

**Oak Park and River Forest High School
201 N. Scoville
Oak Park, IL 60302**

**Human Resources Committee
Tuesday, April 20, 2010
Minutes
Board Room**

A Human Resources Committee meeting was held on Tuesday, April 20, 2010, in the Board Room. Mr. Allen opened the meeting at 9:22 a.m. Committee members present were John C. Allen, IV, Terry Finnegan, Dr. Ralph H. Lee, Amy McCormack, Dr. Dietra D. Millard, and Sharon Patchak-Layman. Also present were: Dr. Attila J. Weninger, Superintendent; Jason Edgecombe, Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources; Cheryl Witham, Chief Financial Officer; and Gail Kalmerton, Executive Assistant/Clerk of the Board.

Visitors: Kay Foran, Communications and Community Relations Coordinator; James Paul Hunter, Faculty Senate Executive Committee Chair, and Dick Chappell of the River Forest Community Center.

Minutes

It was the consensus of the Human Resources Committee members to accept the Minutes of the March 16, 2010 meeting as presented.

Renewal of River Forest Space Sharing Agreement

Mr. Edgecombe stated that he and Mr. Chappell had prepared the memorandum requesting a four-year extension of the original Space Sharing Agreement for the CITE program at the River Forest Community Center and the Childcare Program at the high school. While no formal evaluation was administered, Mr. Edgecombe received both positive and appreciated telephone responses from parents. Mr. Chappell also attested to positive relationship this had been for both entities.

Ms. Patchak-Layman found the additional information she had requested helpful. Her interest was ensuring that teenage moms had access to the services at the high school. She had learned that four pregnant students were on a waiting list next year for services. Because teenagers tend not to think about their future needs, she felt that the May registration deadline was too stringent. Ms. Patchak-Layman wanted the contract to state that it was imperative that these students have a place for their babies in the Childcare Center so that they did not need to look outside of the high school for these services. It was noted that the contract does state that students are a first priority.

Discussion ensued about holding spots for students. Mr. Rouse had felt that these students were a priority and they were given the spots first. He felt the counselors did a good job in making students aware of the opportunities. He was surprised to hear that any students were on a waiting list and asked Ms. Patchak-Layman for the specific information. Dr. Millard asked if she had data as to which students had not been able to access the Childcare Center. While Ms. Patchak-

Layman had spoken with teen parents who were able to get into the program and continue in the program last year, she was speaking about the future, because there were groups working with teens and four of them had been told they were on a waiting list. Mr. Chappell stated that all teenage moms had been accommodated last year and that four spots had been held open for four months for teen parents. He added that there were financial decisions associated with holding spots open. The original purpose of having a day care facility was for the students and Ms. Patchak-Layman did not feel that financial decisions were part of this discussion.

Ms. Patchak-Layman's other concern about the contract was the lack of information regarding the CITE Program. She felt it would be beneficial for the Board of Education to have some other sets of information to determine out how well the students in the CITE Program were being served.

Mr. Allen felt finances were a part of the equation in holding open spots for teenage moms and asked if Ms. Patchak-Layman felt the Board of Education should pay for holding empty spots. Mr. Rouse added that Mr. Chappell has worked with the high school on these issues. Mr. Rouse suggested considering a template for addressing these services, e.g., similar to the one used with the Ombudsman Program whereby the District prepays for a certain number of spots each year. However, he believed students had been made a priority. There are enough measures in place to say that if the school wants to provide these services, it can.

Ms. Witham added that the stories and situations of individual teenagers change. Some choose not to go full term with their babies, some put their babies up for adoption, and/or some of their grandmothers take care of the children. Children will also age out of one program and go into an older program, freeing space in the programs for younger children. Once a child is placed in the Center, he/she usually is there until the age of five. If a child has siblings, the Childcare Center tries to make the sibling a priority. Parents are not asked to find services elsewhere once their child has started in the RFCC program. Discussions have occurred about giving priority to the TAPP program and Ms. Witham reiterated the request for the names of the students who are allegedly on a waiting list. In an effort to help students, the high school has investigated funding for the babies of teens if the mother goes to college and wants her baby to continue to receive services. If the high school wants to go to the model of buying spaces, then all Board of Education members must approve spending that money to hold spaces open.

Dr. Lee stated that the Committee has been presented with a contract, and all contracts are based on a set of assumptions. Right now, the assumptions behind the contract are being presented. It is too late to change a policy before the Board of Education has to vote on the contract at its next meeting. Ms. Patchak-Layman noted that the contract is for July 1 and there was still time to collect the information. She suggested first looking at adjusting the registration dates for these teens.

Dr. Weninger felt that the student who was told there were no more spaces conveyed that information to the rest of the students and they conveyed that to the other groups with which the high school works. This District has committed itself to work with the consortium, the main organization working with the parents being Parenthesis. Communication has to be clear. Mr. Edgcombe stated that through conversations with the Oak Park Health Department, Parenthesis,

the Oak Park and River Forest Townships, OPRFHS and RFCC believe that they have identified every teen that becomes pregnant. These groups, including the District's counselors, meet collectively every eight weeks to identify when a student will deliver, when they will need services, etc. Mr. Rouse stated that communicating the idea that there are no spots has to stop; there is no waiting list. The District has the potential to accommodate its students.

Information was provided on the CITE program. It is a high school program for students with disabilities between the ages of 18 to 22 and this program serves 12 to 15 students daily. This program utilizes a classroom and several other areas of the River Forest Community Center. There is also an agreement with a program called "Opportunity Knocks" giving it access to the CITE program areas after school.

Ms. Patchak-Layman felt a four-year contract was too long because it did not afford the Board of Education an opportunity to evaluate and review things during that time. Mr. Finnegan was comfortable with 1) everyone involved saying that the issues will be worked out and 2) moving the contract forward. Dr. Lee concurred with Mr. Finnegan because this was not a new contract, there was good experience with this agency, and the Board of Education had enough information to trust both its staff and the RFCC staff. Ms. McCormack emphasized doing the right thing for the students. Mr. Rouse stated that he and Mr. Chappell would develop a plan for January. Ms. Patchak-Layman asked that the CITE Program be considered in that discussion as well.

It was the consensus of the Finance Committee members to recommend that the Board of Education approve this contract at its regular April Board of Education meeting under the Human Resources portion of the agenda. Linda Cada, Director of Special Education, will also be asked to attend.

Administrative Update

Mr. Edgecombe gave a status report on the administrative hires:

- Fine and Applied Arts Division Head. No candidates will move forward. DLT will meet on next steps.
- Mathematics. Two interviews were scheduled for that day.
- Assistant Principal for Student Services. Vetting of applications is near completion. Four viable candidates will be asked to interview for the first round.

Additional Discussion

The Human Resources Committee members asked for a reminder as to how teachers were selected. Mr. Edgecombe stated that the process for recommending candidates to the Board of Education for approval includes first the Division Head, then the Principal, and then the Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources. Mr. Allen explained that the school budgets for new hires to average out at the MA Step 5 salary level. When a Division Head presents someone for hire at a higher salary level, generally conversations are had about the merits of this recommendation. If the Division Head has multiple hires, he/she should balance the higher cost with someone with a lesser cost, as this is a give and take situation with the MA 5 level being across all Divisions. Mr. Edgecombe noted that while this has been a practice for some time, he was unsure if it had been reiterated to new Division Heads.

Mr. Hunter noted that as a destination school, OPRFHS gets many applicants. While he was aware of budgeting at the MA 5 level, no statements have been made that only someone meeting that benchmark would be hired. Division Heads should be mindful of that, but they should not be restricted from hiring someone else. When teachers move from one district to another they do not get the full credit for their years of service. That has been the only limitation this District has had and any hiring philosophy change should be communicated. Mr. Rouse affirmed that teachers moving from another district usually receive between 9 to 13 years of credit. Dr. Millard heard that there have been candidates that were not preferred because while they had more experience, they created more costs. She wanted to discuss the instructional quality of the teachers and balance that against the cost. Dr. Weninger stated that a discussion of a specific person should be held in closed session. He continued that he was told when he arrived at OPRFHS that new hires came in at an average MA 5 level. He continued that Division Heads are responsible for asking questions rather than just assuming whoever is brought forward will be accepted.

Mr. Edgecombe reiterated that the process for the hiring of teachers:

- 1) Division Heads make recommendations of finalists to the Principal.
- 2) The Principal then interviews the candidates and refers them to Human Resources.
- 3) If the Director of Human Resources has any questions, he/she raises them with the Principal.

Some people disagreed with the Director of Human Resources asking any questions. Collectively, the Division Head, the Principal, and the Director of Human Resources should be held responsible for the hiring decision. The Superintendent is excluded from this process. Mr. Hunter felt it should be the decision of the Principal. Mr. Allen felt this was a collaborative process with no overriding decision maker. If a conflict arose, the Superintendent and Principal should review the situation.

Ms. Patchak-Layman asked when the vetting of background and reference checks took place. Mr. Edgecombe stated that it has been the responsibility of the Division Head and the Principal but the Human Resources Department is available for help in this regard.

In response to the question as to who is the on interview committee for the Assistant Principal for Student Services, Mr. Rouse stated that the composition consisted of a school social worker, a BLT member, four counselors, two division heads, a student and a parent. Ms. Patchak-Layman asked if it would be helpful to have an OPYT interventionist included on the committee. Mr. Rouse stated that a social worker was already involved.

Adjournment

The Human Resources Committee adjourned at 10:33 a.m.