

The regular Board meeting of the Board of Education of the Oak Park and River Forest High School was held on Thursday, December 21, 2017, in the Board Room of the OPRFHS.

Call to Order

President Moore called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. A roll call indicated the following Board of Education members were present: Fred Arkin, Matt Baron, Jennifer Cassell, Thomas F. Cofsky, Craig Iseli, Dr. Jackie Moore, and Sara Dixon Spivy. Also present were Dr. Joylynn Pruitt, Superintendent; Tod Altenburg, Chief School Business Official; Greg Johnson, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction; and Gail Kalmerton, Executive Assistant Clerk of the Board.

Closed Session

At 6:31 p.m. on Thursday, December 21, 2017, Dr. Moore 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; Litigation, when an action against, affecting or on behalf of the particular District has been filed and is pending before a court or administrative tribunal, or when the District finds that an action is probable or imminent, in which case the basis for the finding shall be recorded and entered into the closed meeting minutes 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(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); seconded by Ms. Cassell. A roll call vote resulted in all ayes. Motion carried.

At 7:40 p.m., the Board of Education resumed the open session.

Joining the meeting were Tod Altenburg, Chief Financial Officer; Michael Carioscio, Chief Information Officer; Amy Hill, Director of Assessment and Research; Nathaniel L. Rouse, Principal; Dr. Gwen Walker-Qualls, Director of Pupil Personnel Services; and Karin Sullivan, Director of Communications and Community Relations.

Visitors

Mary Haley of the League of Women Voter's; Melaine McQueen of APPLE; Mark Christianson, Mary Haley of the League of Women Voters; Patrick Callahan; Blaise Blasko, Mark Christianson, Annette Coffee, Patrick Sullivan, Brian Coffee, and Charley Nelson, community members; Steve Schering of the *Oak Leaves* and Michael Romain of the *Wednesday Journal*.

Truth in Taxation

At 7:40 p.m., Dr. Moore called the Truth in Taxation Public Hearing to Order on Thursday, December 21, 2017, for the Oak Park and River Forest High School 2017. She asked for any written or oral comments to be received. Hearing none, at 7:41 p.m., Dr. Moore closed the Public Hearing

Public Comments

Patrick Callahan stated that his son Connor and another teammate had been asking To compete as individuals at the IHSA State's series. IHSA rules allow for this as Most schools do not have teams. All of these students compete at Oak Park Gymnastics now. They want their school to be proud of them. In the District's

Response to the request last April, concerns were raised about circumventing the Process. The request was misrepresented as it was not about asking for a boys' Gymnastics team or club but to allow them to participate as individuals in May. That will be explained later in public comments by others. IHSA makes it simple. Regarding insurance, IHSA insurance covers competing in state series. It also stated that concerns had been raised by Faculty Senate leadership related to the consideration of circumventing current district's policies and procedures surrounding how existing extra-curricular programming is added, as they play a significant role. These boys would not need a coach or chaperone, as Darin Knight would meet the IHSA rules.

Mr. Callahan asked the Board to work with them to make this happen for gymnastics or any other sport. It would only take a few minutes to complete the forms and these boys do want to compete for OPRFHS and make this Board of Education proud.

Blaise Blasko noted that his background included being the athletic director at Glenbard West high school, a member of the Boys and Girls IHSA Advisory Board, 16 years as a member of the National Federal of High School Boys Gymnastics Rules Committee, 15 years as the IHSA Head Clinician for officials' education on rules, and 10 years as a Meet Referee for IHSA Boys Gymnastic State Series. He was speaking on behalf of Conn Callan, Patrick Sullivan, and Thanos Pantazopoulos to support their request as students at OPRFHS to participate as individuals in the IHSA Boys' Gymnastics State Series.

Mr. Blasko continued that what is being requested is for OPRFHS to follow IHSA Bylaw 3.054 which states that any student in a member school, eligible in all respects under the terms of these Bylaws, may enter to represent that school as an individual in association-sponsored meets or tournaments under the terms and conditions for that particular event. This is the place to extend participation to individuals in schools that do not have teams in that sport. The IHSA state competition is a separate season.

The IHSA, under its Student/School Welfare on its website, states: "IHSA provides catastrophic insurance protection for students involved in all state tournament series. So by definition, the boys become an OPRFHS student-athlete. OPRFHS has purchased student accident insurance coverage for all student-athletes. This would be secondary coverage for any injuries incurred while participating in any school-sponsored athletic activity.

Mr. Blasko noted that there are 26 Chicago area high schools following the IHSA bylaw--17 for girls' gymnastics and 9 for boys.

Mr. Blasko reported on the process that needs to be done, just as for any other student-athlete:

- 1) By February 1, the athletic director enters OPRF into the IHSA State Series. No fee is required.
- 2) February 5, spring sports registration provide an athletic registration/parent permission form along with physical exam, athletic fee, meet eligibility and residency requirements.

- 3) Find a coach. The qualifications are:
 - A. Teacher, administrator or school service personnel certified by ISBE.
 - B. Retired teacher or coach
 - C. Anyone, such as a Park District coach, certified through HKCE, NFHS or other IHSA board-approved coaches certification program.

A high school athletic season has two parts. The regular season is non-conference and conference contests. The last part is entering the IHSA State Series which the Athletic Director does each year.

The OPRFHS Athletic Philosophy Statement says “We encourage student participation in the athletic program and would like to involve as many students as possible in this interscholastic experience.” He hoped that these additional facts provided greater insight into the issue to assist the Board of Education, the Superintendent and the Athletic Director into joining the 27 other suburban high schools in allowing individual student-athletes to compete in their IHSA State Series.

Mark Christianson read the following statement on behalf of The Committee for Equity and Excellence in Education (CEEE), African American Parents for Purposeful Leadership in Education (APPLE), and the Suburban Unity Alliance (SUA). “The terms Asian, Black, Hispanic, Two or More Races, and White are used in ISBE reports. The Time to Hire More Minority Teachers is Now! Oak Park and River Forest High School’s (OPRFHS) Board of Education approved a Strategic Plan in June 2017 that included an equity goal of creating an environment where academic achievement and social and emotional growth would no longer be predictable by race, socioeconomic status, and other social factors. For too long, and despite years of rhetoric, OPRFHS has failed to alter the learning environment for students of color in any meaningful way. There is now an immediate opportunity to forge a new direction that must be seized.

“The racial achievement and opportunity gaps persist at OPRFHS. The achievement gap remains most profound between white and black students. The ISBE State Report Card reports a 33 percent divide between OPRFHS Black and White students on 2016 PARCC scores and a 57 percent divide between Black and White students on SAT scores for last year’s 11th graders. Achievement data for Black students, as well as a growing percentage of Hispanic students, reflects institutional failure to make necessary changes. How can OPRFHS make equitable opportunities a reality? CEEE, APPLE, and SUA identify a critical action step: OPRFHS must hire more teachers of color, starting with the school year 2018-2019.

“Currently, over 21 percent or over 700 of the OPRFHS students identify as Black. A growing population at OPRFHs, 12 percent or nearly 400 students identify as Hispanic, non-white. Another 9.5 percent or over 300 students identify with more than one race, and 3.5 percent or about 115 students are Asian. Despite the diversity of our student body, in the core subject areas of math, English, history, and science and technology at OPRFHS, there are only 9 Black classroom teachers, 10 Hispanic, and 5 Asian.

“Notably, despite a national push for more STEM classes and initiatives for all students, none of the full-time teachers in OPRFHS’s science and technology

division are Black or Hispanic. Overall, the OPRFHS faculty is close to 80 percent White, while the student body is over 46 percent non-white. The biggest divide between students of color and teachers of color is with OPRFHS's Black population. While the student body is 21.4 percent, Black, only 8 percent of the faculty is Black. Hiring is a process of intention; OPRFHS's intention in the hiring process must change. Black teachers need to be hired. Dr. Percy Julian is a noted resident and schools are named after him. OPRFHS should have teachers like him to teach the STEM Classes.

Annette Coffey spoke in support of allowing the 3 gymnasts to compete under the OPRFHS name at the IHSA State Series.

Patrick Sullivan, a junior, read the following statement. "I and fellow junior, Connor Callahan, have been gymnasts for the Oak Park Gymnastics team for well over ten years and both of us are competing at the highest level possible for an Illinois high gymnastics club athlete. We have both had much success in our gymnastics careers and are excellent students.

"This is the third straight year that I am asking to compete as an individual gymnast in the IHSA State Gymnastics Series for Oak Park and River Forest High School.

"My previous two requests have been rejected. I remain very confused by this. From the very first day of my freshman year, the OPRF High School Board of Education, Administration, Faculty, and Staff have told me and my fellow students that you will do everything in your power to ensure that every OPRF High School student reaches his or her full potential. However, the message you have given us in rejecting our requests to compete as individual gymnasts for Oak Park and River Forest High School is totally inconsistent with this policy. I often wonder if your Board and administration are "all talk and no action."

"I have studied constitutional law this semester in my American History class, and plan on being a lawyer one day. I have learned about the procedural due process, substantive due process, and equal protection. I have even read a little bit about my rights and your responsibilities under Title 9. I am really hoping that I will not have to think any further about how my legal rights may have been affected by this whole process.

"Please approve our request to compete as individual gymnasts for Oak Park and River Forest High School. I promise you will be proud of our efforts and that we will be great representatives of Oak Park and River Forest High School. Who knows, we might even bring home a trophy or two."

Brian Coffee read the following statement on behalf of Darion Knight. "My name is Darion Knight and I coach Connor, Patrick, and Thanos at the Oak Park Gymnastics Center right down the street. We have a strong program and they are all strong gymnasts and good young men. A few years back, I gave them the idea of competing for their high school, as they didn't think it was possible. I knew it was, as I did it myself and have supported others in doing so.

"For this year, I am designated as a volunteer coach for one of their teammates at Taft High School in the city – all I had to do was complete the concussion

awareness course and the performance-enhancing drug course through IHSA. Then, in order to become a volunteer coach through CPS, I had to get a background check and take a TB test. That's it! At Taft, the AD was very supportive and told me the whole process was very easy through the IHSA. When I reached out to the AD here last year, the support just wasn't there.

"Gymnastics is a great sport – it teaches and absolutely requires focus, discipline and dedication...all traits that these boys have. They want to be afforded the same opportunity as Charley Nelson, my friend, and the UIC head coach that went here in the 90s – he is here tonight to offer his support. Essentially, everyone in the gymnastics community knows what these boys have asked to do and no one understands why their request hasn't been granted. It happens everywhere else without a glitch.

"Please give Connor, Patrick, and Thanos a chance to compete proudly for their school – we all know it's a great feeling to do so. Thank you!"

Charley Nelson, a referee, 1995 graduate, head coach of UIC Gymnastics, and 1 of 3 in NAAC coaches in the past 30 years. He stated that there was a precedent for athletes to compete outside of their high schools and gave examples of those schools. He contacted the insurance provider for 95% of the gymnastics programs and the costs are about \$50 per student. If cost was a concern, other students were willing to donate that fee. If OPRFHS does not allow these boys to compete, it should change its athletic mission statement.

Status of FOIA Requests

Ms. Kalmerton reported that 4 FOIA had been received and 3 were resolved.

Student Council Report

Matthew Vietzen, the Student Council Board of Education liaison, felt that everything was going well. Student Council handed out hot chocolate and candy canes at the Welcome Center this week. He wished Dr. Pruitt-Adams good luck with her surgery. He mentioned in a previous meeting that he was impressed with the work of IMAGINE OPRF and asked if students could give their input on the solutions it proposes.

Mr. Vietzen noted that the high school was sponsoring a Winterfest Dance on March 16. He questioned what kind of attendance it might draw because of the other things happening on that same day, e.g. two track conferences where 300 students would compete, the feeder play, and No. 5 state basketball team. He wished everyone a good holiday.

Dr. Pruitt-Adams responded that student voice is critical to the work of IMAGINE OPRF and that is planned. Mr. Vietzen was directed to speak with Susan Johnson, Director of Student Activities, about the date of the dance.

Superintendent Announcements

Dr. Pruitt-Adams announced that more than 200 seniors have been designated State Scholars in recognition of outstanding academic achievement. This represents roughly 25% of the graduating class; on average just ten percent of graduates from Illinois high schools are announced as State Scholars each year.

In addition, more than two dozen of the music students have been selected to compete/represent OPRF at the Illinois Music Educators Association All-State

Festival this coming January. This is a record number for OPRF.

Earlier this week senior Kara Jackson was selected as the Allstate Kid of the Week and appeared on WGN radio's Steve Cochran Show. The Speech Team received the "Let Us Give Thanks" Community Service Award for the fourth year in a row at the District 211 Thanksgiving Tournament.

Consent

Dr. Moore moved to approve the following consent items:

- A. Check Disbursements and Financial Resolutions dated December 21, 2017
- B. Monthly Treasurer's Report
- C. Monthly Financials
- D. Audit Report
- E. Regular Board of Education Dates for 2018
- F. Driver Ed Waiver Request
- G. Summer 2018 Capital Improvements
- H. Adaptive Gym Bid Results
- I. Summer School Calendar
- J. Personnel Recommendations, including Resignation, Return from Leave and Leave
- K. Approval of Open & Closed Minutes of November 8, 16, and December 12, 2017 and a declaration that the closed session audiotapes of April 2016 are destroyed

seconded by Mr. Cofsky. A roll call vote resulted in all ayes. Motion carried.

Adoption of 2017 Levy

Dr. Moore moved to approve the 2017 Levy, as presented; seconded by Ms. Cassell. Discussion ensued.

Mr. Cofsky moved to amend the motion and reduce the levy overall to exclude any CPI increase; seconded by Mr. Baron.

Mr. Cofsky read the following statement, "Four years ago I participated in the Financial Advisory Committee (FAC) that was convened to provide guidance into the long-term financial position of the District, specifically aimed at right-sizing our excessive fund balance.

"Since then we have followed key recommendations, including 2 \$10 million one-time tax reductions, 4 years of debt abatement approaching \$10 million, as well as foregoing annual CPI increases on the levy.

"Over this period as a District, we have made significant investments in support of our students. Over that period overall expenses have risen 23% or 5.4% per year. Staffing alone is up by 72, or 15%, with the greatest increases in Special Education and counselors.

"Over this timeframe, the Average Daily Attendance has been flat, while enrollment has been up slightly, whereas the long-term enrollment projections at the time of FAC called for over 3900 students at peak, whereas current estimates do not point towards 3600.

"So where does this all put us today?"

- 1) We have a debt-free school district, with an overall Fund Balance of \$104 million. Backing out the \$20 million earmarked for facilities at the onset, we are still above 100% of the Fund Balance.
- 2) Our cost per student has ballooned from \$17,000 to just shy of \$22,000 over this timeframe. This is due in large part to enrollment numbers not materializing as initially projected.
- 3) Preliminary adequacy numbers from SB 1947 support our districts spend to be high, and we are at the 72nd percentile of districts in the greater Chicago area, lagging only behind the wealthiest districts on the North Shore.
- 4) With the new federal tax cut working its way through Congress, there will be a major loss in tax deductions for state and local taxes, with a \$10,000 per household cap. This means a majority of our taxpayers will see a significant net increase in tax burden related to our state and local taxes.

“So, as it relates to our levy, I cannot and will not support a “tax to the max” approach that existed prior to the FAC. Rather, I believe we need to cap our levy at last year’s level plus growth, but excluding any CPI increase. We need to focus on ways to contain our costs, thereby holding flat or reducing per student cost, without impacting our students.”

In November, Mr. Altenburg brought forward the estimated levy and recommended a 2.91% increase of the tax extension of 2.1% for CPI and .81% for new construction. The recommendation tonight is to adopt the 2.91% increase. Mr. Altenburg reminded the Board that Cook County adds 3% to the Operating and Bond and Interest Fund to make up for anyone who does not pay their taxes. He will ask the County not to add that automatic increase.

Mr. Arkin supported the amendment because the District has followed closely the Finance Advisory Committee’s recommendations, other than moving \$20 million to the capital improvement budget, the District is still approximately \$4.5 million above its model. He noted a substantial delta from budget versus audited amounts and wondered why this happened. It could be a matter of timing as to when the funds are received and when they are spent. He suggested that a new version of the Finance Advisory Committee be constituted and comprised of community, staff and board liaisons to study where the high school is and where it is going. Mr. Altenburg noted that as part of Strategic Plan Goal No. 6, Strategy 1, this would be implemented. Mr. Arkin supported foregoing the CPI and the 3% cost added by the County.

Mr. Iseli concurred with Mr. Cofsky. Mr. Iseli was head of the District 97 Finance Committee and it lived levy-to-levy in terms of making sure it could get enough out of the levy to push out a referendum one more year. Every penny was needed. However, OPRFHS is not in that situation. He felt the Board of Education owed it to the community. He reflected that many things will happen next year, i.e., a new FAC, more community involvement, etc.

Mr. Baron concurred with the other’s comments and said that this was an opportunity to dig deeper and cut out the CPI of 2.1% and the .81%. The philosophy in the past has been to “tax-to-the-max” and that had put a strain on taxpayers.

Mr. Baron moved to amend the amendment so that the District levies the same dollar amount that was received in Levy Year 2016; seconded by Mr. Cofsky. Discussion ensued.

The growth dollars at stake would be money received from new property and would Not fall under the tax cap, the first year it comes on the tax rolls. Mr. Baron stated That all of the Board members were elected over the last four years because there was much angst and upset over the serious increases in taxes and this would be a modest gesture.

Mr. Altenburg said that TIFs were set to expire in 2019 and 2020 and this action Would not put that money at risk.

Mr. Iseli noted that if the District foregoes CPI, it will lose \$2.5 million this year and next year. This would lower the base by 2.9% going forward. Mr. Altenburg added that in FY 2023 the District would receive approximately \$81.2 million. If no CPI is requested, the District will receive \$79 million and it would push the potential for an operating referendum up one year to 2023.

The administration had recommended an increase of 2.9% because the FAC had given guidance for three years with the recommendation for the District to return to full CPI in 2016. Thus, Mr. Altenburg followed the recommendation.

Dr. Moore appreciated Mr. Cofsky explanation and stated that so many things were Yet unknown and the final numbers on new growth will not be known until April. She felt that cushion offsets what has been done in the last two years, and she felt the FAC's recommendation should be followed. While Mr. Cofsky agreed that the original recommendation was to return to plus CPI, he noted that the major change was enrollment. He asked if the Board should adjust or tweak in the interest of taxpayers.

Mr. Iseli said that the District followed the FAC's recommendation and policy says that the District needs to take action and one action is to reduce the levy. Thus, this action is consistent with policy and is relative to both amendments.

A roll call vote on the amended amendment resulted in 5 nays and two ayes. Mr. Baron and Mr. Cofsky voted aye. Motion failed.

A roll call vote on the amendment to reduce the levy overall to exclude a CPI increase resulted in six ayes and one nay. Mr. Baron voted Nay. Motion carried.

Mr. Altenburg will not apply for the paperwork for the lost and cost factor to be added by the County to make up for any unpaid taxes. It is the County's way to help districts collect their payments.

**Emergency
Leave Plan**

Ms. Dixon Spivy moved to approve Dr. Pruitt-Adams Emergency Leave Plan; seconded by Mr. Baron. A roll call vote resulted in all ayes. Motion carried.

EOS Update

Mr. Rouse noted that he would be revisiting the Board member comments in the February/March timeframe.

**Future Agenda
Items**

- 1) The River Forest Survey in February.
- 2) The SRO Contract and training for SROs in the area on adolescent and Relationship building. Dr. Pruitt-Adams noted that the District is scheduling a meeting with Cook County and will bring a presentation to the Board in February.

Adjournment

At 8:51 p.m. on December 21, 2017, Ms. Dixon Spivy moved to adjourn the regular Board of Education meeting; seconded by Ms. Cassell. A voice vote resulted in Motion carried.

Dr. Jackie Moore
President

Jennifer Cassell
Secretary