

*Oak Park and River Forest High School
District 200
201 North Scoville Avenue • Oak Park, IL 60302-2296*

Date: May 17, 2011
To: Policy Evaluation and Goals Committee Members
From: Dr. Steven T. Isoye, Superintendent
Subj: Organizational Assessment

The administration is pleased to present to the Board this initial organizational needs assessment from the Blueprint Education Group. You have in your packet the consultant's executive summary that highlights consistent themes for Board, District, and school growth and improvement. As the executive summary states in greater detail, this review and related Blueprint recommendations are the outgrowth of in-depth interviews with more than 60 representative school and community stakeholders conducted during Fall 2010 and concluding in the early winter of 2011. At the table, you will also find Blueprint's compendium of stakeholders' shared perceptions and observations that consistently surfaced and resonated as issues of note.

Background - From Baldrige to Blueprint:

As we digest and discuss this information, we should remember its context. In 2009, the Board and former Superintendent hired Blueprint to facilitate a Baldrige Organizational Assessment at OPRF, helping us identify where we were performing well; what areas needed improvement, and how we might best address identified areas of need. The Baldrige process provides a highly prescriptive and structured self-analysis model requiring the commitment of many key staff members and stakeholders over time. The proposed spring 2010 launch of Baldrige ended up coinciding with the Board's and administration's involvement in an extensive leadership transition process, including the hiring of three new Division heads, a Special Education Director, an Assistant Principal for Student Services, a Human Resources Director, and a new Superintendent. It became apparent that neither the scope nor timing was feasible for a credible Baldrige review, given other institutional priorities and requirements.

Last summer, with new leadership in place, Dr. Isoye proposed that Blueprint undertake a stream-lined self-assessment process with a quicker turnaround time to inform and benefit new leadership early on. For maximum benefit, Blueprint's analysis was to focus on areas perceived to be and identified as needing change and improvement. In January, the Board accepted the modification to the initial contract.

Findings for Review

This Blueprint review deliberately did not spend time outlining areas of strength. These were givens: an engaged, qualified faculty and staff; an array of enriching programs and course choices; a pupil support team approach to counseling and student services; progress in literacy

and curriculum development that addresses core student learning needs and gaps in achievement; co-curricular programs that provide students with extensive options for engaging with the school and connecting with caring adults; well maintained facilities and well-equipped programs, and fiscal stability for the next decade. Neither does the review reflect areas recently identified for improvement and progress made, such as in the area of Board governance, human resources and instructional technology. These positives are the baseline we are fortunate to be starting from as we look inward, reflect and challenge ourselves to keep getting better for the sake of our students.

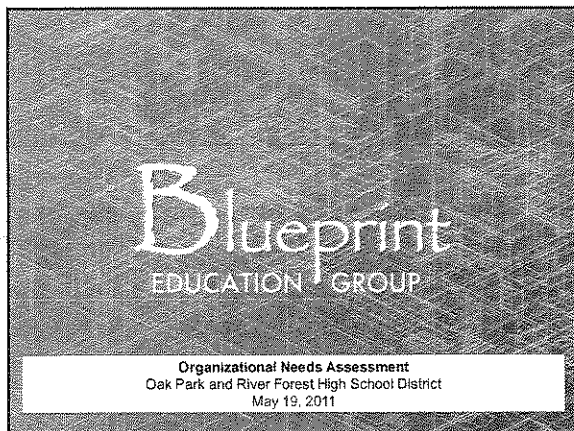
Blueprint's query has helped identify themes that can inhibit our professional growth and erode our institutional educational excellence if not addressed with candor, among them, the need:

- to create a school-wide shared vision and purpose
- to address inconsistencies in quality, focus, expectations and accountability;
- to align our vision, resources, and f commitment with our rhetoric, especially in areas related to disparate academic outcomes linked to students' race.

Blueprint did single out this core strength: "OPRF enjoys a rare degree of community investment and interest. This investment from the community is pervasive and is a real asset as the school moves forward." This notable engagement among internal and external stakeholders pushes us to set higher individual and collective goals and expectations and expect constant improvement.

As such, this information will be an important contribution to the Board's discussions as members develop and set the District's 2011-2012 goals. The administration hopes the Board, faculty, staff and community will accept this Blueprint review in the spirit in which it is created and presented: to spur us to the kind of constructive self reflection that inspires meaningful change to benefit our students' educations and lives.

The executive summary and full review will be available for review on the District's website, as well.



Blueprint EDUCATION GROUP Agenda

Organizational Needs Blueprint: Report of Themes and Recommendations

1. Project Intent
2. Project Methodology
3. Themes and Recommendations
4. Next Steps
5. Questions and Answers

Blueprint EDUCATION GROUP Project Intent

Project Intent

1. Conduct interviews with teachers, administration, community members, Board members, support staff, and students to gather perceptions in order to identify and clarify opportunities for organizational improvement.
2. Provide recommendations in response to OPRF organizational needs.

Blueprint EDUCATION GROUP Project Methodology

Blueprint partners conducted a series of individual interviews with members from the following groups:

- Faculty (12)
- Support staff (9)
- Parents (10)
- Students (2)
- Board members (6)
- Administrative Staff (7)
- Community members (9)
- Leaders from other area education institutions (4)

Blueprint EDUCATION GROUP Themes

In order to condense the findings and focus on primary areas for improvement, the District Leadership worked with Blueprint and the findings from Blueprint. The DLT identified main **themes** while Blueprint identified key **recommendations** for the district to consider. The themes that emerged are below:

1. Communication and engagement
2. Accountability
3. Stakeholder relationships
4. Collection and use of data

Blueprint EDUCATION GROUP Theme 1 Described

DLT and Blueprint identified Theme 1: *Communication and Engagement*

- OPRF must more clearly articulate its vision for closing the achievement gap to all stakeholders.
- OPRF can better communicate with all its stakeholders its services and opportunities for all students.

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Theme 1 Recommendations

Blueprint recommendations for improvement to *Communication and Engagement*

- At the center of the persistent achievement gaps are "engagement gaps." Too many students (and parents) are insufficiently connected to the school.
- Commitment to student engagement must be manifest not only in language but also in student-focused support systems.

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Theme 2 Described

DLT and Blueprint identified Theme 2: *Accountability*

- Parents, students, staff, faculty, the school board, and district leadership must all hold fast to long-term district goals pertaining to student engagement and performance.
- Too many critical elements of student engagement are not held to a high enough degree of accountability.

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Theme 2 Recommendations

Blueprint recommendations for improvement to Theme 2 *Accountability*

- While academic freedom is important, it's also apparent that there needs to be a significant increase in the ways certified staff effectiveness (including administrators, teachers, counselors, etc.) is measured and improved.
- Existing internal structures for assessing certified staff performance appear to be underutilized.

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Theme 3 Described

DLT and Blueprint identified Theme 3 *Stakeholder Relationships*

- OPRF needs to improve the means and degree to which various members of the OPRF community are engaged in relationships with one another centered on student learning.
- Improving relationships amongst the adults – parents, staff, faculty, and administration - is central to improving the working, teaching, and learning conditions at the school.

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Theme 3 Recommendations

Blueprint recommendations for improvement to Theme 3 *Stakeholder Relationships*:

- The district should be gathering robust data as to the workplace and job satisfaction of all staff.
- Expectations for the conduct and personal relations amongst adults must be much more clearly articulated.
- OPRF needs to engage all learners and their families in a significantly more intentional manner.

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Theme 4 Described

DLT and Blueprint identified Theme 4 *Collection and Use of Data*

- The collection and use of data needs to be improved. In addition to academic performance data, OPRF can improve its use of data concerning student engagement, school culture, and teacher effectiveness.

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Theme 4 Recommendations

Blueprint recommendations for improvement to Theme 4 Information:

- OPRF needs to collect and strategically use data that identify school culture and climate (employee and students) trends
- OPRF needs to respond rigorously to the needs of those learners who are struggling.
- Student data must be used more effectively in guiding curriculum and staffing decisions.

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Q & A

Blueprint Organizational Needs Assessment

Your Questions & Answers

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Blueprint Education Group LLC
5/14/11

Project Report

*Oak Park and River Forest High School
Organizational Needs Assessment*

I. Executive Summary

As part of its Knowledge Management Services, Blueprint Education Group LLC ("Blueprint") performed an Organizational Needs Assessment for Oak Park and River Forest High School ("OPRF"). The primary goals of this needs assessment were the following:

1. Conduct interviews with teachers, administrators, community members, Board members, support staff, and students to gather perceptions in order to identify and clarify opportunities for organizational improvement;
2. Suggest a range of improvements specifically in response to OPRF organizational needs.

This process has been a remarkable one, one in which a wide and diverse body of stakeholders was invited into a conversation about a school that they all care about deeply. Without fail, the people who were solicited for input expressed their optimism and concerns for the school as well as a sense of gratitude for the opportunity to be involved in this discussion.

This report is only the beginning of what will inherently be a complicated and perhaps even intense process of authentically and strategically facing the concerns that are shared by the school and the community. However, if the commitment we saw from all stakeholders in this initial phase is mirrored in their capacity to partner with the school to affect meaningful change, then we have little doubt that there is no problem too great for the collective will and talent of the OPRF community to meaningfully address and improve.

We greatly appreciate the opportunity to work with the dedicated people of Oak Park and River Forest High School and the surrounding communities.

Sincerely,

Todd Bloom, Ph.D.
Managing Partner
Blueprint Education Group LLC

Nathan Eklund
Partner
Blueprint Education Group LLC

Blueprint Education Group LLC is a registered Minnesota limited liability company (EIN: 61-150-4811). The company is headquartered at 2101 Morton Road, Wayzata, Minnesota 55391. Todd Bloom is Principal Owner of Blueprint Education Group LLC. Additional information about the company and its services is available by contacting Todd Bloom at (952) 807-5345 or fax at (888) 269-4915 or email tbloom@BlueprintEducationGroup.com.

II. About Blueprint Education Group

Blueprint Education Group LLC is a Minnesota-based professional services organization committed to assisting organizations overcome their most pressing operational and cultural challenges. Blueprint services focus on bringing efficiency to an organization's operations while maintaining or increasing effectiveness. As well, Blueprint takes particular focus on the organizational contexts in which needed change will take place: working with staff and administration, Blueprint not only suggests necessary changes but also guides schools through the often challenging processes of implementation. Blueprint Partners and its Founder, Todd Bloom, Ph.D., are proud to have worked on such projects with the following sampling of schools district and education-focused organizations:

- Lake County Schools, FL
- Utah State University
- TIES, MN
- New York City Board of Education, NY
- Denver Public Schools, CO
- Lansing School District, MI
- Orange County Public Schools, FL
- Sarasota County Schools, FL
- Charleston County School District, SC
- Ysleta Independent School District, TX
- Deer Valley Unified School District, AZ
- Polk County Schools, FL
- eSchool Solutions Inc., FL

Dr. Bloom and his Blueprint Partners have spent years researching and responding to school district needs for increasing their capacity to utilize reliable data to drive strategic decision-making from the classroom to the Board room. With experience serving education consortiums, Departments of Education, associations, and both large and small school districts Blueprint is committed to improving educational performance.

III. Assessment Methodology

Data Sources and Information Collected by Blueprint Education Group

Blueprint partners conducted a broad series of individual interviews based on very general prompts:

- What is presently going well at OPRF?
- What are areas you'd note for improvements?
- Where can the school focus further?

Individual interviews included:

- Faculty
- Support Staff
- Parents
- Students
- Board Members
- Community Members
- Leaders from other area education institutions

Intended to bring structure and coherence to the often complex nature of organizational development and school improvement, this methodology is based on Blueprint's Principal Consultant's background in a variety of school improvement initiatives. Blueprint also leverages its experience working with many school districts from across North America in the area of Human Resource process improvement and knowledge management to maintain high quality standards for the Organizational Needs Assessment. As well, Blueprint takes particular notice throughout the needs assessment process to the organizational culture that is the context for all improvement.

Summary of responses of interviews:

In summary, the majority of interviewees report both strong support for the school as well as confidence in the present direction and tone of the organization. Across all sectors, there is widespread belief that while there are certainly legitimate and pressing concerns there is also in place the leadership and willingness to meaningfully address areas of concern. The overall sense that "things have changed and are heading in the right direction" is palpable.

While this report focuses primarily on areas for growth, it should be noted that there is already in place strong practices, policies, and personnel to meet the needs of the students of OPRF. The pride and care everyone interviewed has for OPRF is of significant importance. OPRF enjoys a rare degree of community investment and interest. This investment from the community is pervasive and is a real asset as the school moves forward.

The intent of this report is to illustrate common and clear themes that emerged through the interview process. Over 60 people were interviewed. Due to the high level of input, some very clear discoveries emerged. These discoveries should be central to the planning process that will follow this report.

Blueprint Education Group applauds the nature of this study, one supported by administration, the Board, and staff. This open and honest look inward is a vulnerable process – one not all organizations are willing to engage in. Universally, the people interviewed expressed gratitude for being asked for input. The process alone served a strong role in engaging key stakeholders.

The issues facing OPRF are not insignificant. They will not be solved by maintaining the status quo. In fact, many people cited the "status quo" as being a source of some of the present issues. That said, across the sectors of interviewees there was a confidence that the present leadership has the real opportunity to affect meaningful change. Of special note, however, was the fear that this would be "yet another empty conversation about closing the achievement gap." Real or just perceived, there is the fear that OPRF will only give lip service to addressing the gaps that exist. Many people stated that the school has essentially had this conversation for the past 30 years. There was great eagerness to cease business as usual.

In that light, the following report contains a summary of the identified needs derived from the interviews and in discussions with school leaders. The report will share both identified needs as well as recommended improvements. While many suggestions and perhaps even qualms were shared in the process, the report is intended to focus on the prevalent themes that emerged. This is not intended to discount the concerns of some individuals. However, as a strategic planning report, it is important to focus on the most pressing needs to the most people.

This organizational assessment is broken into three dimensions, comprising a number of sub categories as listed below:

Dimension: ORGANIZATION AND PEOPLE

- Vision
- Leadership
- Student Focus
- Community Focus
- Employee Focus
- Measurement and Accountability
- Culture
- Organizational Results/Performance

Dimension: PROCESS AND FUNCTIONS

- Learning Processes
- Operational Support Processes

Dimension: TECHNOLOGY AND INFRASTRUCTURE

- Administrative Technology
- Instructional Technology
- Information Access
- Materials and Resources
- Facilities

IV. Key Findings and Suggestions

Dimension: Organization and People

Vision:

Identified Needs/Key Findings:

- There is common consensus that the school has a better “vibe” in it and that there's readiness for change. Multiple people stated this across multiple sectors.
- There is consistent confidence in Superintendent Isoye and a belief he can lead positive change. That said, there was a common refrain of “wait and see” what his vision for OPRF will be.
- When asked if they believed OPRF would close the achievement gap or if it would persist, most respondents had their doubts due to many years of conversations that have already occurred. Respondents were hopeful, but had yet to hear a bold vision for how the school will deeply and authentically engage in learning for *all* students.

Recommended Improvements:

- The Superintendent and Board must articulate a clear vision of change to the staff and community who anticipate a bold plan that squarely addresses the persistent academic and school engagement inequities at OPRF.
- Many noted that there is a timely opportunity and general willingness to change at this moment; hence, this articulated vision needs to be moved forward expeditiously.

Leadership:

Identified Needs/Key Findings:

- There was enthusiastic support for Superintendent Isoye who is believed to be able to listen, process, and connect stakeholders for change.
- The new leadership structure of having a superintendent and principal is regarded to be a sound and strong decision.
- It is broadly held that due to new leaders at the school that things are on “the right path.”
- There are concerns about how effectively the Board functions and the overall tone, efficiency, and efficacy of Board meetings.
- The perceived onerous time commitment of being a Board member is a deterrent to community members to consider a seat on the Board.
- There is a perception that the personal agendas of Board members at times impede progress toward broad organizational leadership and governance.

Recommended Improvements:

- Superintendent Isoye should capitalize on and leverage the good will and confidence he has engendered in his first year. The general confidence the community has in him is a significant component of creating necessary changes at OPRF.
- The Board needs rigorous training and development.
- The changes in leadership structure that have already occurred need to continue to be both shaped and articulated to staff.
- There needs to be increased internal leadership. For example, division heads insufficiently monitor and hold accountable teaching and learning.

Student Focus:**Identified Needs/Key Findings:**

- Perhaps the most single most common comment in the interviews was this: *"Students at the very top and very bottom do well at OPRF. Students in the middle struggles."* Parents and community members, reflecting all grade levels and ethnicities, shared this.
- It was noted consistently that OPRF has offerings that are remarkable and that should result in each student being able to find a connection to the school but that many students are not aware of or making use of these opportunities. This leaves far too many students disconnected from the school.
- Many parents cited that students are moved either from grade to grade or through coursework even if the students had not mastered the requisite content to warrant moving onward. It is perceived that the school fails to remediate or tailor instruction to individual learners.
- School decisions affecting student learning do not seem logically tied to data. If a population of students is struggling, as indicated by data, the school needs to respond rigorously to the needs of those learners.
- Too many students pass through OPRF without "being known." A lack of focus on relationships with all students as well as ongoing and personalized counseling services have left too many students having to fend for themselves.
- While there are services and opportunities available for students, such as extra reading instruction, these offerings have not gone deep or wide enough to successfully address the needs of especially the lowest performing students.
- There is a lot of "talk" about student achievement, but too little "action." The school is perceived to lack true, deep concern about failing students.
- Student safety and behavior concerns indicate a need to reconsider changing the current open campus practice.

Recommended Improvements:

- School leadership must declare unacceptable the present student performance gaps and take bold action to engage all learners. These changes are not only structural but also cultural.
- At the center of the persistent achievement gaps are pervasive "engagement gaps." Too many students of all race and SES backgrounds are insufficiently connected to the school. The school must make systemic the means by which each student is meaningfully connected to teaching and support staff. OPRF's present commitment to ensuring that all students feel connected to the school and its staff can be increased.
- OPRF leadership must acknowledge and address the commonly held notion that there are two schools with OPRF: one for high achieving students and another for all other learners. This two school approach harms all learners, not just the struggling students.
- Commitment to student engagement must be manifest not only in language but also more importantly in student-focused systems. Advisor groups, structured and daily student/staff engagement opportunities, and other concrete and aggressive measures taken to connect students to OPRF are examples of the types of intentional steps necessary to ensure student connectivity and success.
- The "achievement gap" is not the problem facing students. The "achievement gap" is the outcome of OPRF under-serving the needs of all students. A continuation of the status quo or insufficient focus on connecting all learners to OPRF – academically and culturally – will not significantly decrease student failures.
- District decision-making needs to continually focus on this question: "Is this the best decision for students?" An over-focus on adults and external, community factors has led to the consideration of too many non-student factors.
- Need to increase opportunities for community service and mentorship.
- Responding to strong support to modify current policies, readdress the open campus policy.

Community Focus:**Identified Needs/Key Findings:**

- Above all, OPRF is in good standing with the community and is still held in high regard.
- There is a perception that the school is perhaps "not as good as it used to be." Reasons for this perception were varied, although increased media exposure about problems facing students/the school and student behavior is clearly contributing.
- The community seems to be more skeptical of the Board than the school itself.

- The transition from the feeder schools into OPRF needs to be deliberately and significantly improved, both for parents and students. Collaboration between feeder schools and OPRF staff and leadership, while improving, still needs increased attention.
- OPRF should continue to explore ways to increase the voice and engagement of parents of all racial backgrounds.

Employee Focus:

Identified Needs/Key Findings:

- Staff members are proud to work at this school and think of it as an excellent school.
- Teaching staff is particularly proud of its legacy of strong student results.
- Support staff feels well managed and positioned to do their jobs.
- There are two distinct/separate cultures: teaching staff ("faculty") and everyone else.
- Support staff does not always feel acknowledged or respected by teaching staff. Even basic politeness, kindness, and respect are not necessarily a cultural norm amongst the adults in the school.
- As new staff comes into the school, the dynamics and expectations have shifted and changed. "Old staff" and "new staff" do not necessarily have the same view of teaching and learning as well as a sense of overall connection with other adults in the school.
- The autonomy of staff is both an asset and a liability. Academic freedom is celebrated but there is an admitted lack of accountability for student outcomes. This is was echoed both by parents and staff themselves.
- Teachers noted a lack of sustained leadership attention to most pressing needs. As academic struggles of some students have been addressed over time, there has not been a sustained focus long enough by administration to meaningfully affect change.

Recommended Improvements:

- Expectations for the conduct and personal relations amongst adults must be much more clearly articulated. If staff is unable to work well and respectfully with one another across various internal sectors, it will be difficult to get students to connect with one another better. Students take their lead from the behavior of the adults.
- Presently, there are pervasive "us" and "them" structures throughout OPRF. Be it between Honors and non-Honors teachers or between faculty and staff. These barriers must be named, addressed, and actively removed through intentional, district-wide efforts.
- Lingering tensions or discomfort amongst adults remains an obstacle to other improvement efforts. The district should be gathering robust data as to the workplace and job satisfaction of all staff.

Measurement and Accountability:

Identified Needs/Key Findings:

- Amongst parents and community members, it is believed that teaching staff is *not* held accountable for student outcomes. Specific divisions were often named as underperforming but there was no corresponding response from the school.
- Many parents know which teachers perform the best and work very hard to "work the system" to get their children into the right classes. This was made especially apparent in divisions where there is a perceived high degree of variation in teacher quality.
- Many are frustrated that the student academic performance has been so consistently varied for so long without true structural and policy changes being made to address these variances. There is some overall fatigue involved in this conversation and lingering doubts the school will make the difficult choices necessary to truly improve.
- Some community members shared disbelief that OPRF does not have a significantly higher degree of concern to what some called "a crisis."

Recommended Improvements:

- While academic freedom is paramount, it's also apparent that there needs to be a significant increase in the ways teacher performance is measured and improved. Faculty is committed to improving student performance and should be active partners in developing new ways of assessing teaching and learning performance in the classroom.
- Low performing teachers or divisions need to be held accountable and given opportunities to improve. At present, persistent under-performance does not appear to be followed by effective means of evaluation and improvement planning.

Culture:

Identified Needs/Key Findings:

- The belief that there are two schools (including what was commonly referred to as "Oak Park and River Forest University" for honors students) has created a cultural norm that pervades staff, faculty, students, and community members. This acceptance is seen as generally harmful to the needs of the greatest number of students.
- The proud and long history of the school is both a strength and a weakness as the school faces changes. Both staff and community members noted that while there is tremendous pride in the history of the school, that pride might also be an impediment to the school enacting necessary changes to improve student learning and staff performance. The traditions and beliefs of OPRF staff and community members are deeply imbedded, which makes change a more delicate procedure.
- There is a culture that takes its role as educators very seriously, meaning that whatever reluctance there might be toward innovation in new ways to address student achievement can also be leveraged against the cultural dedication to excellence of staff and students.
- There is some disagreement to the present cultural commitment to what it means to be "scholarly." There is concern that too much emphasis on remediation and standardization might lessen the overall rigor and excellence that is part of the essential fiber of OPRF.
- It is clear that there are parallel but distinct cultures within the school populations. The cultures seem to divide along the same lines as the names of the academic tracks – an "honors culture" is quite separate in many regards to the "non-honors culture." This reality is often at the core of why parents struggle to get their kids into the honor culture and out of the "general population."
- Student misbehavior is often cited as a main hindrance to effective instruction in non-Honors courses.

Recommended Improvements:

- There is no academic improvement without culture improvement. In large part, many of the academic struggles facing students are actually cultural issues. An over-emphasis on academic solutions to what might be cultural and engagement problems will likely exacerbate the cultural divides that are already occurring. OPRF must enact a strategic vision for connecting all students, parents, and staff into a unified, cohesive community if the intended academic outcomes are to occur.
- OPRF culture can be built and improved but only if there are systemic alterations and commitments made to this goal. For example, a school-wide, deeply embedded 9th grade program that meaningfully engaged parents, students, and staff would significantly increase the likelihood of engaging students throughout their careers at the school.
- Blueprint applauds efforts already underway, such as "Courageous Conversations" to directly address cultural tensions that exist within the community. These types of efforts should be expanded to explore all cultural permutations that exist in the school – race, class, academic performance, and differing neighborhoods. Too many of the uncomfortable conversations remain marginalized.

- OPRF needs to collect ongoing and nuanced data that relate to school culture and climate and use the data as strategically as the school would likely use academic data. A failure to embed academic strategies within purposeful culture building work will destine the academic outcomes to a difficult trajectory.

Organizational Results/Performance:

Identified Needs/Key Findings:

- The implementation of the new tardy policy was cited often as a strong example of tying policy to student data. Respondents want to see more school performance measures linked to data and other student-based needs.
- In terms of academic performance, it was often noted that it's not just the low/middle achieving students who are struggling. Even "honors students" are not doing as well as they used to. This was deeply concerning to many parents.
- Amongst faculty, there was concern that the traditional high academic standards that have made OPRF unique might be sacrificed to address the performance of low achieving students. Parents echoed this sentiment.
- School leaders consistently mentioned the need for accountability, especially pertaining to how change is handled. There is too high a degree of little follow-through or poor tracking of how changes are implemented and adhered to over time.
- Support staff stated that while many sound policies are in place, too often staff and faculty fail to follow the rules put into place, hence making their jobs harder to perform.

Recommended Improvements:

- Internal structures that presently exist that could be useful in assessing professional performance appear underutilized. For example, using division heads more effectively in improving student performance could be central to assessment and evaluation. Division heads need both coaching and input into how teachers in their departments can be fairly and rigorously assessed.
- Student data must be used more effectively in guiding curriculum and staffing decisions. At present, students who are struggling are promoted to the next grade or course level without the requisite learning necessary for student success. This continual progression is significantly decreasing both organizational effectiveness as well as damaging community confidence.
- Once necessary changes have been identified and agreed upon, there needs to be accountability built into the change process.
- Overall, there is too much leniency and inconsistency toward adult conduct and performance. When adult behavior is left to accident or chance, it does not norm well. OPRF must articulate and systematize its expectations for adult conduct.

Dimension: Process and Function

Learning Processes:

Identified Needs/Key Findings:

- Too many students do not receive the requisite instruction necessary to progress through OPRF. For example, students who cannot read at grade level must be given the services to catch up to their peers before moving on. Many parents noted that this type of attention is nowhere near the necessary levels.
- The "mid level courses" are unattractive to students and parents. Discipline issues and student behavior in these courses were often cited as the primary reasons parents work hard to get their kids out of these tracks and into Honors courses, even if the academic rigor of Honors courses was a poor fit for their students.
- Overall, there was a common refrain that far too many students (at all levels) are able to "slip through the cracks."
- The counseling division is unable to serve and meet the individual needs of all learners and student/parent concerns. This ranged from college admission processes to course selection and academic assistance. This appears to be due largely to understaffing in the counseling division.
- College admission assistance occurs too late and at too inadequate a level to best serve the needs of parents and students.
- It is often noted that only the parents who have time and knowledge of "how to work the system" are the ones who actually benefit the most from all that OPRF has to offer.

Recommended Improvements:

- OPRF has a tremendous opportunity to increase its "customer service." Especially at the 9th grade level, parents and students need to be connected intentionally and thoroughly to the resources that exist at OPRF. At present, the level of student and family engagement throughout the entire school is insufficient.
- The individual needs and interests of students are often not being met adequately. OPRF must commit fully to building the relationships amongst staff, students, and parents that ensure that each student at OPRF has a network of committed and coordinated adults.
- The onus is presently on the parents and students to navigate through OPRF. This needs to be inverted. OPRF needs to truly engage all learners and their families in a significantly more intentional manner.

Operational Support Processes:

Identified Needs/Key Findings:

- The overall body of work in this category, including finances and HR, is not an area of particular concern presently. This dimension of school operation is a strength.
- The Board was praised for its continued strong work in school finance.
- The new administrative structure was often cited as a growing strength for the school.

Recommended Improvements:

- Overall, this is an area that does elicit necessary improvements as opposed to continuation of the improvements already occurring.
- Consistency in policies and practices around issues of staffing and accountability needs continued attention.
- While there are few unique "pain points" in this dimension, as changes inevitably occur throughout this school improvement process, it will be key to ensure that HR is at the center of how these changes are implemented.

Dimension: Technology and Infrastructure

Administrative Technology:

Identified Needs/Key Findings:

- Existing software, particularly in HR, is presently underutilized.
- Use of instructional technology is highly variable across teachers and classrooms.
- It is expensive to fund variability of software and hardware from classroom to classroom.
- Technology spending is too adult focused, leading to tools for productivity rather than student learning.
- Need wireless throughout the building to assist in effective operations.
- Inconsistent technology throughout the building makes effective use of technology resources difficult.

Recommended Improvements:

- Review and further utilize existing District Technology Plan.
- Assess student usage and access to learning technologies.
- Optimize existing software and data systems through training and requiring more from present providers (e.g. pilot new tools from providers for little or no cost).
- Ensure that as the district makes changes that these changes are enmeshed with technological tools that will enable better and easier implementation of new policies, procedures, and even organizational values.
- Have focused conversation of how instruction and learning can be improved through the appropriate technologies and offer the district efficiencies.

Instructional Technology:

Identified Needs/Key Findings:

- There needs to be more technology made available to teachers and learners.
- The school has not sufficiently embraced 21st Century skills for students.

- The autonomy that teachers have also creates a high variance of the use of technology in instruction.
- There is an unclear decision-making process towards how technology is adopted and implemented.
- The role of instructional technology in curriculum and instruction decisions appears to be marginalized.

Recommended Improvements:

- Continue to work with all staff to create more uniform use of technology, particularly as it pertains to effective instruction.
- Create clearer processes for how technology is introduced and utilized by instructional staff.
- Work directly with teaching staff to create shared expectations for how technology will inform instructional strategies and decisions. At present, this conversation appears to be marginalized.

Information Access:

Identified Needs/Key Findings:

- The only information access that consistently emerged as troublesome for parents was surrounding counseling services. Parents felt ill equipped to help in the process of getting their students access to the correct courses as well as college preparation resources.
- Parents of incoming students also struggle to have full access to the resources they need to get their children enrolled, especially for special services such as enrolling for free and reduced lunch.

Recommended Improvements:

- This is primarily a "customer service" issue. At present, parents are working too hard to gain access to the information and resources necessary to effectively partner with the school for the better of their students. OPRF needs to pay particular attention to how it provides critical information to students and parents in an ongoing and consistent manner.
- Overall, it appears only students with strong advocacy from their parents are getting all the information they need to succeed. Students without this advocacy are too likely to fall through the cracks. This needs to be shored up.

Materials and Resources:

Identified Needs/Key Findings:

- This was an area of particular strength. Neither staff nor parents mentioned any perceived lack of necessary resources for effective instruction.
- In areas surrounding remediation and tutoring, many mentioned that OPRF presently under-serves students with needs. Areas of the building committed to providing before and after school assistance were noted as being insufficient.

Recommended Improvements:

- OPRF has existing resources to meet the needs of most learners. It does not appear that the intensity of these services is always sufficient. For example, while there are resources for tutoring and reading assistance, they are not presently offered at high enough quality or quantity to meet the needs of learners. Some of the best work OPRF is doing simply is not done deeply enough.
- If OPRF is committed to raising the achievement of all its learners, it must make the necessary investment of resources and time to these high-need areas.
- In its organizational review process, administration must identify the areas (such as reading instruction) that are presently being addressed but not to the degree they should be and make necessary adjustments to align resources to student needs.

Facilities:

Identified Needs/Key Findings:

- Perhaps more than in any other area, staff, students, and parents lauded the physical facilities of OPRF. OPRF was declared to be a "remarkable place."
- Access to high quality services in athletics and the fine arts in particular was often noted.
- Students report loving the actual building and campus.
- The campus is a real draw for students and parents.

Recommended Improvements:

- Continue to make strategic investments in capital improvements. Many people stated that while putting lights on the field was a difficult process, it was the right decision and is a primary example of the school investing in the physical plant to increase the experience students and community members are having at OPRF.