

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

**Human Resources Committee
Tuesday, October 20, 2009
Minutes
Board Room**

A Human Resources Committee meeting was held on Tuesday, October 20, 2009 in the Board Room. Mr. Conway opened the meeting at 7:13 p.m. Committee members present were John C. Allen, IV (arrived at 8:00 p.m.); Jacques A. Conway, 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; Philip M. Prale, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction; Nathaniel L. Rouse, Principal; 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, FSEC Chair, Jason Dennis, OPRFHS Faculty member (arrived at 8:54 p.m.); and Wyanetta Johnson of APPLE.

Recruitment and Employment of Administrative Employees

Mr. Edgecombe noted that the positions were posted in ED Week, the key and standard advertising venue for administrative positions, and that a few resumes had already been received. The timeline will be to advertise these positions every other week, e.g., starting with the HR position and then the Division Head positions.

Ms. Patchak-Layman asked 1) would the postings read similar to last year's division head and CIO positions versus a job description, as they had come to the Board of Education; 2) would the candidates receive questions in advance, and 3) would the candidates know the desired qualities. Mr. Edgecombe responded that the job descriptions would be posted online and it was not his experience to either provide questions or share the desired characteristics in advance.

It was noted that the Division Head position for Fine and Applied Arts is inclusive of music and performing arts. The final details will be determined after the October 22 Board of Education meeting as to what this position would encompass. It was noted that the retiring Division Head Chair's title is now Fine and Applied Arts.

Mr. Conway asked if Number 1 had been accomplished. Mr. Edgecombe noted that it had occurred but that the conversations were ongoing. DLT, BLT, and IC – have each devoted a portion of their meetings to discuss these items.

Board of Education members with specific input into the terms and responsibilities or characteristics of these administrative positions were asked to provide them to Dr. Weninger.

Discussion of job descriptions ensued. Ms. Patchak-Layman asked if these job descriptions would have been appropriate last year or had they been revised. Mr. Edgecombe noted that these were reviewed by IC and there some adjustments this year. The Director of Special Education job description was more specific, as that position is responsible for policies and procedures and records and reports unique to Special Education and related to state and federal law. Dr. Weninger had reviewed all job descriptions, including that of the HR Director. After reviewing several job HR descriptions from other schools in suburban Chicagoland, he, Mr. Edgecombe, and Ms. Witham included several items into this one.

If an interview team is part of this process, how will they be notified and included in the process. Dr. Weninger suggested that the interview team structure in the past had worked well, he just expanded it. The past process was as follows.

- 1) IC (Instructional Council) and BAT (Building Administrative Team) talked about a process of selecting division heads and other administrative positions.
- 2) The process involved a pre-conversation with the division, conducted by Mr. Edgecombe or Mr. Prale to talk about goals and direction of the District, and the goals and objectives of the division (the sitting Division Head was not present).
- 3) They were asked for representatives for the interview team;
- 4) The chair, usually Mr. Prale, would preside over that discussion and be responsible for making sure there was broad and diverse representation from the school.
- 5) The committee was composed of three to five faculty members from the division, one faculty member outside of the division (chosen by the team), and two division heads (seven to nine people in total). Sitting division heads were selected by the division members to serve on the committee.
- 6) DLT decided which division heads would participate in this process.
- 7) The Interview Team vetted the applications, developed their questions and criteria for the candidates, selected, and interviewed the candidates. The Superintendent then joined the team for the second round of interviews. Three was the preferred number of recommended candidates for the second round.
- 8) One-on-one interviews might have taken place if there were a need to get more information or a different perspective.
- 9) The culminating process was a consensus formed with the influence of the Superintendent. The process lasted approximately 10 weeks with only one committee.
- 10) There was no observation of the candidates' teaching abilities.

It was observed that this represented Number 3 and Number 9a and b. Dr. Millard noted that the prior process was dominated by the faculty.

Dr. Weninger asked of the current division heads including Ms. Bishop and Mr. Wilson, how many were external candidates? The response was two. Dr. Weninger valued opening up the interview process. He felt that more eyes were needed on the interview team (Item Number 3) before making a recommendation to DLT. He did not want to make the decision on his own; he wanted DLT's input. In the case of the principal, it was a committee effort, but he wanted to

make the final decision. He opened the process to both the parents and students as well, as he felt their voices were critical. He did not change the basic structure of the interview team.

When he first proposed change, there was a strong reaction. In the hirings of Bill Grosser, Mark Wilson, Janel Bishop, and Dale Craft, DLT did come to consensus on those candidates. He did not have one-on-one conversations with those candidates, but he did with the final principal candidates. For the science position, one name was forwarded; for PE two candidates were forwarded, for the Assistant Principal for Student Health and Safety several candidates were forwarded, and for the Assistant Principal for Student Services, two candidates were forwarded. Mr. Finnegan asked if he felt there was enough choice. Dr. Weninger responded that he had not seen the applications. He said that in an ideal situation he preferred three choices, but he did not know the pool. Division head responsibilities were being shifted to more of a balance of administrative and advocacy, meaning there would be better balance between the administrative and the divisional roles in terms of vetting those administrative applicants. In the case of DLT and BLT members, that vetting should occur by the administration. Mr. Edgecombe did not believe there was dissatisfaction with the applicants that came forward, but there were examples of why a broader number of applicants did not come forward after the first round. He felt it had to do with the makeup of the interview team. Ms. Patchak-Layman asked if the applications had been vetted blindly in an effort to prevent bias. The response was no. Ms. McCormack added that sometimes bias is not necessarily bad, should faculty or division heads know something negative about a candidate that should be known so that he/she did not move forward? Dr. Weninger concurred for just that reason.

Mr. Edgecombe noted that an ADA had discussed 9a and 9b but he had been unsure as to whether or not DLT was in agreement with the ADA proposal. When they met on the 13th there had been a consensus that this had been agreed to or proposed to present to the Board of Education.

The administration was asked to get the answer to the following questions from the District's legal advisors.

- 1) Are there legal ramifications to adopting a process which gives members of a collective bargaining unit the ability to limit consideration of candidates for administrative positions to those of that the collective bargaining unit approve of? What has been proposed is a process that actually permits members of a collective bargaining limit consideration to only those approved of?
- 2) If there are no legal ramifications, does legal counsel consider that advisable in the District's relationships with the collective bargaining unit?

Mr. Finnegan was concerned that if there were a situation where someone was rejected by FIT and then brought back by SIT and was hired, the District would be open to lawsuits from those who were originally rejected? Mr. Edgecombe will provide legal counsel's opinion on the proposed hiring process and the legality of the Collective Bargaining Unit's involvement.

There was consensus on Number 4 of the document.

Ms. Patchak-Layman suggested that the vetting of applications be done by a separate group that was trained and knew the characteristics being generated in other conversations.

The Committee members suggested reordering the number as follows:

- No. 3 becomes No. 5
- No. 4 becomes No. 6
- No. 5 becomes No. 3

Dr. Lee wanted to talk about combining 3 and 9b as a package because one is dependent upon the other. Dr. Weninger suggested not having a second vetting of applications as suggested in 9b as it was too time consuming and just eliminate 9b. Ms. McCormack and Mr. Conway concurred. Mr. Allen stated that 9A was to make sure that some were not screened out.

Ms. Patchak-Layman asked how the interview team members would be selected. Dr. Weninger responded that there were 3 or 4 DLT members and 2 division members from that interview team who would vet the applications. DLT members have been assigned the chairs of these hiring committees. DLT, BLT, Division Heads are administrative positions and, in the case of the Division Head position, it is a balance between advocacy and administration. The person setting a vision for the District should be a part of the process. Dr. Millard suggested 1) the Superintendent would concentrate on other areas; 2) parents and students should not be involved in vetting of the applications; and 3) faculty and DLT should be involved in the vetting of the applications.

Ms. Patchak-Layman stated that another goal is to have a fair and balanced process where no one could come back and say the outcome was predetermined. Ms. McCormack clarified that not all members of FIT would be included in the vetting of application. Mr. Finnegan added that a vetting team of five people could not control who would come out of the first interview. The Committee agreed to the administration's recommendation that three DLT members and two faculty members would vet the applications.

Number 10: It was the consensus of the Personnel Committee to make the following changes:

- 1) Add the word "select" before the word "applicant"
- 2) Move fourth bullet point to Number 11 to fifth position.

Number 11: It was the consensus of the Personnel Committee to make the following changes:

- 1) Add "lesson observation at the person's placement (optional)" (Item 2 above.)
- 2) Replace "for" with "by" in the last bullet of 11.

In Number 12, it was pointed out that the Superintendent could be a tie breaker if there were a division in terms of equality or he/she could be a welcome to OPRFHS, i.e., a formal introduction to having the position, as candidates appreciate being welcomed by the Superintendent. While Ms. McCormack originally wanted Mr. Prale to be involved in that final

process for Division Heads and Mr. Rouse involved in the case of BLT members to alleviate the perception that the Superintendent had made the final decision, she withdrew her concern. Mr. Allen had disagreed, as it gave the Superintendent freedom of choice. Mr. Finnegan added that the discussion questioned whether the Superintendent should be involved in all cases. Division Heads report to the Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction and BLT members report to the Principal. Should those positions make the key determination or does the Board of Education want the Superintendent to make those decisions; they are not direct reports to the Superintendent. Mr. Conway stated that the Superintendent is responsible for everyone in the building. Mr. Prale knew of no situation where one person made the decision to hire someone; it was agreed to by the team. The practice has been a fluid conversation. Both Mr. Prale and Mr. Rouse agreed with the document as written.

Mr. Edgecombe stated that FIT would give a written summary of the strengths and weaknesses of the candidates as perceived by its members. He was unsure if there was agreement or if there was a minority position, but he did believe the conversations were frank. Dr. Millard stated that some have participated on interview teams and felt that no one cared about their reaction. There were some faculty members who were reluctant to participate on these committees, because they did not believe anyone cared about their opinions and they were missing their classes. Mr. Conway stated that the Board of Education must move forward, it cannot go back and heal the wounds that exist. Dr. Weninger was unsure where that feeling came from and the document needs to make clear their role so that they do feel valued.

Ms. Patchak-Layman stated that it seemed that putting a varied group of people together for the first round of interviews is done because of the perspectives they will bring forward in terms of candidate. There may be more value in rating sheets coming forward so there are ways to take these perspectives into consideration or a combination of rating sheets, and, perhaps, a totaling of points. Discussion ensued about using a point system but the drawback would be that the District might bind itself to a certain requirement. Other suggestions that were made included:

- 1) Requiring the chair to provide both the majority and minority opinions (Ms. McCormack)
- 2) Having FIT members pick its chair, rather than assignment of a DLT member (Ms. Patchak-Layman)

Ms. Patchak-Layman asked to have a list of the candidates being interviewed. Dr. Weninger warned that many candidates do not want it known that they are candidates, as a matter of confidentiality. Ms. Patchak-Layman felt it could be part of confidential personnel report for the Board of Education and the Board of Education would be able to see the breadth of candidates coming forward. There was no support from other members for this information. Mr. Allen stated there would be a report on demographics after the process was finished, without names.

Ms. Patchak-Layman asked if the Board of Education would get the list of finalists. Mr. Allen suggested that it could be part of a report on demographics of the candidate pool. No one asked for the names. Ms. Patchak-Layman asked how the Board of Education or the community would share information about a candidate prior to his/her Board of Education approval. It was pointed out that the Board of Education does not hire below the Superintendent and the first opportunity to see candidates would be at the meeting. It would be appropriate to raise an issue in closed

session. Ms. Patchak-Layman felt the Board of Education had been eliminated from the process and yet it is asked to vote for approval. The Board of Education may have valuable input for this process. She suggested that if Board of Education members had been involved earlier in the discussion, there would be different work to do.

At the next meeting, Mr. Allen stated the document would contain the following revisions.

- 1) The numbering would be reordered;
- 2) The changes noted above in Numbers 10 and 11; and
- 3) There will be no 9b, only 9.

Dr. Lee withdrew his request for a legal opinion.

RFQ for Search Firm

The committee members reviewed a draft of an RFQ to be sent out to superintendent search firms. Dr. Millard asked the committee members to look carefully at the items required of the search firms on pages 14 and 15 and she asked for their additional input.

Mr. Conway asked how the Board of Education protected itself from the same circuit of applicants. Dr. Millard referred him to number 6 on page 14 which requires the firm to state explicitly its methodology for recruiting candidates. The Committee members were told that any candidates they recommended would be directed to work with the recruiting firm.

The RFQs are to be received in the District by November 2 and those asked to make a presentation to the Board of Education will do so at the November 10 Finance Committee meeting. It was the consensus of the committee members to accept this proposal with the following disclaimer on page 15: "Criteria will include but will not be limited to the following." The Board of Education will meet November 3 at 7:30 p.m. to review the RFQ's that have been received.

Dr. Millard also provided the committee with a list of possible search firms and asked the Committee members to provide additional names to Ms. Witham. When asked what an "Independent Search" meant, Dr. Millard stated that it might mean finding someone from the community at large to compose a committee representing stakeholders who would be held to confidentiality. Ms. McCormack noted that it would be difficult to employ someone who did not have a track record.

Ms. Patchak-Layman asked if there was a more public view for the RFQ, i.e., a website. It was noted something would be posted on the AASA and IASA websites. Discussion ensued also about a posting in *Education Week*.

Adjournment

The Human Resources Committee adjourned at 9:53 p.m.