

January 24, 2019

The regular Board meeting of the Board of Education of the Oak Park and River Forest High School was held on Thursday, January 24, 2019, in the Board Room of the OPRFHS.

**Call to Order**

President Moore called the meeting to order at 6:43 p.m. In the Board Room. 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-Adams, Superintendent; Greg Johnson, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction; Roxana Sanders, Senior Director of Human Resources, and Gail Kalmerton, Executive Assistant Clerk of the Board.

**Closed Session**

At 6:45 p.m. on Thursday, January, 24, 2019, 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; seconded by Ms. Dixon Spivy. A roll call vote resulted in all ayes. Motion carried.

At 7:49 p.m., the Board of Education resumed the open session in the Board Room.

Joining the meeting were Cyndi Sidor, Interim Chief School Business Official; Dr. Gwen Walker-Qualls, Director of Pupil Personnel Services; Michael Carioscio, Chief Operations Officer, Karin Sullivan, Senior Communications Director.

**Visitors**

Approximately 200 OPRHFS Faculty members attended this meeting as well as community members.

**Recognitions**

- Walgreen Expressions Challenge Honoree Natalie Serratos
- Posse Scholarship Recipients
- First in Tech Olympic Students
- 2018 Distinguished Educator Award Winner Dana Tolomeo
- Ecology Project International Summer Teacher Fellowship Awardee Faith Nelson

**FOIA Requests**

Ms. Kalmerton reported that 7 FOIA requests had been received and 6 were resolved.

**Student Council**

Student Council represented reported on the following:

- Students enjoyed the MLK Assembly and felt it was one of the best organized they have had.
- Students helped with support staff appreciation day and they felt it was successful. Student Council was happy to be involved and hoped for further involvement in the future.
- Student Council will participate in Freshman Night and recruit for sports and activities.
- Student Council is preparing for its charity night.

## Superintendent's Announcement

Dr. Pruitt-Adams made the following announcements:

The Wednesday Journal named Board president Dr. Jackie Moore the 2018 Villager of the Year for Oak Park. Calling her a “quiet revolutionary,” the Journal praised Dr. Moore for her work to achieve racial equity and in particular for centering student voice in the Board’s equity work. Congratulations, Dr. Moore, and thank you for your service to our school and our community.

- The committee to develop a racial equity policy is crafting a policy that will hold the district accountable for eliminating racially predictable disparities in achievement. Our committee of administrators, faculty, staff, students, and community members has met several times and is on target to present the Board with a policy for approval sometime this spring.

- Training in restorative justice practices is a major focus this school year. Working with consultants from [Umoja](#), a group of about 25 faculty, staff, and administrators are participating in a year-long, six-part "community of practice" training to deepen their skills. Administrators, Board members, and security staff have had workshops in restorative practices as well.

- All of our teachers and administrators have met multiple times with their CARE teams, which stands for Collaborative Action Research for Equity. These small groups are spending five years analyzing their curriculum, teaching methods, practices, processes, and classroom relationships through a racial lens.

- Student members of SAFE (Students Advocating for Equity) are working with the administration and making progress in developing a pilot racial equity curriculum that, in the students' words, "fosters open discussion on uncomfortable topics and goes deeper than just the slavery/oppression topics in class."

- We've have launched the Student Advisory Council, which is diverse across all student demographics, including race, religion, ethnicity, etc. These student advisors are providing input for me and other administrators on racial equity work.

- And finally, as part of our goal for the demographics of faculty to more closely reflect the demographics of OPRF students, this weekend our Human Resources team is holding our first-ever, early-in-the-season interview fair for prospective teacher candidates.

## Visitor Comments

OPRFHS Faculty member Naomi Hildner read the following statement. “I am here with my bag of books (Don’t worry, I fully understand the concept of three minutes) because I do not believe for a single minute that any of our distinguished board members fully understand the concept of teaching. So, as an English teacher, I am going to tell you a brief story. My son was a lawyer in a prestigious corporate law firm for 15 years making good money, when he decided he needed to live a life that would have meaning and count for something – so he quit, went back to school, and is now completing his student teaching at OPRF, his own high school that he fondly remembers from years back. His undergrad major was history and it is his intention to teach history, but it is proving more difficult than he imagined.

“Every day he frets about every one of his students. He plans for the week with various handouts, and frets more, changes his lesson plans, reconsiders again thinking that plans

A and B may not resonate with students X, Y, and Z, so he revises the plans yet again. He is learning that this torturous practice is the life of a teacher. Yet he is ready to persevere. When he led a discussion of the Laquan McDonald/ Jason Van Dyke sentencing, he was surprised by the unaware passivity of the students, and is now determined to bring contemporary parallels to the class for every unit. That is only the beginning. Just wait till he surrenders his weekends to grading.

“I have brought a bag of books that I have added this year to my curriculum in some way as part of our ongoing equity work. I do not heed or need the Transformative Teaching and Learning Team to help me bring race into our discourse in my classes since it is my concern, and the focus of our TCTs and division meetings. I have here:

Ta-Nehisi Coates *Beautiful Struggle and Between the World and Me*  
James Baldwin’s *If Beale St Could Talk*  
Jesmyn Ward’s *Salvage the Bones*  
Colson Whitehead’s *Underground Railroad*  
Ijeoma Oluo *So You Want to Talk About Race*  
Michael Eric Dyson *Tears We Cannot Stop, A Sermon to White America*  
Jason Reynolds’s *Long Way Down*  
Angie Thomas’s *The Hate You Give*  
Lawrence Leamer’s *Lynching, The Epic Courtroom Battle that Brought Down the Clan*  
Martin Luther King’s *Why We Can’t Wait*

“There are more in my room, but that’s all I could fit in the bag

“This is a 24/7 year- around job, but we love it. And who is this *we*? We are not babysitters filling job openings that anyone could fill. We are a faculty that truly exemplifies those things that are best. We discuss our students and equity non-stop. We have much work still to do but we have moved the needle. I have attended many workshops, have worked closely with many parents, and am honored to have been a part of this faculty for a quarter of a century. If you cannot settle contract negotiations honorably, you betray this stellar faculty who have worked all year without a contract, disregard the community, and sacrifice the children, our teens, who apparently are not worth keeping OPRF a final destination school for the very best.”

John Duffy, as a retired teacher, stood with the faculty at the school. Dr. Duffy read the following statement: “All of us in this room tonight are in a historic moment. As participants in the current work to change OPRFHS’s systemic institutional racism, we must be ever vigilant and urgent in advancing racial equity— policies, programs and ways of thinking, feeling, acting that have not been strong features of our past.

“Policies and actions for racial equity that may pervade our discourse and intentions today must be protected when new administrations and new school boards follow in the coming years. To ensure this, our history mandates a strong, accountable and enforceable racial equity policy.

“Without accountability for today and assurances of continuity moving forward, we are more likely to continue as a school and community to be part of America’s historic white racist dysfunction.

“On matters of racial justice, our will to act can evaporate as quickly as it seems to have appeared. There are no guarantees even with a robust racial equity policy that becomes part and parcel of our entire culture. Still, it is our best hope that we will remain steadfast in OPRFHS’s dedication to being a model for racial equity in education. At this time Principal Rouse is leading the racial policy development effort. Some here tonight are participants in that process. We present a few critical ideas on a Racial Equity Policy. These propositions involve the relationship between policy and procedure, and the need for rigorous implementation, enforcement, and accountability.

“While we recognize that a racial equity policy cannot address in minutia all of the variables of the elements of a policy, nor every action of implementation, there are points where policy and procedure intersect and are the same, if not the flip side of one coin. The danger of any policy without some standards and procedures embedded in the policy is that it becomes an aspirational document subject to the changing priorities and interpretation of successive administrations. To move beyond aspirations, our history mandates that our racial equity policy:

1. Involve not only aspirations but also clear guidelines for implementation, procedures and strict accountability.

To assure our racial equity policy is not one more impressive document to sit beside other lauded documents in D 200’s history, it must make a major break from past patterns. To significantly contribute to ending institutional racism and inequities, and for long term sustainability, our racial equity policy:

2. Requires not only goals, but the execution of all components carried out with authority centered in a dedicated fully funded administrative position.

“As the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. counseled us, ends and means must cohere. In saying this Dr. King was usually speaking about the relationship between the racial justice goals of the black freedom movement and the non-violent philosophy and methods for achieving those goals.

“Dr. King was also speaking about policies, laws and institutional practices that would ensure the sustainability of civil rights goals by inscribing in both the spirit and the letter of the law, the means to achieve those goals.”

OPRFHS Faculty member Matt McMurray read the following statement: “Good evening, my name is Matt McMurray, and I am a faculty member in the History Division and the Varsity Girls Golf Coach. This is my 5th year at OPRF, and I am proud to say that I would not want to be at any place else. I have taught in three different, highly-regarded schools before coming to OPRF and I can say, without a fraction of a doubt, that this is the most talented, dedicated, and intellectually-gifted group of colleagues I have ever encountered. This is a very difficult job. I know that I am not speaking for myself when I say that this building has become a second home to me. The hours required, year-round, to do this job at a high level are grueling and seemingly unending. But we do it, day-in-and-day-out, we do it and we do it at an elite level. We do it at a sacrifice to our families, our social lives, and our own personal desires. We do it in spite of the negative perceptions and constant attacks on our profession, often from those who have never done this job themselves. We do it because we love our students and the difference we can make in their lives. We do it because of our deep commitment to serving this

community that we hold so dear. Moreover, we will continue to do it, and do it well, because that is who we are and this is what we do.”

Paul Collins read the following statement: “Hello, my name is Paul Collins. I am a special education teacher and the head wrestling coach here at OPRF. I was born and raised in Oak Park, and I have been a part of the OPRFHS family since 1987 when my father began teaching here.

“I graduated from OPRF in 2000, began working here in 2005, and currently live in the community with my wife and son. As a teacher here I also have the pleasure of working with my brother and sister daily. OPRF is truly our second home.

“I just wanted to take a minute to speak on behalf of the faculty. We have been working “without a contract since July. Between teaching and coaching I am here before school, after school, and on weekends. So I can attest to the professionalism of our faculty, shown by the fact we have been working as if a contract was settled months ago. We never claim to be perfect, but our ability to collaborate, challenge each other, and compromise creates an ever-evolving learning environment. The tireless work put in by the faculty on a daily basis helps provide students with a well-rounded education.

“I urge the Board of Education to move swiftly and develop a compromise with the Faculty Senate. Thank you.”

Community member Amanda Massie, read the following statement: “In regards to consent agenda Items J.

- 2- Policy 6:60 Curriculum Content
- 3- Policy 6:130 High school credit for non-District Experiences: Course
- 5- Policy 7:260 Exemption from Physical Education

“If all three policies are approved as currently written will you confirm that the Current physical education programs and swim requirement will NOT be changing? Thank you.”

Community member Kitty Conklin read the following statement: “Good evening. I would like to revisit an email I sent you last October 10, 2018, which addressed an opinion letter in the September 25, 2018 edition of the Wednesday Journal. In that letter, Imagine team member Renee Bell discussed work needed on the OPRF facilities and one thing she particularly mentioned was “Pool facilities with ventilation so poor it becomes difficult to breathe after 10 minutes is a health issue”.

“In my email to you, I referenced Legat’s Life Safety Review completed during the 2017-2018 school year and which was presented to you on April 17, 2018. This report does not mention air quality issues. However, even though air quality was not called out by Legat, the list of construction work that was to be completed during summer 2018 mentions that OPRF was in the “8th year of a 12-year plan to replace and upgrade air handlers with more efficient systems to meet ventilation code requirements.

“Superintendent Pruitt-Adams responded to my email on October 16, 2018, by explaining the following:

“As for the ventilation in the pools, air quality deteriorates as the water gets churned up during classes and practices; it releases a byproduct of chlorine called *chloramine* that lingers about two feet above the water surface and can cause respiratory problems. We test the levels of chlorine in each pool two-three times per day and remediate as needed-- but obviously, this is not a permanent fix. The problem is the configuration of the ductwork and the quality of the air handling units specifically serving the pool. Replacing the ductwork to properly ventilate the pools would be an extremely expensive and invasive solution.” But a remediation plan was 2/3 complete in October.

‘A review of the ten year maintenance plan attached in tonight’s agenda does not mention continuing the remaining four years of the air handler work. Why not? Since the pool/Fieldhouse is not going to be revisited until 2020, shouldn’t these issues with “poor ventilation” and “chloramine” continue to be addressed to meet code, to complete the last four years of a 12-year plan and for the health of our students? On the ten year plan, I do see work identified for “Mechanical (16) AHU, but it is not called out to be completed in 2027 and 2028. Here are my questions: 1). Once and for all, Just how severe is the air quality issue in the field house? Why is D200 not completing the already-in-progress air handler work in the annual summer cycle? Details can be pesky inconveniences. But the very taxpayers that you wish to eliminate from the Board’s Oath policy deserve honesty and transparency. I look forward to the answers.’”

OPRFHS Faculty Senate Executive Committee Chair Sheila Hardin read the following statement: “Good evening. The Faculty Senate and the Board of Education entered into negotiations in February of 2018. As negotiations continue, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the 285 faculty senate members for their professionalism while working without a contract.

“While the 118,800 periods we have taught this year are a large part of our day, I would also like to give you a picture of what we do outside our contract as educators at Oak Park and River Forest High School.

- We meet with students before school, after school, during our lunch periods and at any time possible. These meetings include help with academics, advise on colleges, advise on social issues, friends, clubs, family and just “chatting.”

- We use our evenings and weekends to plan for classes, grade, and meet with colleagues to prepare for the next week, unit, or semester. And all the other intangibles that go into preparation to teach.

- We write approximately 1200 college recommendation letters for each senior class. This time-consuming practice, done primarily outside the school day, can include student questionnaires, meetings and last-minute requests for a 24-hour turnaround.

- We write scholarship, job, and summer camp recommendations.

- We attend band, choir and orchestra concerts, theatre and dance performances, club and sporting events to support and encourage our students

- We participate in and contribute to students’ fundraising efforts for teams, trips, churches, and scholarships. This participation includes the Senate privately funding two scholarships for seniors of our own staff

- We, as a union, adopt a family, co-sponsor a food drive, volunteer at the Oak Park Public Library to tutor for finals, in addition to the work our members do in their individual communities

- We sit on policy committees, strategic plan committees, board committees, textbook committees, hiring committees and curriculum committees just to name a few.

- We spend our summers prepping for new semesters, new courses, new challenges, and new curriculum.
- We attend and pay for professional conferences, membership in professional organizations and subscriptions to professional journals
- We speak at local, state and national conferences, where OPRF is touted as an advertisement for others in our field

“We do all of this and more [be heartfelt] because we are here for our students. They are our focus, and this focus has not faltered as we work without a contract.

“The Faculty Senate is a strong group of dedicated, strong educators that she is proud to be part of. We look forward to reaching a fair resolution with the board as soon as possible.”

Dr. Pruitt-Adams noted that the items presented under discussion had already been presented at the Committee of the Whole meeting and should have been listed under Information. It is at the Committee of the Whole meeting where extended discussion occurs regarding the topics.

## Consent Agenda

Dr. Moore moved to approve the following consent items; seconded by Mr. Cofsky.

- A. [Check Disbursements and Financial Resolutions dated January 24, 2019](#)
- B. [Monthly Treasurer’s Report](#)
- C. [Gifts and Donations](#)
- D. [Personnel Recommendations, including Transfers, Stipend Positions, Resignations, and Releases](#)
- E. [Northern Illinois Independent Purchasing Cooperative \(NIIPC\) Commodity Foods Bid](#)
- F. [Contract with FGM Architects](#)
- G. [Transfer of Operations & Maintenance to Capital Projects](#)
- H. [Property Tax Appeal Board \(PTAB\) Resolution](#)
- I. [Policies for Second Reading and Action](#)
  - 2. [Exhibit 3:40-E, Checklist for the Superintendent Employment Contract Negotiation Process](#)
  - 3. [Policy 2:120 Board Member Development](#)
  - 4. [Policy 4:170, Safety](#)
  - 5. [Policy 4:130, Free and Reduced-Price Food Services](#)
  - 6. [Policy 5:30 Hiring Process and Criteria](#)
  - 7. [Policy 5:60 Expenses](#)
  - 8. [Policy 5:100 Staff Development Program](#)
  - 9. [Policy 5:220 Substitute Teachers](#)
  - 10. [Policy 7:60, Residence](#)
- J. [Policies for First Reading and Action](#)
  - 1. Policy 6:20 School Year Calendar and Day
  - 2. [Policy 6:60 Curriculum Content](#)
  - 3. [Policy 6:130 High School Credit for Non-District Experiences: Course Substitutions; Re-entering Students](#)

4. [Policy 7:100 Health, Eye, and Dental Examinations; Immunization and Exclusion of Students](#)
  5. [Policy 7:260 Exemption from Physical Education](#)
  6. [Policy 7:330 Student Use of Buildings – Equal Access](#)
- K. Open and Closed Minutes of [December 20](#), 2018, and January [15](#), 2019, and a declaration that the closed session audio tapes of April 2017 shall be destroyed

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

**Exhibit 2:80-E**

Dr. Moore moved to approve Exhibit 2:80-E, as presented; seconded by Mr. Arkin. Discussion ensued. Mr. Arkin reiterated that review of this exhibit was strictly a 5-year review. The Board of Education Code of Conduct was not being amended. A roll call vote resulted in all ayes. Motion carried.

**Certification of Mid-Year Graduates**

Dr. Moore moved to certify the Mid-Year Graduates, as presented; seconded by Mr. Iseli. A roll call vote resulted in all ayes. Motion carried.

**Informational Items**

The following reports were information only, as they had been discussed fully at the January Committee of the Whole Meeting.

- Building Capital Improvements Maintenance Strategy (10 yr.)
- CTIP Update
- Variance Report

**Future Agenda Items** None

**Adjournment**

At 8:30 p.m. on January 24, 2019, Dr. Moore 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