

**Oak Park and River Forest High School  
201 North Scoville Avenue  
Oak Park, IL 60302**

**POLICY, EVALUATION, AND GOALS (PEG) COMMITTEE MEETING  
January 13, 2009**

A Policy Committee meeting was held on Tuesday, January 13, 2009, in the Board Room of the Oak Park and River Forest High School. Dr. Lee called the meeting to order at 9 a.m. Committee members present were John C. Allen, Jacques A. Conway, Dr. Ralph H. Lee, Valerie J. Fisher, Sharon Patchak-Layman, and John P. Rigas. 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 R. Rouse, Principal; and Cheryl L. Witham, Chief Financial Officer; and Gail Kalmerton, Executive Assistant/Clerk of the Board.

Visitors included Kay Foran, Community Relations and Communications Coordinator; James Paul Hunter, Faculty Senate Executive Committee Chair; Mr. and Mrs. Bakkers and Amy McCormack, parents.

**Reordering of Agenda**

Dr. Lee reordered the agenda as follows:

1. Public Comments
2. Consideration of Policy 3361
3. Superintendent Evaluation Instrument
4. Consideration of Policies 20 and 2120

**Public Comments**

Mr. and Mrs. Baker addressed the PEG Committee about the usefulness of in-school suspension as a disciplinary consequence for an infraction that occurs outside of the classroom. They felt it sent the message to students that if they “messed up” outside of school; the consequence was that their education would be taken away. That is not the mission of the school. It also causes teachers to provide appropriate and timely work in order for the students to be on track with the rest of the class. They felt a more meaningful consequence would be for the students to give up Saturdays or to assign them community service. The Bakkers concurred that students who make mistakes must be consequence, but they strongly disagreed with the in-school suspension system and did not understand its rationale. They also understood the problems associated with the assigning of outside community service and the supervision of that activity.

Mr. Conway disagreed that the ISS sent the wrong message, as his son learned not to jeopardize his education in this manner. His son learned that lesson at school and at home. Mr. Conway agreed that the consequences were inappropriate as it cost his son a letter grade, but he did learn a lesson. Students involved in extracurricular activities should be denied only those activities.

Dr. Weninger reported that he had directed Janel Bishop, Assistant Principal for Student Health and Safety, to develop an alternative to the ISS Program for certain infractions, e.g., allowing students to mitigate the consequence by serving community service, attending counseling sessions, etc. While this will take considerable coordination and liability issues will have to be resolved, etc., he hoped a program could be available in the 2009-10 school year.

Mr. Rigas noted that it was hard to disagree with the Bakkers' statement, but he stated that discipline at this school is on a pendulum continuum. He graduated in the 1970's when discipline was much stricter. Up until a few years ago, the community had a philosophical belief that discipline was meted out unfairly, as it was dependent on the counselor. As a result, the inequities were removed and it became more of a penal system for which some students do learn. He called for a review of the system. Because of the administration's hard work, the expulsion record now is very different. While the school is a battleship that moves slowly, he hoped that the District would consider the Bakkers' comments.

Dr. Lee asked what the Bakkers were requesting that would have an immediate impact on their son's situation. Mrs. Bakker reported that their son had served the suspension, which had been appealed and denied. In their situation, there was confusion about notifying the parents before the suspension had started. They felt the process should have worked better about informing the parents as to what will happen. The other two aspects of the punishment were the counseling and withholding of activities; counseling was needed, but he has lost all extracurricular activities for one semester, which seemed harsh. Mr. Rouse clarified that the student was on campus when the infraction occurred and, thus, under the jurisdiction of the policies of the school. The student could have received a 10-day out-of-school suspension as well as the additional outside counseling. However, it was decided to bring him back to school as opposed to assigning a lengthy consequence. He will speak to Ms. Bishop relative to the due process part, including calling the parents and informing them of the details.

Dr. Lee thanked the parents for bringing this forward and reminded the Board of Education that it has much to think about in this regard.

Ms. Patchak-Layman stated that if the goal is to have students in school and moving forward with education, opportunities in ISS program should be available to further educate and provide additional assistance to insure students are able to receive comparable opportunities in the class. It is a punishment to students not to be in class with their friends, but in terms of what happens after school and making them a part of the whole school community, then the school should be finding places along the continuum to be involved. Are there opportunities for students to check in with a counselor, etc., to give an all clear?

#### **Minutes of December 9, 2008 Policy, Evaluation and Goals Committee Meeting**

The minutes of the December 9, 2008 Policy, Evaluation, and Goals Committee Meeting were accepted as presented by the Committee members.

#### **Consideration of Policy for Second Reading and Action**

Policy 3361, Petty Cash (Revisions)

It was the consensus of the PEG Committee members to recommend to the Board of Education that it amend Policy 3361, Petty Cash, at its regular January Board of Education meeting, as presented.

### **Superintendent, Evaluation and Goals and Instrument**

Dr. Weninger presented the PEG Committee members with a memorandum explaining that he had incorporated the changes the Committee members had suggested at the November 12 meeting and made additional edits to the Superintendent Evaluation Instrument (attached to and made a part of the minutes of this meeting). He stressed the importance of completing this document as soon as possible in order that it is used in the March-April timeframe for the 2008-2009 contract year evaluation. Discussion ensued. Mr. Conway stated that the evaluation of the superintendent should be done by the sitting Board of Education versus the new Board of Education. Ms. Patchak-Layman disagreed asking what indicators would be used to evaluate something in April with a due date of June. She did suggest that the superintendent could provide portfolios to the Board of Education in order to know what percentage of the goal had been completed. Dr. Weninger pointed out that these goals were not mathematical and to place a percentage on them would be difficult. In some instances, it would take until July 1 to complete some of the goals. The alternative would be to say as much as possible would be completed by April, which could cause rushing or not giving enough attention to the goal. A status report could be given and the Board of Education could make a determination as to what degree the items had been completed, given a set of circumstances.

Mr. Rigas felt the evaluation piece was more subjective and it would probably not change much in June. The Board of Education could complete this in April and talk about it. If there were other items that were more objective, then it would not matter who was sitting at that point. The Board of Education would need to continue to look at this in June because 90 percent could not be completed and evaluated in April.

Dr. Lee felt the Board of Education members could use their own judgment in evaluating where things would be by the end of June. The Board of Education has to exercise judgment, but he believed it could be completed in April. Mr. Edgecombe stated that making judgments is ongoing. Dr. Lee stated that the Board of Education has an obligation to tell the superintendent where the Board of Education stood with respect to his/her employment in the District. A part of this is ongoing but another part that operates in quantum leaps. Because of this evaluation, this Board of Education has to take one of a limited number of options with respect to the employment of the superintendent. Some parts are ongoing and others have finality. Ms. Patchak-Layman asked if it were possible to get a portfolio to go along with performance goals/activities in order to know what happened with that particular indicator at the time as evidence. Portfolios are used with students to show that they have met their goals and matched the goal set. She asked if works-in-progress would be part of the activities listed as plans, activities, procedures, etc. Dr. Lee assumed it would be everything given to the Board of Education up to that point and the Board of Education would have to exercise its judgment based on that information.

Dr. Weninger clarified for Dr. Lee that the Board of Education and the superintendent would be completing the evaluation at the same time and the president would collate and distributed to the Board of Education at one time. Ms. Patchak-Layman wanted to have evidence as she filled out

her form. Dr. Weninger indicated he too would like the Board of Education's evaluations in order to fill out his form. Dr. Lee felt this document put a great deal of faith in the judgment in each of the eight people. Ms. Patchak-Layman stated that this was a performance-based contract and the Board of Education needs to be able to share with the community the contract, the goals, and the evidence as to when the goals had been met. Because this is the final evaluation in a year's cycle, something concrete should be in hand. She suggested doing quarterly evaluations. No further comments were made on this issue.

It was agreed to list the six fall initiatives in this document. In response to the question of whether a Board of Education self-evaluation would be scheduled by April, Dr. Weninger replied that he was presenting the Board of Education with the draft using both standards by IASB in a similar format to this as a way of having the Board of Education do a self-evaluation and then the Board of Education may decide how and when it wants to use it.

Ms. Patchak-Layman asked if the Board of Education would do performance goals for the following year by the end of April. Dr. Weninger clarified that it was his intention not to make the Board of Education's self-evaluation a part of this evaluation but only to reference it in the cover memo that it should be done.

Ms. Patchak-Layman asked whether the Board of Education members elected in April would have an opportunity to be involved with the superintendent's evaluation and goal setting for the next year. Dr. Weninger responded that there is the potential to have four new board members in the April election. The intent was for the current Board of Education to evaluate the superintendent on the past nine months and not to deny the new board an opportunity to develop goals for the next year. Dr. Weninger will provide a draft Board of Education self-evaluation instrument in February and the Board of Education to can decide when to hold that meeting. Ms. Patchak-Layman felt the performance evaluation could be done easily. The performance goals should be self-evident as to whether the measures of success have been completed. Any Board of Education member should be able to say something was done, etc. The contract contains items that are relative to performance goals for the following year. Dr. Lee reiterated that the Committee was only dealing with the superintendent evaluation, the document, and the process for the Board of Education to use, recognizing that this was not the process for the goals. Ms. Patchak-Layman objected to the timing of this and not splitting the two activities. The performance goals should be separated from the performance evaluation. The April date could work with the performance evaluation but not for the performance goals. Dr. Lee asked if there were any support for Ms. Patchak-Layman's request. There was none.

It was the consensus of the majority of Committee members to utilize this document in the evaluation of the superintendent. Dr. Weninger appreciated the work Dr. Lee did on this document, as it was collegial and collaborative and Dr. Weninger appreciated the Board of Education's willingness to deal with the process. He looked forward to getting the information back so that continuous improvement may continue.

## **Consideration of Policies for First Reading and Action**

### **Policy 20, Board of Education**

Dr. Lee explained that the reason for bringing this to the Policy Committee meeting was the issue of current Board of Education members' ability to read closed session minutes for which they were not a part and/or to listen to closed session tapes for which they were not a part. He continued that the Board of Education would be asked to approve the destruction of closed session tapes older than 18 months. The law calls for closed session tapes to be kept for a minimum of 18 months. The last tapes that were destroyed had been prior to March 2006. When those tapes were brought to the Board of Education for destruction, Ms. Patchak-Layman had asked to review those tapes and the minutes to see if the minutes reflected the discussion in the tapes. She felt that if the Board of Education was being asked to destroy the tapes, they should be reviewed.

Mr. Rigas reiterated that when this discussion first occurred, the attorneys noted that the tapes belonged only to the Board of Education members, and the decision was for only the Board of Education members to have access to the meetings minutes or tapes in which they were involved. He also did not believe that the destruction of tapes put a duty on any Board of Education member to determine the validity of minutes. The minutes were accepted by the Board of Education sitting in place at that time as a record of what occurred at that meeting. For one to do a review and disagree that the minutes did not reflect the tapes, one would be saying that the minutes accepted by the Board of Education sitting at that time should be revised. He reiterated that he did not believe there was any duty or responsibility to review the tapes prior to destruction; the only reason to hold the tapes would be that there is a lawsuit. He also has reviewed the minutes of many public entities in these communities and none were as detailed as the minutes of this Board of Education. There is no requirement to review them in order to destroy the tapes.

It was affirmed to Ms. Fisher that the Board of Education reviews the closed session minutes for the past six months twice per year and makes a declaration that the closed session minutes should be kept closed beginning from when the law so stated. Previously, the Board of Education decreed that the closed session tapes older than 18 months be destroyed. More recently, it had authorized the destruction on a monthly basis.

The present policy does not have any limitation as to which Board of Education members may review the minutes or tapes. However, previously the policy was more restrictive, similar to the language being proposed.

Ms. Fisher noted that the administration should continue to place destruction of tapes on the Board of Education agenda for a vote and Board of Education members can vote as they choose.

Mr. Rigas noted that the minutes are voted in paper format by a Board of Education sitting at the time. Ms. Patchak-Layman's opinion, which is not law, is that she has to vote on something. There is nothing that says she has to listen to the tapes before they are destroyed. Because she would be saying that the minutes were written and reflected in error and that she did not trust the then sitting Board of Education. If she were uncomfortable approving the minutes, Mr. Rigas suggested that she abstain from the vote. He did not believe that Board of Education members should be listening to tapes from meetings at which they did not attend. Ms. Fisher concurred and noted that for two years

Ms. Patchak-Layman had approved the closed session minutes without making any changes. If she felt something was wrong with the minutes, she should have said something at the time and have not approved them.

Mr. Allen was against the proposed change as he felt every Board of Education should be have the ability to review the tapes whether they were a member of the Board of Education at the time or not.. The minutes by their vary nature represents a summary of what happened and he would be against changing the policy.

Dr. Lee felt the fundamental issue was whether once one was elected to the Board of Education if member should have access to anything and everything relative to the history of the school district. When Mr. Rigas retires, will he have access to the minutes? Mr. Rigas was worried about how future Board of Education members might use the minutes. While Mr. Allen understood, he wanted the option of being able to review tapes of past conversations.

This conversation will be tabled until the February PEG Committee meeting. With the consensus of the Committee members, Dr. Weninger noted that the administration would put on the January Board of Education agenda the destruction of tapes older than 19 months. Discussion ensued as to whether Ms. Patchak-Layman had the right to the listen to the tapes prior to the vote the following week, per her statement to do so. As the policy is presently written, she would have that right.

#### Policy 2120, Superintendent/Principal (Revisions)

It was the consensus of the PEG Committee members to recommend to the Board of Education that it approve Policy 2120, Superintendent/Principal, for first reading at its regular January Board of Education meeting, with the following amendment:

Page 4, Para 2, Line 3:            Replace “April” with “June” This date was suggested, noting that the evaluation could be completed earlier.

Ms. Patchak-Layman was informed that No. 6 on Page 2 was amended to reflect current practice.

#### **Adjournment**

At 10:45 a.m., on Tuesday, January 13, 2009, the Policy, Evaluation, and Goals Committee adjourned.