

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

**An Instruction Committee of the Whole Board
March 15, 2007**

An Instruction Committee meeting of the Whole Board was held on Thursday, March 15, 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; Jason Edgecombe, Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources; Cheryl L. Witham, Chief Financial Officer; Jack Lanenga, Assistant Superintendent for Operations; Jason Edgecombe, Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources; 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 Richard Perna, Coordinator of Student Safety; Kay Foran, Director of Community Relations and Communications; Linda Cada, Special Education Division Head, Nikki Paplaczyk, Coordinator of Off-Campus Programs, Peggy Markey; Sheila Hardin, Michael Byers, Carolyn Ojikutu, Dr. Tiffany Allison, Lauren Lee, Sara Rosa, Debbie Neuman, faculty members; Barb Nelson, Co-Chair of P.T.O.; Wyanetta Johnson, Meg Reynolds, Terry Burke, and Sharon Patchak-Layman, community members.

Approval of Instruction Committee Minutes

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

Discussion of NCLB's Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) Results

Ms. Hill announced that O.P.R.F.H.S. had been formally notified of its AYP status—O.P.R.F.H.S. achieved AYP Status. This year a statistical application was implemented for subgroups that did not make safe harbor. She called the Committee members' attention to the four footnotes and the asterisk section at the bottom of the 2006 Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) Status Report (attached to and made a part of the minutes of this meeting). For the subgroups that did not meet their safe harbor target, a 75 percent confidence interval was applied. The confidence interval allows for the fact that small subgroups may not be reflective of the school's overall performance. Thus, O.P.R.F.H.S.'s economically disadvantaged and African-American subgroups were able to make AYP because of these additional points. The subgroup of African-American students' scores in math was 35.8 percent and yet 36.6 percent was necessary to meet AYP. With the confidence interval applied, this subgroup was able to make AYP.

The fact that the school made AYP is both a relief and exciting to the administration because if O.P.R.F.H.S. were able make AYP in 2007 it would remove O.P.R.F.H.S from Academic Warning Status and the school would be exempt from any sanctions; the school would be able to focus on specific interventions believed to be effective. It was further noted that in the mathematics scores, there are still glaring achievement gaps. Also noted was a decline in the reading scores of African-American students and students with I.E.P.s; yet there was no decline for disadvantaged students. No changes had occurred in the school's focus on reading and yet the subgroups did not do as well.

Ms. Ranney asked for an explanation of Supplemental Educational Services "SES." Ms. Hill stated that once a school does not make AYP for a second consecutive year, it incurs a level of sanction. In the second year, the school has to offer an option of SES for a specified group of students. Having made AYP this year does not reduce the current level of sanction for O.P.R.F.H.S. In year two, O.P.R.F.H.S. had to offer choice and SES options. Choice means that if there are multiple schools in a district and one school is making AYP while another is not, a student in the school not making AYP could transfer to the school making AYP, thus allowing the student a choice. In single-school districts such as O.P.R.F.H.S., there could be multi-district agreements with a result being that some of the dollars associated with Title I services, for the students who decided to go to another school would travel with those students. O.P.R.F.H.S. has made good faith efforts to enter into such agreements with other schools, but no other schools in the surrounding areas that have made AYP are available for choice via an agreement.

O.P.R.F.H.S., within thirty days of the state's notification to the school, sends letters to all parents notifying them of the school's AYP status and their parental rights. Those letters usually are sent home in September. Even though notice came late this year, those letters were sent last fall preserving that process and complying with the federal and state guidelines. Regarding SES, twenty percent of Title I funds are used to provide private tutoring services to the students in the subgroups which do not make AYP. An approved list of private tutors is provided by the State of Illinois. O.P.R.F.H.S. contacts those tutors to see who is willing to provide the services. Once those providers are identified, the names and locations are released to the parents. Those students interested are then provided contracted services. O.P.R.F.H.S. students are working presently with two providers. Approximately \$18,000 of Title I funds have been allocated for this private tutoring.

When asked what types of strategies the private tutors use, Mr. Prale stated these tutors are private and provide services offsite. Last year O.P.R.F.H.S. entered into an agreement for a provider to use space within the school. The tutors are responsible to report the results of a pre-test and to use the I.S.B.E.'s STARS website to give monthly updates on the students' progress. The attendance rate for these students at the tutoring site is approximately 50 percent. Mr. Prale noted that it can be difficult to bring students to tutoring; it may be easier to bring tutoring to students.

Ms. Fernandez congratulated the administration on the school having made AYP. Homewood Flossmoor and Lyons Township both made AYP, Homewood Flossmoor for

the second year in a row. Hinsdale High School, Evanston Township High School, and Niles Township High School Districts did not make AYP.

Ms. Reynolds reported that she had spoken with Mr. Prale when the parents were trying to start a tutoring program at the high school. These parents were told that no funding was available for their tutoring/mentoring program. Of the twenty slots available for students out of Title I funds, she asked how many were actually being used. Mr. Prale, remembering that conversation, stated that tutoring is made available in a reasonable time and only the students who qualify for the Free and Reduced Lunch Program may access that tutoring. A funding deadline had already passed when that conversation took place—the deadline to enter into an agreement with a provider of tutoring. He continued that the use of Title I funds is very restrictive. They must be used for the parents of Title I students. This year every available slot was used. In fact, several qualified parents called after the deadline and the high school allowed more students than the number of available slots to request tutoring. Because \$785 is allowed per students, he would probably make the decision to tutor a couple of students, if requested, with funds from other sources. While 20 or more students had requested these services, the invoices he receives for this tutoring only reflects students actually using the services. He anticipated using nearly all the allocated money on tutoring services.

Dr. Greenwald offered his thanks to the people who made this possible—the faculty who work with the students.

P.S.A.E. Plans

Ms. Hill provided a memorandum to the Instruction Committee members on the April Testing and Student/Staff Institute Day (attached to and made a part of the minutes of this meeting). She reported that the Prairie State Achievement Exam (P.S.A.E.) for juniors would take place on April 26, 2007. Juniors would also take the ACT with the writing component. She highlighted the changes for this year. Freshmen will take the PLAN test on April 25 and engage in activities with their dean counselors and the Fine and Applied Arts faculty on April 26. Sophomores will take the Instructional ACT. It will be scored in house. Students will receive their scores the following day. It will mirror the PSAE. Testing will take place in the classrooms, not the gyms. Faculty will act as the proctors throughout the building. Different classes will be tested on different floors.

Ms Hill explained that the PLAN test is typically given to sophomores. By giving this test to the freshman students, O.P.R.F.H.S. will have three years of data, i.e., from the eighth, ninth and tenth grades, to discern what kinds of academic improvements can be made to help these students with the PSAE. Obviously, this testing would be for diagnostic purposes. The ACT predicts a 1 to 3 improvement in test scores. If one gets a certain ACT test score, it is a predictor. The ACT will act as a benchmark.

All School Institute Day

Ms. Hill reported that on April 26, upon the conclusion of testing, plans are to have an institute day for students, faculty and all support staff. A draft agenda was included in her presentation (attached to and made a part of the minutes of this meeting). Seniors will not attend that day. There will be approximately three and one half hours of activities and the theme will be about the O.P.R.F.H.S. community. Faculty discussions occurred last year and the conversation is now to include students. A survey will be used as a jumping off point. That survey will be administered on April 4. It is an opinion survey about what students think about the issues around school regarding community and climate.

Report on Special Education Division

Ms. Cada and Mr. Prale prepared a written report on the Special Education Department, which included updates on student population projections, classroom accommodations and revised information access opportunities, off-campus program costs, regular education teacher attendance at staffings, and recommendations for the division (attached to and made a part of the minutes of this meeting).

Mr. Prale noted that a report on the overall utility or incident rate with regard to Special Education in the building had been requested. The Board of Education and Administration are seeing a steady increase in students who need Special Education services. The school must plan for that increase, which includes hiring more faculty members. Regular education teachers are being counseled on how to manage accommodations. Conversations about accommodations also occur within the divisions. The Special Education liaisons to the other academic divisions have had extremely positive results.

Many discussions about off campus program costs prompted the administration to look at these escalating costs. The goal is to level off these costs or even reduce them next year. Plans are being made on how to accomplish this. Hopefully, the outcome of this will be that the number of students placed at off-campus facilities will be reduced.

Regular education teachers are now attending IEP staffings. This has taken much scheduling and rescheduling and a learning curve for everyone involved as to what their role is in these staffings. The result is that regular education faculty now know much more about the staffing process. It has been a huge task and one handled well by Ms. Cada and her team.

Dr. Millard asked what kind of contact, i.e., progress reports, do parents and students have with the school once a student is assigned to an offsite facility. Ms. Cada stated that Ms. Paplaczyk took over the role of off-campus coordinator. She visited all of the sites and had face-to-face conversations with each of the more than twenty different programs. These discussions included ways in which the high school could improve communication. Ms. Paplaczyk now spends much time attending off-campus staffings,

which has been helpful to the parents. More communication has occurred this year through emails and telephone calls. She encouraged those parents with questions about credits or the child's progress to communicate with the high school. Dean Counselors have been more involved in this process this year as well. While they had attended some off-campus staffings previously, they are doing so now more frequently. IEP staffings are mandated to be held yearly, however, often the number of staffings exceeds one.

Regarding the frequency of communications, Ms. Paplaczky stated that some schools have more than one O.P.R.F.H.S. student in attendance and it is not unusual for her to talk with these schools daily. Staffings for private school students may occur three, four or five staffings times each year. These students are known for letting everyone know their progress because they want to be back on campus. Students are very active participants in this process. When asked if she gets many calls from the parents, Ms. Paplaczky replied that although she does not receive that many, she always responds to those she does receive. Sometimes the response is a returned telephone call and sometimes it is a face-to-face meeting with the parents. When asked if a special staffing occurs to determine when a student may return to the high school, Ms. Paplaczky responded that when the student is ready to return before the regular staffing date, a special staffing is scheduled. The IEP team determines whether the student is ready to return to the high school. . If it is determined that the student may return, then an IEP is built to transition the student and assist the child when he/she does return.

Ms. Cada added that the largest number of off campus students come back to the ED program. Both Therese Brennock and Ms. Paplaczky have worked diligently to make the transition process a smooth one. Ms. Paplaczky stated that if the parent(s) really wanted to have the child back on campus, they must talk to the school about whether the student can manage it.

Ms. Burke then presented a copy of a report from I.S.B.E., which listed funds it sends to O.P.R.F.H.S. and other schools for outplaced students. While most schools note a return to campus date to the I.S.B.E., O.P.R.F.H.S. does not. She also asked what data is available to prove how often parent(s) are communicated with when their child(ren) is(are) outplaced? Ms. Cada responded that the I.S.B.E. does ask for a return date and Ms. Paplaczky maintains a log as to the times there has been contact with parent(s) and student(s). She suggested that if the Board of Education were to talk with the private day schools, it would find that communication had increased dramatically.

Ms. Burke repeated her question as to the data regarding communication. Ms. Paplaczky stated that contact is made via email and telephone calls as well as through agreements with private school personnel as to who will call the parent. At this point, Ms. Burke noted that Dr. Millard had spoken with a parent who had no conversation with the school in the three years her child was outplaced. Ms. Reynolds noted that IEP records should include specific beginning and end dates for outplacements. Most O.P.R.F.H.S. students are outplaced for over one year. Mr. Prale noted that he could not address that issue at that point because he did not have any records of that occurrence and that it was an inappropriate discussion in the abstract. He invited her to bring forward the specifics of

this situation as well as the supporting state data for further discussion with him personally. Ms. Ranney added that parents also have the right to inquire about their child. Ms. Cada stated that the off-campus program was the most fluid program in the Special Education Division. Outplaced students can spike up to 93 or 94 students and it causes a continued review of records. Ms. Witham even had to rework the tuition outlay based on what month it was. The goal of the Special Education division is always to bring students back to the O.P.R.F.H.S. campus. The Division will continue off campus placements as long as the students are doing well. She also reported that O.P.R.F.H.S. must report ending dates to the I.S.B.E. every year by June 30. If a student remains off campus, an end date is not reported.

Ms. Cada outlined the process used in the outplacing of a student:

- 1) An IEP meeting is held.
- 2) If a decision is made to outplace the student based upon the student's profile, then the program chair sends out referral packets to two schools at a time.
- 3) The schools determine if what they can provide is the best for the student.
- 4) Parents then interview the private school.

Students are not only outplaced because they cannot learn, but because they are dealing with emotional issues. That component and the conflict of the learning process, makes the ability to predict when those complicating issues will be resolved difficult to do. It is difficult to know when a student will make educational and emotional breakthroughs.

Ms. Fernandez noted that 64 of the 532 Special Education students were off campus students. She asked why students who were deaf or hard of hearing were outplaced and if it were possible to provide those services at the high school. Ms. Cada stated that Hinsdale High School has a very in-depth program for deaf services. The student to which Ms. Fernandez was referencing was also very disabled and the division felt the student would be served better at Hinsdale.

Ms. Fernandez asked whether students with severe learning disabilities, language impairments and/or attention deficit disorders could be serviced at the high school. A.D.D. is not considered a condition that warrants off-campus Special Education services. Ms. Cada reported that there are a couple of student profiles now being reviewed who have been long time recipients of private day school services as early as when the students came to the high school per their I.E.P.s. The high school tries to keep the same placement as made by Districts 90 or 97 but looks at the specific students and works with the families to gain their trust in the high school when it determines it can work better with the students on campus.

Ms. Reynolds reported that the data obtained from I.S.B.E., which was retroactive, confirmed, for 2005 and 2006, that 70 percent of the outplaced students from O.P.R.F.H.S. were diagnosed as Emotionally Disabled and 80 percent of them were African-Americans. Most of these students were sent to H.A.R.B.O.R. She noted that the availability of counseling is important and that H.A.R.B.O.R. is not a Special

Education school. Ms. Paplaczyc stated that she did not work with students at H.A.R.B.O.R. Mr. Perna stated that there were no Special Education students at H.A.R.B.O.R.

Ms. Johnson asked why so many students who acted out were in Special Education. Mr. Prale stated that H.A.R.B.O.R. also offers alternative placements to students who have agreed to an off-campus placement as part of their discipline consequence. Ms. Paplaczyc handles the students identified as ED and placed off-campus but none are at H.A.R.B.O.R. Academy.

Dr. Greenwald stated that H.A.R.B.O.R. is under the auspices of West 40 and he is the president elect of that board. His concern is not whether students are identified as being Special Education, as they are often students in trouble, but in the students getting the additional help necessary. He will pursue that question with West 40. Mr. Edgecombe added that there is a limit to the number of Special Education students H.A.R.B.O.R. can enroll. It is limited to having no more than five percent of its students having IEP's, i.e. five students. Presently no students at H.A.R.B.O.R. have IEP's. They may have been identified at a later date as needing Special Education services, but when they were placed at H.A.R.B.O.R., they were not receiving Special Education services.

Ms. Johnson reiterated her concern that students were in trouble and that the school has a problem because the grownups do not want to care about the children who are in trouble. She stated that students need a team to work with them. Mr. Perna stated that there was no question that the students at H.A.R.B.O.R. have significant issues. In many cases, their bad decisions caused their outplacements. There are students who have significant issues such as discipline or attendance and each student is significantly different. Mr. Edgecombe added that it was also fair to say that few students with I.E.P.s were placed at H.A.R.B.O.R. because that was always a standing issue between O.P.R.F.H.S. and H.A.R.B.O.R. It could not provide the Special Education services. Mr. Prale thanked Ms. Johnson for her comments.

Ms. Fernandez hoped that the high school staff could accommodate autistic students on campus. Ms. Cada responded that the level of services is based on the individual needs of students. It is a determination of the IEP team. The high school does offer a wide range of services. When an autistic student is placed off campus, it is because the IEP team felt the student's needs could not be met on campus. Often at the IEP meetings, parents feel an alternative school would better fit their child's needs. The staff listens to the parental concerns and recommendations. The Board of Education has not tied her hands at limiting the number of students placed off-campus. There are autistic students at off-campus placements.

Presently the racial breakdown of the students placed off campus is as follows:

60% Caucasian
34% African-American
3% Hispanic
3% Multi-racial

Ms. Paplaczky stated that students come back from off-campus placements all year long.

Ms. Burke asked for the name of the consultant on autism and, if there were none, why not? Ms. Cada responded that the school has hired personnel who have been experts in the field and it continues to bring in qualified consultants to give a more complete picture of the students. Staff members also work with the I.S.B.E. Autistic Project when necessary and attend its trainings.

Ms. Reynolds reported that some parents have told her when the Special Education Division makes recommendation about their child's placement to them which is not agreeable, the parents do not understand that, by law, they have a choice. Ms. Cada confirmed to Mr. Prale that a written copy of the parental rights are being handed out, albeit they are old and are being reworked by the I.S.B.E. The Special Education staff does go through the process and addresses the parental concerns. The unknown, however, sometimes confuses them. She, Ms. Paplaczky and Therese Brennock spend significant time with the parents to give them the information about what schools are available and which would and would not meet their students' needs. She agreed with Ms. Reynolds that the parents could be confused, as it is a confusing process. A review is held at the staffing. When it is an emotionally charged meeting, much information is not understood. Ms. Reynolds stated that parents do not understand that there must be a written plan in place in order for their student(s) to come back to the school, and the plan must have an end date.

Mrs. Fernandez recommended that the number of students who are outplaced would be reduced in a reasonable timeframe.

Alternative School Report

Mr. Perna highlighted information in his written report on the alternative schools, including programmatic information about H.A.R.B.O.R. Academy and Ombudsman, enrollment data, conclusion and recommendations, as well as the number of students attending schools historically (attached to and made a part of the minutes of this meeting.) Mr. Prale noted that a report on S.O.L.O., the other alternative program, took place earlier in the year.

Mr. Perna noted that H.A.R.B.O.R. serves students who are in good standing as well as those who have expulsions held in abeyance. H.A.R.B.O.R. has no Special Education staff. It is a positive environment because it has a small student-to-teacher ratio of 10:1 and a full time counselor on staff. Recently, it updated its facility. It can now

accommodate up to 50 students with the addition of two classrooms and a beautiful new fitness center.

Ombudsman's present enrollment is very low. Its instruction consists of three three-hour sessions beginning at 7:00 a.m. It is computer-generated learning and while it has an accredited teacher on staff, the work is done primarily on the computer.

Enrollment at H.A.R.B.O.R. Academy has never exceeded 20 O.P.R.F.H.S. students. Seven students started at Ombudsman second semester. Nine or ten students now attend H.A.R.B.O.R. Discipline consequences affect the number of students attending these schools. Because H.A.R.B.O.R. now has expanded facilities, Mr. Perna has asked the Pupil Support Services Teams to take a close look at their student loads to see if there might be other students who would be better served at this location next year. H.A.R.B.O.R. requires students to stay at least one semester.

Ms. Fernandez was concerned that some of the "pilot" students, those placed at H.A.R.B.O.R. for reasons other than discipline issues, preferred H.A.R.B.O.R.'s environment to the O.P.R.F.H.S. campus. She asked why O.P.R.F.H.S. should spend money on tuition for these students who were doing so well at H.A.R.B.O.R. Why were they not successful at the O.P.R.F.H.S. campus. Mr. Perna gave the example of a parent wanting his/her student to return to O.P.R.F.H.S. at the end of the semester. Mr. Perna met with the parent and the child and accommodated their request. However, the student was an in-school truant. He would come to school, but had a difficult time resisting his friends' suggestions during the day. The student was allowed to return to the O.P.R.F.H.S. campus with the caveat that he could return to H.A.R.B.O.R. if he were not being successful at O.P.R.F.H.S. The parent later called and requested that the student again attend H.A.R.B.O.R. In this case, the student was not ready to return to the high school. At the end of the year, the student's progress will again be re-evaluated. Mr. Edgecombe noted that a reason for students being successful might be the fact that a smaller classroom is better for them. When students ask to be return to H.A.R.B.O.R., they then become the "pilot" students and are there in concert with their parents.

Ms. Johnson suggested having an after school program for these students rather than having them just sit in front of computers. They are not learning this way. Students would prefer to be at these locations, because it takes no effort on their part to gain credits. Ms. Reynolds contacted the I.S.B.E. and made a F.O.I.A. request as to the number of students for which it sends funds to Regional Safe Schools from O.P.R.F.H.S. who are sent to H.A.R.B.O.R. Academy. The funds that are sent are for specific behaviors of which the students at H.A.R.B.O.R. do not have the behavior that would arise to the level for which they would send funds, i.e., drugs, weapons, etc. Ms. Witham responded that O.P.R.F.H.S. does not get reimbursed for tuition from Regional Safe School Funds. H.A.R.B.O.R. is West 40's Regional Safe School and those monies flow to H.A.R.B.O.R., not to O.P.R.F.H.S. That is the agreement between that entity and the high school. Our agreement is that they may get the funding for these students. Mr. Rigas added that the tuition cost O.P.R.F.H.S. pays to H.A.R.B.O.R. is offset by these funds. The state does not recognize O.P.R.F.H.S., it recognizes H.A.R.B.O.R. Academy.

H.A.R.B.O.R. Academy is the conduit. Ms. Reynolds stated that she would get more information.

Mr. Prale explained that a number of years ago RSSP funds were to have gone to O.P.R.F.H.S.'s S.O.L.O. Program. The decision was made for S.O.L.O. to be funded out of the O.P.R.F.H.S. Regular Education Fund and the RSSP Funds would go directly to H.A.R.B.O.R. Those students at H.A.R.B.O.R. Academy are considered H.A.R.B.O.R. students, West 40 students, by the state. O.P.R.F.H.S. pays a reduced tuition cost for its students.

When directed to talk about computer-based learning, Mr. Prale responded that students engage differently. Computers allow students to work independently. Students are more attuned and engaged in computers than years ago. While students may not get as much value in computer-assisted instruction, they do get the minutes they need. Ombudsman can be used as a credit recovery system for students who have failed other credits. O.P.R.F.H.S. can issue them a diploma.

Ms. Johnson felt that the school used excuses. Students who attend these schools come back slicker. They do not want to do the work and the school is shifting the blame. She asked what happens to the funds if they are not put back in H.A.R.B.O.R. She felt that students were treated as just numbers at the high school and sent to other places.

Ms. Witham stated that the total revenue the high school receives is approximately \$80,000, most of which is for residential placement of students. O.P.R.F.H.S. spends over \$2.5 million dollars on Special Education services and \$100,000 for tuition at H.A.R.B.O.R. and Ombudsman. Regional Safe Schools Funding goes directly to H.A.R.B.O.R.

Mr. Perna stated that one of the things he has been involved with in the past is talking with the students and the parents when the students return from outplacements about their concerns. He reiterated his written recommendations:

1. Develop a survey instrument that can be given to the students attending H.A.R.B.O.R. and Ombudsman And their parents to, in part, determine the satisfaction level of the students and parents regarding the curriculum, instruction, support services, and physical environment.
2. Once again utilize our Instructional Researcher to analyze the impact the alternative programs have on the achievement of students that have attended the programs; and
3. Examine the transition back to the home school. Is the support provided by the alternative school sufficient to make a seamless transition? Does the transition to the home school need to be incremental? How can the school make the transition more beneficial? This is a survey once pursued to Dr. Carl Spight and Mr. Perna would like to resurrect it.

Ms. Cada also noted that two new students were now in the Special Education system at the high school because of being screened after exhibiting certain behaviors at H.A.R.B.O.R. Academy. They had not been identified as needing Special Education services when they were placed at H.A.R.B.O.R. but when they return to O.P.R.F.H.S., they receive the services they need to help them be successful.

Ms. Reynolds was not concerned about the financials, but about the students who are seemingly outplaced forever due to inappropriate attendance issues, etc. Inappropriate attendance issues should not rise to the level where the student needs to be outplaced. Mr. Rigas assured her that if any student was there for attendance reasons, they were there because it was voluntary, not because they were expelled during his six years of service as a Board of Education member. Ms. Johnson disagreed and said that she could produce proof. Ms. Reynolds reiterated that parents are told that their child(ren) have to be outplaced and they had not gone through the discipline system. Too many students end up in alternative placements because of this. Mr. Prale stated that alternative schools are part of a range of options that parents choose not related to a discipline consequence or a Special Education placement. It is possible that in looking for the best place for a student with a particular pattern of behavior, it is within the realm of possibility that in talking with the dean counselor or the dean of discipline that they are given an alternative school to consider. Ms. Reynolds stated that when parents are told by a discipline official that their child has to have another placement, the parents are not aware of that fact that they can dispute that recommendation. Many parents do not know their rights.

Ms. Nelson stated that other school districts have an Ombudsman person, a parent advocate, who acts as a buffer. While this function is served at O.P.R.F.H.S. through a variety of people, she felt it would be a progressive idea to have an identifiable source for parents of children about their responsibilities and rights. It might eliminate and collaborate many conversations in meetings like this. There is a wide variety of alternatives at O.P.R.F.H.S. and the staff looks at what is best for the family, the student, the cost and often the time. She strongly suggested an ombudsman person to act in this capacity.

Ms. Fernandez thanked Mr. Perna and Ms. Cada for this update.

Initiatives

Mr. Prale provided the Instruction Committee members with a detailed, written report on the following initiatives: Algebra 1-2 Black/Agile Mind, Minority Achievement Committee (M.A.C. Scholars), College Prep Scholars, 8 to 9 Connection, and Learning Support Reading Programs. This report included summaries and outcomes on each (attached to and made a part of the minutes of this meeting). The teachers responsible for these programs were invited to add any comments.

M.A.C. Scholars

Dr. Tiffany Allison reported on the activities that the MAC Scholars engaged in during first semester, i.e., Vertical Endeavors, Bull's game, etc.

Reiterating the information in the written report, Dr. Allison noted that these students meet twice monthly. Every Wednesday they have study table. They work on building good student skills, tardiness, notetaking, and study habits. Weekly they review attendance and discuss other issues that arise. Statistics show that students participating in this program (juniors and seniors), who are C students with above average tardiness, are doing well. They also have not had any in or out of school suspensions. Ms. Fernandez wondered if these students were holding themselves back academically to get these opportunities. Dr. Allison stated that students had to meet certain criteria to get into the program, but they are not thrown out of the program when they start to achieve. Mr. Prale stated that there is a theory that there is a social penalty students pay when they enter higher academic streams. By giving them a strong social basis, the benefit to academic size can be seen. It is really a mentoring program. These students are now finding other students in the building who are performing well and with whom they can discuss their future, where they want to go to college, etc. They must be made to feel good and then they have to realize the importance of education.

These students now bring their friends to the meetings who are potential scholars. Three students did drop out of the program because two of them were too busy and one had graduated. Dr. Allison stated that mentoring takes more of the student's time. This program reports to Mr. Prale.

Learning Support Reading

Lauren Lee is the teacher of Learning Support Reading. The ratio of students to teachers in this class is small with 8 to 14 students, and an aid visits each of the classes. She co-teaches with Bill Lohnes who focuses on math and science. The goal of the class is to keep the students on track, both when in school and when not in school, complete the semester, focus on affect, and to help them to be future college students and professionals. Many students come from families where they would be the first children in their families to attend college.

Learning Support Reading is the foundational work of reading and writing. Ms. Lee recommends students to the MAC Scholars program as well. The goal is to make sure these students are engaged positively and have the buy-in. Hopefully, this will prevent discipline issues and tardies; discipline numbers are lower than average for these students. Ms. Lee acts as the advocate for the parent. These classes are the support piece to assist students in moving up to appropriate levels.

Ms. Fernandez felt that this was great support for these students and asked about the parents' involvement and responsibilities. Ms. Lee informed her that there was no parent piece in connection with these classes. It would be something to improve upon and it is a

discussion within the department. Ms. Lee does, however, call the homes of the students before the course starts and invites the family to the Open House. Mr. Prale stated that there was a strong parental piece to the Title I Program. It might be overlapped with the program that the Dean Counselors now have.

It has been found that the Skyward Parent Access has been beneficial, not only to the parents, but to the support teachers as well. Ms. Lee had been a former enemy of Skyward, but now admits to finding parent access positive. Teachers are able to see the grades in other classes as well as their own.

Ms. Fernandez wondered whether students had an understanding of O.P.R.F.H.S.'s sincere goal to have them go to college. Ms. Lee responded that the feedback has been positive. Only one African-American male is not succeeding. They have not found the key to helping him. They cannot contact his family and he has been referred to 308. There is a programmatic piece missing and she asked for suggestions. When looking at students who have difficulty succeeding as well as they might even though the capacity is there, Dr. Greenwald asked if there were any awareness of what pieces could be put in place that would make the difference. Mr. Prale responded that it could be a sport, activity or an elected course that ultimately makes the difference. This is a revelatory piece for the students. When Dr. Greenwald first became a member on the Board of Education, he talked with about six African-American students who were doing very well. If they were to get a C grade, they felt they would be disappointing their mothers. Ms. Lee hoped that the high school could find what is missing for some students.

Ms. Nelson felt a part of the missing piece or focus was that while there is nothing wrong with the goal of everyone going to college, it is common knowledge that for 94 percent of the students or at least 10 percent of the students going to a four-year college is not appropriate. For some students there is a realistic recognition that this school is not the place for them. Students who do not have the goal of going to a four-year college do not want to admit that. She felt talking about alternatives that included choices other than going to four-year college would help in building their confidence because they would be included in the "PR." A few students who fall into the category of average do not feel important because they do not want to go to college. She suggested making "Those Things that are Best" more inclusive.

College Prep Scholars

Ms. Rosas stated that College Prep Scholars was similar to Learning Support Reading. Students are provided an additional period of support, the difference is that the students in College Prep Scholars are also students in her English classes. She has a stronger connection with these students because she sees them twice a day. These students have positive patterns of attendance, lower incidents of absences and discipline, and higher grades.

Can the high school deliver the student to the services? It does push them into her class. These students do better in English with more grades of B. They are pushed from

transitions to regular track English. Longitudinal data reporting out to the teachers should see some benefit. These students receive more minutes with this support.

Ms. Fernandez commented that if similar strategies were engaged in District 97, O.P.R.F.H.S. would not have had as many students in need of benefiting from these services. Mr. Prale responded that there have been a series of articulation meetings with Districts 90 and 97. There have been opportunities for O.P.R.F.H.S. reading teachers to visit the middle schools, albeit it was difficult to schedule. At the last C.R.I.S.S. training, about six District 97 teachers participated. Hopefully, a consistent way of teaching language arts would be beneficial for grades 6 to 10. Ms. Fernandez felt that consistency of teaching should start in the third grade to which Mr. Prale concurred. He noted that Dr. Collins has been receptive to this articulation, just as the administration and teachers have been.

Agile Mind Program

Ms. Neuman stated that there has been articulation with the high school's representative on the feeder districts' study on mathematics. They discuss the scope and sequence and how it fits into the high schools. She continued that the math division is studying about scope and sequencing. She previewed a few different programs and discovered that the Agile Mind Program was embraced by the Minority Student Achievement Network (M.S.A.N.). Presently O.P.R.F.H.S. is using it just for its Algebra I Block Program. It has an expanded enrollment. Nine of the students who originally started out doing well, dropped off across the board. This was disappointing and it was unclear why it happened. She felt that the strength of the program was the time that was spent with the students and parent access. Textbooks had been changed to accommodate the teaching of the Agile Mind Program cycle. This program can be used outside of the classroom as well. It helps to strengthen students' concepts. Every problem is a word problem. Her hope was that students would flourish when they take the work keys test. Students and parents will be surveyed. The teachers are on board with this program and they have grown professionally. The goal is to write core assessments to provide a new software program to determine why students answer with deceptors. This program will be repeated next year at the same level.

Ms. Neuman stated that additional sections would be added when more LCD projectors can be purchased. While the LC projectors are not expensive, the projector bulbs are at \$500 each. Additional mobile labs are also necessary for these block periods. She has requested eight Tablets and the Tech Committee is looking at that request.

Textbook Review

Ms. Ranney volunteered to review the textbook *Principles of Economics* for the Business Education Department.

Ms. Fernandez volunteered to review the textbook *Consumer Education and Economics*, for the Business Education Department.

Textbook Approval

Dr. Greenwald approved the following textbooks for the Math Division:

Algebra and Trigonometry: Graphs & Models, 3rd Edition
Trigonometry, 8th Edition
Concepts in Algebra: A Technological Approach

Dr. Greenwald approved the following textbook for the World Languages Department:

En español 4!

Adjournment

The committee adjourned at 9:05 a.m.