

**ORADELL BOARD OF EDUCATION
ORADELL, NEW JERSEY 07649**

**SPECIAL PUBLIC BUSINESS MEETING – JANUARY 17, 2002
MINUTES**

I. CALL TO ORDER

The Special Public Business Meeting of the Oradell Board of Education was called to order at 8:06 p.m. by President Shinevar.

II. FLAG SALUTE

The flag salute was led by Mr. Julis.

III. SUNSHINE LAW STATEMENT

The Sunshine Law Statement was read by Mrs. Shinevar.

All requirements of the Open Public Business Meetings Law have been met for this meeting of the Board of Education of the Borough of Oradell. Notice of this meeting was filed with the Borough Clerk, posted in Borough Hall and the Oradell Free Public Library, faxed to the Town News and all persons requesting such notice on December 20, 2001.

IV. MISSION STATEMENT

The Mission Statement was read by Mrs. LaForgia.

The Mission of the Oradell School District is to develop in each student strong self-esteem, ethical values, respect and an appreciation of diversity and passion for learning to enable every student to perform at his/her maximum potential through a flexible and inclusive educational system.

To accomplish this, the Board, in active collaboration with parents, staff and administration, and in partnership with the total community, will provide a comprehensive and academically challenging educational program that responds to the unique and changing needs of students and society.

Adopted by the Oradell Board of Education December 20, 1993

V. ROLL CALL

PRESENT: Mr. Julis, Mrs. LaForgia, Mrs. Landau, Mrs. Looram, Mrs. Norian,
Mr. Mr. Walsh, Mr. Feigenson, Mrs. Shinevar

ABSENT: Mr. Spadaccini

Also present were Mr. Jeffrey Mohre, Superintendent, Mr. John Esposito,
Business Administrator/Board Secretary, Mr. William Scott Ryan, Principal, Dr.

John DiGiovachino, Director of Special Services, Mr. Raymond Albano, Strategic Plan Facilitator and approximately 150 members of the public consisting of community members and Oradell Public School teachers.

VI. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT/BOARD PRESIDENT'S REMARKS

Mrs. Shinevar welcomed all and thanked them for coming to this important meeting. She outlined the brief rules for the evening – Let speakers finish first; three minute limit; comments must be pertinent to the plan.

Mr. Mohre gave an overview of the process, introduced each of the facilitators and thanked everyone for their contributions to the plan.

Mr. Albano talked about the process and the history of how the District had come this far. He explained the different phases the project went through over the past 18 months. There were changes made along the way for several reasons, including the District hiring a new superintendent. Mr. Albano also noted that as Interim Superintendent he wanted to conduct an internal needs assessment before the process moved forward.

In the fall of 2001, there was a consolidation of committees due to a great deal of overlap in the issues being discussed. A format was developed and the strategies and activities were identified. The committee chairs had the option to return to their members for additional input, or assistance, in creating goals from this information.

Mr. Albano then reviewed what he sees as the qualities of a successful strategic plan. He stated that Oradell's plan would drive many aspects of the district, including Board goals, curriculum creation, budget development and staff goals.

Linda Gonzalez and Lesley Maklin, internal facilitators for the plan, were introduced to the audience. Mr. Mohre thanked them for their hard work and talked about how the three over-arching goals fit together to form the strategic plan.

Ms. Maklin provided a brief history of the process, including the inclusion of NJSBA and Quality Education New Jersey (QENJ), brainstorming sessions and the gathering of information related to strengths and weaknesses of the school. In November, 2000, a weekend session was held with all interested strategic plan members. Out of these meetings the group formed the mission statement and identified what eventually became the plan's three major goals: Curriculum and Instruction; School Climate, Culture and Community; and Facilities.

Ms. Gonzalez read the mission statement and talked about the three goals. She also noted that there were more than twenty people in attendance at the weekend

brainstorming sessions.

Mr. Mohre talked about the three goals and how they form the core of the plan. Each goal has staffing implications, resource needs and indicators of success. He noted that some have funding implications, while others do not.

Goal 1: CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

Mrs. Goeller and Mr. Kasturas were introduced and they talked about the strength of the document and that they believed it could lead to success for the school. They went through the list of nine strategies that make up this goal for curriculum and instruction.

Mrs. Goeller discussed the set-up and format of the plan's sheets. Each goal has numerous strategies and each strategy has several major activities. Each activity has staff responsible, resources, indicators of success, funding implications and the time frame – either year 1, years 2 and 3 or years 4 and 5.

Mr. Kasturas talked about professional development and how it was incorporated in the plan.

Mr. Mohre expanded on the supervisory model and talked about coaching and supporting the teaching staff.

He also noted the large number of students per administrators in OPS. He expressed his desire to encourage teachers in Oradell to take the risks necessary to advance professional learning and he would support them in their efforts.

Mrs. Landau thanked everyone involved for their hard work and commended them on the plan. She wanted to clarify whether curricula are currently aligned with the State's core curriculum standards or if this would be accomplished by the strategic plan.

Mr. Mohre stated that the school would use a variety of resources to look at units of study for each grade level. He also noted that, ultimately, newly revised curriculum guides would come out of this process.

Mrs. LaForgia asked about teacher and staff development and who is on the OPS research and development team. Mr. Mohre responded that a group of parents and teachers could serve as a team.

Mrs. Landau asked about the middle school articulation, and whether it would include alignment between Oradell and River Edge. Ms. Gonzalez stated that the plan addressed this issue. Mrs. Landau then asked about existing assessments and the need for adopting new ones. Mr. Mohre stated that he would identify what we

are doing well as well as what we are not doing well and figure out what works.

Mr. Montemarano applauded the presentation. He is concerned about the short-term obligation of the school and wants students to be taught to the test.

Dr. Moskowitz had concerns about the indicators of success for some activities. He mentioned specifically that on strategy 4 of the curriculum goal that the Board should reconsider the indicator of success. He believes the true measurement is implementation of curriculum in the classroom. He also asked the Board to reconsider "maximize learnings" in the mission statement.

Mrs. Roberts asked several questions: Where the District goes from here; What does the school keep versus change in the curriculum; and What are the priorities in the curriculum. She also saluted the IDEAS program for its Best Practices Award and suggested incorporating it into the curriculum.

Mrs. Petersen asked for a more detailed draft of the strategies and was told she could obtain one from the Superintendent's office. She also asked about a curriculum guide and Mr. Mohre noted that he favored a balanced approach and supporting the teachers' strategies.

Ms. Gonzalez noted that the items were prioritized in order to be able to accomplish as much as possible in the coming year.

Mrs. Ulman complimented the plan and thought the indicators of success could be strengthened. She stated that she had been involved early in the process but wished she had been called back before the plan was complete. She questioned whether any parents were involved with the end of the process, but stated that overall it's a 'wonderful' plan.

Mr. Mohre explained the process and how a small core of people created action plans with input from committee members. He added that no member of the process was meant to be excluded.

A parent asked about the ESPA test scores, but was told that they were discussed at a meeting in October. The action plan however will be reviewed at next week's Board session.

Mr. Chakansky asked to participate in the various committee processes outlined in the plan. Mr. Mohre stated that information would go out to alert the community when parents or community member participation was appropriate.

Mr. Finkel questioned how a five year plan benefits students right now. Mr. Mohre explained how many of the plan's major activities would have immediate impact as such serve to shape the vision and direction of OPS.

Mrs. Schwartz stated that she was at some of the early meetings and feels that she was not called back to give her input. She congratulated the teachers for their hard work on a voluntary effort and said she wants to support the staff in any way possible.

Mr. Belthoff raised a concern that the school is losing focus on the day-to-day goals while looking at a five year plan. Mr. Mohre answered that this plan drives the every day running of the school. Actions such as professional development are ongoing, but the plan would help guide the manner in which the development program is structured.

Mrs. Shinevar asked for a short recess at 9:59 p.m. before continuing on with the rest of the strategic plan. The purpose of the recess was to ensure that everyone had a copy of the entire plan which had been mailed to participants but not handed out at the beginning of the meeting.

The Board reconvened at 10:07 p.m.

Goal 2: CLIMATE, CULTURE AND COMMUNITY

Mrs. Blakeslee provided an overview of the goal of School Climate, Culture and Community. She reviewed the strategies and gave details for each issue.

Mrs. Landau had questions about specific components and will reach out to Mr. Mohre at a later date if appropriate, or when the Board has a more detailed discussion. She wanted to know how community members could be guaranteed to be involved in future processes in the plan and if there was a model for communication between the community and administration. The Superintendent talked about a user-friendly packet with information about the school and ways of communicating with staff.

Mr. Feigenson asked about Page 18, 5a: Resources for a Task Force. Mr. Mohre stated that he would look to all groups for a balanced, enriched cross-section of individuals for this effort.

Mrs. LaForgia also inquired about resources needed in 5a and who would determine who is selected for this task force. Mr. Mohre added that there are various models to use for selecting people to serve on design teams.

Mr. Walsh wanted to know if people can come back and ask questions next week.

Mr. Albano suggested putting the plan on the agenda for the next Board meeting for additional review and discussion. Mrs. LaForgia asked that people not approach Board members with questions one at a time, but rather ask at the next meeting.

Mr. Chakansky stated that it is hard to make Board meetings and he would like to be able to use the website for adding comments.

Mr. Montemarano stated that he thinks the school needs better communication and the web site should be used to communicate important information.

Mrs. Alonso said that she was surprised that there was no specific item aimed at developing the web site. Mrs. Blakeslee noted that there is mention of the web site in the plan and how to better utilize it in the future.

Mrs. Alonso asked how often the public would be informed of the progress of the plan. Mrs. Shinevar responded that the Board will eventually adopt the plan and the administration will implement it. She stated that public sessions discussing progress on the plan would be held.

Mrs. Loh wanted to know how to communicate issues and questions to the Board and was told to mail them to the Superintendent, and it will be distributed to each member.

Mr. Chakansky wants the community to be included as resources for web design and help.

Mrs. Roberts thanked Mr. Mohre for having informal coffees and opening up the communication lines with parents.

Mr. Moran noted that he was on a technology committee for several years and maybe this should be reconsidered by the Board.

Mrs. Petersen wants to know how concerns raised with Mr. Mohre will be followed up on. He responded that he plans to share information with the staff and community members as often as possible.

Mrs. Postel commented that strategic plans are reviewed and revised on an ongoing basis.

GOAL 3: FACILITIES

Mrs. Orthmann presented the Facilities goal and its seven strategies.

Mrs. LaForgia asked that the plan be revised on an as-needed basis, not just annually.

Mrs. Landau pointed out that Facilities should address issues related to the property outside of the school as well.

Mrs. Gilbert asked about reviewing evacuation procedures for specific events. Mr. Mohre noted that he is exploring ways of making sure the school is prepared for any circumstances.

Mrs. Petersen asked about the student ratio for nursing services.

Mr. Montemarano wants to know the specifics on cleaning and Mr. Esposito explained that the plan drives the day-to-day activities. Mrs. Shinevar explained that the administration is accountable for aspects of the plan.

Mrs. Roberts called the items a laundry list and not a plan. Ms. Gonzalez responded by explaining the process and that there are many specifics behind the general issues.

Mrs. Burtha wanted to know why there are no exact numbers or goals to measure.

Mrs. Sadlon asked about who is dealing with safety on the playground.

Mr. Montemarano commented that he believes the plan is not executable due to the fact that OPS' administrative team is small in numbers.

Mr. Chakansky alluded to revising the safety section.

Mrs. Petersen asked if there would be a chance to ask more questions at next week's meeting.

Mrs. Shinevar and Mr. Albano summarized the evening's discussion and thanked everyone for participating.

VII. CLOSED SESSION (IF NECESSARY)

There was no Closed Session.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

It was moved by Mrs. Loram, seconded by Mrs. Norian, that the meeting be adjourned at 11:30 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Motion carried by a unanimous roll call vote.

Respectfully submitted,



John Esposito
Business Administrator/Board Secretary