

December 22, 2016

The regular Board meeting of the Board of Education of the Oak Park and River Forest High School was held on Thursday, December 22, 2016, in the Board Room of the OPRFHS.

Call to Order President Weissglass called the meeting to order at 6:39 p.m. A roll call indicated the following Board of Education members were present: Fred Arkin, Jennifer Cassell, Thomas F. Cofsky, Dr. Steven Gevinson, Dr. Jackie Moore, Sara Spivy, and Jeff Weissglass. Also present were Dr. Joylynn Pruitt, Interim Superintendent; Tod Altenburg, Chief School Business Official; Brenda Horton, Director of Human Resources Nathaniel L. Rouse, Principal; Philip M Prale, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction; and Gail Kalmerton, Executive Assistant Clerk of the Board.

Closed Session At 6:41 p.m. on Thursday, December 22, 2016, Mr. Weissglass 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; Collective negotiating matters between the District and its employees or their representatives or deliberations concerning salary schedules for one or more classes of employees. 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(2); Student disciplinary cases 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(10); seconded by Dr. Moore. A roll call vote resulted in all ayes. Motion carried.

At 7:44 p.m., the Board of Education resumed the open session.

Joining the meeting were Michael Carioscio, Chief Information Officer; Amy Hill, Director of Assessment and Research; Karin Sullivan, Director of Communications and Community Relations; and Dr. Gwen Walker Qualls.

Visitors Sheila Hardin, Faculty Senate Executive Committee Chair,

Hearing: At 7:44 p.m. Mr. Weissglass called this Public Hearing to order on Thursday, December 22, 2016, for the Oak Park and River Forest High School 2016 Tax Levy. Notice of this Public Hearing appeared in the Wednesday, December 14, 2016, edition of the *Wednesday Journal* newspaper. He asked for any written or oral comments to be received. Hearing none, at 7:45 p.m., he closed the Public Hearing

Public Comments None

Status of FOIA Requests Ms. Kalmerton reported that 2 FOIA requests were received and resolved

Student Council Report No report

**Superintendent
Announcements**

Dr. Pruitt reported the following:

Girls swimming placed fourth in the state overall with the following winning first place titles:

- Samantha Neilson, Natalie Ungaretti, Hanna Blankemeier, and Alex Gill won the 200 Medley Relay. This is only the second time OPRF has won this event (the last time it happened Ronald Reagan was president).
- Natalie Ungaretti won the 50 Freestyle. She set a new school record and is the first OPRF girls 50 freestyle champ as well as the first girl in OPRF history to win two events at state. These athletes will be honored at a future board meeting.

More than 25% of this year's seniors have been named 2017-2018 State Scholars for their outstanding academic achievement. Criteria include performing in the top one-half of the high school class at the end of junior year and/or scoring at or above the 95th percentile on the ACT or SAT.

OPRF faculty and staff adopted 50 families and individuals through the Community of Congregations' annual Holiday Food and Gift Basket program. Outreach Coordinator Latonia Jackson, Communications Secretary Linda Hayes, and students Nyree McCollum, Ishana Euring, Alexis Chandler, Malcolm Crawford, Jalen Floyd, and Anthony Brooks delivered the bus full of gifts to the program.

Varsity boys' basketball took home the championship at the highly competitive Bill VandeMerkt Thanksgiving Tournament at Riverside - Brookfield High School. The Huskies triumphed in each game by over 15 points. Jared Scott was named the MVP, and Isaiah Fuller was named All - Tournament.

Through Jan. 13, the second floor gallery area will feature a show of work by Ms. Carrow's Advanced Photo students, Kimberly "Rowe" Balmer, Lucy Brandstrader, Claire Ciserella, Ayla Ellenbogen, Gatherine Garcia-Goetting, India Guthrie, Meaghan Hackett, Alexandra Hedgeman, Carlee Kernodle, Kelsey Libert, Divia Markley, Marie O'Donnell, Maggie Perisho, Emma Prescott, and Michelle Wolford. The work is a culmination of a passion expressed through many years of hard work, practice, trial and error and most importantly success.

Books for Break, a new program co-sponsored by OPRF librarians and the Oak Park Public Library, was created to encourage students to read during Winter Break and has been a great success. Twenty-four classes visited the library to participate in the program, which included cookies, treats, and BOOKS. Almost 400 titles were checked out.

Dr. Pruitt reported that going forward she would use her married name, Dr. Joylynn Pruitt-Adams.

Items G: Summer 2017 Capital Improvement Bids, was removed from the consent agenda.

Consent

Mr. Weissglass moved to approve the following consent items:

- A. [Check Disbursements and Financial Resolutions dated December 22, 2016](#)
- B. [Monthly Treasurer's Report](#)
- C. [Gifts and Donations](#)
- D. [Adoption of 2016 Tax Levy](#)
- E. [Resolution abating the District's Working Cash Fund and abating taxes levied for the year 2016 to pay the District's General Obligation Limited Tax School Bonds, Series 2005](#)
- F. [Personnel Recommendations, including New Hires, Leaves of Absence, Return from Leave of Absence, and Resignation](#)
- H. [NJPA Joint Powers Agreement](#)
- I. [Summer School Dates and Budget](#)
- J. [IGA with District 200 and the Park District of Oak Park](#)
- K. [Policies for First Reading](#)
 - 1. [Policy 2:120, Board Member Development](#)
 - 2. [Policy 2:125, Board Member Compensation; Expenses](#)
 - 3. [Policy 2:200, Types of Board of Education Meetings](#)
 - 4. [Policy 2:220, School Board Meeting Procedure](#)
 - 5. [Policy 4:60, Purchases and Contracts](#)
 - 6. [Policy 4:110, Transportation](#)
 - 7. [Policy 5:60, Expenses](#)
 - 8. [Policy 5:215, Personal Technology and Social Media; Usage and Conduct](#)
- L. Open and Closed Session Minutes November [17](#), [20](#), [21](#), [22](#), [28](#), and [30](#) and December [7](#) and [13](#), 2016 and a declaration that the closed session audiotapes of May 2015 be destroyed

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

[Summer 2017
Capital
Improvement
Bids](#)

Mr. Weissglass moved to approve the selected work to proceed and award the recommended bids plus all alternates except Alternative 5 (visitor Bleacher/Baseball Field Improvements) for the Summer 2017 Capital Improvements; seconded by Mr. Cofsky. Discussion ensued.

Mr. Arkin explained that at the May 26, 2016, Committee of the Whole meeting, Alternative 5 was included in the Summer 2017 Capital Improvement plans. He was unclear as to why the administration was bringing this forward at this time. Mr. Weissglass referenced the extensive conversation that had been held at that Committee of the Whole meeting where the committee had agreed to move Alternative 5 forward because the pool project was as yet unresolved and the Board of Education was unprepared to say it was going to do anything on those fields. The meeting to which Mr. Arkin referred was held before the failed referendum.

Mr. Arkin moved to amend the motion to include Alternative 5 be included in the summer 2017 capital improvement bids, which included the football field bleachers on the visitors' side and the upgrades. No second was offered.

Mr. Cofsky noted that when bids go out, a breakdown into alternatives is often provided. Situations in the last couple of years have occurred where alternatives were not approved because the bids were too high, etc.

A roll call vote resulted in six ayes and one nay. Mr. Arkin voted nay.

**Superintendent
Contract**

Mr. Weissglass moved to approve the contract between District 200, OPRFHS, and Dr. Joylynn Pruitt-Adams for the period January 1, 2017 - July 30, 2020; seconded by Dr. Moore.

Dr. Moore echoed the excitement and enthusiasm that was reflected in the room and she looked forward to working with the new superintendent who has already shown herself to be passionate, compassionate, dedicated and a fierce leader. Good things will be coming.

Mr. Cofsky was thrilled that the Board of Education was bringing to this District someone who has proven superintendent experience of facing the challenges, pulling people together, setting goals and being results oriented, understanding cost containment, and of having the courageous leadership that was a void in the past.

Ms. Spivy said that Dr. Pruitt-Adams had her at “batgirl”. There have been times when she has had to restrain herself from hugging her. She felt this was the best vote she will have made all year.

Mr. Arkin reflected that the hiring of Dr. Pruitt-Adams had been a comprehensive process, with countless meetings, interviews, and research. It involved people within the building, including faculty and staff, former administrators, as well as people in the general community. A site visit was conducted to UC and the support and feedback from all of the people there was outstanding. Everyone feels the warmth of Dr. Pruitt-Adams and he looked forward to working with her during his tenure on the Board.

Ms. Cassell acknowledged that the Board of Education has had many difficult nights, but the best night had been to bring Dr. Pruitt-Adams on as the interim superintendent. There was an excitement of bringing her on as interim and thinking about the possibilities for the future; a student African-American female spoke about seeing Dr. Pruitt-Adams in this role as being inspiring. She thanked her and she looked forward to working with her and seeing what she would do for the District.

Dr. Gevinson reported that he and Mr. Arkin had made the site visit to UC and had spoken to roughly 20 people who had worked with Dr. Pruitt-Adams in many capacities. He had not ever heard testimony that was so loving, highly respectful, etc., except at a funeral. It was a reassuring visit and he appreciated that day very much. He wished her the best and he looked forward to working with her in the future.

Mr. Weissglass noted that they were working well together and that he believed she was the leader to take OPRFHS forward. Mr. Weissglass added that for the last 7 or 8 months, the Board of Education had been engaged in the process of

searching for a superintendent. The search team helped with hiring an interim, Dr. Pruitt-Adams, who began July 1, 2016. BWP guided the search for a permanent superintendent and 48 candidates sent in applications from 12 states representing people within and outside of education. Six candidates were interviewed and two finalists were selected. This was a tremendous opportunity, and he was extremely pleased to announce that Dr. Joylynn Pruitt-Adams will be the permanent superintendent.

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

Dr. Pruitt-Adams stated that words could not express the emotion she felt. She thought about the journey. It is hard work, it is fun, and this is a great community and staff. She wanted to make a difference for the students. From the first day after meeting students and staff, she knew this is where she wanted to be, where she was meant to be. She has observed the commitment of the Board of Education, the community, the staff, and the administration. The students are amazingly thoughtful, brilliant, and capable of facing the challenges of this world. Everyone will have to work together to be successful. She looked forward to the future. Go Huskies!

On January 23, 2017, at Beye School, Dr. Pruitt-Adams will start the first of five opportunities to join in on the conversation at Beye School. She wanted to hear the communities' voices and what role they would play. She will go to the community on evenings and Saturdays; she will not make the community go to her. She thanked the Board of Education for this opportunity.

SAY Agreement

Mr. Arkin moved to approve the SAY Data Sharing Agreement, as presented; seconded by Dr. Moore. A roll call vote resulted in all ayes.

As a partner in the collective impact effort led by Success of All Youth (SAY), OPRFHS District 200 has been asked to approve the Data Sharing Agreement to formalize the District's commitment to providing data by which SAY will develop baselines and monitor growth in three goal areas.

- Demographic Data (gender, race/ethnic, income level, FRL status, housing status, family education level, family size)
- Program Reports
- Measures, as defined by the Data Team, that are collected by respective organization (Attachment: SAY 2016 Impact Measures)

The information is aggregate level data points, no individual level, and publicly available information mostly. Ms. Hill is OPRFHS' representative, as well as her counterpart at Oak Park Elementary School, Dr. Condon of River Forest Elementary School, and representatives from the Collaboration Early Childhood Care and Education, the Park District, and the Library boards are also data team representatives.

The data will be used to measure the change in the areas identified as the key measures, academic, public safety, and social-emotional well-being. Dr. Moore was cautious about who would be manipulating the data and doing the reports because misinterpretations can happen with different data sets with longitudinal

data from various entities. Ms. Hill noted that the data team, as a collective effort, would work to put the interpretations on the data provided. Dr. Pruitt-Adams stated that OPRFHS has also voiced that concern. Ms. Hill will follow up on whether River Forest will be a participant. Ms. Hill noted that while most of the information is public, this agreement states that the data will proactively be shared so that it does not fall to the person doing it to go out and obtain the information.

Unit Clarification

Mr. Weissglass moved to approve the inclusion of nurses holding a professional Educator's license endorsed for school support personnel (PEL-CSN) into the Faculty Senate Collective Bargaining Unit with the appropriate salary adjustments; seconded by Ms. Cassell. A roll call vote resulted in 4 ayes and 3 nays. Mr. Cofsky, Dr. Moore, and Mr. Arkin voted nay. Motion carried.

**Dismissal of
Tenure Teacher**

Mr. Weissglass moved to dismiss Danielle Dobias as a tenured teacher and adopt the resolution authorizing dismissal and issuance of a notice of charges and hearing rights, as discussed in closed session; seconded by Mr. Arkin: A roll call vote resulted in all ayes. Motion carried.

**Recap of
ETHS-D202
Site Visit**

Dr. Gevinson thanked Mr. Prale for setting up the site visit to ETHS, where a presentation was made by Marcus Campbell on December 7. It was an efficient and long morning. OPRFHS had 12 to 15 participants, including Jason Dennis, Amy Hill, and Karin Sullivan, and Morton District had 4 or 5 representatives.

Dr. Gevinson believed that Evanston Township High School (ETHS) was somewhat following the example of the Montgomery County School District to accomplish a systemic change to address key aspects of student achievement by race. In particular, they wanted to improve ACT scores, the number of students taking AP courses and tests, and students scoring 3, 4, or 5 on AP tests. The idea was to find a way not only to bring up the number and scores for minority students but for all students.

ETHS had decided to focus on freshman humanities and biology, concluding that if they could produce a successful freshman program, it would pay off in subsequent years. It was right. For the first 2 cohorts to go through the full four years, beginning in the fall of 2011 and 2012, ACT scores of 24 and higher, the number of AP courses, the number of AP tests, and scores of 3, 4, and 5 were up for every group, sometimes quite impressively.

The reconceived freshman program had several key curricular features.

- A. Reduction of tracks from 5 to 2. The new 2: below the 40th percentile in reading and 40th and above. There was a relatively small number/percentage below 40th, so the great majority of students are in the upper track, which is why it is often referred to as detracking. Oak Park has three tracks. ETHS is not fully detracked, under 40% in reading, in humanities and everyone above is in this one track. OPRFHS participants had an opportunity to listen to Campbell and Davis and sit on an actual humanities class.
- B. Double-period, team taught humanities (History and English).
- C. Low-class size.
- D. Hand scheduling of students with an eye to equal distribution of ability

- levels in each section.
- E. Stacking of deck and strongest, most committed teachers—not official work, but heard from a teacher he observed.
- F. Rigorous, restructured curriculum, with emphasis on writing instruction in humanities. Curricula backward designed from AP courses.
- G. Earned Honors credit option, based on performance. Typically, it has seen 60-70%-earn honors credit.
- H. Extra period of support for students between 40th and 50th percentile.
- I. Other key supports.

Political considerations to note:

- A. Though the administration could have made the changes independently of the Board of Education, the superintendent and the Board of Education decided it would be smart for the Board of Education to hold meetings and to vote unanimously to support the plan. That happened December 2010.
- B. Much community communication was had to deal with resistance. Reports of Board of Education meetings with 500 residents in attendance.

Other supports:

- 1) Administration and teaching staff received extensive professional development. Everyone went through Beyond Diversity training.
- 2) Much additional cultural competency training, DELT Equity Team - 24 facilitators working with 600 staff with nationally recognized experts addressing faculty
- 3) Much of the work was done on differentiated teaching techniques and other skills and tools important to the change.
- 4) C.A.R.E. - Collaborative Action Researchers for Equity (25 teachers doing action research who are taking part of initiative).
- 5) Student equity/cultural competence work,
- 6) SOAR,
- 7) 300 student discussion forum, black male forum (identified specific groups and allowed anyone to attend).
- 8) A social conscious series, equity recesses as needed, field trips to the Holocaust Museum, e.g.
- 9) Outreach to parents and involvement of parent groups.
- 10) SEL work including counselors and social workers. Significant support and intervention efforts were provided. Student groups provided assistance (TEAP).
- 11) ETHS partnered with Northwestern on evaluating the program.

Dr. Gevinson believed the success of this program depended upon

- 1) The leadership of the superintendent, as it is crucial and central to the Success.
- 2) Strong and unanimous Board support.
- 3) Thorough, skillful preparation of everyone involved
- 4) Curriculum revamped for rigor (ADD--key is really to significantly improve curriculum and teaching.
- 5) Support students and teachers as fully as possible.
- 6) Excellent evaluation

- 7) Institution taking intentional, activist, systemic role of pushing kids up and supporting them, not the traditional institutional role.

The implications for OPRFHS are:

- A. Many similarities to ETHS—one school district, majority majority/minority minority, significant performance gaps. Something very close to their revamped freshman program could well work here and produce good and prideful results. Many OPRFHS faculty are ready and hungry for such a change.
- B. ETHS seems ready to help.
- C. Learn from the ETHS experience. Much more observation will be needed. Understand the mechanics in great detail.
- D. The differences from ETHS would be: OPRFHS would go from 3 tracks to 2 tracks, not from 5 to 2. It would still be a quite dramatic.
- 7) The politics have to be handled well. OPRFHS is fortunate to have the model and day and hope something productive comes out of it and not sure what the next steps should be and the new superintendent could have more ideas.

When meeting with the Superintendent of ETHS, Dr. Witherspoon, Dr. Pruitt-Adams asked him when the light went on for him that something needed to change. His response was that he kept seeing classrooms that did not look like him, and that was when he knew something had to change. The challenges included proactive communication and strategic planning. He also talked about staff turnover because when a major change occurs, residual effects may also occur. However, ETHS did not experience much change. The staff is being put into processes and procedures and there is a deliberate cycle of PD. That made her think about PD at OPRFHS. With regard to new staff, a section of the application and interview process focuses on equity. One may have content knowledge but fall short on equity. While she believed OPRFHS can learn much from ETHS, it is not ETHS. She felt that the administration can build upon the structures already in place at OPRFHS in place by increasing opportunity and supporting more underrepresented students in the Honors and AP tracks. OPRFHS can learn from ETHS, consider its own qualities and then determine how to enhance them. ETHS is working on support programs once the freshman students in the 40th percentile transition to their sophomore year. ETHS has no plans for the other subject areas.

Dr. Pruitt-Adams continued that OPRFHS has many programs already in place, i.e., SEL, the Launch Program, Beyond Diversity training, etc. She wanted to make sure that the school was raising the bar for all students and that the rigor had a positive effect on both the lower the performing and the higher performing students.

Ms. Cassell appreciated the comprehensive reporting and she looked forward to follow-up conversations. Dr. Pruitt has a follow-up meeting scheduled with Dr. Witherspoon about helping her to understand the processes and procedures. Ms. Cassell added that she would appreciate seeing 500 people at the meetings and that she hoped the conversation sparked the first of many to hone the message that this is not just about bringing students of color into AP classes, it is about bringing better outcomes to all.

Dr. Moore stated that this was a great step in terms of developing equity and addressing the gaps. She agreed that there is rarely a one-size-fits-all model and the comparison to ETHS is merited, but differences exist. Given that Northwestern has been working with it, there should be a class. Dr. Gevinson would share ETHS reports with the Board of Education. Dr. Moore continued that from the racial standpoints as well as the students who were below the 40 percentile, it is about where they ended up by their senior year. She struggled with having that definition as the determination for who is placed into a non-tracked class, given that it is a kind of detracking, but not really if this is a class that will not be in other classes. Would the District be further marginalizing a certain group of students? How will the District provide individualized learning and the supports these students need in a way that makes all of the students surpass the expectations and have rigor benchmarks across the board? When she thinks about the scores being used to determine who is targeted, she saw black and brown and then another non-tracked group. She asked for more information. She hoped the District could go beyond ETHS in terms of looking at detracking. She was intrigued with the determination with the strongest most committed teachers in freshman classes, and she wanted to see how the teachers connect with the students. All of the literature says that struggling students should have the most experienced and connected teachers in terms of SEL. While the Board of Education has discussed this: It does not know what the teachers' experiences are. Dr. Pruitt noted that PD included two days of Beyond Diversity, onboarding and differentiated instruction. One teacher said she thought she was a teacher of rigor and a teacher who had high expectations for everyone until she started the process and realized that she did not. If she were given the opportunity to go back into a tracked process where she knew where students failed along the achievement line, she would not. Now they all came in on a level playing level. Dr. Moore stated that spoke to the need to have serious discussions as to what the District's commitment will be in terms of closing the achievement gap and grades and tracks. She asked the Board of Education to have a strong discussion about systemic change that would ensure the District is not only attempting to increase minority participation in honors and AP classes. This requires rigorous review of instruction and policy. She hoped the Board of Education would say it was going to explore eliminating tracks.

Ms. Spivy was surprised as it sounded like tracking is expansive and a paradigm; ETHS has 2 tracks. The Board of Education should be mindful in the descriptors as people in the community may not all embrace the term detracking with the same fervor. Dr. Gevinson stated that the actual number of freshmen who are below the 35 or 40 percentile are 50 out of 800. A skill level in reading is grades below grade level.

Mr. Cofsky reflected that when talking about activities, it is manipulating the population in a way that they want to achieve. It is a balance in each section. He was thankful for the report and echoed that he too wanted more steps taken. OPRFHS is doing many things, but comprehensiveness is missing. When asked if ETHS used Montgomery County resources, Dr. Gevinson responded that the book *leading for Equity* came out in 2009 which is about the same time ETHS started working on this program. Pete Bavis had mentioned the book and the experiment. Montgomery County is very different from ETHS: it is a K-12 and city and suburban schools. The solutions were very different. Dr. Gevinson

believed that it took the concept of systemic change and the passion of producing more equitable results to get to equity and the fact that it can work with a thorough ongoing application was the inspiration.

In response to Ms. Spivy and Dr. Gevinson, Dr. Moore noted that this model is not detracking in the way that most think in terms of removal of all levels; it has to do with scores. The reasons for the large meetings were not just to help. The issue of race is concerning to some and it is the zero sum argument that something will be taken away from some to increase the performance of all. The Board of Education could call this detracking, but there will be pushback, concern, and support. It is a moment when courageous leadership and a statement that the District is doing the best for all students will be necessary. As a strong proponent of looking at data and accountability, the District needs a clear understanding of what is working and what is not is about auditing. Why is 6 years of humanity stronger and less in biology and none in math?

Mr. Weissglass noted that four Board of Education members had read the book *Leading through Equity* as part of the work they did when finalizing the SP when they were first elected. That is where he first heard the phrase “raise the bar and close the gap” as that was the mantra in that District and it will serve OPRFHS well. He agreed that moving into this direction needs to be deliberate and careful and data-oriented. It can also raise some concerns that need to be addressed and engaged. His mantra is that the Board of Education adopt the Strategic Plan framework in which this work can be done. He did not believe this work should be done separately from the Strategic Plan and its implementation. When asked about the relationship with the high school and the elementary districts, Dr. Gevinson stated that as he thought about OPRFHS and because of his experience as division head, he felt the District should start backward and articulate with Districts 90 and 97. There is the question of IB versus AP, as that has been implemented in District 97 and the high school has to deal with that.

District Reports

The Huskie Boosters report was included on the agenda.

Closed Session

At 9:03 p.m., the Board of Education resumed closed session. At 11:32 p.m. the Board of education resumed the open session.

Adjournment

At 11:34 p.m., Ms. Spivy moved to adjourn the regular Board of Education meeting; seconded by Mr. Arkin. A voice vote resulted in motion carried.

Dr. Jackie Moore
Vice President

Sara Dixon Spivy
Secretary

Submitted by Gail Kalmerton
Clerk of the Board