this work itself in order to unpack systematic racism. If people are afraid to use the term "white privilege", then people are afraid of the effect in the long term on the racial equity policy. The goal is to build community in new ways and unexplored ways. She was willing to remove that the term "white privilege" in order to make people comfortable, but the Board of Education needs to begin to have conversations about systemic and institutional racism. It exists, and the Board of Education members were elected to govern. She appreciates including the community; the wording was never intended to alienate anyone. What is racial equity? Mr. Martire stated the Board of Education's charge is to create an excellent and welcoming education for all of our students. Backing away from the term is unnecessary, but it should be supplemented with that this is about all students. If equity is built, it will be beneficial to all students.

Ms. Harris stated that while the Board of Education is the steward for the school, it does not operate independently of the community. The Board of Education's purview is not limited to what is demonstrated to the community. This is about fear and loss. Mr. Martire agreed but said one does not win the hearts and minds of people who are not trained, and thus ways must be found to be engaging. While he has gone through trainings, he does not have the same experiences.

Dr. Pruitt-Adams noted that the implementation of the goals is the job of the administration. Never will everyone come to the thinking the same and some will be unhappy with whatever is done. As a woman of color, the language is not censored. If this school district is committed to removing the barriers for all students, difficult conversations about race are needed. It appeared to her that the Board of Education was talking about “soft-stepping” around that language to make others comfortable in order to bring them along when they could care less. One parent told her that District 97 students are bringing the scores down, and that this is not utopia. One parent told her to go back to St. Louis. That resonated personally for her. If the school is committed to doing this work, she is not saying that they do not attempt to bring people along, but either way the school has to move forward whether people follow or not. Mr. Martire stated that the goal is to change things in the school and bring as many people along as possible. District 90 had the majority of community pushback, but the statistics are proving the benefits. The school must eliminate racism in this building.

Dr. Moore asked, "what's next?" The Board passed the racial equity policy. The Board is trying to eliminate disparity so that all are on the same path to increase each other's comfort and literacy levels when talking about race. For the Board's work to be informed and understood, it will take staying courageous in this work and modeling what black and brown students need to see. This is championing a cause. Part of the work means that all students get what they need.

Ms. Dixon Spivy did not want to put barriers up in getting the work done. Many steps have to take place in order to further the goal of equity.

Mr. Iseli stated that he has lived in all parts of the world, and from his perspective, he has always respected the opinions, emotions, etc. from everywhere he lived, and that is how he has learned. However, in his own experience, as a white male, he goes through emotions just like everyone else, and he had feelings that were different from the ones expressed in this meeting. This is very important and very hard work to do, and language has to be used to do so. But, if people are alienated at the beginning, they will be lost to this before they begin. While his neighbors want to understand, they do not understand the language. How will they understand if the conversation does not happen? The Board needs to talk about the language and invite people into a safe space for conversation, not a space that they perceive is a conflict. Why start the conversation with "white privilege" or "white supremacy". They are zeroing in on those words. He suggested taking some words out of the goals in order to make the language more palatable so as not to create an adversarial place. When questioned as to whether this would make it more palatable for the whites in the community, the response was that some people do not have the conversation and are not spending all day talking about it. Dr. Moore stated that from conversations with the black and brown in community, those who come to the Culture, Climate, and Behavior Committee and her lived experience in Oak Park, it felt as though this discussion was about white people in the community. If so, more discussion is needed. The folks representing racial equity are crying out for these conversations. Students have named it. This is an opportunity to delve into this work relative to the policies of the past; it is part of the work the Board wants to do.

Ms. Harris stated that the Board of Education was talking about its goals, and if using the term "white privilege" is appropriate for this work. She appreciated that this is very hard for white

people who have never had the experience of talking about these terms. In addition, she appreciated not turning people off and allowing them to come into the conversation. There is a way to have a conversation and be mindful of not shying away from the terms that need discussion. Talking about racial equity is not talking about eliminating anything for white students. Mr. Iseli stated that he was comfortable and wanted to explore what “white privilege” meant to him, the Board of Education, and the students. Mr. Martire asked that the following words be added, "This is a process about all of the students." Mr. Cofsky, as a Board member and an individual, was OK with the words. As he looked at this goal, he underlined the words "equity lens." Embedded in this goal is education and learning, both collectively and individually. He asked what it looked like for the Board of Education to look at all of the work through a racial equity lens. What does that mean?

Mr. Baron supported the verbiage and had thought about inserting the phrase "for all students," but he was unsure if it was really needed. However, he did support that insertion. He saw no reason to back off any words or phrases and was open to additional insights. Ms. Spivy stated that a definition is needed in point 3 b.

Dr. Moore stated that Dr. Pruitt-Adams, Ms. Harris, and Dr. Ammons, and she were working on an equity retreat for the Board of Education. She appreciated the Board wanting to have conversations about this.

It was the consensus of the majority of the OPRFHS Board of Education members to approve the goals as presented at its regular October meeting.

Future Agenda Items

- IGOV talking points
- 5Essentials and the State Report Card will come forward in November.
- Periodic report on each division.
- MENTA program Review
- Process for getting more students into AP Courses in May.
- A report on data sharing (in February)
- Green in construction projects. Update in late spring

Adjournment

At 9:30 p.m., Dr. Moore moved to adjourn the meeting; seconded by Ms. Dixon Spivy. A voice vote resulted in all ayes. Motion carried.

Submitted by:
Gail Kalmerton, Clerk of the Board