

January 11, 2007

A special meeting of the Board of Education of the Oak Park and River Forest High School was held on Thursday, January 11, 2007, in the Board Room of the high school.

Call to Order

President Greenwald called the meeting to order at 7:40 a.m. A roll call vote indicated the following members were present: Barbara P. Fernandez, Valerie J. Fisher, Dr. Barry S. Greenwald, Dr. Dietra D. Millard (departed at 9:36 a.m.), Yasmin A. Ranney (departed at 9:05 a.m.), and John P. Rigas. Also present was Dr. Susan J. Bridge, Superintendent/Principal; Jason Edgecombe, Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources; Cheryl Witham, Chief Financial Officer; Jack Lanenga, Assistant Superintendent for Operations; Richard Perna, Coordinator for Student Safety; and Gail Kalmerton, Executive Assistant/Clerk of the Board of Education.

Visitors

Meg Reynolds, Terry Burke, Ms. Wooten, Richard Miller, community members; Wyanetta Johnson, Co-Chair of A.P.P.L.E.

Visitor Comments

Ms. Reynolds, representing the A.P.P.L.E. Discipline Council, addressed the Board of Education.

Ms. Reynolds stated that the Discipline Council was asked by the parents of the students being recommended for expulsion to intervene on the behalf of these two students. She continued that after a review of the documents, there appeared to be a series of due process procedural errors on which the administration was basing its recommendation for expulsion. The A.P.P.L.E. Discipline Counsel strongly disagreed with the recommendation of expulsion. She felt there was a rush to expel these students. Additional information was distributed to the Board of Education and she urged the Board of Education to read this information before it made its decisions.

The Discipline Council also promised to work with both of these students, using all means available to it and had shared its proposals with Mr. Prale. She concluded that the students did not deserve to be expelled.

Mr. Miller, resident of River Forest and parent of current Special Education student and an O.P.R.F.H.S. graduate, addressed the Board of Education.

Mr. Miller expressed concern about the direction that the high school was taking in regard to the expulsion of students. He shared that his older son had two friends who had been expelled. To this date, they were still not living productive lives. One of them Mr. Miller believed, had a chance to be productive, but he is not. Mr. Miller continued that any movement to expel a student from high school derails a student's life. He suggested that it might be the right decision at the moment, but that student might never then be in a position to help himself/herself or the country. If there are people such as the members of the A.P.P.L.E. Discipline Council who want to try to keep these students on track that should be considered. Expelling a student is an awesome responsibility.

Bridgett Wooten, parent and resident of Oak Park, addressed the Board of Education.

She asked the Board of Education not to expel her child. She professed her love for her child and her attempt to do the best by him. She itemized several things about her son's case in which she believed the Board of Education was unaware. She asked the Board of Education to give him a second chance.

Terry Burke, parent and resident of 1160 Clinton, Oak Park, addressed the Board of Education.

Ms. Burke reported that one of the students up for expulsion had not been allowed to submit ten pages of a diary where it was noted that there had been problems and requests for remediation had gone unanswered.

At this point Ms. Burke, noted that the following statements were purely her own and not that of A.P.P.L.E.'s Council of Discipline or the student's parent. She accused the school of being retaliatory because the *Oak Leaves* had printed an article about outplacement at O.P.R.F.H.S., specifically mentioning this student. She did not feel the recommendation that this student be expelled was a coincidence. She too delineated some of the events that led to this case coming before the Board of Education. She felt the vote to expel this student was pre-ordained. She could not find anywhere in any of the Board of Education minutes where the Board of Education had not voted to expel a student.

Wyannetta Johnson, co president of A.P.P.L.E., stated that A.P.P.L.E. wanted to better work with the parents, students, Board of Education, teachers, etc. She remembered her own childhood

and noted that if a child were to get into trouble, he/she had their behinds spanked. Currently, the law governs the way parents raise their children. Time outs mean nothing to today's students. She asked the Board of Education to look at the whole story when it made its decision on these discipline cases, not just what is on the paper.

Mr. Rigas reported that there have been several times when the Board of Education decided not to expel a student. That decision would not be reflected in the minutes, however, because no vote was taken. Ms. Burke was happy to hear that information.

Closed Session

Ms. Fernandez moved to enter closed session at 8:11 a.m. on Thursday, January 11, 2007, for the purpose of discussing student disciplinary cases 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(10); 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)(2); seconded by Ms. Ranney. A roll call vote resulted in all ayes. Motion carried.

The Board of Education resumed its open session at 9:54 a.m.

Student Discipline

Mr. Rigas moved to expel student EXP 01/11/07-22 as of January 11, 2007 for the remainder of the first semester of the 2006-07 school year and to hold the expulsion in abeyance until the end of the 2006-07 school year contingent upon the student's satisfactory completion of second semester with mediation and counseling services provided, verification and maintenance of residency in the District, and any additional services as determined by the Administration, i.e. behavioral contract; seconded by Ms. Fernandez. A roll call vote resulted in all ayes. Motion carried.

Mr. Rigas moved to exclude student EXP 1/11/07-23 as of January 11, 2007, for the remainder of the 2006-07 school year through the first semester of the 2007-08 school year but to hold the expulsion in abeyance contingent upon completion of enrollment and regular attendance at an off-campus therapeutic placement recommended by the Special Education Division for the remainder of the 2006-07 school year through first semester of the 2007-08 school year, ongoing counseling, and verification and maintenance of residency in the District; seconded by Ms. Fernandez. A roll call vote resulted in all ayes. Motion carried.

**Approval of
Check Distribution
List dated
January 11, 2007**

Mr. Rigas moved to approve the Check Distribution List dated January 11, 2007, as presented (attached to and made a part of the minutes of this meeting); seconded by Ms. Fernandez. A roll call vote resulted in all ayes. Motion carried. Dr. Millard and Ms. Ranney were absent.

**Approval of
Album Contract**

Mr. Rigas moved to approve the consulting contract with the Album Group LLC of Chicago, as presented (attached to and made a part of the minutes of the meeting); seconded by Ms. Fisher. A roll call vote resulted in all ayes. Motion carried. Dr. Millard and Ms. Ranney were absent.

**Approval of
Duplicating
Contract**

Mr. Rigas moved to approve the duplicating contract with Konica Minolta for copier lease and maintenance as presented (attached to and made a part of the minutes of the meeting); seconded by Dr. Greenwald. A roll call vote resulted in ayes from Ms Fernandez, Mr. Rigas, and Dr. Greenwald. Ms. Fisher abstained. Motion carried. Dr. Millard and Ms. Ranney were absent.

Adjournment

Ms. Fisher moved to adjourn the Special Board Meeting at 10:05 a.m. on Thursday, January 11, 2007; seconded by Mr. Rigas. A roll call vote resulted in all ayes. Motion carried. Dr. Millard and Ms. Ranney were absent.

Dr. Barry S. Greenwald
President

Barbara P. Fernandez
Secretary