

November 15, 2018

The regular Board meeting of the Board of Education of the Oak Park and River Forest High School was held on Thursday, November 15, 2018, in the Board Room and Room 293E of the OPRFHS.

Call to Order

President Moore called the meeting to order at 6:35 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 6:37 p.m. on Thursday, November 15, 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; seconded by Ms. Dixon Spivy. A roll call vote resulted in all ayes. Motion carried.

At 7:30 p.m., the Board of Education resumed the open session in Room 293E.

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.

Visitors

Diglio, Marta, Sobia Ansarin, Marty and Michael Bernstein, Mary Bird, Whitney Brooks, Lisa Brown, A. Caldwell, Charity Anne Caldwell, Ron & B. Clark, R. Desui, John Duffy, Steven Endres, Kristina Entner, Susanne Fairfax, Christine Fenno, D. Fletcher, Jennifer Fray, Gail Galivan, Paul Goyette, Rachel Hall, Angela Halman, Neena Hernandez, P. Hessig, Burcy Hines, Kim Hoty, Autumn Humer, Venus Johnson, Elizabeth J., Anderson K., K. Levy, Terry Keleher, Meaghan Kennedy, Stephanie Kiesling, Maurine Kleinman, Deborah Levine, I. Liu, Michele Major, Kirsten Mallik, Amanda Massie, T. Meyer, Kyhen Miller, Keely O'Keefe, Kate O'Keefe, A. Patel, James Pflueche, Ellen Pimentel, Sheela Raju, Catlin Ritter, Dot Roche, Laura and Scott Sakiyama, Erin Savers, Gina Senneller, Monica Sheehan, Susan Stephens, Brandon Stiffic, Karen Sue, Nicole Sumider, Leslie Sutpher, Deb Walkstein, Kate Walz, Rebecca Ward, Christina Waters, J. Williams, Cheryl Wishieuslei, Mika Yamamoto, and David Yamenshita; Anthony Clark, Q. Carswell, Naomi Hildner, Jacqui Charette-Bassirad, Faculty and Staff; Mary Haley, League of Women Voters; Charity Caldwell, Eunseo Choo, Makesha Flourney-Benson, and Grace Gunn, and V, students; Steve Schering of the *Oak Leaves*; Michael Romain of the *Wednesday Journal*.

FOIA Requests

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

Student Council Report

Mr. Choo appreciated the conversation about race but asked to be more informed, especially when it came to the assembly in order to have conversations with peers. The conversation during second period was useful and they believed this should

occur weekly or bimonthly so that as more conversation occurs, people will become more tolerant. Teachers should ask how their students how they are doing. The Tradition of Excellence Convocation went well and many appreciated it. Student Council also wrote thank you letters to teachers to show their appreciation. Student Council is fundraising for Sara Coglianese, a former OPRFHS graduate, who recently died of ALS.

Superintendent's Announcement

Dr. Pruitt Adams made the following statement:

“Normally I use the Superintendent’s Report as an opportunity to update the Board and public on student and staff accomplishments from the past month. With the events of the past couple of weeks, however, I’m using this month’s report to give a public update on our racial equity work.

“First, thank you to everyone who has been sending messages of support to students and staff. This has indeed been a challenging time for OPRFHS. But it’s also proven to be an opportunity for our entire community to come together to fight racism, anti-Semitism, anti-Islamicism, homophobia, and all other forms of bigotry. I’m so proud of our students, our staff, and the wider community for the message you are sending out into the world: Hate has no home at OPRF.

“The district has been acting on our commitment to achieving racial equity for many years. Recent events have served only to strengthen our resolve to create access and opportunity for *all* students. I’m gratified that so many in the community are now expressing a desire to join the effort, because we can all get more done together.

“Here is an update on some of the work.

“First, we have presented a racial equity policy to the Board. Over the summer Principal Nate Rouse worked on researching racial-equity policies then wrote one for D200. He presented this draft policy to the Board at its Sept. 18, 2018, Committee of the Whole meeting. The draft policy commits the district to a variety of actions that students and community members have voiced their concerns. These include:

- Using a racial equity analysis tool to review district policies, procedures, programs, and professional development.
- Implementing culturally responsive curriculum and teaching practices that reflect the diversity of our student body.
- eliminating practices that lead to disproportionate representation of particular student groups in the discipline system.
- Recruiting, hiring, and retaining staff of color to mirror our student demographics.

“At the Sept. 18 meeting, the Board supported further work to refine the draft policy and asked that administration work with a team including experts in the field, just as the Gender Equity Committee did, to give input on best practices and craft clear procedures that are then agreed upon by students, staff, community members, etc. Formation of that team is underway. The administration will have a finalized racial equity policy and procedures to bring back to the Board no later than the end of this school year with the inclusion of student, staff and community voice.

“In the fall of 2017 we drafted a hiring protocol focused on hiring teachers of color. We realized our plan needed to be broader, and at the same Sept. 18, 2018, Board committee

meeting, administrators presented the Board with a comprehensive “talent management” plan that explains how we plan to recruit, hire, and retain excellent teachers and staff. The plan says plainly: *“Our recruitment strategies will focus explicitly on attracting highly effective teachers and staff with diverse backgrounds, especially teachers of color.”* The plan states clearly that we intend to hire teachers and staff who view students’ existing cultural resources as assets, and who are aware of how their own identities affect their understandings. This too will have inclusion of staff and community voice

“From 2012 to 2017 our professional development focused on how to have healthy conversations about race. Our current multi-year professional development plan is focused on eliminating racial bias in classroom practices. Last year about 40 teachers received intensive training in racial equity leadership. Beginning this school year, all OPRF faculty members have been assigned to small groups led by these teachers. The groups will spend the next ensuing years analyzing their curriculum, teaching methods, practices, processes, and classroom relationships through a racial lens and acting on their research to eliminate bias in our classrooms. In addition, this year two OPRF faculty members with an extensive background in racial equity leadership are mentoring their colleagues as racial equity coaches.

“And finally, as promised, I am forming a student advisory committee that is diverse across all student demographics, including race, religion, ethnicity, etc. This new committee is schedule to hold its first meeting Tuesday, November 20 at 3:20 in the Little Theatre. These student advisors will play an essential role in offering input and guidance on implementing a student-initiated racial equity curriculum, as well as looking at other initiatives students have recommended, such as hiring an assistant superintendent of equity and developing student-led clubs that promote racial justice initiatives.

“The racial-equity work we began years ago continues, and now with more community support than ever. As Mahatma Ganhdi said, “If we could change ourselves, the tendencies in the world would also change... We need not wait to see what others do.” Oak Park and River Forest High School has the potential to be a national model in providing a just, equitable education for all our students. I welcome all in the community to help us achieve this goal.”

“Our students and staff members spread love with posters on the lockers.”

Dr. Moore asked the audience to approach public comments with respect and civility and to listen to learn. There Board of Education held 30 minutes of public comments at this time and continued after the IMAGINE information. The comments were limited to two minutes per person.

Public Comments

Mr. Clark asked that all that supported the following student speakers stand. Grace Gunn and Chloe Leach, sophomores, and other members of SAFE, were aware of the work the administration is conducting with students appreciated it. They had the support of students and community and were demanding a racial equity policy and curriculum. They wanted a commitment from the administration to get a student-led curriculum as soon as possible, as it should have been part of English and/or World Studies classes long ago. They cared about the experiences of their classmates. They asked for no delay.

Joslyn, student, a new member of SAFE, wanted consideration given to having native Spanish classes. The Latino population in Oak Park is growing very fast and she wanted

the school ready to serve the undocumented by having trained counselors and hiring Spanish teachers as well as Black teachers. She demanded that Latinx be part of World History and English classes. She was proud to stand for justice in racial equity.

Grace Gunn, a senior at OPRFHS, stood with SAFE, and asked that a racial equity coordinator be added to all hiring committees. All teachers should be examined for racial consciousness. Students did not know who to go to if they experienced being targeted or discriminated. She thanked the Board of Education for recognizing the notes of support in the hallway that was the idea of Shoenice Reynolds. Ms. Gunn recognized Ms. Reynolds for her work with students of color.

Mickala Anderson, stepping out individually, noted that SAFE demanded the administration focus on teachers' racial consciousness by hiring a racial equity coordinator, implementing the student equity curriculum, hiring teachers that reflected the student demographics, and retaining teachers of color. She did not blame the school for teachers as she the community at large was at fault. It hurt her that Anthony Clark and others were being targeted. She asked for respect for Mr. Clark and others as they are like parents in the building. She appreciated the support of Dr. Moore.

Anderson Kennedy, a junior, spoke to the recent counts of hate speech that had happened on campus. Due process was not had in one of the rulings, i.e., the absence of the teacher, student assignments, etc. Restorative Justice was not effective in achieving understanding by both parties and coming to a resolution. How was it that after this process and all of the cogs in place, the process was stopped? The teacher's removal was a knee-jerk reaction. It was not about "Those things that are Best," but Those Things that Look Best."

Naomi Hildner spoke of her reaction to the community last Wednesday. Her thoughts, in a Trump-era when rhetoric is heated, that when speaking with authority minus critical facts, one must be careful one does not become a part of the problem. The bigger picture is that the students are awesome. The teachers are dedicated, and they do not commit hate crimes. While there is a long way to go, true progress only happens in an atmosphere of kindness, trust, and cooperation of mutual parties. That is what she hopes.

Monica Sheehan read the following statement: "Good evening, I'm Monica Sheehan, 626 Fair Oaks. As you prepare to accept Imagine's plan tonight, I have two questions. "First, please clarify what acceptance of this plan means. Two years ago, you accepted the 2016 Long-Term Facility Plan, which included three options and was the result of a nearly year-long effort examining the facilities and assessing needs.

"One key difference between that plan and Imagine's is that Imagine has tacked on a list of recommendations, including ones that are intended to exert influence and control over the implementation of the plan. I find the recommendations to be an act of overreach. As such, my second question is for you to clarify the role of the Imagine group moving forward.

"Imagine has done exactly as it was instructed. It created a long-term plan without any parameters, financial or otherwise. It's now time for you, our elected board, to begin the process of prioritizing the elements of the plan and deciding what should and can be addressed in the short term. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Marty Bernstein made the following statement. “Good evening. In 2016 the taxpayers of OP and RF voted down the referendum for a pool. Since the referendum failed, D200 has embarked on another that mirrors what was defeated in 2016; a plan that includes an oversized-pool and demolition of structurally sound and useful buildings to make room for the pool. The voters said no in 2016 and to my knowledge there has not been another referendum since to reverse the results of 2016. Why is the board ignoring the will of the people? No too large pool. No demolition of good buildings. If you approve the Imagine plan as written you will fail everybody in OP and RF. You can fix this tonight by rejecting the Imagine plan in favor of one that puts academics before extracurriculars and does not call for the demolition of good structures that can be renovated.”

Makesha Flournoy-Benson, parent of three children, D97 senior and graduate read the following statement: “Good evening. My name is Makesha Flournoy-Benson and I am the parent of three children one in D97, a senior here at the high school, and an OPRFHS graduate; I am making a statement on behalf of the Friends of the D97 Oak Park Diversity Council (DivCo).

“The mission of the Diversity Council is to support our Oak Park schools and fellow community organizations like CEEE, APPLE, and SUA and expand their efforts in creating districts that are welcoming, inclusive, and equitable for all families resulting in academic and social success for every child but with particular emphasis and impact for kids of color and those students that are the most marginalized. By show of hands, how many people in this room are a D97 or D90 parent and/or sit on their school’s diversity committee or PTO?

“What we’re trying to represent today is that we are here and we’re watching. We are watching what you all collectively can accomplish today, tomorrow, and certainly by the time that many of our children enter these four walls. This isn’t only a high school issue - it is a community one. Almost exactly one year ago, the Diversity Council and several of its partnering organizations came together to create a statement that appealed to you and your fellow school colleagues across Oak Park and River Forest. We asked that you collectively address the issues that incited last year’s black face incident. If you recall, a white student was miseducated and misguided and decided to paint his face black and circulate that post in jest on social media.

Back then we cited that “the Diversity Council believed that the incident created an opportunity for school leaders and concerned citizens to turn an ugly incident into a learning opportunity for students, parents, and the community.” We went further to acknowledge that the “ongoing racial tensions, if unaddressed will further tear at the fabric of our community”. Now here we are again.”

Venus Johnson continued with these comments: “These organizations asked to partner with you to establish fair and equitable policies that effectively address school and community culture in which unacknowledged tensions had been allowed to fester.

“We recommended as a first step for the Districts and Oak Park and River Forest school leaders to work “collectively and create a joint statement that swiftly, clearly, and unambiguously denounces racist behavior and communicate that the Oak Park and River forest schools stand for respect, inclusion and a culture of advancing meaningful restorative justice and one which creates a welcoming community for every child.”

“We also requested that you all “collectively create age-appropriate safe spaces across our schools to ensure that children have an opportunity to voice their concerns, thoughts, questions and experiences about race, and in turn, have them adequately addressed in a culturally competent way.” But here we are again.

“We went on to state that “In partnership with community organizations, offer educational opportunities for families to engage in dialogue around race and how to handle discussions in the home.”

“We requested a “review and prioritization of the social studies and histories curricula to ensure that it reflects the history of our diverse student base and work collaboratively with teachers, curriculum directors and community members to ensure that the high standards of our community are upheld.” Today, we will further underscore that we demand the swift adoption of the OPRFHS student racial equity curriculum that is in front of you now.

“Finally, we asked the Districts and school leaders to “practice critical pedagogy and take an equally critical lens to investigating institutional structures and power dynamics that led us to where we are in our student community and ensure that curriculum resonates with lived experiences of students.” But here we are again.”

Charity Anne Caldwell continued the statement. “What we experienced these past two weeks through these terrible acts of aggression are representative of a deeper passivity that exists for many white Oak Parkers who teach their children that we are all the same, color doesn’t exist, and hatred doesn’t happen in Oak Park. For those of us that do address issues of race and white suppression in the home -- you can imagine that those conversations can vary from one end of the spectrum that teaches the reality of who are children are but emphasizes love and care for each other --to-- the other end of that same spectrum where money, access and privilege is heavily implied and therefore we get entitlement, greed, and power.

“We fully support SAFE and BLU and other student organizations and their selfless efforts to make Oak Park and River Forest High School an emotionally and physically safe space for students to thrive and learn in and to uncover their best selves in. We demand that these students be heard.

“We support students in the middle schools who try so very hard to be heard, who are trying to find themselves, and whose voices are often muted by dominant culture. These students are making critical choices now and need to be prepared for what’s in front of them now.”

Josh Vanderberg remarked on the fact that IMAGINE had completed its work and that the Board of Education will accept its recommendations. This is the time to thank everyone and dismiss IMAGINE team members. The Board of Education must make some tough decisions. The end result should be a comprehensive facilities plan that tells the community what, when, and how will it be funded. Please include in this information the information relative to timeline, affordability, referendum, etc. before the renovations begin.

John Duffy thanked the brave and courageous students who spoke before. He thanked Dr. Pruitt-Adams for showing courageous leadership and urgency. The idea of a racial equity policy was brought to the Board of Education two years ago and a month ago protocols were presented. He asked the Board of Education how to go about vetting and adopting a policy, which is the easy part. The hard work is putting it into practice and living and believing in it every day. The community cannot wait for a racial equity policy. It is untenable and immoral in this country not to have one. He urged the Board of Education to move quickly on this. Even if it were adopted in the spring, it would not be implemented until next year. Eleven years ago the Board of Education heard about Restorative Justice, and it is just now being implemented. The families can't wait.

Kirstin Mallik, a parent of elementary school children, hoped that her children learned how to be and contribute to a community that cares for everyone and welcomes them. How well they do that depends on what the District says and does. The District is being watched carefully by every student. Right now students are building concepts of themselves, the world, and making their decisions every day. Can they trust adults or institutions of power? Every day students are making decisions and are in flux, and everyone needs to be thinking of them.

Leslie Supther read the following statement. "...My daughter is a senior at the high school. I want to commend the Imagine Committee for all the work they've done on all aspects of the high school facilities. The plan is creative and addresses the need for more modern academic environments, expanded performing arts facilities, gathering places where students and faculty can collaborate, and upgraded physical education facilities.

"That said, the plan was developed without a particular budget and I believe the overall price tag of \$218 million and the phasing of the plan does not address the extreme taxation pressures on our community and the prioritization of academics and equity over physical education and even the arts.

"Even before this plan was proposed, the school has been generating a substantial operating deficit such that the reserves are being depleted. The Board suggested that it may have to go to referendum as early as 2023 due to the depletion of the reserves because of the deficits. In addition, there is a very real possibility that the State will ask the local School Boards to take on more of the teacher pension obligations which could put further pressure on the budget. It is unconscionable that the Board agree to use up a substantial portion of the reserves for even the first few phases of this plan.

"In addition, the tearing down of the South End of the school and the building of a large swimming pool remains a controversial issue in this community, as evidenced by the last referendum vote. I ask the Board to put this very controversial part of the plan to public referendum as there is no evidence of community support for this expenditure.

Consent Agenda

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

- A. [Check Disbursements and Financial Resolutions dated November 15, 2018](#)
- B. [Monthly Treasurer's Report](#)
- C. [Gifts and Donations](#)
- D. [Personnel Recommendations](#), including New Hires, Transfers, Stipend Positions, Resignations, and Leave of Absences
- E. [Policies for Second Reading](#)

1. [Policy 2:150, Committees](#)
 2. [Policy 4:80, Accounting and Audits](#)
 3. [Policy 5:30, Hiring Process and Criteria](#)
 4. [Policy 6:240, Student Travel](#)
 5. [Policy 7:50, School Admissions and Student Transfers](#)
- F. Open and Closed Minutes of [November 5](#), and [8](#), 2018 and a declaration that the closed session audio tapes of February 2017 shall be destroyed and declaration that the Closed Session audiotapes from January 1, 1986 through May 1, 2018 will be destroyed.

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

[Property Tax Relief Grant](#)

Dr. Grossi reported that the Property Tax Relief Grant was established by Public Act 100-0465 and revised by Public Act 100-0582. The Property Tax Relief Program was created to provide property tax relief in those school districts with high tax rates. The FY 2019 budget of the State of Illinois has funded \$50 million to subsidize the property tax relief provided by school districts via this Program.

OPRFHS ranks 15th on that list and the funding of the grant is based highest to lowest tax rates in the state of Illinois and OPRFHS would likely receive the grant. The Board of Education would have to make a short application to the state by January 7. If an application were made, the maximum amount of property tax relief would be \$5.8 million. The state would reimburse the District \$3.8 million of that for taking this action. The percentages will vary from district to district. Dr. Grossi will continue his research on this grant. This could mean that the District would receive approximately this same \$3.754 million annually so long as the State continues to increase funding to schools. The continued allocation of state dollars is not contingent on the District abating taxes beyond the FY 2018 levy year. Many high school districts are on the list. If the District filed a \$5.8 million abatement and approved a 2.1% levy increase, it would decrease taxes by 8.5%. This would be very beneficial to the community.

The District would receive this money in May. If the program is stopped, the District would be out \$2 million. If it lasted two years, the District would be ahead. More information will be presented in December.

Acceptance of the Facilities Master Plan Recommendations

Dr. Pruitt-Adams presented a personal gift to Lynn Kamenista and Mike Poirier for their tireless work on bringing forward a comprehensive review of the District facilities and a long-term facilities plan. A video with students talking about the various needs of the building was presented.

After the defeat of a District 200 (D200) facilities referendum in November 2016, the D200 Administration and Board decided to create a citizen-led committee to undertake a thorough assessment of the facilities needs at Oak Park and River Forest High School (OPRFHS) with the charge to create a comprehensive, long-term facilities master plan. A master plan is not a construction project where design and financing of every portion is done at the start. Instead, a master plan is a living document that should be reviewed and modified every few years as the impact of early projects is assessed, school needs change, and funding becomes available. Acceptance of the plan means the Board accepts the recommended Facilities Master

Plan, which is different from approving the plan. By accepting the Long Term Facilities Master Plan, the Board is accepting the identified facility needs and is not locked into a financial commitment. Once accepted, the Facilities Master Plan becomes the Board's. At that point, the Board of Education has the latitude to then decide what portion of the plan to implement and when, along with how to funding that portion.

Over the past 16 months, the Imagine Work Group has conducted a rigorous, needs-driven research process that resulted in the prioritized the list of needs as outlined in the report. The process focused on student learning and equity in the context of facility impact. The process resulted in recommendations tied to: ● Student learning spaces ● Inefficiency from decades of piecemeal construction ● Connection and community ● Equity, along several dimensions ● Configuration and capacity ● Unmet student, enrollment and curricular space needs The facilities master plan is designed to facilitate the education of the whole student, providing support for the full range of curricular and co-curricular activities that foster excellence, equity, and a sense of belonging for ALL OPRF students.

The recommendation was for the Board of Education accept/receive the Facilities Master Plan presented by the Imagine Work Group. During the December 11, 2018, Committee of Whole meeting the administration will engage the Board of Education in discussions regarding what sequences of the Facilities Master Plan should be addressed initially, when and how to begin the process, and potential ways to fund the work.

Lynn Kamenitsa made the following statement. “Good evening. My name is Lynn Kamenitsa and, along with Mike Poirier, I am a co-chair of the Imagine OPRF Work Group. We would both like to thank you for the opportunity to present Imagine’s Facilities Master Plan to you this evening and to answer any questions you may have.

“We will not be presenting all 140 pages of the plan to you tonight, but will instead mention a few highlights, beginning with a quick review of how we got here.

“When the Imagine Team first met in August 2017, it included 31 community members and 11 faculty and staff members. Mike and I were asked to co-chair it because of our active roles in opposing referendum campaigns.

“For the next 15 months, the Imagine Team worked to understand OPRF’s facilities and their adequacy for meeting current and future needs, and to create a workable, comprehensive plan to address those needs.

“Data collection methods were thorough, detailed, and diverse, including

- a student survey,
- two faculty and staff surveys,
- listening sessions with more than 600 students,
- listening sessions and interviews with faculty and staff,
- tours of OPRF’s facilities,
- five Community Engagement Sessions to gather public input,
- reviews of professional research,
- tours of other area high schools, and

- consultation with architects and construction professionals engaged by District 200

“Imagine spent the next six months working to prioritize the identified problems and to understand how the most important ones could be addressed in a long-term master plan, within the constraints of the school’s physical space, the District’s other priorities, and the community’s financial concerns.

“Mike and I would like to take a moment to acknowledge the volunteers of the Imagine OPRF Work Group. These Team members went above and beyond our expectations in every way. For more than a year, they gave freely of their time, skills, and professional expertise. Their hard work, insight, professionalism, and willingness to challenge assumptions are responsible for the plan in front of you. Team, we thank you from the bottom of our hearts. The school and the community owe more to you than they will ever know.

“We’d also like to take a moment to acknowledge the support, guidance, and expertise of the consultants from Perkins + Will Architects -- Rick Young, Mike Dolter, and Mark Jolicoeur -- and International Contractors Inc -- Terry Fielden and Marc Poskin. Their hard work turned Imagine’s findings and insights into a concrete plan.”

Mr. Poirier then made the following statement: “Well, it has been an interesting fifteen months. As Lynn mentioned, the plan in front of you represents the collective efforts of our team over that period. As you know, tonight we are asking you to accept this report, and in doing so, feel it is important to be as clear as possible as to what that means and what it does not.

“First, we ask that you accept this plan as a vision for the facilities improvements of the future: a strategy for meeting identified needs in a manner that does not create obstacles for future problem-solving.

“Acceptance of this master plan does not constitute a commitment to doing all of it; it is not a commitment to building any specific components or spending any specific amount of money.

- The overall master plan has been broken into smaller components to be done as the school can afford them.
- Very importantly, this plan is designed so the building is whole and fully functional after every sequence; there is not a risk that implementing part of the plan will put future Boards in a position of being forced to do other sequences.
- The master plan does not have single budget – components can be funded from multiple sources and as funds are available.
- When you, or future Boards chose to invest in OPRF facilities, this master plan is our recommended approach to meet the identified needs in a logical, coherent, and comprehensive way.

“While the only action tonight is to vote on the Administration's recommendation to accept the master plan as a vision, we would like to bring to your attention some specific recommendations that Imagine has included in the plan. I refer you to page

7 of Executive Summary document. Once again, accepting the plan tonight does not obligate you to act upon these recommendations, but we do expect you will give them thoughtful consideration as you decide on how to begin to implement the plan.

“I would ask that you review all these recommendations in detail, but would like to highlight a few of them this evening:

- We recommend that future facilities investments proceed largely in the order indicated in the master plan. The sequences represent the Imagine Team’s assessment of prioritized needs as well as constructability considerations.
- We recommend pursuing an aggressive timetable for the RFQ process for the earliest work you decide to undertake, so that construction can begin in June 2020. Because the major construction activity will take place as much as possible during the summer months, time is of the essence for this first set of decisions.
- Specifically, we recommend that the Board bid design and engineering for sequences one and two this winter and, while that’s underway, make decisions about what construction to do simultaneously or sequentially.
- We strongly support an organized effort to raise private funds for portions of the plan.
- Imagine would like to see this work completed within a decade. We realize that funding and other circumstances may not allow that to happen, but we encourage you to consider it and keep it as an informal goal
- We recommend that the Board establish a regular schedule for reviewing the master plan. This must be a dynamic process. Future investments need to take into account the impact of previous investments and changes which will impact future work.
- We hope the Board will leverage the expertise and institutional knowledge of the imagine Team members at every stage of the process.”

Ms. Kamenitsa then followed with the following statement: “Given the public comments this evening and recent developments in our communities, I’d like to take a few minutes to share some thoughts about equity and student voice.

“In recent months our communities have engaged in deep and meaningful discussions about equity and inequity at OPRF.

“As I have said before: initiatives to facilitate equity and investments in improving facilities are not competing efforts, they are intertwined. Claims that pit equity and facilities against each other are based on the false premise that this is a zero-sum game, but it is not.

“In reality, the pursuit of equity happens in a place, and facilities can create obstacles or opportunities for that pursuit. At its core this master plan is an effort to remove those obstacles and to maximize those opportunities.

“At every stage, the Imagine Team considered the equity implications of our work. Equity is about providing each student what they need to be successful. Our plan creates facilities with the flexibility to support that.

- The plan improves academic spaces for ALL students, and provides flexibility for instruction that meets diverse learning styles of individual students

- But the plan also includes facilities that
 - Help ALL students feel welcome
 - Create spaces for groups of students who feel marginalized
 - Support the WHOLE student
 - Support students’ social and emotional growth
 - And create appropriate spaces for a full range of extracurricular activities
 - Because, once again, what Imagine learned from students, staff, and independent research is that extracurriculars are key anchors for students at this school. They are not just fluff, as detractors would have you believe.
 - We saw it in *America to Me* and we saw it in every stage of Imagine’s work: extracurriculars provide ALL students a much-needed connection to their school -- for some, it’s the only thing that brings them through the front doors each day.
 - That is why the master plan designs flexible curricular spaces that support a full range of extracurricular activities

“As Mike is fond of saying: Marginal facilities affect all students, but they have a disproportionate effect on marginalized students. This master plan is designed to support ALL students in achieving their highest potential at OPRF. This plan facilitates equity. And finally, a central theme I heard at last week’s Town Hall on Hate Crimes was that we should listen to students and act on what we hear.

“This call sent me back into Imagine’s data to look, once again, at how our plan lines up with what we heard from students.

“Part of what we heard is indicated in the Student Survey Summary in your packet, which lists the spaces students mentioned most frequently when asked what facilities do and don’t work for them. Their responses were consistent whether you look at African American students, all students of color, or all students who responded. The master plan invests in expanding and improving spaces that work well for students: Tutoring Center, Library, classrooms, the Balcony, and the cafeterias. And the master plan invests in fixing the spaces that students report don’t work well: Locker rooms, bathrooms, pools, classrooms, gyms, and music spaces. But the call to listen to student voices also sent me back to the survey responses where students told us what they would change about their school’s facilities.

“What I found was that the needs identified in Imagine’s research are clearly and consistently reinforced in what students wrote.

“So I want to end by sharing with you the words of students themselves. (I’ll omit some of the most creative, colorful language that students used to describe places like the locker rooms, bathrooms, pools, and the field house.)

“All of the quotes I am about to read were written by students of color, who were telling us what they would change about OPRF’s facilities to feel at home and be successful in this school:

“On Study and Collaboration spaces the students wrote:

- [Make] Somewhere where we are allowed to talk or work on group projects without getting in trouble.
- Add more social areas for studying and collaboration.
- Create more quiet spaces where one can eat/drink and work in peace.
- Make the tutoring center more innovative and renovated.

“On PE facilities the students wrote:

- A new fieldhouse, please. It was "state of the art" almost 100 years ago.
- Gym rooms need to be updated, ask the students.
- The physical facilities are really outdated and the locker rooms are worse than other schools
- Treat all sports equally!!!!!! Why does football get new jerseys every year but my whole track team has shin splints and plenty of other injuries because we run on concrete.
- The weight room needs to be redone completely
- The wrestling rooms need to be bigger and renovated
- Please, new pools
- Renovate the dance studios with Marley floors
- I would make a bigger athletic training office
- Make the 3rd-floor gym ceilings higher and larger.
- Add more locker rooms for other sports
- Spaces in the locker rooms specifically for private changing.
- I would change the gyms and pools. Make them so they aren't chipping away.

On Arts facilities students wrote:

- More space and equipment for stage crew.
- Spacious music rooms with larger storage compartments for our instruments.
- Create new and larger practice rooms.
- A proper and large enough orchestra room.
- The band is the heart of the school.
- More band spaces. PLEASE!
- There are no rehearsal spaces for dancers at this school, we often have to dance on unsafe floors or in the hallways (which is also unsafe)

- Expand the green room and renovate the Little Theatre for theater kids !!
- Please make the green room bigger and fix the ventilation.
- The musical arts facilities really need updating especially the Auditorium sound system. It has ruined many an event with poor sound quality.
- Bigger or more rehearsal space (maybe even a place for speech team so students could use the library after school hours)

On Social spaces students wrote:

- We need a place where students can just hang out or do homework without being yelled at by security guards
- A personal space for students to hang out after school hours
- Gathering space for students that is open longer than 5:00
- We could have a student lounge that provides students with a place to talk and relax during lunch as an alternative to lunchrooms.
- Add more spaces for students who don't want to eat lunch in the hectic lunchroom.
- I would add more space to the balcony.
- Make more hang out spots

On Classrooms and other spaces students wrote:

- Renovate some of the classes by making them bigger
- The chem lab should be updated/redone.
- Expand, update, and grow the number of STEM specialized classrooms.
- Bigger classrooms -- so many kids crammed in one room
- Maybe create more spaces for large clubs to meet like APA.
- Have more classrooms with more windows in them to have more sunlight
- Renovate some of the entrances so that they are safer.
- Have more gender-neutral bathrooms and make the existing ones better, because right now they are awful.

“And finally, one student wrote: There should be space for people to do what they love in this school, be it band, orchestra, choir, theater, dance, woodworking, engineering, rapping, speaking, thinking, crying, hugging, everything.

“Thank you for the opportunity to listen to these students for the past year, and thank you for your consideration of the Imagine Facilities Master Plan.”

Mr. Baron appreciated all of their efforts. Deciding by December on Segments 1 and 2 will be a tall order, but he looked forward to the discussion.

Mr. Arkin accepted that this plan would now be that of the Board of Education and it would have the ability to modify it. He thanked Ms. Kamenista, Mr. Poirier, the other members of the workgroup and Perkins + Will, and ICI who went above and beyond. This building is the greatest asset in the community. Many things are needed in the building because the last big renovation was in 1974 and the things

that have changed are: 1) there was no racial breakdown when he graduated as there only 12 African-American students in his class. 2) The building was not designed for special needs students. 3) There were no ADA compliance standards at that time. 4) There was no accommodations or thought process on nonbinary students. 5) No technology existed other than the auto shop. 6) Vocational education that was provided then is different today, engineering, coding, STEM, and STEAM. 7) The evolution of a collaborative and student center learning did not exist. Students sat at desks while the teacher spoke and students took notes. 8) No daycare existed in collaboration with the River Forest Community Center. 9) The growth of the arts program has been exponential, and many opportunities exist, whether performing arts or others. 10) Extracurricular participation, especially in sports, has grown. The number of girls participating is almost equal to the boys. All of these needs that have evolved over the years have been addressed. It is the Board of Education's job, as stewards of this District and community, to do what is in the best interest now and in the future.

He continued that the Board of Education has heard all of the comments and it understands the tax issues in the community and the state. The Board needs to do its work regarding figuring out the funding, the prioritization, which he thanked them for providing an outline, as it puts accessibility needs and making the school a welcoming environment to make students feel safe and comfortable. When he walks through this building, he sees students in the hallways. They need collaborative spaces and for extracurricular activities. He fully advocated that the Board look at outside funding. OPRFHS has accomplished alumni. Colleges fundraise all of the time, and as the District moves forward with this plan, fundraising should be deeply explored. Again, he thanked them all for their work, and he hoped the Board would come to a reasonable consensus. This is a plan, not a project or a commitment to spend one nickel, which outlines what is needed for the next 50 to 70 years.

Ms. Cassell thanked Dr. Pruitt-Adams and the team. It was evident the number of hours and time that was put into these recommendations. She will accept the vote, as it would be irresponsible not to accept this plan. While the staff has done a great job of maintaining the building, given the age of the building, the last significant renovation, it is not sustainable to continue. In the past when capital improvement projects were proposed, everyone was paralyzed because they had no roadmap. These recommendations are needed to make decisions for the future. While she may not agree with everything in the plan, this was about accepting the plan regarding priority. The work of the team has been rigorous. They met with students, faculty, visited other schools, and held community discussions. The work has been done through the lens of equity. It is needs driven and student-centered and the work done in 2016 pales in comparison. She was part of that group. No studies were conducted, no tours took place, etc. This work is not the same type of work done by IMAGINE Workgroup, and it is unfair to make that connection. The plan is rooted in what is the best interest of the students. While she appreciated students' voices in the room, she was also troubled by the rhetoric used by the public and using the students to make a point by having the public stand by just waving a hand. That is not right. She thanked the IMAGINE group for bringing the voice of the students to them.

Mr. Cofsky appreciated the value of a long-term vision. He was more accustomed to having a budget and had been somewhat uncomfortable not having budgetary

restraints. He now thought the other approach was better because things were unearthed. That has changed his thinking. On the other side, having no budget causes a challenge. It puts the Board of Education in charge of doing the work and prioritizing. He appreciated all of the work. The plan addressed both long- and short-term needs. This plan is not about a pool: It is about facilities. The scope is big and the resources needed are daunting. It is beyond what is available. The recommendation page has budgetary assumptions implied and he struggled with that fact. He greatly appreciated all of the input, but this makes assumptions that the Board of Education has not discussed. His acceptance is for the content that the Board of Education can act upon and not the recommendations presented, as it does not take into account what the job needs to be. The Board of Education's job will be to prioritize. Lots of substance are in this plan as well as lots of great things to consider. Discussions will be forthcoming. The Board of Education needs to figure out what the District can afford to do and how that can be done best to meet the students' needs. He congratulated them on doing their work. He accepted the plan regarding content but had hesitations on the recommendations and implementation.

Ms. Dixon Spivy was the lone Board of Education member who voted against IMAGINE. In the wake of 2016, she was not interested in passing the responsibility. IMAGINE did a far better job than the sitting Board of Education could have done and she thanked them for not making her do it. The scope, depth, thoughtfulness, and detail in which they looked at everything was astonishing. She also commented on the friendship that had developed between Ms. Kamenista and Mr. Poirier. She thanked Dr. Pruitt-Adams, Ms. Sullivan and the community people who stood up and took on this responsibility. She also did not want them to be dismayed if the plan changed. The Board of Education will probably make some modifications. While this is a dream, the realities are more somber. She appreciates all of their time and energy.

Mr. Iseli thanked Ms. Kamenista and Mr. Poirier for their hard work on this plan. It is a great default format with which to have a discussion. Mr. Iseli concurred with Mr. Cofsky. He believed that some of the recommendations imply financing. The Board of Education will flush these out in financing discussions.

Dr. Moore thanked IMAGINE for their hard work, and while Ms. Dixon Spivy liked the friendship that had blossomed between Ms. Kamenista and Mr. Poirier, she was appreciative of their disagreements along the way. She never felt like they were putting on a show. The Board of Education did not know what to ask. Dr. Moore is a true believer in leadership and collaboration, and the community had stepped up in ways that were incredible. The members of IMAGINE have walked every step of the community. What process could be more inclusive and transparent? She thanked Mr. Arkin and Mr. Baron for being Board of Education's liaisons, for being the observers, for stepping back when needed, and for keeping the Board of Education informed. A master facilities plan is as necessary as a financial forecast or a strategic plan. It is a roadmap. She appreciated that this Board of Education was willing to be proactive as opposed to being reactionary, as they were elected to do policy and procedures. It is time for the Board of Education to do the work.

Regarding looking at the student-centered aspect of it, it talks about equity. If students are not exposed to PE or extracurriculars, they do not know if they can or cannot do them. Taking away something or having students say something different

about their needs is counter-intuitive to education. There was the example of one student not knowing how to swim, yet later the student was on the water polo team, and received a scholar, just as many others were given scholarships for field hockey lacrosse, etc. She hoped the community was visionary. The Board of Education's job is about being fiscally responsible and doing what is in the best interests of the students.

Dr. Moore encouraged questions to be given to the administration so that the Board can be intentional as to dates.

Dr. Moore moved to accept the Facilities Master Plan; seconded by Ms. Cassell. A roll call vote resulted in all ayes. Motion carried.

The Board of Education recessed at 9:40 p.m. and resumed at 9:50 p.m.

Public Comment

Gail Galvin, raised five kids in OP, thank everyone for all of the work they have done and equally billing for financially, socially-emotionally, academically, great to move forward. Without one it will not work. A holistic system is necessary. Shaun Harper, a professor at Urban Leadership, researched 40 high schools and how students overcome micro aggressions throughout high school and are successful in life.

[Approval of Building Maintenance Strategy \(2019 and 2020\)](#)

Dr. Pruitt-Adams pulled the item and asked the Board of Education members to send email questions to Ms. Kalmerton to understand why this was being brought forward at this time and separate from the IMAGINE components.

[Approval of Estimated Levy](#)

Dr. Moore moved to approve the Estimated 2018 Levy as presented; seconded by Mr. Cofsky. Discussion ensued.

Dr. Grossi reported that the Board of Education must approve a tentative tax levy at its November 15, 2018 Board meeting pursuant to the Illinois School Code (35 ILCS 200/18-60 and 35 ILCS 200/18-101.15) which reads that "not less than 20 days prior to adoption of its aggregate tax levy" the District must estimate the amounts necessary to be raised by property tax." Based upon Board deliberation and discussion, the Board may direct the administration to amend the 2018 tentative levy before adopting the final tax levy at its December 20, 2018 Board of Education meeting. The District may consider holding a truth in taxation hearing on the date of the adoption of the final tax levy but is not required to do so since the levy request is less than 5% higher than the prior year's tax extension.

Approximately 80% of the total revenues received by Oak Park and River Forest High School District 200 is derived from real estate taxes. Therefore, the decision made by the Board of Education regarding the tax levy is the main driver in determining future revenue growth and fiscal stability in the District. It appears that the District is in a current financial position whereby total revenues and total expenses are essentially balanced. The Board of Education must recognize that its decision regarding the tax levy will impact the probability of future balanced budgets and the level of fund balance reserves available for major capital projects. The amount of the levy can be changed up or down.

Dr. Grossi stated that the District's greatest asset is the fund balance. He asked the

Board how much fund balance reserves it wanted to use to cover deficits. The magnitude of deficit spending is what drives the health of a district. Next year if expenditures go up 3% that is \$4.2 million. Will that money come from tax increases or the fund balance reserves? If it comes from the fund balance, less money will be available for IMAGINE. The great concern is the gap. Hypothetically, if there was a freeze for one year and expenses were 3%, it would mean a \$2.4 deficit next year. However, if it captured the 2.1% growth in revenues and expenditures were 3%, the District was already behind. The District could exhaust \$20 million over five years and continuing to spend that would be unsustainable. He encouraged having a balanced budget, and if the District did that, in theory, it would never need to go for a referendum again. He believed that OPRFHS would not have to go for a referendum if it took CPI and monitored its budget, and it could still lower taxes by 8.5%.

Mr. Cofsky favored levying at CPI and holding the District's costs to that level, as one without the other is futile. Recognition that the Board of Education can provide an abatement is good for the citizenry.

Mr. Arkin noted that the Board of Education had no enrollment forecast as the figures have been off and were off by 98 students this year. He believed that costs could be controlled much through the hiring and retention of teachers. He applauded the Human Resources Department. The 2013 plan to spend down the deficit to have a slow arch and not have such a gap when needing to go for the referendum had not been accomplished. The District is still ahead of the game financially. He understood the pressure of IMAGINE, but he did not support taking the full CPI. Dr. Grossi reminded him that both the positive and negative sides were not known, i.e., the cost of labor, property tax reform, pension shifts, etc. If the District is in a deficit spiral, and this happens, the District will be at the mercy of a referendum to provide quality of education.

Mr. Baron supported going for the Tax Relief Grant.

Evidence-Based Funding Plan

As an informational item, Dr. Robert Grossi noted that in FY18 ISBE replaced General State Aid, General State Aid Summer School, General State Aid SP/ED Summer School, Funding for Children Requiring SP/ED Services and TPI/TBE with Evidence-Based Funding (EBF). As anticipated, we have been placed in Tier 4, resulting in no additional state aid compared to earlier years. Included in this report is a 5-year comparison of funds received and how the funds are currently being spent, and an overview of our EBF Funding Plan, which was submitted to the state in September.

The comparison of the five years illustrates what we anticipated: there has not been a significant change in funds received from ISBE. For FY 18, we have received just over 2.4 million in state aid. Our EBF Funding Plan, created from a drop-down menu of options provided by the state, is designed to identify those school improvement initiatives that we have committed to as part of our Strategic Planning process.

School Report Card

The School Report Card for 2018 was presented as an informational item as a full the presentation was made at the Committee of the Whole meeting on November 5, 2018.

- Future Agenda Items**
- 1) Update on equity policy.
 - 2) Debate the formation of a financial committee, B&G, student and community voice in helping the Board of Education sequence the IMAGINE plan. Dr. Pruitt-Adams will bring forward a facilities committee.

District Reports District Liaison Reports were embedded in the agenda.

Adjournment At 10:37 p.m. p.m. on November 15, 2018, Dr. Moore moved to adjourn the regular Board of Education meeting; seconded by Ms. Dixon Spivy. A voice vote resulted in motion carried.

Dr. Jackie Moore
President

Jennifer Cassell
Secretary