

November 8, 2017

A special meeting of the Board of Education of the Oak Park and River Forest High School was held on November 8, 2017, in the Board Room of the high school.

**Call to Order**

President Moore called the meeting to order at 6:35 p.m. A roll call indicated the following Board of Education members were present: Fred Arkin, Matt Baron, Jennifer Cassell, Thomas F. Cofsky, Craig Iseli, Dr. Jackie Moore, and Sara Dixon Spivy. In addition, Dr. Joylynn Pruitt-Adams, Superintendent, and Gail Kalmerton, Executive Assistant/Clerk of the Board of Education and FOIA Officer.

Also present were Tod Altenburg, Chief School Business Officer; Nathaniel L. Rouse, Principal; Amy Hill, Director of Assessment and Research; Brenda Horton, Director of Human Resources; Greg Johnson, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction; Michael Carioscio, Chief Information Officer; Karin Sullivan, Director of Communications and Community Relations; and Dr. Gwen Walker-Qualls, Director of Pupil Support Services.

**Visitors**

Jason Dennis and Karen Ury, OPRFHS faculty and staff.

**Public Comments**

None

**Central Questions  
And Data Indicators**

Dr. Pruitt Adams noted that the purpose of the meeting was to explore data and what the data looks like for the Board of Education, the District, and the classroom. Data is in everything: assessment, attendance, SAT, PSAT, PARCC, formative summative, 5Essentials, student discipline, demographic data, community, etc. OPRFHS has many individuals who have a high level of expertise in data and analysis, and the District has a Strategic Plan to focus on benchmarking and direction. Qualitative and quantitative data is available. The original Strategic Plan had a matrix, a knowledge of what the community expects, the data needed to close the achievement gap, and commitment to effective practices to remove the gap for underrepresented students, including special education students. The District wants to know that students are on track throughout their high school career. Because there is so much data, a disconnect sometimes happens when the administration thinks it bringing the data that the Board of Education needs to make and decision and yet the Board of Education asks for other data.

During Dr. Pruitt-Adams' one and a half years at OPRFHS, she has been in multiple meetings where the Board of Education has said that it has been asking for specific data for a year or more and/or it has said it wants something else. That has been challenging for the administration as it believes what is being brought is right, but it may not have looked at the work in a different way.

Another challenge is maximizing the resources at a time when data is plentiful and is being asked for at all levels of the District. How can the District maximize its resources in terms of staff, Data Warehouse, the Hanover Group, and Lincoln Chandler, a consultant?

The goal of this meeting is for the administration and the Board of Education to come to a consensus of the school leaders, as to what data points are important to make a decision. Is what is being presented what the Board of Education wants and what the administration needs to do the day-to-day work for the instruction of students. The hope is to hone in on the necessary data. Dr. Pruitt-Adams credited Ms. Hill and Mr. Carioscio for framing the evening's meeting.

The first exercise was to have the Board as one group and the administration as another group answer overarching questions to help delineate what is important to them and then come into alignment and agreement on what is wanted and needed in order for the Board of Education to make a decision.

The Board of Education members delineated their strengths and challenges with regard to data.

#### Strengths

- 1) Collection of all data at all levels--individual, classroom, and division to division
- 2) The beginning of having longitudinal data as a result of collecting data for sometime
- 3) Mindful of the importance of using data to make decisions, ahead of some other districts
- 4) Numbers can be limiting or misinterpreted and/or can lead one astray.
- 5) Access to the data warehouse to capture the data
- 6) More strategic use of data

#### Challenges:

- 1) Too much data to distill down to what is relevant and useful
- 2) Data can be a moving target as to what is desired and when. Momentum Can be lost when having back and forth discussions.
- 3) Attempts at having data in reports provide recommendations for actions and that the loop of follow up to see if what was hypothesized. What is and what is not and why is not always known.
- 4) Numbers are taking out of context (subjective term).
- 5) Due to the insatiable desire for data, how can the true data points that are significant to that report/strategy/action/desired outcome be identified? What direction should be pursued? What is the outcome?
- 6) The ability to process metrics and relate them to true outcomes.
- 7) Lots of data can be overanalyzed and perfect outcomes will not be achieved.

Ms. Hill reiterated that this meeting was about working toward consensus on central questions that should drive the inquiry of data and related data questions in order to answer the questions of the Board of Education members. She then asked what their expectations were. Comments included:

1. Issues having to do with students with no limitations.
2. Clarity on what is nice to know and what is needed to know.
3. Central outcome metrics are more important than data. Agreements are needed which include the levels and what levels are needed.
4. Why is something considered valuable?

She continued that the data that the administration seeks is aligned to its role and the data the Board of Education seeks is aligned with its role and that may be different. At the teacher and division head level (student learning), the teacher's role is to cause learning and the purpose is to assess instructional strategies in student learning. Have students mastered the instruction? The role of the Division Head is to monitor teaching and learning in the division. A purpose of inquiry might be to address the needs of a course. Are students learning the intended objectives and the data to answer the question would be final exam results?

To that end, DLT and the Board of Education members, in their respective groups, were asked to 1) identify areas of focus (e.g. student learning, finance, school climate, etc.), 2) identify the questions that were important for them to know, what data or metrics were needed, what was the alignment to their roles, and then what was the alignment to governing frameworks (Strategic Plan, Board Goals, Policy, Requirements, Community Expectations, etc. The result of this exercise is attached to the minutes of this meeting.

After the exercise, the two groups reviewed their responses to see if there were an overlap in the questions. They asked if there was a commonality of things to which the Board of Education and administration agreed.

Discussion ensued about the definition of a dashboard and a scorecard and their uses. An example of a dashboard was that it was what the coach uses to make the work on the team. It is real-time data. A scorecard is how one follows how the team is doing. If a dashboard is created based on what is learned at this meeting and the administration looks at the data map created by Mr. Chandler, could a process be built to follow that? A scorecard did not need to be daily, but it could be provided quarterly. Evanston Township High School has a scoreboard. One of its tracked data is attendance. If a student is absent 10% of the time, that affects the GPA. A scorecard would be transparent and show the community the work that is being accomplished. It would be a measurement of the goals at the highest level. One member asked for measurements to tell the District how well it was doing to make those things happen.

Other elements are the complexity of data and the bandwidth of people to make that happen. It is not worth training other teachers and supervisors to mine the data. Cleaning up the data is a large, ongoing task.

Dr. Moore questioned the ability of the Data Warehouse to produce the desired types of reports for scorecards at this point. Ms. Hill stated that multi-day and multi-week chores have been reduced to a couple of hours. The Data Warehouse has been well worth the money as a resource and it has untapped potential. It is compelling as it has been used at every level of the organization. Special Education has used it extensively. The question is, what is it that needs answering?

Information from a dashboard can be pulled into the system to be used for a scorecard. The Discipline Report is an example of a real-time snapshot. Much of the data is not real time. At this point, the dashboard is not the scorecard desired.

While Forecast 5 is an outside view, the Data Warehouse is about the internal financials that can be looked up with student data.

One member stated that the scorecard includes goals and if there is no clarity about what is successful, questions arise. Where is the District on target? Financial metrics were presented and had been put on hold because of administrative changes.

The administration will dissect the result of this exercise and draft data topics for more discussion and will bring them forward to the Committee of the Whole.

Dr. Moore suggested that this was not about auditing but rather about what is being done, what is work and what is the continuous feedback. Some of the reports that come to the Board of Education feel like a point in time and do not have the input as to how it fits in with the bigger picture, i.e., discipline and belongingness and achievement. How can the Board understand what supports work for the students and what do not? What do outcomes mean? How do they impact the students?

**Adjournment**

At 9:15 p.m., Dr. Moore moved to adjourn the Special Board Meeting; seconded by Ms. Dixon Spivy. A voice vote resulted in all ayes. Motion carried.

Dr. Jackie Moore  
President

Jennifer Cassell  
Secretary