

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

**Policy, Evaluation and Goals (PEG) Committee
Thursday, December 9, 2010
Minutes
Board Room**

A Policy, Evaluation and Goals Committee meeting was held on Thursday, December 9, 2010, in the Board Room. Co-chair Dr. Millard opened the meeting at 9:20 a.m. Committee members present were Terry Finnegan, Dr. Ralph H. Lee, Amy McCormack, Dr. Dietra D. Millard, and Sharon Patchak-Layman. Also present were: Dr. Steven T. Isoye, Superintendent; Philip M. Prale, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction (departed at 9:39 a.m.); Nathaniel L. Rouse, Principal; Lauren M. Smith, Director of Human Resources; 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 (departed at 11:13 a.m.); Nathan Eklund and Todd Bloom (arrived telephonically at 10:15 a.m.) of Blueprint Education Group.

Minutes

It was the consensus of the Policy Committee members to accept the minutes of the November 11, 2010 meeting, as presented.

Consideration for Second Reading and Action

Policy 3910, Identity Protection

It was the consensus of the PEG Committee members to recommend to the Board of Education that it approve Policy 3910, Identity Protection, at its regular December Board of Education meeting, as presented.

Special mention was made about the importance of educating employees about this policy; Human Resources will begin Step 1 training.

Policy 5144, Food Management Program

It was the consensus of the PEG Committee members to recommend to the Board of Education that it approve Policy 5144, Food Management Program, as its regular December Board of Education meeting, as presented.

Consideration for First Reading and Action

Policy 4113, Certified Personnel – Certification

It was the consensus of the PEG Committee members to recommend to the Board of Education that it approve Policy 4113, Certified Personnel—Certification, for first reading as presented.

The original policy had not addressed highly qualified teachers who are teachers of record who assign student grades and are qualified in each of their teaching areas. Ms. Smith used the language provided by IASB's PRESS service and incorporated it into this policy. Teachers gain that distinction of highly qualified either through experience, education, a test, etc. Special Education teachers who teach self-contained classes must be highly qualified in each of their teaching areas. No OPRFHS teachers have been removed from their content area teaching responsibilities because they were not highly qualified.

4122, Substitute Teachers

This policy was removed from consideration as a result of a recent amended veto taking away the centralized data base.

Superintendent Goals and Indicators

The PEG Committee considered Dr. Isoye's language for the goals and the language for his annual performance evaluation. The goals would remain the same during the term of his contract and the Board of Education would evaluate his annual goals. Dr. Millard had asked Dr. Isoye to include his goals and indicators in one document and to show the evidence for the outcomes. Dr. Millard asked for the committee members' comments as the Board of Education is required, based on his multi-year contract, to vote on specific goals and indicators. Provisional time was given for this when the contract was first agreed upon.

Dr. Isoye stated that both the IASA and the Board of Education's attorneys have reviewed this document. While both Dr. Millard and he were presenting this draft, it is from the Board of Education's attorney. Dr. Millard had asked the District's attorney about what was legally required for the contract.

Ms. Patchak-Layman felt the goals were more of a mission and she wanted to see the use of smart goals included, which usually included numbers or percents. Dr. Millard noted that legal counsel cautioned the Board of Education about specificity, because when it is time to determine whether to rehire Dr. Isoye, if the goals of his contract were not attended to, the Board of Education would not be allowed to extend or remove them from his contract. The state developed performance contracts because of the practice to continue to renew contracts with superintendents even if the schools remained status quo or lost ground.

Ms. Patchak-Layman suggested using things that showed positive improvement with subjectivity. The Board of Education's liability was that if it liked Dr. Isoye's work and rehired him, even if he did not meet the goals, and someone challenged that, he legally would have to be released. When he was hired, both he and the Board of Education were aware that the contract needed to be tweaked, thus, the January approval date. Discussion ensued about what might be acceptable. Even the language "use effective measures," reflecting a trend in the right direction, would indicate that there were no measures in effect previously.

Ms. Patchak-Layman suggested using a dashboard saying that the Board of Education wanted to see a positive direction in the AYP scores, i.e., using the present baseline. Dr. Isoye was uncomfortable with that suggestion as a statistician may say there was a margin of error and it was subject to interpretation. He reminded the Board of Education that this is about 1) satisfying

the law, and 2) allowing the Board of Education to have options in the future. Ms. Patchak-Layman responded that the words are important as they are what the community sees. What faith will the community have in the Board of Education that there will be a change at the school to move things forward?

Ms. McCormack, Dr. Lee, and Mr. Finnegan were comfortable with draft. Ms. McCormack agreed with legal counsel and the language presented. Dr. Lee saw no need for numerical indicators because it could prohibit options. Mr. Finnegan preferred to leave this as general and global as possible knowing that further information was available and the Board of Education would use the annual evaluation tool.

Dr. Millard noted that this would move forward as presented. If there were specific suggestions they should be brought to her and she will share them with others.

Organizational Needs Assessment

Dr. Isoye reported that there was a contractual agreement with Blueprint Education Group to do an assessment of the District. That assessment had gone through many variations since the original and it was decided to have Blueprint present again. Mr. Bloom put together a side-by-side activity report to compare the two processes. Blueprint Education Group received an \$11,000 payment, representing 50% of the work it had done including expenses. Mr. Rouse reiterated that last year the District was not able to schedule the 90-minute sessions due to the work involved with the number of new hires. This had been presented to the Board of Education as well as to Mr. Bloom, who came back with adaptations, yet still adjustments continued to be made. Then Dr. Isoye was hired. Dr. Millard noted that on February 15 an alteration was presented that was not an expectation of the contract and it had been Dr. Weninger's decision to pay for that adaptation. Subsequent activities were rejected. Dr. Millard noted that she had discussed this with Mr. Allen and he is cognitive of the alternations and supportive of them.

Ms. Patchak-Layman noted that the Baldrige process provided the school with an opportunity to have committees in place to discuss activities in a focused way, involving the administration, the staff, and the Board of Education. Over 100 people would have been involved in the criterion committees and it was valuable to have that many people using at standard vocabulary at the table focusing on the school's problems and assessing the current work. The value was the communal value that all would be sitting together looking at the school in a focused way. The discussion is happening within only DLT. Part of the discussion is that the Board of Education does not know what happens in the classroom and this was a way to have a full-fledged conversation about that.

Mr. Eklund stated that Blueprint had spent three full days talking with people. It was a positive experience for the interviewees who participated, community members, students, staff, and faculty, in that they were able to speak openly and freely about their own view and the current state of the school. The dialogue contained a focus and richness and the participants were told that it would be shared with the Board of Education and the administration. One thing that did emerge as the core was the fact that people have a deep love and commitment to this school. The participants were grateful for the opportunity to speak.

Mr. Bloom stated that Blueprint Education Group had not completed its interviewing. Mr. Bloom underscored the importance of one-on-one meetings. While data collection takes more time in this format, people feel safer in one-on-one meetings. While not suggesting that one cannot collect good information through groups, he stated that those groups can change. Blueprint wants to focus on the quality of data and was willing to meet with other stakeholders.

Dr. Millard noted that the District's needs have changed over the past two years. Mr. Finnegan noted there was a more collegial environment and this was a starting point from which to assess the needs of individuals and to hear the themes. Dr. Lee felt the District was moving in a positive direction.

Dr. Millard asked the Committee's opinion about the alteration of the process. Ms. McCormack acknowledged Ms. Patchak-Layman's concern and frustration that the game was changed; however, the methodology for gathering this information was far less important to her. She agreed with the value of the individual meetings and that would have been her original choice. She hoped the Board of Education would have the information necessary to move forward. Ms. Patchak-Layman's concerns stemmed from the contract and that any amendment should have come before the Board of Education. The District did not go out for an RFP for these services. What the contract provides for is not happening: 1) specific things, and 2) the payment of those things. Would this addendum have been approved? She felt this was a violation of the contract and action was necessary, i.e. an amendment to the contract that specifies the deliverables should be added. Dr. Isoye will speak with the attorney about amending the contract. Mr. Rouse stated that the District asked for the change and Blueprint Education Group graciously adapted to its needs.

Mr. Bloom added that the changes are more in the "how" than the "what." Blueprint is not changing the deliverables and he was unconcerned about amending the contract. The work was unchanged in his perspective. Blueprint is excited about capturing the enthusiasm from the people they have met within the community. Discussion will occur about a final date to present to the Board of Education.

Dr. Isoye stated that the District needs to start doing things relative to benchmarks. The District is doing a variety of things that are not parallel, but they will converge and that will be rich. The key to change will be the information gathered and how it is synthesized. Ms. Patchak-Layman stated that the end point might be the report, but it is the "how" that furnished the rest of the end point, e.g., the number of people aware of Baldrige, its vocabulary, etc. She agreed that there will be a list of recommendations, but the only people who will have that will be the administration. She felt the Baldrige process was part of the expected outcome as well, e.g., the number of people involved, the vocabulary, the structure of a facilitated conversation to take forward on their own that come forward to work on other problems, etc. Blueprint was hired because the District wanted the Baldrige process. Dr. Isoye felt Blueprint would interview DLT members just as it did everyone else. He wanted to alleviate any fear that there was a tone from the District as to the outcome. Ms. Patchak-Layman noted that DLT replaced the Steering Committee and that part of the improvements was prioritization by the Steering Committee. It appears that Blueprint will make recommendations for immediate improvement and there will be no vetting of it, just a straight report. Dr. Isoye was unsure of the format for the outcomes.

Nathan Eklund looked forward to the element of this conversation ironed out in a pleasant way for all involved. It has been a remarkable experience for him and he felt privileged to be let into this community.

Superintendent Evaluation Tool: Format and Timeline

Dr. Millard asked the Committee members whether they wanted to use the same evaluation tool that was designed previously. The timeline for completion is June 1 for 2011 and 2013 and November 2011.

Dr. Lee felt that while it was too bulky and could be more concise, it was not worth the effort to trim it down, despite its imperfections. Mr. Finnegan noted there was virtue to respecting the work previously done and concurred with Dr. Lee. Ms. Patchak-Layman noted a deficiency was the lack of evidence that something had been accomplished. She asked if there were possible to have a portfolio of evidence. One of the pieces of information she had disseminated was on the basis of the work by Doug Reeves, "The Best Practice in Assessing Educational Leaders." In talking about leadership, specifics are part of it and feed into a bigger picture of leadership, the attributes of leadership. Does the Board of Education want leaders to be decision makers? While one may say they want leaders with vision, there are no criteria that will help one see that an activity is taking place. What are the attributes of a leader that can implement the vision of the Board of Education? Ms. Patchak-Layman offered to disseminate the information to see the foundation of the conversation and to have a further conversation about it. It goes along governance questions as to what the Board of Education sees and where leadership fits in. She suggested that other criteria might be developed. Ms. McCormack, while happy to read information about useful ways to look at evaluations, tended to see the big picture and she looked at these as being prompts for the Board of Education to be able to address both the positive and negatives of the superintendent performance. She felt the tool presented was fine and that the Board of Education would be successful in evaluating the superintendent properly with it.

Dr. Isoye asked if the Board of Education wanted him to focus on the goals or on everything. If everything, he may have to change how he does his daily work. He was concerned about the definitions of "low" and "high" and suggested using a three-number scale, as follows: 1) unsatisfactory, 2) satisfactory, and 3) exceeding. Originally the Board of Education could not find an evaluation tool that offered the opportunity of comment and evaluating subjective verbiage; it wanted the option of writing something that could be shared with other Board members. Ms. Patchak-Layman added that the Board of Education had talked about rubrics but it did not want to have that conversation. She felt there should be consistency as the Danielson model which states that exceeding will look like x so there is consistency across the board. Dr. Millard did not want to see Dr. Isoye change his focus. Dr. Lee stated that the Board of Education never settled on the evaluation on the basis of what was important at the time, i.e., the goals. He did not believe the Board of Education could come to a meaningful resolution on the difference between the total job and the goals that are important right now. Dr. Millard did not feel any tool would be perfect but that she would bring this one back in a couple of months after possibly making some adjustments. Dr. Isoye and Dr. Millard will work toward that end.

Retreat Evaluation

Evaluation of the past retreat, consideration of future retreats and suggestions for PEG will be considered at the next PEG committee meeting.

Additional Matters for Deliberation

Ms. Patchak-Layman questioned whether the present process of reviewing the Policy Manual was the most efficient use of staff members' time. Dr. Isoye suggested proposing a process at the January PEG meeting; he will talk with co-chairs about the next best steps.

Mr. Rouse planned to present a status report on the Courageous Conversations About Race and additional professional development, including further Board of Education discussion. It will include a debriefing on the first semester's work and a budget for next year. Dr. Isoye stated that the plans for this year and next year were set prior to him coming to the District. The leadership has focused on training and discussion. The District must itself about its strengths, its mission, why should people attend various conferences, and should more people attend them. At the retreat, discussion occurred about working towards an equity policy and Ms. Patchak-Layman stated that an annual goal might be the creation of such.

Adjournment

The Policy Evaluation and Goals Committee adjourned at 11:32 a.m.