

January 22, 2009

The Board meeting of the Board of Education of the Oak Park and River Forest High School was held on Thursday evening, January 22, 2009, in the Board Room of the high school.

Call to Order President Conway called the meeting to order at 8:36 p.m. A roll call indicated that the following members were present: John C. Allen, IV; Jacques A. Conway, Valerie J. Fisher, Dr. Ralph H. Lee, Dr. Dietra D. Millard, 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 L. Rouse, Principal; Cheryl L. Witham, Chief Financial Officer; James Paul Hunter, Faculty Senate Executive Committee Chair; Ryan Mullin, Student Council Board of Education Liaison; and Gail Kalmerton, Executive Assistant/Clerk of the Board.

Visitors The Board of Education welcomed the following visitors: Kay Foran, OPRFHS Communications and Community Relations Coordinator, Jason R. Dennis, OPRFHS faculty member, Judie Wilson, League of Women Voters; Richard Falen, Victor Guarino, Rosa Higgs, Amy McCormack, John Bokum, and Wyanetta Johnson; community members, Dan Knickelbein of the *Trapeze*, Terry Dean of the *Wednesday Journal*, and Chris LaFortune of the *Oak Leaves*.

Change of Agenda Ms. Patchak-Layman asked that Agenda Item the “Open and Closed Minutes of December 11 and 18, 2008, and January 13, 2009, a declaration that the audio recordings from March 2006 through June 2007” be destroyed be removed from the consent agenda.

FOIA Requests Mr. Conway reported that one FOIA request had been received and resolved.

Board of Education Dr. Millard thanked everyone who sent e-mails and tried to communicate regarding the B&G negotiations. She made it clear that no decision would be made that evening. This is a historic year for everyone with the new President of the United States, and she hoped for more hope and optimism and making a difference.

Ms. Patchak-Layman requested to view the FOIA request that had been received. That request was satisfied at the table.

Ms. Patchak-Layman too was appreciative of all the support for the Buildings and Grounds custodial staff shown earlier that evening. She felt that the activity the Board of Education took on November

20 needed reaffirming in a public venue. It reads in the process line as it came from a regular Board of Education meeting, but the conversation was held in closed session. Because this is not part of negotiations, a separate dual item, it should be held in open session so that the community has an understanding. When this information came to the Board of Education, it was put together by the administration. She found it a conflict of interest that the administration involved in the Buildings and Grounds negotiations was also working on the third-party vendor process. She felt it was a disservice to the negotiation team and it was not good faith bargaining to explore outsourcing at this time. She recommended dispensing with the current negotiations and the pursuit of outsourcing and that both the Board of Education and the union learn how to do interest-based bargaining framework in order to move away from an adversarial point of view. It would be both a service to the community and a fair and just system of bargaining. Ms. Patchak-Layman did not favor outsourcing and she hoped that the other Board of Education members would share their vote with the community so that all had the information upfront.

Ms. Patchak-Layman had voiced a concern in August regarding students being given late arrivals and early dismissals rather than being assigned to study halls. With the beginning of the new semester, she had the same concerns. Underclass students should be in school. To offer them a late arrival, instead of a study hall, is not in the best interest of their education and, perhaps, the parents do not know about it.

Ms. Patchak-Layman asked for an update on the Childcare Center. Because the Board of Education had been informed last spring that there would be many children having children this year, she wondered if the Childcare Program would be able to accommodate those children seamlessly. A concern had been brought to her that students were not able to enroll their children into the daycare program expeditiously. Did students have a rolling enrollment period? Were places were being held for those students who the administration knew was pregnant? Dr. Millard asked if Ms. Patchak-Layman had heard of students who have not been accommodated expeditiously. Ms. Patchak-Layman noted that the word was “expeditiously,” and one case had been brought to her attention two hours prior. Dr. Weninger advised that it would be best for Ms. Patchak-Layman to either provide that information to Mr. Edgecombe or refer that person directly to him.

Ms. Patchak-Layman reiterated her request that the Board of Education members take a vote on outsourcing, as the community would like to

know who favored outsourcing. Mr. Rigas said he did not have enough information on outsourcing so he did not know how he would vote. Ms. Patchak-Layman clarified that the question put before the Board of Education was whether the Board of Education should pursue outsourcing and that she was against that. She felt the community should know whether the Board of Education members or how many of them wanted to handle this issue.

Mr. Conway stated that it was encouraging to see the families and staff show its support at an evening meeting. He received over 100 emails regarding the subject, but what he did not receive was suggestions for solutions. Negotiations are taking place. He recommended that a Board of Education member be assigned to a negotiating team in order for there be to be a Board of Education voice to help end this matter.

Visitor Comments Wyanetta Johnson, resident of 929 S. Oak Park Avenue, addressed the Board of Education. She was concerned about the amount of fighting in the school. She said that suspensions or timeouts were not working. Mr. Conway had spoken with Mr. Rouse regarding the number of incidents. The Board of Education is aware and there has to be dramatic action regarding this. When parents come into the building, put the students at risk, and disregard the directives of the school personnel, there needs to be intervention from a larger level. This was very serious. Girls and parents have been involved. Ms. Johnson concurred.

Student Life Student Council—He stated that the recycling program is now in place with two-thirds of the teachers participating. After school on Wednesdays, Student Council members collect the recycling bins from the hallways. The company that picks up the bins when they are filled, pays the school. He noted that the bins cannot contain co-mingled items and they have had to do some sorting. Student Council would like to get more clubs involved, as it is difficult to get people from Student Council to collect these every Wednesday after school. Going green is one of the Board of Education's goals for this year, and Student Council felt it helped it with its goal.

Principal Mr. Rouse thanked Mr. Mullin, Student Council, and the Clubs and Activities Council for the countless hours of work they do and being a driving force in this school.

Mr. Rouse reported that freshman transition meetings for eighth-grade parents were held last week. The next phase will be the Open House on February 4 where they will highlight academics and extracurricular opportunities and graders will have the opportunity to explore the building.

Mr. Rouse stated that the students who wrote the essays for the Martin Luther King convocation would be honored at the next month's Board of Education meeting. This convocation was completely student run.

Mr. Rouse stated that the District has been dealing with physical altercations among students. While this is a rarity, due to the sequence of events that occurred, it was important that the community knows that the District is utilizing its resources both in and out of school.

Superintendent's Report

Dr. Weninger reported that the inauguration of President Obama was during final exam week and the District opened the auditorium for students to watch the ceremony. Over 200 students took advantage of that opportunity. There was a great deal of celebration when the Oath of Office and the Hail to the Chief were given.

While Cary McLean of Citizens' Council was not present, he reported that he gave a lengthy report on the events at the high school and Mr. Allen talked about the Board of Education, teamwork and how the Baldrige process could help the school by having them do an exercise. In addition, members of the Building Leadership Team (BLT) talked about school climate.

Dr. Weninger and Ms. Kalmerton will complete the development of a Board of Education candidate workshop on February 3. Every BLT and DLT member will attend.

Dr. Weninger and the superintendents at Districts 90 and 97 were planning two meetings.

- 1) An articulation meeting with the superintendents and two Board of Education members either March 5 or March 11 to talk about student transitioning from eighth grade to the high school. Dr. Weninger had presented a proposal and framework for an articulation plan for the three school districts. The superintendents are developing the agenda for this meeting. Ms. Patchak-Layman and Dr. Lee volunteered to be the OPRFHS Board of Education members to participate. Ms. Patchak-Layman asked if additional Board of Education members could attend and Dr. Weninger reported that they were trying to limit it to two so that it did not invoke the Open Meetings Act, but he did say citizens were able to attend.
- 2) A Joint Board of Education meeting on May 13, 2009, from 7:00 to 9:30 p.m. for all three districts. The agenda will include a welcome, introduction, a 20-minute goal sharing discussion by each Board of Education, and then discussion on how the districts might collaborate on common issues.

District Liaison & Community Reports Boosters—Mr. Allen reported that Boosters fundraiser was March 21, 2009. It continues to fight for lighting the stadium; the Plan Commission will discuss this on January 29 and again on February 5.

Concert Tour Association—Ms. Patchak-Layman updated the Board of Education on the tour that CTA students would take to the southern United States and then board a music cruise to Mexico. Eight adults will supervise 57 students. She reported on the conversation regarding the financial aid process and the process for knowing which students may need additional financial support from CTA, how that is arranged, or what forms that are used, etc. She asked what is the school's responsibility in protecting students' identities and providing them the aid and services they might need to be involved in music and other groups, e.g., athletics, fine arts, theatre, etc. She asked if there were a packet in place. Ms. Witham said that the difference would be if it were a mandatory fee or if it were an extra co-curricular activity fee. For the most part, CTA takes care of the needs of its students. Ms. Witham informed Ms. Patchak-Layman that if students qualified for the Free and Reduced Lunch Program, there is no legal responsibility for the District to be involved in their co-curricular activities. Dr. Millard said there were scholarships available for co-curricular activities administered through the Superintendent's office and there are private sources that may have their own criteria as to what they want to support. Ms. Witham added that the fact that a student qualifies for the Free and Reduced Lunch Program is not public information. However, if CTA knows that a student wants to go, the name could be forwarded to the principal. Ms. Patchak-Layman asked what the school did for students. Did it give them the support or do the students have to initiative asking for support? As more students come forward from the Ping Program, support for students with financial needs must be part of the music program to make sure students are included and are not presented with additional barriers. This is a broader question than just for CTA. She asked who at the school took responsibility for this issue.

Mr. Rouse stated that due to the sensitivity of a family's financial status, it is important for the sponsors to initiate the request. All groups have their own private situation, but the difficulty for the administration is to know who the students are. Sponsors should make the administration aware.

APPLE—Dr. Lee reported that the APPLE meeting was extremely well attended and there was a very well received presentation by a very experienced reading specialist.

Faculty Senate—Mr. Hunter made the following statement:

“I would like to highlight a couple of pieces of good news that the Board has chosen to ignore. During the first semester, the Administration highlighted the efforts made on the part of the faculty and school community to improve the quality of teaching and learning in the district. A simple scatter gram was presented that illustrates a comparison to the other districts in the state and the immediate area. The achievement attained by Oak Park and River Forest high school students was the best performance of any high school in the state that featured similar demographics. When compared with high schools with a more homogenous population, the performance of our students still falls within the upper tier of schools in the state. Why some Board members refuse to acknowledge this performance is beyond me? It also appears that the Board action to support the infusion of legally acquired tax revenue is proving worthwhile. While implementation and measurement of successes is a difficult process, it is quite clear that the plans being forwarded by the administration are beginning to take effect and the needs of the underserved students are being served. The posture of some Board members on these two bits of good news is disheartening.

“The Faculty Senate of Oak Park and River Forest high school is concerned about two recent developments that face our Board of Education. Our concern is predicated on two actions that Board is considering this evening: a decision to entertain the idea of outsourcing elements of the Buildings and Grounds staff and the adoption of a resolution on cost containment. Both developments are dangerous actions that are inconsistent with Board behavior and goals.

“I am not sure what the motives of certain Board members are, but several individuals’ actions lead me to believe that political aspirations are driving the poor governance and arrogant behavior of some Board members. In a community whose greatest assets, aside from location, is its schools and children, this picayune approach to problem solving is wasting the time of the administration and distracting the entire Board from its important duties. Knowing that the faculty would probably support the philosophy behind Dr. Lee’s resolution on cost containment, the Senate believes it is an unnecessary action whose end purpose is to create an artificial political division between potential candidates in the coming Board election. The political grist that is created by this resolution is only meaningful for those who want to create a reactionary posture on issues of school finance. Dr. Lee and other Board members need to review carefully the presentation made last Tuesday at the Finance Committee by the districts auditors. The auditing firm praised the

work of the administration by illustrating their positive assessment of the district's finances; he declared that we were ahead of the curve on the issue of cost containment. He noted that in a time when other school districts expenditures are creeping higher, the hard work of the Administration has actually kept the costs of this district in a static state. This remarkable statement was ignored by some members of the Board of Education. And not an hour after the presentation by the auditor, a discussion ensued on cost containment and the resolutions, ignoring the promising news presented by the auditors. The lack of unity on this Board is going to eventually hurt the financial position of the district and in turn, impact the student and families of the community.

“In the same breath, as some members of the Board of Education tout their viewpoints about the negative economic situation in America and make unsupported statements about the economic health of the local communities, the Board is ready to reject a working relationship with the buildings and grounds staff of the district. Some Board members say they are worried about the plight of taxpayers in the district, yet they are more than willing to readily displace taxpayers of the school district and local community who happen to be custodians. In one breath, some of you are worried about the livelihood of the community, while at the same time you are insuring the loss of work for a number of members of the Oak Park and River Forest community and region. I implore both the Buildings and Grounds union leadership and the Administration's leadership to quickly and harmoniously return to the bargaining table. Both sides need to reconsider past positions and work towards reaching a contract that falls within the parameters of the five-year plan. The need for a respectful and ethical solution to this dispute is tantamount to the health and welfare of the community.”

Collaboration on Early Childhood—Dr. Lee reported that one of the most important things this community does is with the achievement gap. He encouraged everyone to attend the annual seminar of the collaboration of Early Childhood Care and Education on Saturday, February 21 from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Percy Julian School. Dr. Millard added that it is generally very well attended.

River Forest Service Club—Mr. Rigas stated that Ms. Witham received high remarks from a very critical group at its meeting on January 17. Mr. Conway distributed Ms. Witham's PowerPoint presentation.

Consent Items

Dr. Lee moved to approve the consent items as follows:

- personnel recommendations;

- resolutions Ratifying and Confirming Execution of Certain Vouchers and Payment of Certain Bills and Expenses;
- resolution Authorizing Execution of Certain Vouchers for the month of January;
- check Disbursements and Financial Resolutions dated January 22, 2009;
- monthly Treasurer's Report;
- authorization to Prepare Amended 2009 Budget;
- authorization to Prepare FY '10 Tentative Budget;
- food Service NIIP Bids;
- fall Athletic Uniform Bid;
- post prom contract with ESPN Zone; and
- textbook, *Geometry, Illinois Edition*, for the Mathematics Division.

seconded by Ms. Fisher. A roll call vote resulted in all ayes. Motion carried.

Approval of Minutes

Ms. Patchak-Layman stated that last year when the Board of Education was asked to declare that the closed session audio tapes dated March 2006 to be destroyed, she asked the Board of Education to reconsider so that she could hear the tapes and match them up to the minutes of the meeting. In order to destroy the tapes, the minutes have to match up. For one year the Board of Education did not have that item on the agenda. Last week when an item was presented to the Policy Committee about who would be able to listen to closed session tapes, and the decision was made to destroy the tapes from March 2006 to June 2007, she said she would be listening to the tapes and matching them to the minutes. She did that for two months of meetings. In March 2006, there were seven closed sessions and she recommended that the tapes of four of the meetings, March 2, 9, 14, and 23, 2006, be kept because they did not meet the intent of the Open Meetings Act and the recording of minutes. When student discipline was involved, there was no summation of the discussion involved in those meetings and in some case the resolution was different from the recommendation. She also wanted to change the minutes of December 18 because some dates needs to be added. She reiterated her request to continue to listen to the tapes and make recommendations that the tapes not be destroyed so that Ms. Kalmerton does not have to go back and include the summation of the discussion.

When Dr. Millard asked Ms. Patchak-Layman if she found the minutes, as recorded, in general, beyond closed session inappropriate, Ms. Patchak-Layman responded they were appropriate, but her concern was for the executive session. The Board of Education has been asked to vote to destroy the tapes. At times there was a summary of the discussion and at times there was only the action that had been taken.

Mr. Rigas read the minutes and he viewed them as a summary. Ms. Patchak-Layman felt the tape was sufficient to be able to cover the summary part and that is the question before the Board of Education.

Ms. Fisher commented that what she hears in Ms. Patchak-Layman's remarks is the point of preserving confidentiality for the students involved in discipline matters; that is critical and the Board of Education has been protective of student names. When she first came on the Board of Education, students who were expelled to their own devices. There was no provision for student services after expulsion. Now, the Board of Education provides alternative education when they have consequences in terms of behavior at the high school because it was critically important for them to have services, even at a cost to the District. So to preserve the tapes regarding a situation in which these students had a failure for no purpose other than to expose it to someone listening to it was not reasonable. These tapes are almost three years old. The issue is totally mute. No one can argue that the consequence can be litigated or addressed in anyway. Whatever was the result of the Board of Education's deliberation has been carried out and there is no longer any reason to preserve the tapes other than to expose the student to the possibility that confidentiality has now been lost. She hoped that these students had been rehabilitated, gotten back on to the path of the education, and there was no reason to preserve a time of failure for that student.

Mr. Rigas asked about the minutes of the May and June 2007 meetings, as Ms. Patchak-Layman was a member at that time and if she had any amendments to the minutes, they should have been brought up at that time. Ms. Patchak-Layman acknowledged that when you have been in a meeting, you read more into the minutes because of one's experience, the paperwork, etc. To Ms. Fisher's concern, a part of the conversation is how the Board of Education looks at one student discipline case and then carries the conversation through to other discipline cases. Part of the conversation helps to inform the discussions and that is why the conversation is summarized. Dr. Millard asked why would the District keep these tapes when the students are out of high school and what would be the point if she were a newly elected member of the Board of Education to go back and listen to what the Board of Education said three years ago relative to a student discipline case. The student is gone.

Dr. Lee noted that there was no motion on the floor. Ms. Patchak-Layman asked for the Board of Education's permission to review the tapes listed on the agenda. There was no support for this request.

While Ms. Patchak-Layman felt that she brought evidence that the minutes did not summarize the discussion in some instances, Mr. Rigas

stated that she had not brought evidence and that the appropriate way is to correct the minutes at the time. To have the tapes reviewed by the Board of Education members and to keep them for an indefinite amount of time was not the right way to do that. Only a court of law could say the minutes were inadequate.

Dr. Millard stated that some of the closed session tapes related to outstanding litigation and asked if those tapes should be retained until the litigation is settled? The response was that it would be O.K., but as long as it is not indefinite.

Mr. Allen asked if a statement of conclusion adequately qualifies as a summary. If the Board of Education did not believe the conclusion statement qualified as a summary, then there is a problem. Mr. Rigas encouraged the modification of closed session minutes before approving them.

Ms. Fisher moved to approve Consent Agenda A, open and closed minutes of December 11 and 20, 2008 and January 13, 2009, and a Declaration that the audiotapes dated March 2006 through June 2007 be destroyed; seconded by Dr. Lee. A roll call vote resulted in 4 ayes and 3 nays. Ms. Patchak-Layman, Mr. Allen, and Dr. Millard voted nay. Motion carried.

**Amendment of
Policy 3361**

Dr. Lee moved to amend Policy 3361, Petty Cash, as presented; seconded by Mr. Rigas. A roll call vote resulted in all ayes. Motion carried.

**Approval of
Policy 2120,
For First Reading**

Dr. Lee moved to approve Policy 2120, Superintendent/Principal, for for First Reading, as presented; seconded by Mr. Rigas. A roll call vote resulted in six ayes and one nay. Mr. Conway voted nay. Motion carried.

Ms. Patchak-Layman asked that an addition be made to the policy: Replace last sentence on page 3 with: “Mutually develops with the Board of Education a long-range comprehensive education plan that positively impacts students, executes the education plan, and”

While Ms. Patchak-Layman moved to amend the motion to include the above, there was no second.

Dr. Lee noted that this could be given to the Policy Committee members for their consideration at the second reading of this policy, as was the format. Dr. Millard asked that this be distributed prior to the Committee meeting.

**Student
Achievement
Indicators
Report**

Ms. Hill stated that the administration has been working for the past year on a set of measures of student achievement that would be more comprehensive than the PSAE. The process has involved numerous rounds with different stakeholder groups. This document was complete at this point. She offered to answer questions. Discussion ensued.

Mr. Allen was very impressed with the document. Ms. Patchak-Layman asked if these were in any weighted order in terms of what the District would consider instructional excellence? Is Domain 1 a higher ranking than Domain six. Ms. Hill reported that they were not ranked at all. In some measure this is an educational institution, so the greatest amount of effort would go to academic knowledge, key cognitive strategies, however, there are many measures that pertain to cocurricular activities. Though no value has been placed on them, more attention will be paid to some areas rather than others.

Dr. Weninger felt Ms. Patchak-Layman's question was very important for the students and the community. What the District collectively, led by Ms. Hill, has done is to develop a document which respects and comprises the elements of a comprehensive secondary education at OPRFHS. To value one of these domains more than another would diminish the value of the entire document because it codifies what is done every day. Last year Dr. Lee asked if the District could develop the indicies by which the District could determine how it was doing, and not just rely on the PSAE scores. That is a remarkable type of direction. How would the District know how to set the standards and benchmarks and goals high enough so that the District could work toward those goals and always be a mode of continuous improvement. The question of weighting is very important. His answer would be no, because it attempts to comprise a secondary education at the high school. How is the document implemented practically? How would the District provide this Board of Education and community where the good work has been done and where more work needs to be done.

Dr. Lee stated that this was one of the most thoughtful, comprehensive efforts he had ever seen, he found this both good and bad. It is good because of the obvious careful thought that went into it. However, no one had asked how education was defined until there was talk about an achievement gap. When he first raised the issue for the purpose of coming up with some workable means for determining exactly what is meant by the achievement gap, how will that be communicated to the public, and how will the District communicate how well it is doing specifically with each other. There are fifty-five different sets of measurements that this report lists to be done annually or semi-annually as well as additional ones not listed. He asked for the resources that would be needed to collect, analyze, and report on this data

compared to the resources available. He also asked about reading scores or evaluating the reading level of students at the eighth-, ninth-, and tenth- grade levels. Dr. Lee asked if the District would have the EXPLORE, PLAN and ISAT scores of almost all of the students who enter the school. He asked this because he did not know how complete the District's information was on these tests and he also did not know how much that these test told about the reading abilities of individual students. Will the District be able to go into Domain 1 and answer the question how many of the students arrive at the school with reading skills that the District would judge to render them unlikely to work successfully at the college level. He did not know if the District had that information or not. He remembered saying to the Board of Education that it should be able to answer that question.

He continued by asking if the reading scores the high school receives from the PLAN EXPLORE and ISAT test were sufficient to identify the reading skills deficiencies with enough specificity to do anything about them. From the small end, he asked to get a handle on something that was adopted by resolution last year having to do with reading skills being clearly identified as one of the chief ways to close the achievement gap. He asked how the District would pare this document down with more indicators and test scores than anyone around this table could repeat. He was trying to get to the usefulness of this huge body of data and the resources necessary to gather this data. It could be something to work toward but he needed more information about a plan.

Ms. Hill responded that the District was trying to get at the usefulness of this huge body of data and what kind of resources it would need to deal with all of this. She questioned if this was doable with the resources available. Regarding the standardized test data, she stated that it was a sequence of scores for the whole population. The answer is that the District does not have matched scores for every student in the building. We administer the EXPLORE test to as many eight grade students as possible, e.g., Brooks and Julian Middle Schools, five private or parochial schools, and various students who have been identified as not being able to take the test previously. With regard to reading, students who come to the District between now and into the school year, all will take math and science tests, and the reading portion of the EXPLORE test. Approximately 98 to 99 percent of the students will take the EXPLORE test. There is some fluidity in the student population so students come in the 10th grade or junior may not have all of them. For any set of class there will be 500 to 600 test scores. Current sophomore class is the cohort that the District started with. Next year's juniors will take ACT as part of the Prairie State and that will be the first class that will have taken an entire EPASS system, e.g., EXPLORE, PLAN and ACT. If there are 600 sets which is approximately three-quarters of the

class, it will be representative. How much did the test data have about the reading level? ACT publishes college readiness standards, aligned with the benchmarks, but these are actual statements about what a student is likely to do. A student who scored 17 on the reading can probably do these skills inside the reading framework. The next steps is what a student can do to improve. ACT provides a growing curriculum of sorts as to what that guideline might look like. For the students who may struggle in reading, this test is not the only piece of data about their reading level. Students receive the Gates MacGinitie test to about one-half freshmen and one half sophomore students. It is given twice in the freshman and sophomore year.

Dr. Lee asked how the District would answer the question, who desperately needs help to be taught how to read. Does the district know whether a student were an adequate reader?. Mr. Prale said that the District says this is a student who would benefit from participating in Learning Support Reading with contact with the Reading Plus Program or collaborative teaching opportunities. The District looks for opportunities. They try to match the student with a program in the 9th grade so that they can do well. The Reading Plus program focuses on the 9th grade but there is some strength in the 10th grade. Dr. Lee asked if the District could identify those students needing help and do something about those needs. Mr. Prale replied affirmatively. Mr. Prale noted that reports would be brought to the February Instruction Committee meeting.

Dr. Lee asked to what extent the District has the resources to implement what is in the document. Ms. Hill stated that we have most resources to do what is necessary in this document. Some instructions need to be defined and developed. However, every other index on page 1 is already being used. What would help would be the filling of the institutional researcher position. Dr. Lee wanted to know the status of the institutional researcher in this organization.

Dr. Weninger stated that one year ago October, the District presented a plan to raise student achievement under four rubrics; one was defining institutional excellence. Because the Board of Education felt that was too many, it narrowed this list down to six and asked the District to determine a definition of institutional excellence. For the past year, the administration spent producing the document and he felt it had been successful in identifying how the District would achieve excellence and the measures to use. He asked what the Board of Education wanted the administration to do with this document. If the Board of Education wants the administration, the faculty and the staff to work on, would that be a directive, a goal, etc., and what would the timeline be. Dr.

Weninger agreed that the District has the resources, but it is a matter of whether it has the will.

Mr. Rouse, in talking about the 9th graders, believed the articulation with the feeder schools were making great strides. However, several students come without the tools necessary to be successful. Counselors and staff work hard to make sure they can get these students into school in a proper fashion and align a curriculum. This puts stress on faculty members to teach a student when all of the information needed to place those students is not known. In the junior year, they take the PSAE, which is the one test held most accountable. At another time, more conversation should occur on those students who enter at any point and they are the uncontrollable factors. Dr. Millard affirmed that it will be discussed at Instruction Committee meeting.

Dr. Lee wanted to see the Board of Education at the next meeting start to map out where to go with this? What does the District want to do with this? A list could be created of what it wants to do and the kind of activity to be done with each one of them. He wanted a definition of the achievement gap. He wanted a strategy session dealing with the how, as opposed to jumping into something that looks just at reading, etc.

Mr. Prale stated that he sent a document to the Board of Education titled "What Do We Know About the Relationship between Race and Achievement, which was developed a number of years ago. Every statement has a footnote. He suggested the Board of Education read that again. It is not what is thought is known, it is what is known from the research.

**Approval of
2009 Summer
School Stipends,
Tuition, and
Dates**

Mr. Rigas moved to approve the dates for Summer School 2009 and the proposed tuition rate and stipend increase as noted below; seconded by Dr. Lee . A roll call vote resulted in five ayes. Mr. Allen and Ms. Patchak-Layman voted nay. Motion carried.

When Mr. Allen asked why there was an increase in the stipends, he was informed that it was to keep in line with other budgets and it would be under the increase that would appear in the teacher contract. Summer school runs on its own budget and it has come within its budget. Mr. Prale felt the increase was reasonable because it did not cost additional funds. The District can provide a reasonable increase and not look to teachers from other districts to teach the classes. Mr. Allen could not support this when the Board of Education was exploring outsourcing. Dr. Millard stated that had been discussed in the Finance Committee meeting and sometimes it hard to attract some teachers for some curriculums.

**Approval of
Financial
Resolution**

Dr. Lee moved to approve the Resolution Concerning OPRFHS Financial Planning, as presented; seconded by Mr. Rigas. A roll call vote resulted in all ayes. Motion carried.

**Resolution Concerning OPRFHS
Financial Planning**

WHEREAS, the current Illinois school funding structure, including the Property Tax Extension Limitation Law (PTELL), along with significant unfunded federal and state mandates, place an undue burden on the residential property taxpayers of Oak Park and River Forest, and

WHEREAS, it is the primary duty of the Board of Education of Oak Park and River Forest High School District 200 (the "District") to sustain, protect, and improve the quality of public secondary education in this district, and

WHEREAS, the current long-range financial plan of this district, through the year 2018, involves taxing at the current rate (plus increments not to exceed the lesser of the Urban Consumer Price Index or 5%), and spending at a rate that is likely to exhaust general fund balances and cash reserves, and if so, would require the Board to request another tax increase in order to continue that established rate of spending, and

WHEREAS, we believe that a future referendum for a higher taxing level would not be supported by our taxpayers,

BE IT RESOLVED that the Oak Park and River Forest District 200 Board of Education will embark of a course of action which will result in

1. the development of a long range financial model which is based on the premise that, for the foreseeable future, this district will manage its income and its expenditures such that there will be no need to ask for further tax rate increases that extend beyond the limits of the Urban Consumer Price Index;
2. a method for setting educational priorities in such a way that necessary changes in educational strategies can be managed by changing spending priorities, rather than by seeking higher tax revenues;
3. the District taking an active role in seeking to change the public school funding mechanism in the State of Illinois, along with forming the ability to adapt quickly to any such changes, and
4. a practical showing of its determination to take every available opportunity over the next ten years to contain costs in ways that balance both the District's ability to sustain its financial health and deliver the highest quality of educational services.

Previous to the vote, the following discussion ensued.

Mr. Rigas agreed with some of Mr. Hunter's remarks. The District has been trying to identify and reduce costs. What this resolution says is that the District is going to evaluate what it would take to have long-

term sustainability under the risk that a referendum would not pass in the future. That is a plan that says here is what it will look like. The District received notice that CPI was only .1 and the five-year plan uses a 2.5 CPI. This Board of Education has to look at a model. He will not be on the Board of Education when it is presented but it should continue to look for cost containment whether there was a resolution or not. It should not wait until a referendum is needed. He suggested that the District look at the different items and to let the Board of Education and the community decide where it wants to go. Another plan may or may not affect education, but one cannot make a change if there is no plan and there have been no presentations of a model. Mr. Rigas thanked Dr. Lee for doing this work. It is a matter of common sense being put in the form of a written document. If this were not in front of the Board of Education, it and the administration would not be doing their jobs. Much in the resolution is already occurring and is being evaluated. Over the next eighteen months, many things will come forward from the administration that will make people feel comfortable about what the district is doing. The resolution says that the District will look at a plan.

Dr. Lee hoped the resolution would be binding enough for each Board of Education to think more seriously about what he/she does, especially relative to the big items. On the issue of \$50 in summer school pay, he voted yes because it was discussed at an Instruction Committee meeting and he agreed at that time. He had not thought that out and decided to go with his original thought. Dr. Lee affirmed that he was very serious about this resolution. He felt the District was headed for a brick wall in ten years, especially when negotiating big contracts.

Ms. Patchak-Layman wanted to make an addition, i.e., Draft Number 6. She wanted to include other entities, e.g., the state, and the statement that the Board of Education believed future referendums would not be supported by taxpayers. That is a statement that relates to the whole community; it did not seem to be time specific, but a true statement for the next number of years. She felt the resolution should be more expansive and include Districts 90 and 97 in terms of working on financial planning and resolutions because all of the schools have an interest of the same students. She wanted to bring that forward because she wanted one of the resolves to be that the Boards of Education with Districts 90 and 97 would be invited to work together to expand the categories of shared services (currently OPRFHS provides food service to District 97), to include, but not be limited to, administrative and support functions, common contracts, economies of scale, and technology. Looking at all of the financial goals would expand that discussion. Because there was no support for Ms. Patchak-Layman's suggestion, no changes were made.

Dr. Millard was fearful of this resolution the first time it was presented because of the suggestion that the Board of Education would govern by resolution. Many discussions have occurred among Board of Education members in understanding this, and while she is concerned, she began to understand that the Board of Education members are making a public statement that they acknowledge the issue related to economics, as stewards of the District with a timeline of about 2018, based on the current information that taxpayers would be asked for more money. The Board of Education wanted to be as judicious as possible to extend that timeline and would look carefully as to how money was spent, instead of putting forth something new, how could it shift based on assessments on what is working well and what is not working and proceed with what is working and redirect those that are not. She was worried that it would make this organization look as if it had not been financially responsible. As she thinks that this is one of the most solid organizations which has tried to watch its finances and that was stated by the auditors. The way the school funding structure in Illinois is, at some point nearly all organizations have to go back and ask for money. She applauded Dr. Lee's intent of saying, "Let's make a statement to citizens that the District will be as careful as it can with the dollars it has to see if the District can extend the timeline for going for a referendum." She generally supported looking at new models and the premise of this. She felt it could have used more fine tuning and there had been lots of discussion, wordsmithing, abbreviation, etc., and with seven people trying to decide made it difficult. She supported this with reservations. How it is stated may not be as critical as she originally thought because one could wordsmith it to death. But she hoped that this could be supported as a team or whether it needs more careful discussion as it is adopted. She felt that the District was already doing what the resolution stated.

Ms. Fisher concurred with Dr. Millard. She also did not like the fact that this was being done by resolution as opposed to discussion in the Finance Committee and addressing it in several meetings. This was a major change in policy direction, as stated, and the District would look to take various actions to carry that out. Dr. Lee felt an urgency to this in respect to the economics as they are now. Ms. Fisher understood that and she remembered her experience as a community member in helping to get a referendum passed in the mid 90's that failed. As Mr. Rigas said, the District went through the exercise to see what would be cut as a result of a failed referendum; the referendum passed the following year. This resolution is not binding on future Boards of Education and to make a statement that the administration proceed on a path of which it is already on, one must be as careful as possible. Ms. Fisher noted that she had become reconciled with this.

Mr. Rigas noted that Dr. Lee found a way to short circuit the process.

Ms. Patchak-Layman felt the District should be doing referendums more regularly as the community says they need to keep doing what it is doing or make some changes. What she likes about this resolution and why she will support it is Item 2, a method for setting educational priorities. The District has had a historic budget and allocate the CPI to the change. If the Board of Education wanted to do something dramatic, start a program, etc., the only way it could do that would be by looking at changing the priorities and allocating the resources. This gives the Board of Education an opportunity to look for money for programs.

Mr. Allen's concern was that going down this road could cause controversy in the future. Eighty-five percent of the budget goes to salaries and benefits. At a certain time in the future that 85 percent will be greater than the entire budget. Our commitment has been to go through that grueling gauntlet. So if the Board of Education cannot deny the \$50 increase in summer school stipends, then he was not sure it could make this commitment. Mr. Allen's concern was for the Board of Education's resolve without real thought to the consequences and to the taxpayers.

Mr. Rigas referred to Ms. Patchak-Layman's statement that the District should have more periodic referendums has been brought up several times in public meetings. He noted that an institution cannot be run like that. Having a referendum every five years takes the focus off what is happening within the building. The purpose of referendums is to ask the taxpayers if the District can raise their taxes higher than they are now. It is not looking for the taxpayers approval. The school board elections are for approval, referendums are to increase taxes.

Closed Session

At 11:48 p.m., on January 22, 2009, Dr. Millard moved to go into closed session for the purpose of discussing the appointment, employment, compensation, discipline, performance, or dismissal of specific employees of the District or legal counsel for the District, including hearing testimony on a complaint lodged against an employee or against legal counsel for the District to determine its validity. 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(1), as amended by PA.93—57; Collective Bargaining and/or Negotiations; Litigation, when an action against, affecting or on behalf of the particular District has been filed and is pending before a court or administrative tribunal, or when the District finds that an action is probable or imminent, in which case the basis for the finding shall be recorded and entered into the closed meeting minutes 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(11); seconded by Ms. Fisher. A roll call vote resulted in all ayes. Motion carried.

At 12:45 a.m. on Friday, January 23, 2009, the Board of Education reconvened its open session.

Adjournment

At 12:50 a.m. on Friday, January 23, 2009, Dr. Lee moved to adjourn the Board of Education meeting; seconded by Dr. Millard. A roll call vote resulted in all ayes. Motion carried.

Jacques A. Conway
President

Dr. Ralph H. Lee
Secretary