

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

**Human Resources Committee
Tuesday, September 8, 2009
Minutes
Board Room**

A Human Resources Committee meeting was held on Tuesday, September 8, 2009 in the Board Room. Mr. Allen opened the meeting at 10:00 a.m. Committee members present were John C. Allen, IV (departed at 10:57 a.m.); Ralph H. Lee, and Amy McCormack. Board members present were Terry Finnegan, Dr. Dietra D. Millard and Ms. 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 and James Paul Hunter, FSEC Chair.

Acceptance of August 2009 Human Resources Committee Meeting Minutes

The minutes of the August 2009 Human Resources Committee meeting were accepted by acclimation, as presented.

Recruitment Procedures for Administrative Positions

Mr. Allen reviewed the procedures that he and the administration had outlined for the recruitment of administrative positions. At next month's Human Resources Committee meeting, recruitment procedures for teachers will be presented.

As the committee reviewed the procedures, Mr. Allen noted his preference to wait until the positions were filled before notifying unsuccessful candidates in order to keep the pool as large as possible as long as possible.

Discussion ensued about how information would be forwarded from one search group to another. Would the search committee members send a screening packet, including applications, reference checks, writing assessments, etc., to DLT or would it just send a summary of their recommendations? Mr. Allen and Ms. McCormack felt the entire packet should be given to DLT. Ms. McCormack was concerned about the continuity of the entire process; she wanted the first screeners' impressions of the candidates to be diluted as the process progressed.

Committee members learned more about the hiring process used last year. Applications were first reviewed by the screening committee which made a determination, based on its understanding of the values desired, as to who would be interviewed. DLT does not question why the committee chooses to interview one candidate over another. The screening committee is asked to forward to DLT three unranked candidates; DLT values their comments. The DLT member who chairs the committee then actively engages DLT in what had occurred in the

interviews. Dr. Weninger stated that any document related to employing an individual has to be kept on file for a year, including those who are rejected. Case law says that anything written could put the process at risk. That is why no notes are taken at the meetings and no checklists are used. Should a form be used in the future, it must be clear and cautious and the faculty must be educated on how to use it. Mr. Finnegan felt that a note taker would be useful in this process.

Ms. Patchak-Layman felt that it was important to have a more inclusive conversation about the desired aspects/expectations/characteristics are for these administrative positions. It should not be just those of DLT, BLT, and IC members. She also wanted the Board of Education to participate at this point. She felt that the more informed the committee members were, the more likely it would be that they would find the right candidate. She also noted that the Board of Education was to have the opportunity to review the job description. Mr. Allen responded that special attention was given to having all stakeholders involved in the process.

Dr. Millard spoke of a situation where the committee might present three candidates, who were not all on an equal plane; but someone may or may not stand out for a variety of reasons. There have been differences of opinions about how candidates were ranked as they were brought forward to DLT and then to the Superintendent. A decision was made that was contrary to the original search committee's recommendation and the reasoning for that was not given to those who were involved at the beginning of the process. Dr. Weninger appreciated that discussion and he, as the superintendent, asked the Board of Education for its guidance on this. He asked if the Board of Education wanted the committee to rank the candidates. Mr. Edgecombe remarked that it would be unfair to say that three finalists came forward to DLT as equals: they come forward as finalists who are acceptable as the final choice. While the candidates may not be equal, they do come forward with strengths that are valuable to the institution. The direction has been that they are free to rank them for the purposes of the First Round Committee. Any preference in finalist order should, however, be held until the DLT has completed its work. Sometimes, only one candidate is viable and the Chair provides an explanation for this result to DLT. Bringing forward multiple candidates is preferred so that DLT can have a give and take about the merits of each candidate.

Mr. Allen asked if minority reports were accepted. Mr. Edgecombe's operating style is that the committee's perspective is forwarded to DLT, including a minority perspective. This tells DLT that the committee did not have full consensus. That same principle holds true in the interviewing process. A candidate may be interviewed even if only one person on the interviewing team desires that. This is not an exact science. The separation of the candidates occurs through the process.

Dr. Weninger noted that the position of division head should include having a balance of being an advocate for one's division and having the responsibilities of a school-wide administrator. This process allows DLT to screen the candidates. Discussion ensued about whether the decision should be made by the entire DLT with the Superintendent giving the stamp of approval or if the Superintendent should be the one to make the decision. Dr. Weninger felt that the superintendent should give final approval on all DLT positions, as they would report directly to him/her. Mr. Allen added that because this is a one-school district, the superintendent works closely with all of the administrators.

Discussion continued on who would make the ultimate decision about administrative hirings. Some members felt strongly that they wanted the Superintendent to make the final decision because they wanted to hold him personally responsible for the decisions. Dr. Lee was adamantly opposed to having Board of Education involvement in the interviewing process. He felt the Board of Education was in charge in hiring only the superintendent. Other members felt that giving the superintendent that ultimate responsibility would devalue the work already done by others.

Ms. Patchak-Layman stressed that it was important that the committee is fully aware of its purpose in order to eventually save time. Only those candidates meeting the expectations would continue in the process. When asked if DLT should receive the applications of those candidates who were not brought forward, Ms. Patchak-Layman replied yes. Dr. Weninger did not feel that was reasonable or feasible considering the number of candidates that apply.

Dr. Millard felt the document was a strong guideline for the process and for the Board of Education, itself, to understand that it only hires the Superintendent. Ms. McCormack concurred and did not want the Board of Education involved in the hiring process for all positions, but she also wanted procedures that addressed the Board of Education's greatest concerns.

Dr. Millard felt the Superintendent should make decisions relative to the DLT members, the Principal should make decisions relative to BLT members, and the Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction should make decisions relative to the Division Heads. As such, those persons should be held directly accountable. Ms. Patchak-Layman felt that the person supervising the new employee should have the value of knowing what was fully expected of that person from all arenas in order to be able to evaluate the person properly. Dr. Weninger commented that if the Board of Education made Mr. Prale responsible for employing Division Heads, and the process allowed the divisions to select them, it would be unfair to Mr. Prale as there would be incongruence. Dr. Millard believed that responsibility and accountability was important.

Dr. Weninger stated that at some point the accountability for where things begin and where that direction is set has to be included. Who goes out and does that? The District would not have gotten to the level of 20% in its minority hirings if someone had not believed it was important. Mr. Finnegan hoped that the work being done by Mr. Rouse and Mr. Alexander with the Courageous Conversations on Race would be helpful in that regard. Every educator must be part of that process going forward. He felt there was miscommunication and mistrust at this point. Mr. Finnegan wanted those involved in the process to feel valued and motivated. OPRFHS is a tremendous school and it is a great opportunity for new teachers to make a huge impact on the students and to show other districts what is possible. His goal was to craft procedures so that the committee members felt they were moving in the same direction.

He also inquired as to how much was budgeted for substitutes for when those teachers participating in screening committees would be out of the classroom.

Ms. Patchak-Layman suggested that many teachers may not feel comfortable in encouraging others to apply because of what is happening at the Board of Education level. She stated that the

HR Department takes the lead on hiring and activities with employees at the school. HR is the partner component as it is the job function and responsibility.

Dr. Weninger noted his desire for the committee to review this document at the next meeting.

Need for Increase in Faculty FTE

The Committee was informed that the administration increased staffing by .2 FTE to meet the need in Spanish 5-6. The reason for this increase was that there were four Spanish 5-6 sections with a total enrollment of 123 students, or an average of 30.75 students in each section. An additional section would reduce that average to 24.6 students, which is slightly more than the established guideline of 24. This course is critical for college preparatory students in terms of understanding key concepts and providing sufficient oral practice of the language.

Adjournment

The Human Resources Committee adjourned at 12:22 pm.