

February 26, 2011

A special meeting of the Board of Education of the Oak Park and River Forest High School was held on February 26, 2011, in the Board Room of the high school.

Call to Order

President Millard called the meeting to order at 8:05 a.m. A roll call indicated the following members were present: John C. Allen IV, Terry Finnegan, Dr. Ralph H. Lee, Amy Leafe McCormack, Dr. Dietra D. Millard, and Sharon Patchak-Layman. Also present was Dr. Steven T. Isoye, Superintendent; Cheryl L. Witham, Chief Financial Officer); and Gail Kalmerton, Executive Assistant/Clerk of the Board of Education and FOIA Officer.

Visitors

Dr. Allan Alson of School Exec Connect and John Phelan, Board of Education Candidate

Retreat

The purpose of the retreat was to discuss the following areas: Governance, Policies, Time Management, and Goals.

Board of Education members reviewed the meeting norms discussed at its last retreat:

- Be actively involved
- Be Fully Present – No Cell Phones or email
- Respect One Another’s Opinion
- Monitor Your Own Air Time
- Do not Interrupt
- No Sidebar Conversations
- No “bird-walking”
- Act as a collective body

Board of Education members reviewed the expected retreat outcomes for the day.

- Agreement regarding structure and timing of board and committee meetings
- Clearer notions of policy versus program development
- Draft list of OPRF Goals for the 2011-12 School Goals

With the assistance of Dr. Alson, the Board of Education explored ways to be more effective and efficient. Suggestions included:

- Move the morning meetings to afternoons or evenings or have variable meetings;
- Schedule a second monthly evening Board of Education meeting;
- Except for Finance, schedule committee meetings every other month;
- Set time goals and limits for the agendas, including adjournment, and then get agreement on the agenda and timing at the beginning of the meeting;
- Develop a standardized format for committee meetings which would include: (research/evidence, questions, decision making)

- Develop a Board of Education work plan to reduce time-sensitive agenda items
- Schedule longer, every-other-month discussions, i.e., work study sessions.
- Schedule an annual retreat to review its function, seriousness of issue, and the time to allow debate;
- Eliminate public comment time for Board of Education members;
- Limit Board of Education comments in terms of their part of the discussion;
- Choose a method of policy review/creation that does not include the entire the manual;
- Avoid issues that do not fall within the Board's role;
- Specify how agenda items relate to Board policy and/or goals;
- Add discussion of instruction/academics at regular Board meetings and/or highlight what occurred at the Instruction Committee meetings;
- Provide written reports about other committees and highlight one item that is goal related;
- Discuss specific Board of Education members' behavior in meetings as well as the chair's responsibility during the meetings;
- Shorten staff presentations in committee meetings;
- Schedule the Superintendent's report at the end of the meeting;
- State why an agenda item is being brought forth;
- Form a strategic planning committee;
- Make the Superintendent of individual Board of Education questions so that he can either direct them to the administrator in charge or have them contact the Board of Education member.
- Should a request be too onerous, it may be at the pleasure of the entire board that the request is filled;
- Have proposals presented at the committee meeting with follow-up discussion at the next regular Board of Education meeting, similar to how policies are brought forth for first and second readings; and
- Board of Education members should be direct, polite, and respectful of each other in the moment.

While discussion ensued about these ideas, it was the consensus of the Board of Education for Dr. Millard and Dr. Isoye to structure a conversation at the PEG Committee with a menu of options. Scheduling of work-study sessions could eliminate the need for a second regular monthly Board meeting. The Board of Education members also wanted the monthly committee meetings to be consistent in their scheduling with defined time limits.

Due to time constraints, the subject of equity will be discussed at a future retreat.

Goals for 2011-12

Mr. Alson presented a list of suggested goals for 2011-12 as follows:

- Review of Policy Manual
- Strategic Planning Facilities Plan/Capital Plan/Finance Plan, SIP, it is the planning and coordination of all.
- Equity/Achievement Gaps

Board members gave their individual suggestions:

- Budget
 CBAs/Negotiations
- Safety/Climate
- Diversity of work force
- ISS/OSS/Academics tied together (Discipline & Relation to Academics).
 Critical thinking on social/emotional issues
- Expanding annual surveys
- Development of community school charter that states it is the expectation that the District will deliver a system with communal and parent assistance for students to graduate with the opportunity to attend a four-year college or university.

Discussion ensued about these items. Dr. Isoy itemized the things that the District is presently working on relative to these items:

- 1) An internal link for a scorecard is being designed for Board of Education members.
- 2) District 200 is discussing with Loyola University as to whether the District is capturing the right discipline data.
- 3) The District is also seeking information about teacher evaluations based on the Race to the Top Initiative. The state is struggling to find the appropriate descriptors for performance of teachers. In the 2014/15 timeframe, The Common Core State standards will replace both the ISAT and PSAE tests.

It was the consensus of the Board of Education members that the following items were of the highest priority to the Board of Education members for next year.

1. Discipline & Relation to Academics
2. Scorecard/Dashboard
3. Teacher/Administrator Evaluation Instruments (Accountability of use)

The next steps will be to determine what will accompany these goals, e.g., what actions must be given to provide guidance, what does the Board of Education want to present and define as the problem, etc.

Dr. Isoye distributed the Board of Education's budget for the 2010-11 school year and asked that it be discussed at the March Finance Committee.

Dr. Alson and Dr. Isoye will determine dates for the next Saturday morning retreat and Dr. Alson assigned the Board of Education members the task of reading chapters 5, 6, and 8 of "Leading for Equity." In future retreats, Board of Education members asked for less-ambitious agendas and that materials are provided to them before the meeting.

Adjournment

At 12:35 p.m. on Saturday, February 26, 2011, Mr. Allen moved to adjourn the Special Board Meeting; seconded by Dr. Lee. A roll call vote resulted in all ayes. Motion carried.

Dr. Dietra D. Millard
President

Terry Finnegan
Secretary