

April 11, 2017

A special meeting of the Board of Education of the Oak Park and River Forest High School was held on April 11, 2017 in the Board Room of the high school.

Call to Order

President Weissglass called the meeting to order at 6:34 p.m. A roll call indicated the following members were present: Fred Arkin, Jennifer Cassell, Thomas F. Cofsky, Dr. Steve Gevinson, Dr. Jackie Moore, Sara Dixon Spivy, and Jeff Weissglass. Also in attendance was Dr. Joylynn Pruitt-Adams, Superintendent; Tod Altenburg, Chief School Business Official; Brenda Horton, Director of Human Resources; and Gail Kalmerton, Executive Assistant/Clerk of the Board.

Visitors

Thomas Brandstrader, Declan Collins, Sungan Dundee, Max Halle Podell, Nicholas Hymson, Andrea Inksetter, Nick Jergus, Aaron Kaufman Levine, Lizzie Maquire, ReillyMosley, Leo Peschowsfski, and Noah Sherman, students; Kathy Chang Hymson, Maureen Pulick Meyer, Chuck & Urshanna Colgrave, Midge Dinou, Jim Duignan, Julie Griffin, Laura Kaufman, Patti Meadors, David Messina, Bill Meyer, Liz O'Hara, Tammy Schultz, Kara Short, Jovan Williams, Julia Wooley, community members.

Public Comments

Lizzie Maguire, student, senior, speak about Drew Fr. from full-time to part-time, large and important part of OPRFHS and speak on behalf of all arts students, the biggest impact on lives, he is a special individual and a compassionate encouraging and caring teacher, sound better and created a positive environment that is just about being with each other. He is an incredible emotional support system and encourages to stand up for what is right. In 20 years owe my success to music teachers.

Patti Meadors, a senior, spoke about her experience in the choral program since she was a freshman and she has seen how it's been remodeled since then. She stated, "When Ms. Mcguire announced that bass ensemble would be added as a class, I was excited for the new prospects of the choir department. I remember specifically how important it was for me to have a freshman choir and be able to develop as a musician. Mr. Fredrickson has provided a safe space for the students in the bass ensemble to learn and grow as musicians and as people. They have created amazing music, and I am thrilled every time I hear them sing, because of how important I believe it is for students to be able to express themselves. High school is not always the easiest place to be yourself, and choir has always been a safe space for me. Having that for young bass singers in addition to young treble singers for the two typically freshman and sophomore classes is so important.

"Mr. Fredrickson has always been a positive role model in every situation I have experienced. He always encouraged healthy singing and fosters a positive learning environment. He is trustworthy and very intelligent, and he works so incredibly hard. I am involved in OPRF's award winning show choir, Noteworthy. D. Fred, as we call him, was

essential in a lot of the success we had at our competition. We won best vocals, best combo, best choreo, best female vocalist and best male soloist, and we won the title of grand champions in our division. With the help of Cameron, our other music coach, and Mr. Fredrickson we were able to showcase our talents well. Mr. Fredrickson directed the band which won the best combo.

“I was lucky enough to go to Spain with the OPRF performing arts, where Mr. Fredrickson was one of the chaperones. I choreographed a piece that the band played, and about halfway through the trip -- at the second performance, I landed wrong and seriously injured my knee. He was extremely helpful and worked with the other teachers to make sure that I was as comfortable as I could be. He continued to check up on me to make sure I was doing all right. D. Fred has positively impacted many students lives (show choir, bass choir, marching band, recording studio to name a few) for the few years he has been here, and I hope that he can continue to do the same for future OPRF students and musicians.

Risley Mosely, a sophomore and a member of Show Choir, noted that Mr. Frederickson had impacted every student he had taught. He is willing to spend extra time with everyone. When in Spain, there was a student playing football by himself and he orchestrated others to play with him. He has only had pleasant interactions with Mr. Frederickson. His positive energy has made a positive impact on Show Choir.

Thomas Brand also testified to Mr. Frederick’s leadership and complimented him on the work he has done for the students and the school.

Max Halle Podwell, a student in bass ensemble, spoke about this unique experience for him. Mr. Frederickson makes the class enjoyable. He presents different types of music and lets the students choose the ones they want to learn. Mr. Frederickson shows them new artists and transmits how much he loves doing what he is doing. He has learned so much.

Julie Griffin appreciated the opportunity to protest the elimination of the Bass Ensemble and the reduction of Drew Fredrickson's contract. She stated that “recently, the Illinois State Board of Education adopted 5 indicators of school quality around the implementation of ESSA. One of those indicators is the ARTS. The ISBE board included the arts as an indicator after a large outcry from the public that the arts are just as important as math, reading, and another core curriculum. They received over 3,000 emails in a 48-hour time period, which was more than they had received about the other indicators combined over 3 months.

“This community values the arts. The support around the fall referendum that, although it did not pass, came very close and was due in large part to the inclusion of the arts in long-term facilities plans. The arts are growing. The arts here are successful look at the multitude of award-winning ensembles and individuals that we consistently send to

the top statewide ensembles and theater activities. The arts develop a well-rounded student- the type of student that the 21st-century workforce is looking for. To cut programs is, frankly, incredibly short-sighted and detrimental to the department. The bass' ensemble was started this year. There were 17 students in the class. The class would have had 21 students next year until it was cut before auditions had even been completed. As has been detailed in the emails sent to the Board of Education, this ensemble is critical in helping to develop young men's voices. To lump them in another choir (one that, for girls is an audition-only choir) is akin to lumping all math students into AB calculus. This is not a way to nurture our young men.

“Finally, the quality of educator you have with Drew Fredrickson is unparalleled. I was a chaperon on the Show Choir trip to Memphis this past weekend and Drew was the lead teacher on that trip. He was cool under pressure and led the Show Choir and Band for an outstanding performance at Graceland. They also took part in a workshop at Millikin - both the band and the choir were highly praised by the entire Millikin University faculty. OPRF is known statewide as having a great arts program. I have worked with him since his first day of student teaching when he was with the marching band at band camp. I could tell from that first encounter that he was going to be a great educator. And I should know as I am the daughter of two music educators with a combined service of over 50 years. In these days of a declining educator pool, we want to KEEP the good ones- not lose them.

“I implore the board to please re-consider the elimination of bass ensemble and the reduction of Drew Fredrickson's contract. Let's do what's best for our kids and this school. Thank you.”

Jim Duignan, parent of students since 1998, noted that the priority of the school district is to educate children, to provide a complete set of tools for them to interpret their experiences, and to provide a place to reside as they become educated. He lives in Oak Park and has 2 children. He testified to sitting next to Mr. Frederickson on a bus for 25 hours with 41 OPRFHS and they sang the entire time. He has a love and commitment to students; they swarmed him. He is their ally and much more than just a music teacher to them. This high school would deeply miss him. He asked the BOARD OF EDUCATION to do the right thing and bring him back full-time.

Laura Kaufman, a resident of Oak Park for 22 years and a parent of a daughter who graduated last year and a sophomore son who is active in the arts. Both of her children were active in music since they were 5 and 4 and she is a music educator. Support is rare and has a significant impact. As a parent and taxpayer, she asked the Board of Education to rethink about its current asset, Mr. Frederickson. Her son is seriously considering going to music school. Students on their way to the performing arts, look to their performance arts teacher for guidance. Mr. Frederickson has been meaningful to our family. He was able to connect her son with a private teacher who has made a significant difference to

his skillset and commitment to music. This has gone missing from other teachers. Mr. Frederickson is a role model.

Nicholas Hymson, a freshman, stated that Mr. Fredrickson has been a very important part of my music career. He is involved in concert band and show choir, but he first started at Julian Middle School. He instantly liked Mr. Fredrickson because of his energy and passion. He continued, "When I first got to OPRFHS, it was very scary and I didn't know what I was going to participate in. Mr. Fredrickson instantly reached out to me. He remembered me from the one year he had taught at Julian and put me in show choir. In addition, changing to a brand new instrument was something that he encouraged me to do. It has become one of my favorite parts of my school day, and I went on to audition for the top band, which I made, solely because of his support. He made me rise to my actual potential in music. He also relates to students very well. He provided me music artists to listen to that have become my favorite. Two students reached out to me to also provide their support. I sincerely hope that Mr. Fredrickson will be able to stay and help support the musical abilities of the students at OPRFHS. Thank you."

Aaron Kaufman Levin plays the saxophone and is in Show Choir Band. Mr. Frederickson called them part of the choir, Noteworthy. However, it has a wider repertoire, and Mr. Frederickson allowed him to do a solo. He had referred him to private teacher for alto players, and his help in the Show Choir band helped him become a better person. He also spoke about learning new and different types of music from Mr. Frederickson and he found himself transcribing it, etc. When Aaron went to IMEA, he would have them singing jazz tunes to make them feel more comfortable. There are few people to look up to as music teachers, and he asked that Mr. Frederickson be kept full time.

Noah Sherman, a junior plays drums in band and jazz ensemble. No one questions Mr. Frederickson's worth as a person. He and two other students are in a band and record with him about once a week after school as he is assigned to the recording program at school and he had helped them create their first album. They have learned much about recording and techniques and how to measure a snare drum and microphone. Not only has he added to the worth of that program but he has taken the symphonic band with Mr. Pearson to be an amazing sounding band. These students are not as committed to music but Mr. Frederickson inspires them.

Kathy Chang Hyman, Nicholas is her freshman son, and he is a multitasking student. This is a critical time for role models who they can trust. My freshman has a rapport with Mr. Frederickson that he does not have with any other teachers. She appreciated the fiscal prudence of this Board of Education, yet she also thought you were looking at the person who was multi-talented in show choir, guitar, recording studio, low brass, and she appealed to the Board of Education as a steward. Mr. Frederickson is a proven quantity who reaches students and to lose him would be short-sighted. She urged him to look at those parameters.

Jovan Williams, a senior, noted that Mr. Frederickson had made a huge impact on his life. They met in his sophomore year, and Mr. Frederickson is passionate about what he does. He is the leader of the symphonic band, marching band, and in charge of marching portion of the school. This was the first season that they had won an award.

Declan Collins, a freshman, also spoke about how important Mr. Frederickson was to the arts. He was involved in band, choir, extracurriculars, and inspires kids with the power of music. Under his leadership, they have won awards. He has helped them stand up for themselves about what they think is right and he has shared his gift of music. It is inspiring.

David Messina, a 2015 graduate, had Mr. Frederickson for senior year and was speaking for all 4 years in high school; he was a member part of anything musical. When he went to college, he didn't go into music, but when he thinks of the valuable things that happened here revolve around the band room and he can't say how much the musical educator had prepared him with regard to discipline and relationships.

Maureen Pulick Meyer, the parent of 2 daughters, a freshman and a junior at OPRFHS, stated that both of her girls are very involved in the music programs, participating in band, choir, show choir, and the musicals. She continued that "These programs are what anchor our daughters to the high school – without them their HS experience would be one of stress and tests and exhaustion and frankly isolation.

"And this connection comes in large part from the highly engaged teachers in the music department.

"Our daughters attended Julian MS and were fortunate enough to work with Mr. K, Mr. Seymour, and Mr. Fredrickson, who was student teaching at that time. These amazing teachers helped our daughters evolve from "musicians by default" (because music is my passion and darn it they were going to love music) to "musicians by choice"

"In the past, there was not a well-developed pipeline for students coming out of the fantastic middle school choral programs, in particular, to participate in a vibrant choral program at the high school. Often students fell away from singing because of that. With the addition of Meredith Maguire and Drew Fredrickson, there are much more opportunities for students to continue singing and learning and to not lose the momentum established in MS – especially for boys. In addition, these teachers have opened up opportunities for students, such as my daughters, who both play instruments seriously and sing seriously, to be able to audition for small ensembles even though they cannot take chorus as a class due to taking the band.

"The D97 choral program currently consists of approximately 850 students – and these groups are fairly well balanced by gender. (There

are over 80 male students in the choral programs at Julian alone) It would be short-sighted and not in our students' best interests to cut back on choral programs and teachers who can continue to cultivate their passion for music and help it flourish at the HS.

"Our world needs music and the arts now more than ever. It is what connects us to each other and to that which is greater than ourselves. Our youth need these human connections now more than ever in our digital and very divided world. Drew Fredrickson plays a huge part in cultivating these connections at the HS."

Bill Meyer is the father of a freshman and a junior, and his junior is a new member of show choir. They went on a trip to Memphis and he was impressed with the kids on the trip and seeing Mr. Frederickson's interaction with them. He knows nothing about music, but he has been a CEO for a marketing agency for 15 years and he knows leaders and he knows when someone is drawn to someone. In 10 years, no one is going to care about honors geometry, but they will remember who helped them. He felt it would be a grave mistake if Mr. Frederickson would be allowed to walk away.

Kara Short, the parent of a freshman, noted that Bass Ensemble was canceled before auditions were completed. Her son talks more about Bass Ensemble than anything else in the high school. He appreciates the diverse music in Bass Ensemble. While Bass Ensemble is unique, it is fair for the girls, but the boys who have not had the experience and the training, it is incredible. From the girls' perspective, they have more maturity and training and could go further. She had left teaching because she did not feel valued. If it is the desire for students to receive the best education, they need to be in an environment that is ideal. Teachers have to be shown that they are cared about and Mr. Frederickson should be allowed to get his full benefits. Not getting benefits would be hard on morale and that would bleed over to the students.

Chuck Colgrave asked the Board of Education to consider the effect that Mr. Frederickson was having on the full community, not just the students in the high school, as he has been amazingly supportive and a great role model for students.

Andrew Inksetter, junior, participated in band all 3 years and in show choir band for 2 years after auditioning for the vocal parts. Show Choir has won best combo. He was standing true to his belief that Mr. Frederickson should come back full-time next year.

Francis Bassett-Dilley testified to Mr. Frederickson compassion, kindness, spirit and willingness to help people whether it is something related to music or not. He felt Mr. Frederickson would make him grow much during high school.

Ben Spielman received a text during 8th period asking for support of Mr. Frederickson. He noted that he came into concert band and freshman

band and he was split between A. Svejda and Mr. D. Mr. Frederickson makes students feel comfortable and he could not imagine his experience without him.

Liz O'Hara, parent of a junior daughter in stem and music classes. She appreciated the Board of Education's fiduciary responsibility, but asked that it be taken in the right places. She manages a group of developers. A teacher like Mr. Frederickson is in the same situation. This community just passed another referendum to increase taxes for the betterment of the students and this conversation is about decreasing a great teacher. She has watched how students respond to him. He has passion and compassion and to lose this teacher would be short-sighted. She urged the Board to relook at the budget and to keep him as a full-time teacher.

Midge Dinou, the parent of a sophomore, stated that if Mr. Frederickson is not full time he will lose benefits and will have to look elsewhere. He is committed to the students and to the community at large and the impact he has made on the students. The music program is amazing and that program will suffer without the help of him full time. Please consider as it may be harder to find someone who will work harder if he moves on because of this reduction.

Tammy Schultz has 4 children, 2 at OPRF, and is a member of Community Council. Her son and daughter participate in marching band, which is a no-cut activity and has achieved at the award winning level. Her son loves music and looks forward to the band, even though he has an auditory processing disability, and this is the one time he can express himself. He has been encouraged to grow and perform. Winter Prisms was pulled off with 4 staff people and over 1000 students. She asked that Mr. Frederickson continues as a full-time teacher.

Julia Woolley, a teacher at District 90, noted that middle school boys' voices are still high and they are coming to a place with Mr. Frederickson that is great and a safe place--Bass Choir. As a feeder school, it is a great group. She has a daughter in the marching band and a son in the choir and she is a 1986 alumni and graduate of Tulane.

Sungan Dundee, junior, auditioned for band. Mr. Frederickson is different from other teachers. She was only inspired by her 5th grade, Ms. Mcquire, who supported her decision to continue with band. On the trip to Memphis, one student was having a panic attack and she saw him as a father rather than a teacher and that was inspiring for him. He deserves to be considered for full time as he has affected everyone.

Leo Peschowfski, remembered him from Julian Middle School as his student teacher. He remembered his early teachings from Mr. Frederickson and remembered how excited he had been when he told me he was going to be working with the high school. I go to his office to ask questions that I would not ask anyone else.

Nick Jergus, echoed everyone else's comments. He had considered quitting the band and had sent a long email expressing that he did not know what he was doing. Mr. Frederickson had said he was a good flute player and was inspiring. He could not imagine him not being here and not seeing him every day.

Mr. Weissglass stated that it was with great joy to hear the students.

The Board of Education recessed at 7:38 p.m. resumed open at 7:44 p.m.

Closed Session

At 7:45 p.m. Mr. Weissglass moved to enter closed session for the purpose of discussing the appointment, employment, compensation, discipline, performance, or dismissal of specific employees of the District or legal counsel for the District, including hearing testimony on a complaint lodged against an employee or against legal counsel for the District to determine its validity; Litigation, when an action against, affecting or on behalf of the particular District has been filed and is pending before a court or administrative tribunal, or when the District finds that an action is probable or imminent, in which case the basis for the finding shall be recorded and entered into the closed meeting minutes; seconded by Mr. Ms. Cassell. A roll call vote resulted in all ayes. Motion carried.

At 8:40 p.m., the Board of Education resumed its open session.

Recommendations for Tenure

Mr. Weissglass moved to acknowledge tenure being granted to the teachers presented; seconded by Dr. Moore. A voice vote resulted in motion carried.

Resolution Authorizing Honorable Dismissal of Part-time Teachers

Mr. Weissglass moved to approve the Resolution Authorizing Honorable Dismissal of Part-time Teachers; seconded by Ms. Cassell. A roll call vote resulted in all ayes. Motion carried.

Resolution Authorizing Honorable Dismissal Of Teachers From Full Time to Part Time

Mr. Weissglass moved to approve the Resolution Authorizing Honorable Dismissal of Teachers, excluding Andrew Fredrickson; seconded by Ms. Cassell. A roll call vote resulted in all ayes. Motion carried.

Mr. Fredrickson was being retained under the development of a program under an appropriate protocol.

Resolution Authorizing Non-Reemployment Part-Time

Mr. Weissglass moved to approve the resolution authorizing non-Re-employment of Full Time, Non-Tenured Teacher; seconded by Mr. Of Cofsky. A roll call vote resulted in all ayes. Motion carried.

Resolution Authorizing Non-Reemployment Of Full-Time Non-Tenured Teachers Not In Last Year of Probationary Service

Mr. Weissglass moved to approve the resolution authorizing Non-Reemployment of Full-time Non-Tenured Teachers Not in the Last Year of Probationary Service; seconded by Dr. Moore. A roll call vote resulted in all ayes. Motion carried.

**Personnel
Recommendations**

Mr. Weissglass moved to approve the personnel recommendations, including new hires, lateral hires, and retirement, as presented; seconded by Dr. Moore. A roll call vote resulted in all ayes. Motion carried.

Adjournment

At 8:56 p.m., Dr. Moore moved to adjourn the Special Board Meeting; seconded by Mr. Arkin. A voice vote resulted in motion carried.

Jeff Weissglass
President

Sara Dixon Spivy
Secretary