

**Oak Park and River Forest High School
201 N. Scoville
Oak Park, IL 60302**

**An Instruction Committee of the Whole Board
January 18, 2007**

An Instruction Committee meeting of the Whole Board was held on Thursday, January 18, 2007, in the Board Room. Ms. Fernandez opened the meeting at 7:35 a.m. Committee members present were Jacques A. Conway, Barbara P. Fernandez, Valerie J. Fisher, Dr. Barry S. Greenwald, Dr. Dietra D. Millard, Yasmin A. Ranney, and John P. Rigas. Also present were: Dr. Susan J. Bridge, Superintendent/Principal; Jack Lanenga, Assistant Superintendent for Operations; Cheryl L. Witham, Chief Financial Officer; Philip M. Prale, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction; Amy Hill, Director of Instruction; and Gail Kalmerton, Executive Assistance/Clerk of the Board.

Visitors included Kay Foran, Director of Community Relations and Communications; Leigh Remack, F.S.E.C. Representative; Dale Craft, Summer School Director; Dr. Ralph Lee and John C. Allen, IV (departed at 8:00 a.m.), community members.

Approval of Instruction Committee Minutes

Ms. Ranney moved to approve the Instruction Committee Minutes, as presented; seconded by Dr. Millard. A voice vote resulted in all ayes.

Summer School 2007

Mr. Prale introduced Dale Craft who had been hired as the 2007 summer school director. Information concerning approval of dates, tuition and salaries will be included in the Board of Education's packet for the Thursday, January 25, 2007 meeting. The Board of Education will be asked to approve these recommendations at that time.

Mr. Craft stated that he was looking forward to this opportunity and noted that he was open to any suggestions or changes that the Committee members might have. He announced that Linda Hayes would continue to be the administrative assistant for summer school.

Ms. Fernandez, concerned about the summer enrichment and bridge program for eighth graders, asked about the status of that program. Mr. Prale, responding as the head of transition program, noted that one of the innovations that he and Ms. Cada were working on was a summer reading class for incoming ninth-graders who had not been recommended for summer school in their IEPs. He stressed that a better job of screening students for a variety of programs was key. He has on going discussions with Kelly Baer of District 97 to talk with her principals to find out where students will be best served. The program is intended to serve approximately forty students with a teacher-student ratio of 1 to 10 or 1 to 12. Presently 25 to 28 students have mandatory summer school

requirements included in their I.E.P.s. Additional students will be identified to fill the other two sections. When asked if this budget were separate from the summer school budget, Mr. Prale responded that Title I Funds were within the summer school funds; Title I funds may be used for reading and math.

Ms. Fernandez was concerned that District 97 was not aware of the summer bridge program and asked what communication had taken place between Districts 97 and 200 to that end. Mr. Prale responded that Kelly Baer and he meet every other week, albeit the transition program is not always the topic of conversation. Having a separate district office is different from that at O.P.R.F.H.S. District administrators may not have the same type of accessibility to the teachers as does District 200. District 97 has two junior high schools and one alternative school.

Ms. Ranney had two concerns. The first one concerned the Alumni Association's giving money for summer enrichment programs. There seems not to be enough articulation for students who need summer school. She encouraged Dean Counselors to continually talk about these opportunities from now until the start of summer school and to provide classroom teachers with information as to what opportunities are available. Last year there was money not utilized. The second concern was whether the summer school program had been viewed as a self-contained financial unit that paid for itself. One area where they had been an over expenditure was the musical. The success of the musical depends so much on what is performed. She hoped that Mr. Craft could use his influence as to what was selected, as that determines the audience to which it plays.

Mr. Conway congratulated Mr. Craft on his appointment to this position. He observed that last year classroom attendance had risen, but camp attendance had fallen. It was explained that the drop in camp attendance was because the pools were unavailable that summer due to their renovation. Ten dollars of every camp fee goes into the summer school budget. Ms. Ranney was pleased that the pools were once again available as the coaches of the summer swim classes were very well recognized.

Dr. Millard asked Mr. Craft how he would strengthen the summer school program. His response was that there have been conversations regarding the continued work on the achievement gap and getting students to sign up for courses that would assist in closing the gap. He planned to work closely with Mr. Prale on that endeavor. He felt that the health program should be standardized and consistent among all of the classes. Presently, there are eight teachers who teach health; 16 sections with 28 students in each class.

Update on the Solo Program

Mr. Prale presented a report on the Solo Program; the first in a series of reports to Board of Education on programs of intervention. The S.O.L.O. program is an alternative program designed for students not "making it" in the traditional school setting. Generally, these students are non-attendeess; they do not have disciplinary problems. Before S.O.L.O. was implemented, these students would have been recommended for the alternative school, B.E.A.C.O.N.'s Academy, now H.A.R.B.O.R. Academy.

The changes that have been made to the program this year include the addition of more teachers in content areas and teachers who can help these students with their elective courses. The students are also more connected with their dean counselors, they are given more daily work services, and a teacher assistance has been assigned as well. Each Dean Counselor has one or two S.O.L.O. students on his/her caseload. The written report on this program (attached to and made a part of the minutes of this program) identified areas in which these students were doing better. They seem to be having fewer D and F grades and are attending their classes. While there are presently 15 students in this program, space is available for up to 19 students. Mr. Prale will work with Ms. Kyrias on identifying additional students for next semester. These students generally have more unexcused absences and need behavioral interventions. Again, there are no disciplinary problems.

Mr. Prale continued that three S.O.L.O. students graduated at break and they were given a party. He believed their future plans included enrolling at Triton College. A survey of the students in the S.O.L.O. Program indicated that most of them were satisfied. Those who were not wanted more access to the mainstream. The combining of S.O.L.O. classes and mainstream classes is being explored.

Ms. Ranney questioned the label of being in the S.O.L.O. program. She asked if it were possible to prevent any such labeling. She asked what was the sense in the school. Do most students in the mainstream understand the program? How does one make a recommendation to attend a regular class? Mr. Prale responded that they had no recognition as being S.O.L.O. Dr. Bridge concurred.

Mr. Prale continued part of the curriculum includes a mandatory work program. Four credits are earned through S.O.L.O. classes and one credit is earned for their work experience, which Ms. Conrick monitors. O.P.R.F.H.S. helps them to find their jobs. Ms. Fernandez felt that it might be important for them to write a paper on their work experience as, perhaps, a reflection for themselves.

To Dr. Millard's question as to how many students graduate or move back into the mainstream, Mr. Prale responded that the data would be available either at the end of the semester or at the end of the year.

The racial makeup of the students in the S.O.L.O. program is fifty percent African-American, one Hispanic, 1 multi-racial, and 40 percent White. This is similar to last year's makeup as well.

Dr. Millard asked if students had insight into their attendance patterns. Mr. Prale had not asked that question, but he felt it was an issue of engagement.

Mr. Prale added that Theresa Conrick has a Special Education background and that the teacher's assistant had a background in all Special Education continuums. In addition, Bill Loovas, an English teacher, who has worked in the program, has that background.

Textbook Approval

Committee member Fernandez recommended the approval of the textbook *Lifetime Health* for the Science Division.

When asked how one would object to any instructional materials, Mr. Prale reported that O.P.R.F.H.S. has a policy and process in which parents can lodge a complaint/intention. In the case of an objection, the student would be provided with alternative assignment.

Adjournment

The committee adjourned at 8:33 a.m.