

The Board meeting of the Board of Education of the Oak Park and River Forest High School was held on Thursday evening, March 26, 2009, in the Board Room.

Call to Order President Conway called the meeting to order at 7:30 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, 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; Amy Hill, Director of Assessment and Research, 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; Judie Wilson, League of Women Voters; Carol Ebert, Michael Powell, Janel Bishop, Jason Dennis, Jim Goodfellow, Tia Marr, Alyse Walton John Bokum, Danny Matos, Donna Diederich, Tom Kirchner, Patt Cheney, and Patti Collins, OPRFHS employees; Paul Keller of Ancel Glink; Julie Brown, Tim McDonnell, Wayne Lindwall, and Gene Washington of SEIU; Carey McLean, Co-Chair of Citizens' Council; Victor Guarino, Wyanetta Johnson, Joie Pierce, Richard Neuman, Mami Andrews, Greg Johnson, Steve Ericka and Mary Jo Lopez, community members, M. Copenhagen of the Ombudsman Center, Debra Kadin of the *Chicago Tribune*, Terry Dean of the *Wednesday Journal*, Christopher LaFortune of the *Oak Leaves*.

The students who achieved in the following areas were honored at the Board of Education meeting.

IHSA Class 3A Wrestling State Championship Team
Annual German Day Competition, Poetry – First Place
Area Regional Math League Team
S.C.O.T.I.E. Tournament of Champions, Prose – First Place

Public Comments Richard Neuman, resident of 312 Linden Avenue, Oak Park, addressed the Board of Education.

Mr. Neuman expressed his opinion on the controversial issue of stadium lights. Last year, the *Wednesday Journal* reported that one of the principle

reasons for the Board of Education's awarding of the Superintendent salary increase was because of his efforts to get lights installed at the stadium. This increase was given despite accusation of plagiarism or misrepresentations in connection with a speech he gave at the high school. Three separate and independent village commissions have refused to approve the request for lights at the stadium, i.e., the Zoning Board of Appeals, the Historic Preservation Society, and the Plan Commission. More recently, a Plan Commission member chastised the high school for its failure to reach out and work with members of the community to see whether a compromise could be reached. One Plan Commission member said publically that the high school could not be trusted. Based on the information received from a FOIA request, the District has spent in excess of \$50,000 of taxpayer money seeking the installation of stadium lights for which the high school had no budget. He hoped that the Board of Education would consider not whether Dr. Weninger was entitled to a raise, but whether his contract should be extended.

Local papers recently indicated that the Board of Education would be taking a formal evaluation of the superintendent. Based on conversations he has had with the faculty members, the Board of Education is not intending to obtain any input from the members of the high school teaching community. If this were correct, he submitted that the Board of Education was seriously deficient in fulfilling its responsibility to the citizens of Oak Park and River Forest.

John Bokum, resident of 629 S. Home, Oak Park, addressed the Board of Education.

Mr. Bokum acknowledged the Board of Education as being the stewards and the gatekeepers of this 135-year old school. Regarding the tentative four-year collective bargaining agreement with Buildings and Grounds, he noted that it was nice to see that there had been cooperation amongst the groups, e.g., the administration, the Board of Education, and B&G, etc. He was complimentary of Ms. Witham, who had corporate experience. He too came from the corporate world and bringing in someone with fresh ideas is always a good idea. It is always good to have the checks and balances not only for the entire country but also at the local level. He was glad that there was a tentative agreement with the Buildings and Grounds personnel, as he felt it was better for the high school to have its own employees.

Patti Collins, OPRFHS employee, addressed the Board of Education.

Ms. Collins said she was relieved that there was a tentative agreement with the Buildings and Grounds personnel on the table. It had been a difficult experience for her to watch. She appreciated the overwhelming

support of the teachers, the staff, the community, the newspapers, and the students. She highlighted the fact that through all of this turmoil, the level of the professionalism that the Buildings and Grounds personnel provided was a testament to the type of people working here. She hoped that it was a fair agreement and one that Buildings and Grounds and the Board of Education would approve it. She understood that the Board of Education must save money for education, but the continuity of educational demands would not be done without the staff doing everything that is asked of it every day.

Steve Mrkvicka, parent and resident of 329 S. Taylor, Oak Park, addressed the Board of Education.

Mr. Mrkvicka, parent of two students at the high school, was concerned because one of his children was involved with drugs. While he was not asking the Board of Education to do a parent's job, he knew, and John Williams of the Oak Park Township Youth Services agreed with him, that these communities have a drug issue. He asked what the high school was doing about it. He also suggested the following:

- 1) Close the campus to deter students from going out and getting high during their lunch hours;
- 2) Determine which students were bringing drugs into the school by bringing in dogs to do drug searches. He suggested this even though he was an Elmwood Park middle schoolteacher and that it would be frightening to this community.

Mr. Rigas said that the Board of Education probably has a greater knowledge about drugs in the high school than others do, as it has to deal with discipline issues, many of which are drug-related. The District has a close relationship with John Williams and students receive significant counseling. The Board of Education takes this seriously and many preventative things occur within the building. In response to Mr. Mrkvicka's suggestion to close the campus, Mr. Rigas stated that it had been a question at the time he ran for the Board of Education eight years ago. It is a controversial issue in the community. This issue is periodically brought up, but it is not given much discussion time.

: Dr. Lee stated that the answer is to look at the policies. He believed that each Board of Education member would support the policies adopted by this Board of Education, the State of Illinois, and the United States Government. The District has an obligation to support them. While he personally does not agree with many of those laws, he nevertheless is committed to supporting the laws that exist. He did not believe Mr. Mrkvicka was asking about the drug policy of the United States. Dr. Lee believed that Mr. Mrkvicka would find that the Board of Education

supports the policies on the books with respect to drugs and it is obligated to support the laws it is able to support. Dr. Lee added that he thought Mr. Mrkvicka would find that the District has moved to a positive direction overall in its policies. The District has put a great deal more effort in helping students make wiser decisions, and he, himself, was proud of the direction that the Board of Education has moved to help the students.

**Board of Education
Comments**

Dr. Lee reported that he had participated in a statewide telephone conference sponsored by the Voices for Illinois Children in which there was a great deal of discussion of the Governor's budget being examined in Springfield. He encouraged the Board of Education members and citizens, in general, to keep up with type of movement in Springfield right now, especially with the respect to schools. Many decisions are going to occur rapidly and on short notice over the next few months. He felt dramatic trade-offs would occur that would affect everyone, including Illinois schools. One of the mechanisms for staying informed is through the Voices for Illinois Children's website.

Ms. Patchak-Layman expressed her sadness about the past year and the amount and time attention that has gone into the question of outsourcing. She apologized to the staff that has been part of the discussion, as she did not feel it was fair to put them through these discussions, which started last February. She was saddened by the feeling that somehow this is acceptable to this community: it does not respect employees nor value their longevity, when "we" can just weigh the balance of dollars and service over everyone's head and expect that people will accept that as the way of life in this town. She was troubled because it makes people expendable and disposable and she worried that this sentiment carries over to what the view should be toward students at this school. Rather than providing the services, the District finds someone else to do it. She believed the District had the duty to provide the services the students need. She apologized for a horrible year. She hoped the contract on the table would start to move everyone forward to a better day, but she did believe damage had occurred this past year.

Ms. Patchak-Layman stated that the Board of Education is in the midst of doing an evaluation of Superintendent. It is a two-prong approach: 1) the performance goals, posted on the web and it should be obvious if the goals were being met and 2) the more traditional personnel evaluation. The Board of Education does not have a formal process for soliciting information from the staff and she offered to receive feedback on the performance measures in place.

Mr. Allen responded to Mr. Mrkvicka's comments about drugs in the school. The school's position is that drugs are serious and that the State of Illinois laws should be enforced to make a positive impact on the student

body. Everyone believes illegal drugs are bad. A drug problem in any community is not new and the type of drug usage varies. This school takes this issue very seriously, especially with a student body of this size. The Deans try to make sure the student body and the staff enforce the laws, as well as educate the students about drugs, their effects, the laws, the consequences, both informally and formally, and the fact that drugs will have a negative impact on their future lives, etc. The District educates and uses discipline so that students can learn how to make good decisions. While 14- to 18-year old students think that they are full-grown adults they are not; the OPRFHS counseling staff is second-to-none in trying to work with students as they mature through that process. In some ways, students have more rights than do Janel Bishop, Assistant Principal for Health and Safety, and Mark Wilson, Assistant Principal for Student Services, in enforcing the rules. The school has to be mindful of the rights of the students, the parents, and the school. This is not excuse. The issue of drugs is complex and serious and there are consequences for both the participants and the enforcers. When he was prosecuting, people always cried to put the offenders in jail, until it came to their own son or daughter and that is when they asked for help. The community has to be mindful that this District has 3,000 students to care for, to help them grow, to mature, and to be responsible adults. This is something that the District has taken seriously for a long time.

As to the tentative agreement with the Buildings and Grounds department, it was a relief and elation for him personally. It has been a hard road and as with any conflict, it is easy to build animosity to help one get through the conflict. The Board of Education has always respected that profession and knows how important it is for the institution that the B&G staff is here. However, there are decisions that have to be made regarding taxpayers' dollars and sometimes those decisions are hard. The foundation is that of respect and admiration every day. As the wounds heal, and they will, he hoped that the Board of Education's foundation would help the wellbeing of this institution and the stakeholders who are a part of it.

Ms. Fisher appreciated and concurred with all of Mr. Allen's statement. With respect to the speaker who suggested that it was reported in the *Wednesday Journal* that the lights were tied to the Superintendent's compensation, while she did not know if the paper reported that, she said that was not the case.

Because Dr. Millard had left earlier that day to accompany OPRFHS students on an excursion to India, Mr. Conway read her prepared statement.

“I am sorry that I am not able to be present for the District 200 Board meeting tonight because I have a conflicting commitment to OPRF students. At this very moment, I am boarding a plane with fourteen of our OPRF young people for a two-week-plus tour and service trip to India. In addition to visiting well-known destinations such as the Taj Mahal and a sunrise boat ride on the sacred river Ganges, our students will participate in a slum development project, play with abandoned children—some with severe physical and mental handicaps, some with HIV/AIDS, and dying men and women at one of Mother Teresa's homes, and teach elementary school-age street children some songs and games. For me, it is inspiring to watch the expansion of the minds and hearts of our young people as they witness the world from a new perspective—a key element of their education.

“I want to say that I am extremely pleased about the tentative agreement that the District has reached with our dedicated and hard-working Building & Grounds crew for a new employment contract. A mutually acceptable contract has always been the goal of both sides of the negotiating teams, and I want to publicly acknowledge and applaud the diligent bilateral efforts made very recently to achieve this tentative employment agreement. I look forward to its ratification by the B & G membership and approval by the Board to retain these highly valued members of our school community.”

Dietra Millard
Vice President of the Board
March 26, 2009

Mr. Conway stated that the report on Student Discipline indicated the number of cases where students were involved with illegal drugs and substance abuse. He believed what the school was a mirror of the society. If one reads the papers, the *Wednesday Journal* mentions the number of arrests made next to the Police Department in the parking lot next to McDonald's. People drive from Oak Park and River Forest to the west side of Chicago to buy their drugs and drive back to their safe haven, Oak Park, and use them. He did not believe any weeks had passed by where someone was not arrested. The District's faculty is aware of this fact and has things in place to work with the students, e.g., counseling and support, etc. Unfortunately, the citizens of America are hooked on drugs. Other countries send their drugs to America because it is the buyer. The children are involved in what they see, not just in their homes, but also in the community and in the media. He too believed that the school should bring dogs into the building so that the students understood the Board of Education's awareness of it. He also believed that there would be community outrage the first time they were. Once someone dies of an

overdose, another outcry will occur as to why the school had not taken that step.

The District cannot stop drugs coming into the school; drugs are not being grown in the building. Students are bringing it in from home, from their weekend trips, etc. Students come to the school high for sports events and for classes. Because security monitors them, they are caught. While understanding Mr. Mrkvicka's dilemma, Mr. Conway said the school's personnel is very much aware of the situation and is doing what it can. He thanked Mr. Mrkvicka for sharing his thoughts.

Mr. Conway stated that it was nice that Ms. Patchak-Layman apologized, but he hoped that the apology was just for her and not the rest of the Board of Education. The Board of Education has never disrespected its employees. Disagreements cause conflicts. Two sides must agree and when they do, it is a contract; when they do not agree, it is a conflict. In the end, the District wanted to reach an agreement; that is why, despite the opportunity to outsource, the Board of Education, in his mind, focused on reaching an agreement with the employees. Is it the best possible agreement on both sides? He said no. He always felt that it was important to reach an agreement and not to outsource, but he did feel outsourcing would bring "us" closer together because there was the possibility that someone could come in here and do this job for a lesser amount of money. It would be a lesser amount. The bottom line is that if the District pays a company "x" amount of dollars, it would pay its employees less money, and it, in turn, would charge the school less money. While he did not want to sacrifice the employees' jobs on the back of a budget, people must understand that with today's situation, the Board of Education members have to be the stewards of the children for years to come. This District has to be able to offer sports, music, drama, etc. If the District spends its money today, then in five or ten years, people may ask why it had not made sacrifices earlier. Yes, sacrifices have started with Buildings and Grounds and the sacrifices will continue with every other bargaining unit that comes before the Board of Education. The Board of Education is not in a position to pay out large amounts of money for today and not worry about tomorrow. That would not be good stewards. While there is money in the bank now if the District is not mindful, it will be gone. Everyone, including administrators, teachers, coaches, etc., must understand that in this economy, the Board of Education has to be better stewards of its money. He is not one to say that it is just sacrificing B&G employees, and then rewarding the administration, etc. Everyone has to be in a position to sacrifice. In closing, Mr. Conway said that in all of the commentaries he has listened to about this issue for the last year, he never heard a B&G employee say he/she was underpaid or had poor working conditions. He has never heard a teacher say that he/she were willing to sacrifice for the good of the group. He has not had a citizen say that he/she was willing to

pay higher taxes so that all employees could get higher salaries. However, he does need to hear that for the District to be in a position to pay out large sums for the superintendent, administration, teacher, etc., down to the least paid in this building. If not, the Board of Education, as trustees of this building, has to look at ways to save as much money as possible in order to educate the 3,000 students who are the primary focus. Unfortunately, with this economy, it started with Buildings & Grounds and it will be followed by the next group, etc., until the Board of Education is at the point where the District has enough resources so that it will not have to go back to the taxpayers in 2018. When in Springfield, he attended the Finance Committee meeting to talk about ways to finance the schools. Presently, it is impossible for the schools to continue to burden the homeowners with tax dollars for expenses that do not decrease; CPI continues to be less and yet the expenses continue to rise. Those in Springfield must determine how to pay for increasing teachers' salaries, building expenses, and the fact that the District will get less and less money from the taxpayers. He thought this was an important agreement and he was thankful for the dedication of the B&G staff, its union, the District staff, and especially the Superintendent who stepped up to be a part of the conversation. Mr. Conway felt it was important in the end that this was a time for all to sacrifice, as this was the most important real estate in both communities. OPRFHS holds so much value for these communities and it has to be supported at all costs.

FOIA Requests

Mr. Conway reported that five FOIA requests had been received and all had been resolved.

Acceptance of Gifts & Donations

Mr. Rigas moved to accept with gratitude the gifts and donations as presented (attached to and made a part of the minutes of this meeting); seconded by Ms. Fisher. A roll call vote resulted in all ayes. Motion carried.

Review of RFP For Custodial Services

Next on the agenda is Item B., Review of RFPs for Custodial Services. Mr. Conway stated that following: The Board of Education has received proposals from Sodexo, GCA, Alpha, and Perfect. Each Board of Education member has been provided a copy of each of the proposals, as well as additional information this past week. The Board of Education also received a report from staff concerning the proposals, and it reviewed the report, as well. Because the District has reached a tentative agreement with SEIU, there is no need for further discussion of this matter tonight.

Mr. Conway stated that if there were no questions from Board members, he would entertain a motion to table Items C. and D. under Finance and Item A. under Human Resources. Hearing no questions, Mr. Conway called for a motion.

Dr. Lee moved to table Items C. Consideration of Selection of Vendor to Provide Custodial Services, and D. Consideration of Direction to Staff to Negotiate Agreement with Selected Vendor and Present Contract To Board of Education for Final Approval, and under Finance and Item A. Resolution of Reduction in Force Of Custodial Staff under Human Resources; seconded by John Allen.

Mr. Rigas asked if the motion had to be tabled until a date certain and he was informed that it did not. Ms. Patchak-Layman asked for clarification as to what tabling meant. What would be the possibilities of it coming up? Mr. Conway stated that a tentative agreement has been reached and when that agreement has been ratified by the union representatives, the Board of Education will vote on it, and the Board of Education can proceed from there.

Ms. Patchak-Layman asked about a what-if scenario. What if the agreement was not signed, what would the procedure then be? Would it immediately come back on the table at that point? Mr. Conway did not believe there would be a what-if, but the Board of Education would have to deal with it at that time if that happened. Ms. Patchak-Layman said that if there were a what-if, would the Board of Education be proceeding exactly from the point it is now. Would a time have to be stated? Mr. Rigas stated that procedurally anyone could bring something back on the table until a date certain. If there is no date certain, it sits in limbo until someone makes a motion, it is seconded, and it is voted on. Mr. Rigas clarified for Ms. Patchak-Layman that what was being tabled now is what would be brought back to the table.

A roll call vote resulted in all ayes. Motion carried.

**Renewal of
Treasurer's Bond**

Dr. Lee moved to moved to approve the Treasurer's Bond with Broker's Risk for \$20 million of coverage for an annual premium of \$9,415; seconded by Mr. Allen. A roll call vote resulted in all ayes. Motion carried.

**Release of
Probationary
Non-Tenured Staff**

Dr. Lee moved to approve the Resolution to Release Probationary Non-tenured Staff, as presented; seconded by Mr. Rigas.

Mr. Edgecombe explained that each March the Board of Education is required to authorize a resolution for the dismissal of Probationary Certified Teachers. The teachers affected by this resolution fall into one of three categories: 1) uncertainty of staffing needs for 2009-2010, 2) completion of the current year contractual obligation or professional performance, and 3) judged to meet District standards this category. Discussion ensued.

The Board of Education had received many emails regarding a teacher being given only a part time status next year. The Board of Education was informed that Theatre had eighty-eight (88) students in five sections this year and only only fifty-seven (57) students have signed up for this class which translates to only three sections. The Board of Education members were informed as to how the scheduling process works. It includes:

- Counselors register students for next year's classes by a certain date.
- A moratorium goes into effect after that date so that the master schedule can be built.
- Once the master schedule is built, Counselors are informed as to which classes are open and which classes are closed. They then inform the students.
- Adjustments are made after that time.

The District has a statutory and contractual obligation to notify non-tenured teachers by April 1 of their status in the District for the coming year for the three reasons listed above. This action protects the District from being overstaffed. Some teachers will be invited back.

Mr. Rouse stated that the District has reviewed the enrollment and the registrations. Should a student change his/her mind about a course at this point, he/she would be coming from another elected course. Registrations were up this year by approximately 300 due to the counselors registering their students in a timely manner. Mr. Rouse continued that more students have registered for more classes. He does not believe there were students who were not yet registered.

Dr. Weninger reiterated Mr. Rouse's comments that if students were able to change classes, they would be coming from other elected classes. Students take 6.3 classes which means that 3,100 students enroll in about 19,350 classes. The increase this year of approximately 300 more registrations means 19,650 and that is significant. The computer assigns the classes in the best way possible so that everyone gets the classes he/she wants. If the moratorium were lifted on, in this case, Theatre, the demand for other classes would then be lower.

Mr. Rigas summarized that the District was holding back the classes because students were not signing up for this class. This is not a new class. Mr. Allen did not want to over react, but if there were a serious concern that a teacher might leave, he might suggest lifting the moratorium for a week. Mr. Rouse reiterated that the District believes all students have registered and to lift the moratorium could potentially cause problems in other areas. Mr. Conway stated that the District can not create a demand where there is no demand. The District is fortunate to have great

teachers in the building and that students have a variety of classes to take. He did not believe the Board of Education had to create a demand where there was none.

Ms. Patchak-Layman referred to the teachers being rified that some were part time and full time, English, Fine and Performing Arts, and Consumer Ed and asked if this was because of the lack of students. How many sections is part time? Mr. Edgecombe responded that it would be three or less.

Ms. Patchak-Layman stated that one of the responses through email involved allowing students to take drama freshman year in the same vein as music, and asked what procedures would be used to make that a possibility. Mr. Prale stated that it would be an alteration in the course structure and the need for a course proposal in the fall. The Board of Education would have to a discussion regarding costs. Dr. Weninger noted that there were serious ramifications to making that wholesale change at this time. Six to seven hundred freshmen are required to take study hall. Some freshmen take classes such as band and choral. If that requirement were lifted, there would be financial complications and the District could not accommodate the schedule changes. This might be a discussion for next year's registration process, including the financial implications, as each section costs approximately \$10,000.

A roll call vote resulted in five ayes and one nay. Ms. Patchak-Layman voted nay. Motion carried.

**Recognition of
Faculty Who will
Achieve Tenure**

Mr. Rigas moved to recognize and congratulate the Certified Staff Who Will Achieve Tenure; seconded by Dr. Lee A roll call vote resulted five ayes and one nay. Mr. Allen voted no, although he congratulated these teachers. Motion carried.

Devon Alexander
Douglas Allee
Michael Byars
Eleanor Crawford
Jason Dennis
Elizabeth Fox
Jessica Greenberg
Yeni Hart

Katherine Moran
Ryan Mulvaney
Peter Nixen
Stephanie Oliver
Raffaella Spilotro
Carolina Schoenbeck
Anthony Svejda
Tyrone Williams
Glynis Kinnan

Mr. Edgecombe explained that teachers achieve tenure by being at school on the last day of their fourth year of continued teaching. It is a property right that cannot be taken away from them without just cause, e.g., an

deficiency that cannot be remediated, commitment of a felony, etc. A deficiency would be identified in the evaluation process. Mr. Allen asked if evaluations were typically inflated. Mr. Edgcombe felt that could be one perspective but he would not claim OPRFHS to be different from other school districts. Mr. Allen said that if the faculty member's performance decreased and that was not reflected in the evaluation, then the school has to continue to hire that person or wait until he/she decides to leave. Thus, Mr. Allen congratulated these teachers but voted no.

Retirement Request Approvals Mr. Rigas moved to approve and congratulate the retirement requests for the following certified staff; seconded by Ms. Fisher. A roll call vote resulted in all ayes. Motion carried.

Vanessa Hughes (June 2013)
Colleen Biggins (June 2014)
Barbara Kenning (June 2014)
Larry Montagno (June 2014).

The Collective Bargaining Agreement with Faculty Senate permits certified staff to provide an irrevocable written notice by March 1 of any school year, up to six years prior to the retirement year, or intent to retire. The reason for early requests is that the local retirement benefit changed in 2004, as a result of the collaboration of the Faculty Senate and in 2007, because of TRS rules and regulations about the increases that could be given to faculty members in their final years of services. In 2007, a new retirement benefit was negotiated with Faculty Senate that required notification six years prior to the date of retirement in order that a teacher would get the full benefit of retirement.

Changes to the Agenda Ms. Patchak-Layman asked that Items A, Open Minutes of January 22, February 12, 17, and 26, 2009, and the Closed Session Minutes of January 22, February 12, and 26, 2009, and a declaration that the Audiotapes of the closed sessions in July and August 2007 be destroyed; and B, Personnel Recommendations, be removed from the Consent Agenda.

Student Life Student Council—Ryan Mullin was happy to hear about tentative agreement with B&G.

Mr. Mullin reported that over 1,000 students voted over two days in Student Council's election of officers and the results were as follows:

President: Jenny Linder
Vice-President: Emilio Velez
Secretary-Treasurer: Molly Campbell
Board Rep: Liz Turcza
Service Project Coordinator: Jessica Goldberg

Public Relations: Emily Hendrix

Mr. Mullin also reported that the recycling program was working well and that the Mr. OPRFHS contest would be held April 16. The proceeds will be given to benefit a cause not yet determined. Student Council asked for suggestions on other acts to be included that night.

Principal Report

Mr. Rouse reported that a Plus One Award Ceremony was held to honor those students who gained 1.0 or more on their cumulative GPA from the last semester.

Mr. Rouse reported Ms. Gwen Walker-Qualls coordinated a wellness intervention program that included the Oak Park Township Youth Services, Oak Park Public Health Department, Parenthesis, Family Services, etc. Special education students helped to make posters, etc. Special thanks were offered to Linda Spain, Daphne LeCesne, Charles Barr, Carol Gilbert, Marvin Walker, Evelyn Walker, and Food Service and B&G employees.

Mr. Rouse reported that a voluntary assembly aimed at inspiring youth is scheduled for after school on April 8. The "Wakeup" will feature Rapp Artist Blaze, Steven Epstein, Spoken Word students Keenan Smith and Rebecca Johnson, Gospel Choir and Gospel Dancers. Testimonials by recent graduates and presentations by the faculty and staff will be given. Staff will be on hand to provide resources.

Mr. Rouse reported that in lieu of valedictorians speaking at commencement, those students receiving the Scholarship Cup Awards would receive their diplomas first and have their pictures accompany their 300 to 500 word statements in the commencement program. Students must be an OPRFHS student for five semesters to be eligible for the Scholarship Cup; this award has been in existence since 1915. Currently nineteen students will be Scholarship Award Recipients.

Mr. Rouse reported that the school extends its sympathy to the family of student Marcus Winfrey who recently passed away and to another student who was hit by a car earlier that week at the corner of Ridgeland and Lake. Knee surgery was scheduled for the following day.

Student Discipline Report

Mr. Rouse introduced Ms. Janel Bishop and her staff who gave a brief overview of the Student Discipline Report. He thanked her and her staff for the work they had done.

This report had been shared at the Instruction Committee as well. Ms. Bishop introduced Deans Tia Marr, Alyse Walton, James Goodfellow, and Jason Dennis and thanked them for attending this meeting.

Ms. Bishop reported that some of the Board of Education requests have not yet been fulfilled with regard to this report, but with revisions to the data collecting and reporting, she hoped their requests would be fulfilled next time. She reported on the following:

1. Sixty-six attendance related infractions, primarily due to the new tardy procedure. Deans are working hard to address the truancy issue and teachers are trying their best to record the tardies and to write referrals;
2. African-American males committed 38 percent of all infractions as compared to 16 percent committed by White males;
3. Non-Special Education students committed 32 percent of all infractions as compared to 15 percent committed by Special Education students;
4. 1894 infractions were committed by males of all races and 1151 committed by females;
5. 31 offenses of gross misconducts, at term used to identify an offense not currently listed or a student who has multiple infaction;
6. 23 offenses of fight. The current system does not allow the recording of the number of fights;
7. 18 offenses of mob action which were committed in four incidents;
8. 16 students were found under the influence of an illegal or controlled substance. An illegal substance is illegal drugs and a controlled substance is alcohol, over-the-counter medication, or prescription drugs, etc.

There was no reciticism Class IV infractions for fighting. While there were too many violent offenses, students are not repeating this action. Seven African-American females received consequences for fighting and 12 African-American females committed the infraction of mob action.

There has been a significant issue of theft in the building, i.e., crimes of opportunity in the locker room, etc. A system has been implemented where security picks up those items left out and stores them. Thus, no more thefts in the locker room have occurred. There are other opportunities in the building when things are left unattended. There is no profile for those students who do the stealing; they are of all races, gender, and grade levels.

The GPA of students in the ISS and the OSS is very low and the District must do better in the discipline and academic achievement of these students.

On Page 31, the report shows what alternative disciplinary actions have been assigned, e.g., cleaning up the cafeteria, restricting lunch, and not being able to leave the school, etc. The school takes no pleasure in students missing class or in issuing consequences. The Deans spend a great deal of time

meeting with students and that often takes away from their everyday tasks. Seventy-nine dean conferences were recorded, e.g., students and families, students and teachers, etc. Page 33 shows the number of Dean conferences and mediation, which are separate meetings, that were held. The Deans need to do a better job of recording these events. She felt the Deans were succeeding at having students request help for different situations, as the students are learning who to go to for help. The Deans also do home visits. Student who smoke are referred to the Oak Park Health Department's smoking cessation program instead of serving detention hours.

Ms. Bishop stated that the District no longer has behavior contracts but it does hold behavior expectation meetings for any student who commits a Class 3 or 4 infraction. Sixty-one meetings of this type have taken place. The meeting may include the Dean, student, parent, counselor, etc., and the purpose is to talk about each other's role. While Deans do hold everyone accountable, there is no written record.

OPRFHS is also proud of the partnership it has begun with Concordia University on counseling. OPRFHS refers students to Concordia for counseling in lieu of issuing suspensions/detentions. Fourteen students were referred to Concordia. Thirteen girls (involved in mob action fights) and one male were referred for this basic-level and group counseling sessions. The students counselors receive feedback from Concordia.

There have been positive benefits to having all of the PSS Team members in the same place this year.

Changes have been made to the FREE and MUREE Program. Forty-two referrals have been made but not all students have accepted that invitation. A more detailed report will be given at the end of the school year.

Ms. Patchak-Layman asked if exist interview were given to students to find out what interaction was the most positive for them. Mr. Bishop responded that the District is working with Concordia University on obtaining this type of feedback.

Ms. Bishop continued that the last table gives a year-to-year comparison and the numbers this year are higher. An ASD is a 3-hour detention. In previous reports from previous years, there was no separation of ASD or Detentions. This year there was. The Dean may allow the student to serve the ASD in increments, i.e., an hour here and two hours at another time, etc. The detention number is high (2270) because ASDs were not separated out from the detentions. The new tardy procedures might also be a factor in the higher rate of detentions.

Ms. Bishop felt anecdotally that female violence stood out, although that is not reflected in the report. Deans receive discipline referrals; they do not create them. That fact says that perhaps the school should look at the issues in the classroom, as the referrals are written mostly by classroom teachers.

Ms. Bishop thanked Mark Wilson for putting together the tables in the report.

Dr. Weninger reviewed expulsion numbers from past years and noted that they were considerably down this year and last year as a direct result of 1) the Assistant Principal, 2) the Deans, 3) the PSS Team model being strengthened, 4) the physical move of deans and counselors being located in the space space for better and quicker communication, and 5) utilizing community services, including Concordia. In addition, several cases were brought to the Administrative Council which recommended expulsion and either the superintendent or the Board of Education made a different recommendation. He personally followed up with every student who had not gone to expulsion and with their parents. In every case they have followed their commitments and in many instances their behaviors, attitudes, and outlooks have improved.

Ms. Patchak-Layman asked how many students fell into the category of administrative or superintendent review. Dr. Weninger responded that this year there was three. She wondered how many were referred to HARBOR. Dr. Weninger stated that first semester one student did not go to Ombudsman or HARBOR and did not go for expulsion. Other venues are utilized to modify behavior. Ms. Patchak-Layman suggested adding another column to show the students recommended for expulsion but the recommendation was deflected by the administrative review. She felt this would allow a better understanding of the discipline infractions. When asked if the Dean's office knew about this intervention, Ms. Bishop stated that it does not have that information as it is a higher level than the Deans. Mr. Rouse agreed to put in an additional column. Mr. Rigas too felt that information would be interesting. An alternative school will be given later in the year and the reasons for their placement will be in that report as well.

Ms. Patchak-Layman asked how much of the intervention related to academics. Ms. Bishop said that the Deans work regularly with the counselors in all aspects of the students, including academics. Additional interventions are the PSS Teams interventions listed in the report. Conversations do result in what are felt to be the appropriate interventions and consequences. Those conversations are not documented. If a student with a 1.0 GPA has been given an OSS, Ms. Patchak-Layman asked how the school was ensuring that academics was a priority. Ms. Bishop stated that every student that has an OSS for five days or more, sees a tutor once a day. Teachers who are teaching 3 or 4 classes in a row may not be able to get the work to the students as quickly as others, but this system is in the

developmental stage. The District wants to develop alternatives to suspensions; counseling is a part of that development. Conversations are beginning with the Volunteer Center of Oak Park about community service projects. The District is working on decreasing the number of OSS recommendation.

Mr. Conway learned that the time the student spends in OSS includes the time spent on an investigation and the student told to stay at home. Mr. Conway challenged the new board to review the *Code of Conduct* in order to assure that students were safe by controlling the behavior of those who misbehave and that the time spent in ISS and OSS was being used wisely. It is a misjudgement to leave students with just supervision as they do not accomplish anything academically. The District must teach them acceptable behavior and still value their education in this building. The District must mandate that they continue to be educated. The Board of Education should also find ways to separate those students who are dangerous to the population from those are not and yet not sacrifice their academics.

When the superintendent was first interviewed, the Board of Education shared with him the situations in Rooms 272 and 308. Dr. Weninger felt that he could deal with that directly and did so by spreading the counselors and deans throughout the building, so there is not one location where all of the trouble is. That has made a big difference in how students perceive what is happening to them. It does stigmatize them. Mr. Conway commended Dr. Weninger for that work and the results were obvious. He continued that every time a student has an opportunity to be taught it is very important.

He thanked them for the report and he looked forward to being in cooperation with them and the staff to provide the best opportunity for students to learn and to grow.

Citizens Council

Ms. McLean, cochair of the Citizens' Council, reported on the last meeting. She stated that Citizens' Council too had a candidate forum where approximately 40 to 45 people attended. It was an attempt to educate people as to the candidates for the Board of Education.

Citizens' Council will do an evaluation of its work for this past year. It wants to help the Board of Education and she suggested that it might be able to help in the areas of substance abuse and destructive decision-making. She will talk with John Allen about brainstorming things that Citizens' Council can do to help the Board of Education.

SIP Report

Mr. Rigas moved to approve the School Improvement Plan, as presented, and to direct administration to submit the plan to the Illinois State Board of Education; seconded by Dr. Lee. A roll call vote resulted in five ayes and one nay. Ms. Patchak-Layman voted nay. Motion carried.

Mr. Rouse informed the Board of Education that stakeholders had reviewed this report and it was being brought to Board of Education for approval. As the report relates to NCLB, it speaks to areas in which the school needs to improve based on the benchmarks set by the State of Illinois. If a District does not meet the standards, it is required to submit this document. Those areas in which the District did not meet the standards are as follows:

- 1) African-American students who are deficient in reading and math;
- 2) Students with special needs who are deficient in mathematics; and
- 3) Economically disadvantaged students who are deficient in reading.

The 42-page document was condensed into a 16-page executive summary. The biggest change is Response to Intervention (RtI), a different way in which the State will require the District to respond to students. The premise is that there is an overpopulation of special education students. To combat that, the District is required to have regular education faculty respond differently, i.e., before asking for an assessment of special needs, the teacher must codify the areas in which he/she has tried interventions. This is a formulation of what teachers already do, e.g., creating extra time for the testing for the student, enhancing the students' ability to be more visual learners, hold before or after school conversations with teachers to brainstorm, look at data that formulates teaching techniques, etc. RtI is prevalent in elementary schools and is a trend that is shifting in education. It is a three-tier approach that addresses the students needs and it is hoped that in the 2010-11 documentation of the RTI process will be part of the evaluation process of students. The District is identifying in this document where the implementation will take place and how RtI can be used in the areas of deficiency.

Discussion ensued. Since the discussion at the Instruction Committee meeting, page 18, paragraph 4, changed. It talks about progressive monitoring. More concrete ways on how the District monitors a student's receipt of tiered interventions was added.

Mr. Rouse thanked the individuals who helped create this document as many of them were parents who worked countless hours to give him insights and challenged the District to use this as a tool to address the needs of the students. He looked forward to continuing the work of this document. This report is a two-year report and the new Board of Education should use it to help it develop its goals for the next school year.

Superintendent's Report

Dr. Weninger reported that Matt Maloney was Basketball Coach of the Year of the West Suburban Conference.

Dr. Weninger reported that Counselor Joe Herbst worked to setup peer mediation that will help students settle differences positively

Dr. Weninger reported that the Village of Oak Park has sent out 3000 letters to the community, including the high school, regarding a parking plan about which public hearings will be held on April 6, 7, and 13. Dr. Weninger reported that after reading the Intergovernmental Agreement with the Village of Oak Park about student and staff parking, he concluded that the high school's fees could not be raised.

Dr. Weninger reported that a pilot tutoring program for students in In-School Suspension would begin the later part of the school year.

Dr. Weninger reported that the University of Illinois would hold its spring practice on Saturday, April 11 at OPRFHS from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m.

Dr. Weninger reported that the Presidential Marine Corps Marching Band and Silent Drill Team would perform at the high school on May 12 at 6:00 p.m.

District Liaison & Faculty Senate—Mr. Hunter made the following statement:

“I am not going to lie, Spring Break starts tomorrow afternoon, and I am excited! A popular misconception about teaching is that teacher's have vacation time. Unlike members of the business community, teachers do not negotiate vacation time. Teacher's time is determined by state law and contracts. Teachers only work 185 days or so.... Therefore, we are only paid for a 185 days of work. I wish the community would learn the difference between non-contract days and vacation time. Teaching is a demanding profession... we help manage the lives of multiple individuals and in some cases, their parents. This week I will have met with parents panicked about how to motivate their students to finish their senior year of high school... contacted a student in the hospital that was injured in a car accident... talked to young teachers that are discouraged by the myriad of problems they face in the classroom... counseled parents that things would turn out ok for their kid while I was attending a social event.... Held a breakfast for some students that need the extra push to get across the stage in June... taught 20 sections of class at very challenging time for struggling or distracted seniors and spent six hours on Saturday in my office grading and lesson planning... I mention all of this because this is the time of the year where teachers are not viewed as valued members of the community; instead, teachers are reduced to a figure, a number, an FTE or Full time Equivalents. We become digits or pawns in a big system of matching course registration and student needs with the available staff and their teaching prowess. This is a difficult time of year, especially for inexperienced teachers. The process of being

converted from a nurturing and respected professional to a number is very disconcerting. It becomes even more complicated when they are in turn RIFFED. I feel like George Carlin when I say the word RIF. Reduction in force can mean you are fired and need to move on, or you are temporarily without a job for the next year. You sit and worry about whether or not you are going to be recalled to teach. Experienced teachers understand the process, do not necessarily endorse the process, but understand that enrolments rise and fall and that states laws and local collective bargaining agreements force early staffing decisions to help alleviate problems when searching for a new job. It is an unpleasant time of the year. The decisions you make tonight on whether to RIF teachers should not be taken lightly. These FTE's are people that want to call OPRF home and I hope that we find a way for those that have been rified to be recalled and once again become part of the vibrant learning community in which they really want to belong.

“While talking about employment issues.... Let me offer thanks and congratulations on the announcement of the tentative agreement reached between the Board and the Buildings and Grounds bargaining unit. As an experienced negotiator and Senate chair, I understand the discomfort associated with bargaining, especially protracted bargaining. It would have been a devastating blow to the learning community if the B and G staff had been outsourced. The Senate's position all along was that with some hard work, these difficult negotiations could be successfully resolved. The gratitude we as a faculty have to offer both sides is heartfelt. Thank you for reaching an agreement.

“Next year a number of important retirements are going to occur within the District. A number of instructional leaders and distinguished teachers are going to retire. It is of vital importance to the faculty that this important work not be stalled or delayed by the Administration. We need to find and hire some outstanding people to fill these vacated positions. We also should engage in some discussions on the expansion of administrative jobs and the impact it has on the educational bottom line. And most certainly, we need to create an environment that nurtures and retains teachers of color. My most significant disappointment this year is that we have not been able to create and sustain a program for the recruitment of teachers of color. This is a serious error. As we approach one of the most challenging recruitment years in the history of the high school, we should be testing a minority recruitment system that we wish to employ next year. I am frustrated because everything that the teachers have been asked to do in dealing with Achievement issues. These include participation in CRISS and Courageous conversations, developing new methods and programs to address achievement issues, such as the teaching model and the expanded reading program have been successfully implemented. It is critical that this important piece of the

plan to address the achievement of all students be operational as soon as possible.

“One last comment: Best of luck to all of the candidates that are seeking to be elected or re-elected to the district 200 Board of Education! I am a bit torn tonight as to how to approach the departure of two valued members of the Board. Twenty years of Board experience is going to evaporate during the next month. It will be very difficult to replace both Valerie Fisher and John Rigas. Valerie’s tenure on the Board may be historic; few, if any, have served as long as Valerie Fisher. She has served as a calming influence on the board. She is rarely riled and never has grandstanded on issues that she viewed as important. And, remarkably, she has never been political in her motives or actions as a Board member. I am afraid, the cloth from which the fabric that makes up the being of Valerie Fisher, is no longer made. Valerie has been a vanguard for the strong traditions and demeanor that inspiring Board leaders have displayed. It will be very difficult to fill your seat Valerie and the faculty will miss your presence at the Board table.

“As an experienced Board watcher, John Rigas was the first Board member that was my age. When I started at the High School back in the middle Eighties, I was the youngest member of the faculty for a number of years. I was also the youngest Chair of negotiations in the history of the district. Whether I was at work teaching or serving the faculty, I was always working with people that were my senior. When I first met John, I was struck by his honest and straightforward demeanor and his desire to what was right for his community and the school that he loved. John truly bleeds Orange and Blue. John has tirelessly worked to better the work of the faculty and administration and has offered the district the type of financial stewardship that will be missed and difficult to replicate. John deserves the Traditional of Excellence Award, not because he is a famous actor, athlete, or scientist, but because he represents the average student that attends this high school and was changed by having had the chance to learn and grow while being here. And remarkably, those positive experiences in this building as a kid have made John one of the best Board members in the history of the high school. John understands that high expectations for and tremendous support of teachers is what makes this such a special institution. John the faculty wishes you all the best in the coming election and we will miss your stewardship, integrity, and honesty at the Board table.

“Clearly, this next election is an important one, since we are losing two experienced, knowledgeable, and terrific leaders. Thank you, Valerie and John for taking the time to serve the community in such an important way.

When asked which Board of Education candidates Faculty Senate supported, Mr. Hunter suggested going to www.oprffs.com for its position statements.

Ms. Fisher thanked Mr. Hunter for his comments and suggested that Mr. Rigas should compete for the Mr. OPRFHS contest.

Boosters—Mr. Rigas stated that the Booster auction, while well attended, was down from last year. He surmised that it was due to the earlier scheduling of the event and the state of the economy. Mr. Rigas thanked faculty member Tom Tarrant for hand making a beautiful picnic set and donating to the auction.

APPLE—Dr. Lee reported that APPLE brought in the seven Board of Education candidates for District 200 at its last meeting and it was well attended. This forum was only for the Board of Education candidates. He hoped it was helpful.

Alumni Association—Ms. Fisher stated that the Alumni Association met on March 9 and she wanted to acknowledge the hard work that the members put into the scholarship opportunities for the summer; while its membership is small, the members are very dedicated. She thanked them for all their endeavors. She offered to share the minutes and materials from the last meeting with any Board of Education member who had an interest. She would leave them with the Clerk of the Board.

Consent Items

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

- 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 March;
- Check Disbursements and Financial Resolutions dated March 26, 2009;
- Monthly January 2009 Treasurer's Report;
- Award of Photography Services Contract to HR Imaging;
- Extension of two-year agreement with Grand Prairie Bus Service; and
- Textbooks, *Algebra 2: Concepts and Skills*, for the Mathematics Division.

seconded by Mr. Allen. A roll call vote resulted in all ayes. Motion carried.

Audiotape Destruction

Ms. Patchak-Layman stated that after reading Policy 20, Board of Education, she believed the declaration that the audiotapes on this agenda should be destroyed was misplaced because the policy says that two times per year the Board of Education would review the closed minutes and audiotapes in order to determine whether they needed to remain closed or destroyed. Having a running agenda item to destroy the tapes did not match the policy.

In Ms. Fisher's view that was why Ms. Kalmerton includes the minutes of all of the meetings for the past six months in the Board of Education packet when it is asked to make a declaration so that each Board of Education member can review those minutes; if there were reason for them to be preserved, one would act accordingly. She did not believe there needed to be a special activity to review the tapes. That is the reason the Board of Education Clerk includes those minutes so that the Board of Education can make the determination.

Hearing no motion to approve Ms. Patchak-Layman's request to strike the declaration that the audiotapes be destroyed, it died.

Consent Item A

Mr. Allen moved to approve the Open Minutes of January 22, February 12, 17, and 26, 2009, and the Closed Session Minutes of January 22, February 12, and 26, 2009, and a declaration that the Audiotapes of the closed sessions in July and August 2007 be destroyed; seconded by Ms. Fisher. A roll call vote resulted in five ayes and one nay. Ms. Patchak-Layman voted nay. Motion carried.

Consent Item B

Mr. Rigas moved to approve the personnel recommendations, as presented; seconded by Dr. Lee. A roll call vote resulted in all ayes.

Discussion ensued regarding the new Outreach Coordinator, Ms. Debra Middleton. Her position is 12-months and her duties include getting to the know the OPRFHS students and parents, as well as incoming students, coordinating with John Williams of OPYTS, and working with parent organizations. Ms. Middleton is a 20-year resident of this community. She is familiar with the feeder schools and with the struggles of her own students. She has a way to communicate that will be of benefit to the parents. Her office will be located near the Principal's Office.

Dr. Lee was informed that the name had been changed from African-American Outreach Coordinator to just Outreach Coordinator. Originally, the position was proposed because most of the students not meeting state standards were African-American. Dr. Weninger received a call from the Attorney General's office about a complaint from the community stating that the position's title would be discriminatory to non African-American groups. There was direction to change the title to put that issue at rest. The Attorney General's indicated that it was inclined to agree with the complaint.

Ms. Patchak-Layman asked if this position was considered an advocate position for parents. Dr. Weninger responded negatively, as it was intended to bring parents closer to the school and the school closer to the parents. Ms. Middleton will act at times as an ombudsman, a liaison, a marketer of school programs, and she will help the school to know what inhibits parents from participating with it. When asked if this person would interface with staff

and teachers as well with administrators, Dr. Weninger suggested that the interface may be more prevalent with counselors, deans, resource managers, etc., but that this was a staff member just as any other person in the building.

Ms. Patchak-Layman was informed that Ms. Quane had been hired as a TA earlier in the year and would now be hired as an art teacher.

**Approval of
Policy 3363,
For First Reading**

Dr. Lee moved to approve Policy 3363, Student Activity Accounts and acceptance of Administrative Procedures, for First Reading, as presented; seconded by Ms. Fisher. A roll call vote resulted in all ayes. Motion carried.

**Approval of
Policy 3551,
For First Reading**

Dr. Lee moved to approve Policy 3551, District Property, for First Reading, as presented; seconded by Mr. Conway. A roll call vote resulted in all ayes. Motion carried.

**Non-Agenda
Items**

None

Closed Session

At 11:15 p.m., on March 26, 2009, Ms. Fisher 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 negotiating matters between the District and its employees or their representatives or deliberations concerning salary schedules for one or more classes of employees. 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(2); 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 Mr. Allen. A roll call vote resulted in all ayes. Motion carried.

At 1:10 a.m. on Friday, March 27, 2009, the Board of Education reconvened its open session.

Adjournment

At 1:15 a.m. on Friday, March 27, 2009, Mr. Allen moved to adjourn the Board of Education meeting; seconded by Ms. Fisher. A roll call vote resulted in all ayes. Motion carried.

Jacques A. Conway
President

Dr. Ralph H. Lee
Secretary