

January 25, 2007

The Board meeting of the Board of Education of the Oak Park and River Forest High School was held on Thursday evening, January 25, 2007, in the Board Room of the high school.

Call to Order President Dr. Barry S. Greenwald called the meeting to order at 7:35 p.m. A roll call vote indicated that the following members were present: Jacques A. Conway, Valerie J. Fisher, Dr. Barry S. Greenwald, Dr. Dietra D. Millard, Yasmin A. Ranney (arrived at 9:02 p.m.), and John P. Rigas. Also present were: Dr. Susan J. Bridge, Superintendent/ Principal; Jason Edgecombe, Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources; Jack Lanenga, Assistant Superintendent of Operations; Philip M. Prale, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction; Amy Hill, Director of Instruction; James Paul Hunter, Faculty Senate Executive Committee Chair; Loie Davis, Student Council Board Liaison; and Gail Kalmerton, Executive Assistant/Clerk of the Board.

Appointment of Secretary Protempore Dr. Millard was appointed Secretary Protempore in Board Secretary Fernandez's absence.

Visitors The Board of Education welcomed the following visitors: Kay Foran, Director of Community Relations and Communications; Rebecca Bloch, Mallory Cybulski and Bethany Salmon of the *Trapeze*; Dr. Ralph H. Lee, Jim Donovan, Sharon Patchak-Layman, Terry Burke, Pat Nassano, and Meg Reynolds, community members; Terry Dean of the *Wednesday Journal* and Christopher LaFortune of the *Oak Leaves*.

Superintendent's Dr. Bridge congratulated Science Teacher Marie Urbanski on being selected as one of the thirty-two (32) Golden Apple Finalists to be honored at the Golden Apple Celebration of Excellence in Teaching at the Chicago House of Blues on Saturday, February 17.

Dr. Bridge reported that 209 college/university representatives scheduled visits to speak with 747 seniors during first semester.

Dr. Bridge reported that the Class of 2011 Open House would be held February 14 from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m.

Dr. Bridge also thanked Cindy Milojevic, Elaine Hlavach, Latonia Brown, Terrell Burgess and Tia Marr for coordinating the Martin Luther King Jr. Day Assembly.

Board of Education Comments Dr. Greenwald reported that two F.O.I.A. request had been resolved.

Visitor Comments Terry Burke, parent and resident of 1180 Clinton Avenue, Oak Park, addressed the Board of Education.

First Ms. Burke thanked the Board of Education members for the many hours they volunteered to the high school. She affirmed that they have the best interest at heart but she was aware that not everyone agreed on everything. She said that was evident from the simple revisions of the current policies that just reinforce the current policies.

Ms. Burke continued that she did not understand why students were being outplaced when O.P.R.F.H.S. has the best and highest paid teachers and administrators in the state. Ms. Burke was critical of some decisions made by the director of special education regarding faculty and the outplacement of students. She stated that it was too easy to outplace students and asked when oversight occurred.

Ms. Burke continued that District 97 parents were becoming aware of the disparity between the budgets at O.P.R.F.H.S. and at District 97. O.P.R.F.H.S. spends \$3 million on the outplacement of students. In looking at the educational program that is part of the policy changes, it reads that students may be placed at an alternative educational program at the District's expense and at the Board of Education's discretion. She asked who benefited from an alternative educational program. Some students are sent to Harbor Academy where the tuition is between \$5,000 and \$6,000 per year over and above what it costs to educate the student on campus. She asked what kind of educational benefit were these students receiving with that amount of tuition. While the hours at Harbor are flexible, the education is minimal. She asked the Board of Education to seriously look at the outplacement budget and determine whether creative things could be instituted at the high school to keep more students on campus.

Meg Reynolds, parent and resident of 1160 S. Clinton, Oak Park, addressed the Board of Education:

Ms. Reynolds also took note of the fact that the Board of Education had begun the process of amending the policies relative to alternative schools and expulsions, as well as Special Education tuition. She too was concerned about the money being spent on the outplacement of students. She examined the State Code and found that every contract over \$10,000 had to be approved by the Board of Education. She

asked the Board of Education to do so. She continued that there were situations where outplacement is appropriate. However, in this District, she has heard from parents that their children had an IEP and the child was forced out of the school. She asked if this Board of Education was now paving the way for the Special Education to continue to make those decisions. The money spent on the outplacing of Special Education students is significant for taxpayers. She urged the Board of Education to retool and not do things willy-nilly.

Pat Nassano, parent and resident of 507 Edgewood, River Forest, addressed the Board of Education.

Ms. Nassano distributed a handout. She wanted to address the Special Education portion of the policy proposed for revision, not specifically about the policy, but what she had done. She looked at the Special Education costs included in 2006-07 budget. She noted that there have been significant increases in tuition and salaries during the last ten years, i.e., the amount of money spent on tuition for the outplacement of students vs. the salaries of the teachers at the school. She felt teachers might be surprised, too, to find that more teachers could be hired for the school, rather than sending students to alternative schools. All students are different and some do need to be out placed, but there are some that managed to stay in a public education facility through the eighth grade. Yet when they get to O.P.R.F.H.S. and the parents are told that the students need to be out placed, they ask what changed from last year to this year. Just over \$3 million was spent last year on tuition, representing 35 percent of the total Special Education budget. Salaries represent 50 percent. For every dollar spent in 1997, 33 additional cents is now spent on tuition. O.P.R.F.H.S. is spending 70 cent additional for outplacement. O.P.R.F.H.S. is sending more students out and spending more money. She charged the Board of Education with its fiduciary responsibility to the community to find out why that number had increased. She was unsure as to who would be the person to do that or what policies needed to be reviewed.

Dr. Greenwald explained that before policies are amended, they are vetted through the Policy Committee, chaired by Dr. Millard. Dr. Millard will note Ms. Nassano's comments at the next Policy Committee meeting. He thanked her for her comments and concern about the well being of the school community.

Mr. Rigas stated that in his six years on the Board of Education, he had never had one person tell him his/her child was outplaced over their wishes. Two public references have been made to children who

were out placed, one of whom he is very friendly with the family. The parents are very happy with their child's placement. He has not heard that the Board of Education is "willy-nilly" on the outplacement of students. Some students have specific needs that cannot be accommodated at the high school. He also knew of one family who fought to have their child outplaced.

Dr. Greenwald continued that one of the things that happens at the high school level is that children become adolescents. Adolescents present another set of challenges, which may account for why the high school sees the possibility of outplacement. Developmental changes in the students add to the questions, concerns and challenges that students have in adjusting to the high school setting. He took umbrage and exception to the notion that the Board of Education or the school does things "willy-nilly." It would seem from the statements being made that the Board of Education was tossing away students as if they were an expended resources. He continued that he and his colleagues take very seriously the responsibility with which the public has charged them. He could say he had the same concerns of the parents, but he appreciated the fact that they took time out of their lives to come before the Board of Education and advocate for their students. But to suggest that the Board of Education cares less, is looking for a fast solution, and/or does things in a cavalier fashion is insulting. Despite what is said, he guaranteed that the Board of Education struggles, anguishes and thinks through each case to try to make decisions that are for the good of the individual student and the student community.

Ms. Burke, referring to autism, said that she knew of some of those issues closely. This is the first year that an autism consultant had been hired. She felt she knew the family to whom Mr. Rigas referred. While she does not believe that they wanted the outplacement initially. However, it worked out and apparently, it worked out well. She felt the school could do a better job. She knew of families whose students were out placed. They did not want it and did not agree to it because their eventual hope was that student would come back. They are hoping for student to come back or not be sent to a school that is more difficult for their child. The alternative schools vary greatly; some are therapeutic and some make their children wear ankle bracelets. The parents of students who have IEPs and have bad behavior are fearful that their students will not be allowed back into the school. The Board of Education has the reputation, despite what discussions it may have that it will vote the recommendation of the administration. Mr. Rigas informed her that no one would know if the Board of Education voted not to uphold the administration's recommendation. That information is confidential.

Ms. Nassano observed that not many people come here and complain. As a taxpayer, she was mortified when she met another Special Education student at Jewel who was outplaced. She observed that the student was social, and admitted that she did not know the specifics of her case. However, Ms. Nassano acknowledged that there was little oversight as to what goes on regarding Special Education outplacements. She asked if the Board of Education knew that outplacements had increased by 400%. She felt a review was needed.

Consent Items

Mr. Rigas moved to approve the consent items as follows:

- The open minutes of December 14, 18 and 21, 2006, and January 11 and 16, 2007;
- Personnel Recommendations;
- Resolution Ratifying and Confirming Execution of certain vouchers and payment of certain bills and expenses, fund transfers and list of bills for January 25, 2007 (attached to and made part of the minutes of this meeting);
- Resolution Authorizing Execution of Certain Vouchers for the Month of January 2007;
- Approval of Check Disbursements for January 25, 2007;
- Amendment of Policy 5110, Student Rights and Responsibilities;
- Deletion of Policy 5111, Student Freedom of Expression;
- Approval of Policy 5116, Ombudsman Program for Alternative Education, for First Reading;
- Approval of Policy 5118, Special Education Tuition, for First Reading;
- Approval of Policy 6135, Bookstore, for First Reading; and
- Approval of textbook, *Lifetime Health*, for the Science Division;

seconded by Ms. Fisher. A roll call vote resulted in five ayes. Motion carried.

**Approval of
Summer School**

Mr. Conway moved to approve the Summer School 2007 tuition, salary and dates as indicated below; seconded by Ms. Fisher. A roll

**Tuition, Dates
And Fees**

call vote resulted in five ayes. Motion carried.

Summer School Dates: Wednesday, June 13, 2007 to
Friday, July 20, 2007. No school will
be held on Wednesday, July 4, 2007
Tuition: \$175 per academic course
Salary: \$2,300 per course

**Acceptance of
Gifts &
Donations
Approval**

Dr. Millard moved to accept with gratitude the gifts and donations as presented (attached to and made a part of the minutes of the meeting); seconded by Mr. Conway. A voice vote resulted in five ayes. Motion carried.

**Authorization to
Prepare Amended
Budget**

Dr. Greenwald moved to approve the Resolution for the Chief Financial Officer to prepare FY 2007 Amended Budget; seconded by Mr. Conway. A roll call vote resulted in five ayes. Motion carried.

The Amended Budget will be placed on display Monday, March 19, 2007 and all public notices regarding the Amended Budget will be published in the *Oak Leaves* and *Wednesday Journal*.

**Authorization to
Prepare FY 2008
Tentative Budget**

Ms. Fisher moved to approve the Resolution for the Chief Financial Officer to Prepare FY 2008 Tentative Budget; seconded by Mr. Conway. A roll call vote resulted in five ayes. Motion carried.

The Tentative Budget will be placed on display Friday, August 15, 2007, and all public notices regarding the Tentative Budget will be published in the *Oak Leaves* and *Wednesday Journal*.

**Withdrawal from
The Cicero
Township
Trustees of Schools
And the Township
Treasurer's Office**

Ms. Witham presented the Board of Education with the following information.

“The Illinois General Assembly’s recent action approved new Public Act 94 – 1078 with an effective date of January 9, 2007. The Public Act allows the O.P.R.F.H.S. Board of Education to pass a resolution to withdraw from the Cicero Township Trustees of Schools and Township Treasurer’s Office. A draft resolution was presented at the Finance Committee meeting on January 16, 2007.

“Several factors complicate the withdrawal time process. We are presently reviewing the legal aspects of withdrawal as it relates to the reconciliation process and settlement, the continued Oak Park representation on the Board of Trustees and the development of an Intergovernmental Agreement on the dissolution of the Treasurer’s Office. Professional accountants are still in the process of reconciling account balances in the Township Treasurer’s Office and

report that this process will not be complete for another sixty to ninety days. The professional accountants believe that it is inevitable that there will be some type of unresolved differences that will need to be allocated amongst the districts. In addition, the Cicero and Berwyn elementary districts intend to seek referendum approval to abolish the office. An immediate adoption of a resolution to withdraw would remove the Oak Park Trustee from the Board of Trustees. Therefore, we recommend that the Board of Education delay the formal approval of the resolution until the District can 1) secure an intergovernmental agreement concerning the transition and resolution to reconcile and 2) obtain proper banking and investing institutions.

“The formal resolution is attached for future reference. However, at this time we are recommending that the Board of Education delay approval, and, instead, send a formal letter describing an intent to pass the resolution in the near future and signaling the desire to develop an intergovernmental agreement concerning all of the aspects of the reconciliation and withdrawal process. After the intergovernmental agreement has been developed, the reconciliation process completed, and the banking and investment institutions secured, the Board of Education can approve the resolution. When the approved resolution is delivered to the Township Treasurer’s Office, it will then trigger the actual withdrawal process and the resignation of the Oak Park Trustee.”

Authorization for District 200 to Commence Negotiations of Intergovernmental Agreement with District 97 for Food Services Program

Dr. Greenwald moved to authorize District 200 Administrative Staff to commence negotiation of Intergovernmental Agreement with District 97 for Food Services Program; seconded by Ms. Fisher. A roll call vote resulted in five ayes. Motion carried.

District Committees Liaison Representative Reports

Faculty Senate—Mr. Hunter was disappointed that the guests who had chosen to speak earlier had already departed. There are lots of things this year that will keep everyone busy. He thanked the Board of Education for trusting the faculty and the administration for making sound educational decisions and for providing a community that fosters the sharing of ideas, doing what is in the best interest of the District, and providing students comprehensive programs, the depth of which are vastly superior to those districts surrounding O.P.R.F.H.S. He also thanked them for not “playing” at being a school board, but being a school board. School districts are obligated

to follow laws regarding finances, rules, and regulations. The lack of respect that some people show to the administration and to the faculty was astonishing to him. He did not think the Board of Education “played” at this. The idea that the Board of Education is whimsical in its decisions, as was alluded to in the earlier comments, was insane. He was sorry those who had made those remarks were not hearing his remarks. He felt bad for the Board of Education because it could not respond to these allegations because of confidentiality. He wanted to say that 99.5 percent of the things the Board of Education hears are negative allegations. When researched, they are found to be untrue. He asked how much it cost the District in terms of energy and time to deal with the unsupported attacks that are brought monthly. The frustration level is immense.

Student Council—Ms. Davis reported that Student Council was involved in fundraising and would use the funds for an adopt-a-school cause and for medical research. Its most recent vehicle for fundraising was the King of Hearts Dance. Student Council will continue to have discussions about fundraising. Ms. Davis announced that she would be attending Duke University next year.

Alumni Association—Ms. Fernandez had provided the following report in her absence.

At the Monday, January 8, 2007 Alumni Association meeting, conducted by chair Bobbi Raymond, the following items were discussed.

Financially, the Alumni Association is currently operating with a positive cash flow. However, with the loss of donations, there is concern about raising new money for the coming year. Therefore, the Alumni Association has set objectives for raising money: 1) get new members, and 2) request and obtain financial support from organizations to which the Alumni Association has given its assistance. Also discussed was the possibility of enlisting those students who had received scholarships to speak at an Alumni special event. It was strongly suggested that a representative of the Alumni Association should speak at every June Commencement in an effort to increase and acquire new members in good standing.

The Alumni Association was appreciative of the \$500 donation from the chairman of the Park National Bank.

A continuous goal of the Alumni Association is to communicate more effectively with the alumni members who have non-active status. Maureen Kleinman has compiled a list of these non-active

members. Other Alumni members are trying to contact various individuals in order to encourage and to solicit their participation on any of the following committees: Website, Special Events, Scholarship, and Membership. The By-Laws committee is a standing committee which meets on an as needed basis.

The Alumni Association's next meeting will be Monday, February 12, 2007 at 7:00 pm in the Student Center.

P.T.O.—Dr. Millard reported that at the January P.T.O. meeting, there was an update about its theatre benefit scheduled for March 3. The musical will be *Ragtime*. School Resource Officer Eric Locke will be introduced at the February P.T.O. meeting.

Citizens' Council—Dr. Millard noted that Dr. Bridge lead a discussion on diversity within the high school and the wider community as a whole. It was an interesting conversation, punctuated with the good things that the high school does and where it can do better both individually and in groups. She hoped it was the beginning of a common, frequent dialogue. She stated that just an hour-long discussion was not enough in order for people to feel comfortable.

A.P.P.L.E.—Mr. Conway reported that Police Chief Tanksley was present and introduced the new school resource officer, Eric Locke at the January A.P.P.L.E. meeting.

Mr. Conway announced that the NAAPID Dinner was scheduled for February 7, 2007.

In response to a Letter to the Editor in the *Wednesday Journal* regarding the A.P.P.L.E. organization, Mr. Conway stated that he had the privilege of working with A.P.P.L.E. in the grade school and the high school. He was excited about the tutorial assistance that A.P.P.L.E. was orchestrating for parents and students. It was a positive move. He believed that the parents who are advocates are important and serve as a very important part at this school as well as organizations.

Boosters—Mr. Conway reported that the Booster Auction was April 28, 2007.

Early Childhood Collaboration—Ms. Fernandez also submitted the following report:

“On Friday, January 12, 2007, Chair Eric Gershenson held the Collaboration meeting at the Oak Park Public Library. Parents and educators of young children are invited to attend the February 24, 2007 "It All Adds Up!" Symposium at the Julian Middle School from 8 a.m. until 2 p.m. The keynote address is "Little Kids, Powerful Problem Solvers" by Angela Andrews (Aunty Math). The first workshop is from 10:30 until 11:30 a.m. The second workshop is from 12:45 until 1:45 p.m. More information can be attained at the Collaboration for Early Childhood Care and Education website at www.Collab4kids.org.

“The Collaboration’s other current projects are Professional Development, Community Events, Research, Membership, Early Childhood Resource Directory, and Early Childhood Resource Center.

“The Annual Planning Meeting will be April 13, 2007. Fundraising activities involve grant writing. Presently, the Collaboration intends to apply for the Community Bank Visionary Grant. Current finances were reviewed and discussed.

“The Collaboration’s next meeting is scheduled for February 9, 2007, at 9:00 a.m. at the Oak Park Public Library.”

**Approval of
Closed Session
Minutes**

Ms. Fisher moved to approve the Closed Session minutes of December 14, 18 and 21, 2006, January 11 and 16, 2007; as presented and declared that the closed session audiotapes of July 2005 be destroyed; seconded by Dr. Millard. Motion carried.

Closed Session

At 8:55 p.m., on Thursday, January 25, 2007, Ms. Fisher moved to go into 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; Student disciplinary cases 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(10); Collective negotiating matters between the District and its employees or their representatives or deliberations concerning salary schedules for one or more classes of employees. 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(2); Litigation, when an action against, affecting or on behalf of the particular District has been filed and is pending before a court or administrative tribunal, or when the District finds that an action is probable or imminent, in which case the basis for the finding shall be recorded and entered into the closed meeting minutes. 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(11); and The establishment of reserves or settlement of claims as provided in the

Local Government and Governmental Employees Tort Immunity Act, if otherwise the disposition of a claim or potential claim might be prejudiced, or the review of discussion of claims, loss or risk management information, records, data, advice or communications from or review with respect to any insurer of the District or any intergovernmental risk management association or self insurance pool of which the District is a member. 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(12); seconded by Mr. Conway. A roll call vote resulted in five ayes. Motion carried.

The Board of Education reconvened its open session at 10:56 p.m., on Thursday, January 25, 2007.

Student Discipline Mr. Rigas moved to expel Student EXP 01/25/07-25, as of January 25, 2007, for the remainder of the 2006-07 school year. Should the student return to O.P.R.F.H.S. with established residency, the case would be re-examined; seconded by Ms. Ranney. A roll call vote resulted in all ayes. Motion carried.

Adjournment At 11:05 p.m. on Thursday, January 25, 2007, Ms. Fisher moved to adjourn the Board of Education meeting; seconded by Ms. Ranney. A roll call vote resulted in all ayes. Motion carried.

Dr. Barry S. Greenwald
President

Dr. Dietra D. Millard
Secretary Protempore