

February 22, 2018

The regular Board meeting of the Board of Education of the Oak Park and River Forest High School was held on Thursday, February 22, 2018, in the Board Room of the OPRFHS.

Call to Order

President Moore called the meeting to order at 6:35 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 Tod Altenburg, Chief School Business Official; Greg Johnson, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction; Michael Carioscio, Chief Information Officer; and Gail Kalmerton, Executive Assistant Clerk of the Board.

Closed Session

At 6:36 p.m. on Thursday, February 22, 2018, 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; 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); 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 meeting minutes; seconded by Ms. Dixon-Spivy. A roll call vote resulted in all ayes. Motion carried.

At 7:39 p.m., the Board of Education resumed open session in Room 293E.

Joining the meeting were 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

Qia Carswell, Brendan Lee, and Paul Noble, OPRFHS Faculty; Isaiah, Jocelyn, Erika Bachner, Mary Bird, Amari Cecil, Mark Christensen, John Duffy, Khirey Floyd, Liz Goss, Community, Juanita Griffin, Grace Gun, Beth Hig, Kennedy Holloway, Sukari Holloway, Wyanetta Johnson, Karen Jones, Jung Kim, Rep. Camille Lilly, Saria Lofton, Cheeree Moore, Felicia Moore, Lisa Pintado-Vertner, Mike Poirier, Jameel Rafael, Karen Su, Tara Tamps, Erika Washington, Kennedy Wilson, and Aliyah Young, students and community members.

Public comments

Jung Kim spoke about the need for more diversity in the District. She spoke of the effort that had been put forth by Downers Grove schools to pursue recruiting and mentoring teachers of color. She hoped that concrete actions would occur.

Burcy Hines read the following statement: “I am an Oak Park resident, a member of APPLE, and a participant in the Campaign for More Teachers of Color. On behalf of the Campaign, I am here to talk about how our School District’s teaching staff can better reflect the needs, values, and diversity of our community.

“About a dozen Oak Park social justice organizations, several of whom you will hear from this evening, have been in conversation about ways to advance equity and eliminate racial disparities in our local public schools. We decided to coordinate efforts and work together to seek a more racially balanced teaching staff in both of our school districts. We believe this is an important strategy to help reduce racial gaps in academic outcomes. We hope we can enlist your full and active support. I want to share with you the overall goal, as well as the short and long term goals of this campaign.

“The overall goal is The Campaign for More Teachers of Color in District 200 and District 97 seeks to remedy long-standing racial disparities between the racial composition of our certified teaching forces and our student bodies, with the immediate priority of hiring more African American teachers to address critical shortages, and to implement ongoing systems to achieve and sustain full inclusion and equity in our teaching force.

“The Short Term Goals (from January to August, 2018) are:

1. Develop ambitious plans and take active steps, during this current hiring cycle to address disparities and significantly move us toward a racially inclusive and representative faculty.
2. Give immediate priority to expanding the pool of African American teachers, especially in core subjects—to remedy acute needs and gaps.
3. Support and train, during this hiring cycle, those who hire staff (Principals, Division Heads, and Human Resources personnel) to eliminate bias and barriers and to implement viable action plans to reach recruitment and hiring goals.

“The longer-term goals (embrace and achieve during the 2018-19 school year) are:.

1. Implement, monitor, and evaluate best practices to support and retain teachers of color.
2. Institute ongoing systems, supports, and strategies to eliminate remaining inequities and achieve and maintain a fully inclusive and representative faculty.
3. Train all teachers and staff in de-biasing, racial equity practices, and inclusive school climate.

“We know that you have already been working with some organizations and have already been taking some important steps—such as the recent recruitment visit to Howard University. We appreciate these efforts and hope you will continue to make this a priority. We hope to see continued partnership between the school district and community to step up these efforts.

“We would request a written response to this proposal from the board, preferably within two weeks. In that response, we are interested in the following: Will you wholeheartedly support this campaign and its goals.

“And more specifically, with regards to our three short-term goals:

- 1) Are you willing to develop, and share with us, an action plan to address these long-standing issues of inequity during the upcoming hiring cycle?
- 2) Will you give priority to expanding recruitment efforts to attract a wider pool of African American applicants in order to address current critical shortages? And,

3) Will you provide some immediate training and support to all staff involved in hiring so they can further develop and implement strategies for incorporating the District's commitment to equity and inclusion in all upcoming activities related to teacher recruitment and selection? Thank you for your consideration.”

K. Jones told his personal story of dropping out of high school and having a tough childhood. His elementary Maywood teachers had been Black, and they knew how to deal with him. It is important to have teachers of color.

Juanita Griffin graduated in 1992 from OPRFHS. Mr. Averbach, the history division head, taught the African-American history class. She stressed that teachers of color know students of color and are nonjudgmental. White teachers made her feel like she needed to fit in.

Ms. Wyanetta Johnson, an Oak Park resident for 50 years, wanted changes to happen. She supported the hiring of more teachers of color.

Camille Lilly, a graduate, and State Representative, spoke on despair. When she attended OPRFHS, she was proud and is still proud to see teachers who looked like her. It gave her courage and joy that she could be someone. All of the students who got to see African-American teachers teaching did well. She didn't understand the struggles as to why there were disparities in education in Illinois. African-Americans across the country are being educated to be teachers. Thousands of African-American students are being educated at Moorehouse, Howard, etc. She hears too often that qualified African-American professionals in many careers cannot be found. Celebrating different cultures brings a true aspect as to what society is as a country. All will benefit from that and it needs to be reflected in the halls of OPRFHS. Just one type of person does not reflect the diversity. This discussion is important, and she thanked the Board of Education for listening. The disparity is real, and it is felt in schools, homes, and the community. It is important to open the minds and the hearts of everyone to address the issue.

Mr. Duffy read the following statement: “CEEE is here tonight for several reasons. With APPLE and SUA we continue to urge you to take deliberate actions and make decisions to:

- adopt Restorative Justice practices
- adopt and implement a racial equity lens policy.
- adopt priority learning standards and assessments that put an end to curriculum goals and instruction that deny learning opportunities to large numbers of students, but especially for African-American, and Latino students.

“We are also here to join with you in enthusiastically supporting the many teachers who continue to inquire, collaborate and shape their instruction and classrooms in ways that support racial equity.

“We are here to work with you in ensuring the Strategic Plan's provision to create an all honors Freshman humanities curriculum which can help bring an end to a racialized learning experience at OPRFHS that sustains systemic segregation and inequities in our student's opportunity to learn.

“Most importantly, we are here tonight to continue to advocate for and support D 200 in reviewing, revising and reforming OPRFHS history and practice of finding, hiring and retaining African-American teachers and other teachers of color.

“We are joined in this hiring campaign by individuals and groups across the community dedicated to racial justice and working to make our school and community a place where race is no longer a predictor of learning results, college attendance, college graduation.

“We are all here to say it is long past the time to end the distorted hiring practices, whether intended or not, that have led to a gross under-representation of African-American and Hispanic teachers and division heads in our core academic departments.

“Be assured. However, I am not here to cast blame. We believe that Superintendent Pruitt-Adams, the District Administration, and building leadership are committed to the principles and goals of this hiring campaign. Since October, the administration has shown this in working with APPLE and CEEE to build a collaborative and cohort relationship with Historically Black Colleges and Universities—a promising first step in expanding our pool of potential African American teachers at OPRF.

“In addition, the administration with the community and other school personnel are engaged in a complete review and revision of the hiring process and protocols to align them with best practice research for expanding the pool of African American candidates and other people of color.

“I want to remind everyone that the work and actions we propose on hiring are in alignment with the goals of the Strategic Plan for 2017-22.

“In closing, let me share a small part of my personal racial history. I am sad to say that in my many decades of formal education, I have only had one African-American teacher—that came in 1980. As a teacher union leader then, I worked with a community coalition in Proviso Township to create a curriculum council to devise an alternative plan to the Proviso board’s program to reduce graduation requirements by one full semester for academic classes, to double credits for work programs, and to make physical education 19 percent of the required credits for graduation. I know how incredible that must sound tonight—but too often similar developments followed the resegregation of public schools in the first generation after the Brown Supreme Court ruling.

“My single African-American teacher, Professor Joe at Triton College was a tall, sinewy, former Philadelphia Eagle wide receiver with a beautiful full Afro. Joe was an engaging, enthusiastic, outspoken teacher who challenged his students to examine our world in new and often uncomfortable ways. He became both my mentor and friend. Yet, at the same time, Professor Joe was wrapped up in an ongoing, grinding battle with the Triton administration. Both as my teacher and then my friend, Professor Joe affirmed my outrage with the injustices of second-generation segregation in schools I worked with others to change in Maywood and Oak Park.

“Professor Joe had appeared in my life at the very moment his story, militancy for racial justice and teaching intersected with mine. As the saying goes, ‘When the

student is ready, the teacher appears.’ I finally had my one and only Black teacher. I felt blessed, affirmed, and lucky.

“Sadly and outrageously, too many of our students in D 200 and D 97 today are still waiting for a Black teacher to appear in their life, to teach them, identify with them and inspire them in their social studies classes, their math classes, their science classes, their technology classes. As I am sure you will hear this evening from students and parents, this is an especially crushing loss in the development of our African American students and diminishes the learning of other students as well.

“Fortunately for me, I had dozens of African-American, Latino, and Asian-American teachers outside the classroom, who through their life and writing mentored me as a teacher, father and citizen dedicated to racial justice in public education.

“I will end with a quote from one of those great teachers we can all take inspiration from. The extraordinary artist and political sage James Baldwin continues to guide us in these difficult times with a universal truth when he said: ‘Not everything that is faced can be changed, but nothing can be changed until it is faced.’ I believe this Board is up to Baldwin’s challenge. Please support the goals presented tonight and assure us that D 200’s is ready to act in new and energizing ways to ensure racial justice and equity in the recruitment, hiring and retention of African American and other teachers of color.”

Grace Guns spoke of her frustration that during her freshman year she had no African-American teachers. Her first African-American teacher was a history teacher in her sophomore year. Every time she went into that classroom, she felt relieved because she could just be herself. She looked to him as a role model.

Cheeree Moore moved from the Chicago to Oak Park the summer before 7th grade. It had been difficult to acclimate to Oak Park, but her mom was a great help to her. She spoke fondly of her African-American history teacher, Mr. Vance. Anyone she meets who graduated from Oak Park asks about him. She continued that it is important to hire qualified African-American teachers because experience does impact students.

Mark Christensen read the following statement. “I am a member of CEEE, a lawyer by profession, a husband and a father of a 14-year old daughter, a young African American woman navigating her way through Oak Park and River Forest High School as a freshman.

“Often in the public forum when the issue of inclusion of African Americans is raised, the “objecting” voices seek to move the discussion to “qualified” candidates in a theoretical race-neutral society. The irony of such a comment after years of exclusion of African Americans from educational and economic opportunities is profound. My parent’s generation benefitted from the GI bill to attend college in the 40s and 50s which was not extended to black veterans. Although the African diaspora was skilled enough to build the capital and the White House in Washington D.C., blacks were excluded from the Washburn trade school in Chicago. When the Honorable Harold Washington was elected mayor of Chicago in 1983 and insisted on the trade school becoming inclusive, it closed down. This systemic history of exclusion has many tragic and painful memories. When inclusion is advanced,

history teaches us that we must not be fooled by the argument, posed as a harmless question, “why can’t we just hire qualified teachers?” The question perpetuates an unjust assumption that one, especially a person of color, is unqualified until proven qualified. The question emanates from an existing power paradigm that the objector is the one who knows and decides. I do not hear inclusion from this voice, rather a perpetuation of exclusion.

“What we all know in this room, in this school, and in this community, is that there are great teachers from every nation, tribe and people, and in every home. To think otherwise defies logic, reason, science and the dignity of the human experience. I attended a small liberal arts college, and during my second year rented a room with another student on the second floor of the home of the senior psychology professor. The school was overwhelming white, and to give a flavor of the culture, the student union was packed after lunch every day as reruns of Happy Days played in a shared communal experience. There was a small cohort of black students from around the country, who obviously did not share the same taste in television programming. They would come to the psychology professor’s house where she would provide safe-haven for full-on political discussions, a kitchen for home cooking including rice and beans, Nigerian dishes and hot water cornbread. Significantly, there were times the room would empty to allow for deep personal counseling between the professor and the student, to survive the culture of the college. There were no black professors, no one to affirm the culture, or dress, or history, or literature, or music, the communication style or language of the African American students. A wilderness.

“We are not all the same in Oak Park and River Forest, we are not monolithic, we are different, and our differences need to be celebrated, and recognized and affirmed. There are deep streams of thought, eternal moments of inspiration, and sources of encouragement of hope and joy shaped by the crucible of the African American experience that would enrich the lives of all students at this school, and make it even greater. By urging this administration to be intentional in its hiring, and supporting this board to continue on a journey of inclusion, this generation of our children will be prepared for the global community. We cannot settle for less. Do not be deceived or distracted by the objecting voices in the days ahead.”

Isaiah Clark, a 2009 OPRFHS graduate, spoke about teachers of color and content. He had attended Percy Julian Middle School and yet found out just two years ago who Percy Julian was. Mr. Clark educated himself and noted that history does not start with slavery. If history comes from the point of slavery, people will think they have to be slaves. He suggested teaching things that empower people’s cultures.

Kennedy Holloway, student, stated he had only one Black teacher in one of his AP classes. He wanted more teachers of color in all subjects.

Students Aliyah Young, Kennedi Wilson, Jocelyn, Kennedy Holloway, made the following comments:

- 1) Racial conversations can be passive aggressive because people do not have the language to speak about race. Diversity includes are teachers of color
- 2) Teachers of color are miserable here, and they are scared to speak up because they are afraid of losing their jobs.
- 3) More black and brown teachers are needed to make students feel more comfortable.

- 4) Teachers of color know the students of color. Administration and staff should be trained on the issues.
- 5) Teachers of Color are needed in College Prep classes to make minority students feel more comfortable.
- 6) Nothing bad will happen if African-American teachers are hired.

Felicia Moore, APPLE liaison, attended to Howard University, a 10-year Oak Park resident stated that her son had only one black teacher while attending OPRFHS. While many minorities reside in the community, not many minority teachers teach in the classroom and White students would learn better if teachers reflected the community. Teachers of color should not be fearful of speaking. APPLE and other organizations are willing to help.

Lisa Pintado-Vertner, parent, was part of the Oak Park Call to Action Network. She delivered a petition to the Board of Education with 636 signatures supporting the following:

“Non-white students make up 45% of the District 97 student body while non-white teachers account for only 19% of the teaching staff.

“At Oak Park and River Forest High School, non-white students make up 47% of the OPRFHS student body, but non-white teachers account for only 21% of the teaching staff. Not only that, but many of the non-white teaching staff are put in support positions, rather than primary, teaching positions. This puts our students and our community at a disadvantage.

“It should go without saying that a diverse teaching staff is good for our students, but here are few good reasons why it's essential.

“Teachers of color help students of all backgrounds feel more welcome and comfortable school, resulting in better engagement and a higher quality learning environment.

“The research is clear that students of color benefit academically and emotionally from teachers of color. Hiring more teachers of color also benefits our whole community. If all our students are performing at their best, then we can truly claim that our schools are among the best in the country.

“Studies show that teachers of color are more likely to have a much higher estimation of the academic abilities of both students of color and white students. Black and Latino students are more likely to be identified as gifted by teachers of their own race, with no corresponding reduction by teachers of color of white students being identified as gifted.

“A diverse teaching staff allows our students to develop cultural competency to succeed in this globally connected world.

“Teachers of color can help disrupt what can be one-sided portrayals of the world and offer invaluable insight to our students of all backgrounds.

“The District 97 and OPRFHS teaching staff across all departments should reflect its student body.

“More teachers of color in our schools is not a “nice to have.” It is an imperative for our students. Our schools need to hire and retain more teachers of color. Our schools need to hire the quality teachers of color who apply for jobs in our district.”

Qia Carswell, OPRFHS teacher, parent of OPRFHS student, 1998 graduate of OPRFHS, stated that her mom is a teacher in the Chicago Public Schools. Ms. Carswell is a member of both the Oak Park Involvement Network grassroots program that supports black parents as well as District 97’s Diversity Council. She had been active in ACT-SO as a student at OPRFHS. When Ms. Carswell saw her mother teaching, she witnessed the critical connection her mother had with her students. Ms. Carswell wanted to help black males connect with their community and she does that via the tutoring center. The same challenges exist today as when she was a student. Black students need more teachers who they can look to, trust, look like and who are motivated to guide black students. Students may only have two or three Black teachers during their entire school careers.

Jameel Raphael was not optimistic about any action being forthcoming, but he could not sit on the sidelines. He had children who graduated from OPRFHS and one who will be attending. Hiring teachers of color has been an issue for years. Where is the diversity? Where is the equality? He did not understand why the achievement gap could not be solved in one day. He supported the hiring of more Black teachers.

Floyd was a 2008 OPRFHS graduate. As a senior at OPRFHS, he learned about Brown vs. Brown and Ergo Marshall’s vision to desegregate public schools to assure African-Americans would have equal access to education. That learning was a seed that played a role in his life. When asked by African-American students what he remembered about high school, he shared that learning and that seed was transferred to those students. As a result of what he had learned, he is attending law school.

Erica Washington, resident of Oak Park, an attorney, is on the Antiracism Committee of the Democratic Party of Oak Park. Her personal experience is both past and present. In grades 3 through 5, the majority of her teachers were Black. When she went to high school, the majority were White. She felt separated as she was in honors courses. She decided to become a lawyer because a Black OPRFHS graduate who was a lawyer spoke at an event at the school. She felt she could have benefitted from more African-American teachers during high school. Her mom was from rural Mississippi. Ms. Washington was the first one in her family to achieve a JD and it is a huge success. She had influence beyond her parents.

Paul Noble read the following statement: “My name is Paul Noble, a 30-year veteran of this high school's faculty, here tonight to lend my voice to those calling for an increased commitment by the district to hiring and retaining faculty of color.

“The district has long paid lip service to diversity in hiring, but has never put its money where its mouth is. Just as an example, 11 years ago, the faculty bargained for a small district commitment of \$20,000 annually to recruit teachers of color. A drop in the proverbial bucket. Two years later, we learned that the money was never budgeted, much less spent. Perhaps that board and administration failed to appreciate

the need for the adults in this building to reflect the students in their diversity. I hope this board will take the issue more seriously.

“District 200's failure to actively seek the best candidates, choosing instead to sit back passively and wait for them to apply to us, is a fatally flawed model. The district needs to commit a small portion of its ample resources to finding, recruiting, hiring, and retaining the best people of color available. For that matter, the district should spend some time recruiting the best people who are apparently unavailable, employed elsewhere, via headhunting and poaching. Ideally, these efforts would go *beyond* hiring the best candidates of color. An effective recruitment program could also facilitate hiring *white* candidates who are truly committed and prepared to engage our district's unique mission.

“Find somebody charming who knows the district, pay them \$75K, and provide them a reasonable travel budget so they can seek out the best new teachers of color in the country, including those at historically black colleges and universities, among other bastions of diversity. The problem we present to you tonight is only complicated in its impact; the solution is within your grasp.

“As a side note, I'd suggest the district reconsider its practice of capping the qualifications of new hires at Masters-degreed candidates with only 5 years of experience. This is a crippling limit when it comes to hiring, and is not good business. Again, if you think we are widgets, sure, why pay more? But you don't need an MBA to recognize that a candidate – particularly a black candidate – who is twice as strong a teacher as her competition, is the better investment at a 25% higher salary.

“Finally, there is the question of retention. There's little point in bringing great people of color here if we can't keep them. But retention *IS* a complicated problem, and I only have 3 minutes. I'd just ask you to consider the weight, the suffocating weight on our teachers of color, who are called upon in this racially-charged petri dish to teach a full load; represent, explain, defend, and champion an entire race; AND deal with the daily drain of working in an institution – and a community – that hasn't, for all its efforts, shed its own tendencies toward white supremacy. Thanks for hearing me out.”

Brendan Lee read the following statement: “I am an English teacher and a member of the Faculty Senate Executive Committee. I was notified on Monday evening that four community and parent groups were going to present at tonight's BOE meeting on the importance of hiring and supporting the retention of teachers of color. I'm happy to be able to speak tonight in support of both of those critical initiative.

“The question of hiring and supporting teachers of colors is, of course, connected to our work confronting systemic barriers that our students of color experience at OPRF. Before I list things that I think can be done or improved on, I think it's important to recognize some of the things that come we have done and are continuing to do.

1. Courageous Conversations About Race: Throughout the 2016-7 school year, I participated in a learning strand on late-arrival Wednesdays with about one hundred colleagues to learn about and practice the CCAR protocol. Every teacher in the

district, over the course of the last six years, has participated and benefited from this professional development.

2. Beyond Diversity: In October of 2016, with my colleagues in my CCAR strand, I participated in a two-day Beyond Diversity training led by Ladene King. It was a transformative experience for me and my own racial literacy/illiteracy. The training, like the CCAR strand, was completed by every teacher in our district over the last six years.

3. The Spoken Word Teaching Program: Right now, we have two faculty members in the English division whose job is to visit each freshman and sophomore English class in the building to teach the art of the poetry and to provide a space and format that reflects the diversity of our school. As far as I know, we are the only high school in the world that has such a position in an English department. This program has been up and running now for two decades. Peter Kahn's work—though it benefits all students in the school—has particularly helped students of color find a place and a voice in the school and the results have been astonishing.

4. CARE Teams: This year, we have switched to CARE teams from our learning strands. On certain late-arrival Wednesdays, we meet in small groups to discuss excerpts of Robin di Angelo's *What It Means to Be White*, and we dig deep into racial equity issues using the CCAR protocol.

5. Hiring Committees: I have been on numerous hiring committees during my time here, committees tasked with selecting the best candidate for teaching positions and chair positions. On every committee, our focus was to select or give preference to candidates of color. In particular, we focus on how candidates respond to questions about racial equity.

“These are just a few things that come to mind. There are many others I'm not talking about...like, e.g., our great Motivational Mentorship Program. Okay. Having started with that, here are the things that I think we can do better on.

“1. We need to be more proactive in recruiting teachers of color. We can do this by visiting HBCUs (something I think that we've been doing now for two years) but we can also do this right here in Chicago by recruiting from places like the Jacob H. Carruthers Center for Inner City Studies in Bronzeville.

“2. The Applitrack application system that our HR uses needs to be reexamined for potential racial bias.

“3. Our first round screening process needs to be reexamined. What questions do we ask? How do we treat people when they apply?

“4. In the English Division, there are 39 teachers. Of those 39, 8 (or 21%) are teachers of color. In the History Division, there are 25 teachers. Of those 25, 3 (or 12%) are teachers of color. We know that around 33% of our students at OPRF are students of color. Our focus should be to have divisions that reflect that diversity. It's clear that work needs to be done to make that happen.

“5. Over my 15 years teaching in this building, I have increasingly noticed that my colleagues of color could receive better supports and recognition. I have noticed that this is particularly true for women of color who teach in the building. Over the years, several female colleagues of color have left the building to work elsewhere. We need to do better here.

“Thank you for listening and thank you for helping us to work on this very important issue.”

Paris Stamp, an educator, a union activist, a leader, and a mom, stated that when her sons were first enrolled in OPRFHS, they were elated. They had wanted to have a teacher who they could love as much as her students loved her. While one of her sons is a straight A student, gentlemen, and a scholar, he was recently reprimanded for something she understood. However, she could not understand how debilitating it was to his self-esteem. He said, "They only saw me as a black boy who did something wrong and the first thing they did was to punish me." Her sons love the athletics, the reputation of the school, and the profile. However, they do not love OPRFHS, as the environment does not support them. Ms. Stamp is redirecting herself to APPLE. She wanted to sound the voice about equity, about being Black, and having teachers of color. It is about culture and character.

Liz Goss, parent and a principal of an elementary school in Chicago, stated that research shows that if a low-income African-American boy has one African-American teacher, he is 39% less likely to drop out of high school. She had been visually surprised by the lack of teachers of color at OPRFHS. Students are missing something, and they will not get that back. Her son has three more years at OPRFHS. He needs lots of experience, is biracial, and he does not see other people who look like him. Teachers of color will also benefit white students. OPRFHS has many ways to recruit teachers of color. At her school, 70% of the teachers are African-American, and because of the culture and climate of the school, they are retained.

Karen Su, parent of senior and incoming freshman, Clinical Assistant Professor at UIC, the project director UIC Asian American and Native American Pacific Island Serving Institutes (AANAPISI) Initiative, added her comments as an Asian person. She believed that rather than finding the "best" teachers of color, the District should find "good" teachers of color. She, too, did not see diversity in the schools. Culturally responsive teachers and curriculum is important. All students should be learning Native American History, African American History, and Asian History. She was troubled by the school celebrating Columbus Day.

Beth Hig stated that everyone's voice needs to be heard. Children need more windows and mirrors and equitable representation. She too never had a Black teacher before she went to college. That was a disservice to her. She was surprised that the Board of Education was not presenting a plan to the community.

Erica Batner, a Latino in River Forest, a mother to a 4th grader, and part of Indivisible Oak Park, spoke about the need for everyone's voice to be heard and that the community needed to see action. The Board should do something now. Friends tell her that when they were students at OPRFHS, the same issues existed.

Mike Poirier encouraged everyone to attend the next IMAGINE OPRF community engagement event on January 27 at 7:00 p.m. regarding the long-term master plan.

At 9:43 p.m. the Board of Education recessed its meeting to resume in the Board Room, Room 213.

Status of FOIA Requests

Ms. Kalmerton reported that three FOIAs had been received and three were resolved.

Student Council Report

Matthew Vietzen, the Student Council Board of Education liaison, reported: 1) the Student Council charity event went well; 2) the IMAGINE Group visited track facilities and had been active with students; 3) the public comments were insightful. His teachers were being educated to talk with all students and that the rhetoric in class is inclusive. He supported the hiring of teachers of color; 4) the walkout went very well, and students expressed their beliefs. Students protested because they do not feel safe. Student Council is launching a campaign to support all students/raising awareness of inclusiveness. It may host a “happiness day” and invite puppies into the school.

Superintendent Announcements

Mr. Johnson announced that on February 21, 2018, several hundred students in a walkout as part of a growing national and student-led effort to end gun participated violence. After gathering in front of the building at noon, they spontaneously decided to march around the block, down Cuyler and back to the high school on Lake Street. Administrators and security staff with radios accompanied them on the perimeter of the crowd to be sure everyone was safe; the police did a great job of blocking traffic. The students were orderly and peaceful. They were out of the building for about a half hour and proceeded to class when they returned. We are very proud of how our students conducted themselves.

The following students are finalists for National Merit Scholarships, with winners to be announced this spring:

Students selected by faculty as Students of the Quarter for second quarter were Cheyenna Thomas(Math), Isaiah Fuller (Athletics), Peter Bade (Driver Education), Cori Robinson (Science and Technology), Brittany Owens (English), Romi Gonzalez (World Languages), Christopher Rice (Art), Charlie Reichart-Powell (Music), Malik Donaly (History), Malike Finley (Physical Education), and Brandon Scott (Support Services).

Sam Theis won the Shakespeare Monologue Competition and will go on to represent OPRF in the regional competition.

Forty-five OPRF students competed at the Model UN conference at the Palmer House Hilton against teams from across the nation and even a few international teams. Scott Smith and Ryan Jansen won awards for outstanding delegates.

Speech Team captured the third place TEAM award at the IHSA Regional Competition. Ellie Bourgikos was regional champion in Impromptu Speaking. At sectionals, Parthenia Gharavi placed second in extemporaneous speaking and qualified for the state competition.

A record number of 21 students were selected to represent OPRF at the Illinois Music Educators Association All State Conference.

Along with the vocal and instrumental state performers, we had a record number of 11 winners in the state composition contest. Also first-place awards went to Noah Sherman for jazz improvisation composition and jazz drum set, and to Gabriel Schonman for Jazz Vocal Tenor.

For the first time in OPRF history, all 14 Huskie wrestlers advanced from regionals to sectionals, and nine went on to qualify for the state tournament. Jake Rundell won the state championship and along with Eddie Bolivar and Joe Chapman also won All-State honors. With the individual portion of the season over, the team won its sectional match and earned a spot in the Elite Eight at the IHSA Dual State Tournament this Saturday in Bloomington.

Girls' gymnastics took third place in the conference for the season, while varsity took third in the conference finals and junior varsity took second. Coach Chris Wright was voted by her peers as conference coach of the year.

Cheerleading had its most successful competition season ever. Junior varsity (JV) placed second and third at both cheer invitationals and qualified for state, where it placed fourth. JV is also this year's conference champions. Varsity placed first and third at both invitationals and qualified for state, placing sixth.

Varsity boys' basketball won the conference title for the second year in a row. The players are Isaiah Fuller, Dashon Enoch, Charlie Hoehne, Anthony Roberts, Malachi Ross, Chase Robinson, Phil Saleh, Sidney Allgood, Sheldon Allgood, Martinez Lenyoun, Abram Ross, Trey Royal, Dan Francis and Ben Pierce.

Consent

Dr. Moore moved to approve the following consent items:

- A. [Check Disbursements and Financial Resolutions dated February 22, 2018](#)
- B. [Monthly Treasurer's Report](#)
- C. [Monthly Financials](#)
- D. [Gifts and Donations](#)
- E. [NIIPC Bids and Rollovers](#)
- F. [Athletico Trainers Services Agreement](#)
- G. [CDW Network Equipment Purchase E-Rate 470 Bid](#)
- H. [Policies for Second Reading](#)
 - 1. [Policy 4:15, Identity Protection](#)
 - 2. [Policy 4:110, Transportation](#)
 - 3. [Policy 4:170, Safety](#)
 - 4. [Policy 5:90, Abused and Neglected Child Reporting](#)
 - 5. [Policy 5:200, Terms and Conditions of Employment and Dismissal](#)
- I. [Personnel Recommendations, including New Hires, Lateral Hires, Retirements, and Resignation](#)

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

Policy 4:170 Safety

Dr. Moore moved to amend Policy 4:170, Safety; seconded by Mr. Cofsky. Discussion ensued. A request was made to review this policy in more detail in consideration of recent events to see if the policy was complete. This policy complies with the law as it is written. A presentation will be made at the Committee of the Whole Meeting in March.

A roll call vote resulted in all nays. Motion failed.

District Registration

Mr. Cofsky moved to approve the District, Instructional Material and Technology Fees for the 2018-2019 school year; seconded by Mr. Baron.

Discussion ensued. Mr. Cofsky noted that he had voted no on the fees in the past and he expected to have discussions on this policy in the future.

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

I-GOV

The next I-Gov assembly with all of the taxing bodies is scheduled for March 17 at Julian Middle School. Discussion items will be the Strategic Plan and where plans may dovetail or collaborate with other taxing bodies. A following assembly may occur in either May or June about property taxes and the drain on taxpayers. Ms. Dixon Spivy will work with the administration.

Future agenda Items

- 1) Public financial committee at the March COW meeting.
- 2) Board-level discussion on Special Education. Possible rotational division meetings with Board of Education
- 3) Diversity-related to public comments on the hiring policy.
- 4) Outline of hiring protocols

Adjournment

At 10:05 p.m. on February 22, 2018, Mr. Baron moved to adjourn the regular Board of Education meeting; seconded by Mr. Arkin. A voice vote resulted in motion carried.

Dr. Jackie Moore
President

Jennifer Cassell
Secretary