

# LEAGUE of WOMEN VOTERS™ OAK PARK / RIVER FOREST



**Oak Park River Forest District 200  
April 24, 2008**

*Angelika Kuehn, Observer*

The meeting was called to order at 7:35 p.m. All board members (Allen, Fisher, Lee, Millard, Patchak-Layman and Rigas) other than Chair Conway were present. Member Millard chaired the meeting. Superintendent Weninger and senior administrators were present. The board room was packed with students and parents, for a long session of student recognition. Fourteen other community members were in attendance, but there was no public comment.

*MUREE and FREE programs.* These are anger-management and life-skills programs, one for boys and one for girls. The director offered a report on the programs in response to the board's request last month that they hear more about discipline-related programs. A community member who frequently participates in board discussions asked the director if the programs are run by qualified mental health professionals and stressed the importance of that qualification. Member Patchak-Layman complained about the lack of measurement of the program and academic support for either the program or the students; it was not clear. A student member of the program as well as a mentor had been invited to speak about her experience, which she did, in a positive way, when she arrived later in the evening.

*New principal.* The hiring of Nathan Rouse as principal was approved. He had been in a leadership position at Highland Park High School, where he was considered "smart and savvy and compassionate." He and his wife were present and Mr. Rouse spoke briefly to the board, staff and guests. The faculty head said good-bye and thank you to (Interim Principal) Don Vogel, who was the choice of the faculty, and welcomed Mr. Rouse, asking that he be the principal of all the students. Superintendent Weninger reported that with this hire, there was a "40% minority recruitment rate."

*Legal services.* Member Patchak-Layman asked that the board hire new legal counsel for the District. Acting Chair Millard asked top staff members for an account of their experiences with the individual attorneys and law firms they are currently engaging. The staff had positive evaluations of the counsel the respective staff members dealt with. Member Patchak-Layman suggested that a change of lawyers every five years stimulates competition and would result in economies for the District (as contrasted with her position taken in prior board meetings that the current attorneys were acting in violation of the law). Other board members disagreed that a change would be beneficial at this time. A guest volunteered that APPLE had serious criticisms of a specific lawyer assigned to special education matters. Member Patchak-Layman asked to get documentation of current legal services.

Near but not at the end of this meeting, the Observer left.