

Oak Park River Forest League of Women Voters Eyewitness Report

Observed by Mary Haley

Date: March 21, 2019

Meeting Length: 4hr. 4015min

Meeting Name: District 200 School Board

Headline: Superintendent Presents New Administrative Alignment Eliminating Post of Principal

Events and Testimony: During Public Comments a number of community members and students spoke in support of the creation a new position of Inclusion Facilitator. While the parents spoke well of the work regular education teachers are doing to include students with developmental disabilities in the general education classes, they described the need to have a single person to coordinate the work.

What Did the Board Decide: In a 4-3 vote, the board created five new full-time positions. These positions are: secondary pathway coordinator, testing coordinator, inclusion coordinator, security supervisor and food service supervisor. These positions are needed according to administration to help implement the equity policy. The overall cost of the positions is about \$270,000. Dr. Moore, Mr. Cofsky and Mr. Iseli voted against the motion. While they all believe the positions are of value, they questioned the impact these salaries would have on the goal of balancing the budget. Cyndi Sidor, interim chief school business official, said that the costs would be offset by cuts in the budget for furniture and other savings. Mr. Iseli commented that the new positions will be an ongoing expense while the budget cuts for next year are a one-time only savings.

What Else Did the Board Discuss: Dr. Pruitt-Adams presented a realignment plan for the district administration. The position of principal will be eliminated with those responsibilities divided among newly created positions of associate superintendent and directors. Greg Johnson will take on many of the responsibilities and duties formerly held by the principal, while his current responsibilities will be shared among newly created directors. Dr. Pruitt-Adams said that the new plan will bring the district and school into a more inclusive team. The board was enthusiastic about the new plan, but questioned how the staff and community will respond to it. Dr. Pruitt-Adams explained that the faculty senate, deans and division heads will be included in the planning. An FAQ is being created, and community meetings may be scheduled.

What Else to Watch For: The racial equity policy is being reviewed by the district's legal consultants. Some changes are expected. The policy will be up for a second reading at the April meeting. An amended strategic plan will be up for approval in June. The PSS teams asked the board for direction on how to reconcile the current code of conduct with the district's move to embrace restorative justice.