

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

**An Instruction Committee of the Whole Board
June 21, 2007**

An Instruction Committee meeting of the Whole Board was held on Thursday, June 21, 2007, in the Board Room. The meeting opened at 7:36 a.m. Committee members present were John C. Allen, Jacques A. Conway, Valerie J. Fisher, Dr. Ralph H. Lee, Dr. Dietra D. Millard, Sharon Patchak Layman and John Rigas. Also present were: Dr. Susan J. Bridge, Superintendent/Principal; Jason Edgecombe, Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources; Jack Lanenga, Assistant Superintendent for Operations; 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, O.P.R.F.H.S. Director of Community Relations and Communications; Rich Perna, Coordinator of Student Safety; Julie Fuentes, O.P.R.F.H.S. Counselor; Monica Swope, O.P.R.F.H.S. faculty member; James Paul Hunter, Faculty Senate Chair; Terry Burke, Wyanetta Johnson, Burcy Hines, and GERALYNNE RODE, community members; and Terry Dean of the *Wednesday Journal*.

Approval of Instruction Committee Minutes

The Instruction Committee Minutes of May 10, 2007, were accepted, as presented.

Visitor Comment

Geralynne Rode, parent and resident of 1160 S. Clinton Avenue in Oak Park addressed the Instruction Committee meeting regarding her concern about the Science Division's grading scale. It was her understanding that the grading scale was inconsistent with scales used in other departments within the school. Her son, a junior, took the honors biology class and experienced some frustration in the course. In conversations with students who wanted to take a more difficult and rigorous science course, the students found the science department's grading scale to be punitive and demoralizing. They see no reason why they should take an honors class, which is more challenging, and be punished or discouraged for doing so. She thought the science department would want to encourage students to go on the honors track. Ms. Rode suggested that numerous studies have shown that students who take more rigorous course loads do better in college, are able to better face the demands of college, and are able to complete four years of college with the degree. Her experience in working with bright elementary students taking honors chemistry is that they end up being discouraged and dropping out of the honors track. That concerned her. While she told that other schools used this variant honors grading scale, she only found Hinsdale Central using it and using it for social studies, history, and language arts, as well as science, not solely one curriculum. In her conversations with the ASCI, she was told that the previous division head put this grading scale into effect

because there was the perception that there were too many A's and B's. She felt that the school was putting obstacles ahead of the students and raising the bar too high. She did not feel it was equitable. The school should be encouraging students to take more science classes, rather than discouraging them.

When asked if she had met with Ms. Foley, the Science Department Chair, Ms. Rode responded affirmatively. Ms. Foley said she had inherited this problem and had written a letter to Mr. Prale about it. After three phone discussions with Mr. Prale, Ms. Rode learned that the grading scale for honors would be in effect next year. Ms. Rode stated that Mr. Prale gave the reason for this was that too high of a percentage of A, B, and C grades were given. The perception was that there was grade inflation in the science department. The fact that a number of students dropped out the first semester because the course was too demanding alarmed Ms. Rode.

Mr. Prale clarified that teachers were allowed to make their own grading scales; their perception was that some grade inflation occurred. The science division teachers, almost unanimously, adopted this practice. There may be some other teachers in other departments who have implemented the same grading scale. Teachers are required to be explicit about their activities and their grading scale in the course syllabus, which both students and parents receive.

Dr. Lee noted that an important point was being overlooked. He asked about the District policies and discovered that the Board of Education delegated the teacher with the authority to use his/her professional judgment to assess a student's progress. It is not just the faculty member's privilege, but also a responsibility to exercise his/her best professional judgment in assessing a student's progress, i.e., assigning a grade. Teachers do not have the right to delegate that responsibility to a division head, to a committee of the division, or anyone else. Teachers have that responsibility as an individual and must inform the parents at the beginning of the semester of their individual policies. To Dr. Lee, the teacher then also has the responsibility of defending a policy that he/she created for his/her own class. If questioned why the cutoff score was 92, it is not an acceptable response to say that the division committee decided to do so. It is not the committee or the division head that has the responsibility. Only the school board has the right to set District policies. He supports a group of teachers who want to express an opinion, but to give the reason that there were too many A's and B's was indefensible. Dr. Lee asked for feedback from the staff and the Board of Education to see if this were correct. He suggested there might be the need for a clarification of the grading policies for the school district.

Mr. Prale responded that what Dr. Lee said was fundamentally correct. However, teachers had a discussion for more than the reasons identified for wanting to move to a grading scale. One teacher has not chosen to use that grading scale, thus invoking his autonomy. All teachers have the ability to apply their own scales. The scale would be subject to the teacher's internal activities and grading practices. He concurred that teachers have the responsibility and they must be held accountable.

Mr. Rigas made two points: 1) there was a student who was not achieving at the level expected and received a B instead of A. The district values achievement based on standard scores, which probably has to do with either a student's skill or the instruction. Achievement, however, is a different topic. 2) If students are dropping out because they are not getting A's, they are getting bad advice from either home or from the school. College admissions would rather see students taking higher level classes and getting a B over getting an A in an easier-level class. Dr. Lee stated that when he taught honors courses, his grading scale was 84 and above for an A, a grade of 54 was the cutoff for D's and F's. He was never criticized for having too many A's and B's. He lowered the grading scale because he tended to make the exam more complex than other teachers do. What he sought was different from what other teachers sought. He exercised his right to set his grading scale. If a group decided to use a different grading scale, he would have disagreed and used his own.

Mr. Allen asked Ms. Rode if the division head indicated that she wanted to change the grading scale. Ms. Rode was unsure. Ms. Rode stated that there is no indication on the website or handbook that this grading scale is different. No awareness of this difference is cited until students get the syllabus in honors class. Parents are saying to her that their children are dropping out of honors classes. She wondered why students would be discouraged from the honors track in science. A grade of C does not contribute to the in the weighted grade point average index. Students in honors science classes using the higher scale need at least a score of 83 for that. Do colleges look at the courses students take? Yes. However, they also look at the GPA. Some Board of Education members disagreed. Ms. Rode again asked why students were being discouraged from taking honors' classes. Was it being made by more difficult so that they have a smaller class size? She hoped not. She asked why this grading scale was not published.

Mr. Allen, assuming there are differences between regular and honors class, asked what was gained by making a harder grading scale. What was the advantage? From the teachers' viewpoint, it was a better alignment of grades with the results on standardized tests. That is the reason for the discussion, not matching the standardized tests. Teachers felt it was a way to discuss grade inflation; how could it be addressed by like-minded teachers. What is the motivation for student to do his/her best work in science and not to get a better grade? Regarding the grade point average impact, it is better to get an A in a regular class, than a B with the addition to the WGPA index of .01. Students strategically take honors classes. The point might be when the grades and the grading scale come into play when students are deciding which classes to take. What is more critical is what goes into the grade. How are tests constructed? Is the test appropriate for the content being taught? Ms. Foley has an opportunity to raise those questions.

Ms. Patchak-Layman asked if students were allowed the choice of the teacher. Mr. Prale responded not unless it was a situation of a singleton class. In those situations the student is selecting a teacher by selecting a class. Ms. Patchak-Layman did not understand the teacher's individual rights when students do not get to choose the teacher. That is not similar to college level practice. The idea of individual teachers having their own grading system is fine if students have the opportunity to choose the teacher. Mr. Prale

responded that teacher autonomy was encouraged, to ensure that their values were student centered. This is a discussion for the future. Ms. Foley will address this directly in the division's goals. The Board of Education is aware of the situation, the Science Division is aware and there a number of parents have parallel concerns. Dr. Millard stated that the challenge is to get the students to learn. It is a concern that students are dropping rank and that the GPA determines rank. It is a bigger issue than just the grading scale.

Ms. Rode stated that the grade is important in honors class because students are recommended to continue. Because her son got a B and not an A, he was not recommended for honors chemistry. Ms. Hill had told her that a sophomore compares his/her scores to the benchmarks for college readiness. The best way to prepare for college is to take a rigorous course of study during the four years of high school.

Mr. Prale stated that the Philosophy of Grading Committee was chaired by him and the superintendent and there was representation from each division. Mr. Prale affirmed for Ms. Fisher that each semester Mr. Lanenga generated a report showing statistically the various grades in the various divisions. Science's strategy to mutually devise a different grading scale was a result of the Philosophy of Grading Committee and that report.

It was the consensus of the Instruction Committee members that the Philosophy of Grading Committee would be asked to address this issue. It would also be asked to incorporate parents into its membership for this discussion.

Mr. Allen thanked those parents for who brought this issue to the Board of Education's attention.

Professional Development Activities Report

A portion of the Mr. Prale's written report on Professional Development 2006-2007 Activities follows below:

"The 2006-2007 Professional Development Committee (PDC) was composed of one representative from each division and two representatives from Instructional Council. The committee determined the following goals for the 06-07 school year to involve faculty in decision making, evaluation, and debriefing on professional development programs and activities:

- Build awareness for all staff about Response to Intervention (RTI) as part of working with special needs students. This includes informing about changes in Special Education law, reporting, and accommodation requirements.
- Develop teacher expertise in using classroom data for generating relevant classroom based questions and reports.
- Use divisional time to develop teacher led learning teams to improve classroom performance.

- Continue the dialogue among faculty, staff, and students about diversity and difference and how the school can promote stronger, supportive, appropriate relationships throughout the school and community including attention to the issues of bullying and harassment.
- Continue work on evidence-based efforts to narrow disparities in achievement.

“Full Faculty Activities

“Opening of School and Close of School Celebrations – This year we began and ended the school year with a gathering of the entire faculty and staff to celebrate our work and our shared experiences across the school community. These events focused on establishing common goals for the year, building morale and mutual respect throughout the school, and creating an authentic spirit of school improvement. Both events were met with support and gratitude from the entire staff.

“On September 8, 2006 the faculty and teaching assistants attended three presentations organized and led by members of the Special Education Division. The three presentations covered information on ADD/ADHD (this biennial presentation is required by school code), an introduction to RTI, and a discussion of procedures to assist general education teachers attending staffings for Special Education students and families.

“On November 10, 2006 members of the PDC led a series of cross-divisional discussions that focused on identifying points of consensus regarding school climate discussions. The information collected was used to frame later discussions regarding school climate and how student and adult behaviors contribute to the school climate. On this day, Dr. Marc Loafman from the Oak Park Department of Public Health also presented to the entire faculty and staff on prevention of the spread of Avian flu.

“On January 22, 2007 the faculty participated in an Institute Day that focused on three areas: 1) Follow up on school climate discussion; 2) Follow up on general education teachers attending Special Education staffing; 3) Introduction to Outlook e-mail system.

“On February 16, 2007 the entire faculty and staff attended a presentation by employees of the State of Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) on the duties of mandated reporters. This presentation was scheduled at the direction of the Superintendent in response to community criticism that OPRFHS employees had not been exposed to this kind of training in years. This summer the DCFS website will have a training video that new employees can access to convey the appropriate information.

“On April 26, 2007, an All School Institute Day focused on the topic of school climate. Students, faculty, and staff attended a large group event in the field house, shared lunch, and then gathered in smaller groups to share observations, ideas, concerns, and questions. Information collected in the later sessions can be used in follow up activities in the coming school year.

“Individual Divisional Learning Team Results

“This school year each division organized learning teams that were asked to set goals, meet during the eight late arrival mornings (or more as needed), and issue a report summarizing the work of the team. The learning team model of professional development provides teachers with time to improve teaching skills and materials and to assess the impact of their work on student performance. Division heads were responsible for monitoring the teams and ensuring that the work of these teams aligned with the goals of the district and aimed to improve the quality of instruction for students. Several divisions organized teams according to specific courses. Course teams that worked best developed a key person who organized and recorded the work of the team. Course teams, particularly core course teams, benefit from the right person in this key role, a strong core of teachers, a strong curriculum for the course, and a good chemistry among the teachers on the team. Several divisions, although not all, formed course teams.

“Learning teams took place at all levels of the school organization. IC learning teams created a handbook for division heads and recommended a joint review of the faculty professional growth/evaluation program. BAT reviewed the course request and sectioning process and developed a new spreadsheet for tracking section information. Dean-Counselor and Dean of Discipline teams examined the ways to improve communication via parent and faculty meetings and through the use of the school’s webpage and the Naviance software package. In all, 60 teams were formed averaging four teachers on a team. Included as an appendix to this report are examples of learning team reports taken from each division. Mr. Prale reported that the annual Professional Development Activities Report had grown over the past couple of years. In terms of the faculty, the administration has shifted to holding celebrations at the beginning and at the end of the year i.e., the beginning- and end-of-the year breakfasts, which has resulted in good feedback from faculty and staff. Climate discussions continued, including conversations about race and how that factored into school climate. In February, the Department of Children and Family Services made a presentation. The individual learning teams, a complex system, continue and have had positive results. These will continue next year. Presented were each of the division goals. In response to Dr. Millard’s question as to whether the learning teams were cross-divisional, Mr. Prale stated that the structure is along the divisions. Faculty members are tied to the memberships of their divisions, which is advocated for in school structure as being the best. The first year of the Learning Teams were cross-divisional, but there was some confusion with that structure.” The individual divisional reports were also attached.

Dr. Lee commented that the report was an excellent description of activities that have taken place during the past year.

Ms. Patchak-Layman noted the anecdotal information from the learning activity teams showed improvement among minority students. She wondered what effect activities had on this improvement. Of note, the Spanish, Agile Mind and Poetry Learning Team reports contained that information. Ms. Patchak-Layman wanted Learning Teams to use

student-related questions in the future. For example, if the writing assignments were too short, why?

Dr. Bridge noted that this was the first year that most of the staff development time was being spent in this way. She hoped that the Board of Education would be open to continuing to identify areas where better practices could be developed. Next year more assessments were anticipated. She hoped the Board of Education would say to the faculty that this was purposeful staff development and it does have the student at its center. Dr. Millard added that every report did state that goal in the first paragraph. While the impact may not be seen, the goal was to try to impact student achievement. The teachers' focus as to what they can do relates to achievement. Ms. Patchak-Layman stated that the conversation is really about goals and the professional development calendar for next year. She hoped that next year there would be a way for the Board of Education to introduce questions and give directions.

Ms. Johnson added that she was tired of the same promises she has heard since the end of the 1980's. She stated that if the school board would work with more parents and were respectful of their needs, the gap would be resolved. Many programs cannot work in this school. When she speaks out about the children, it seems to be taken negatively. The African-American students have the same feelings as the adults. What will work? The community needs to come together. She admitted to being wrong about Dr. Weninger. She believed that the school would get a surprise and may do better than it ever did in the past. She believed Dr. Weninger would pull this community and school together. She had originally objected to his not knowing how to close the achievement gap. She is angry at the ways things are developing at O.P.R.F.H.S. She then added that Gail Kalmerton has done a good job, she listens to her and allows her to vent and never takes sides. She is a good listener.

Dr. Lee wanted a consolidated report about everything the District knows about the achievement gap, what it does not know, what the District would like to know, and what resources it would take to find out the things it does not know, as well as a comparison by year.

A question was asked as to how the administration follows up on Special Education legislation and how is that information put into practice. The response was that a PBIS workshop (a workshop on instructional or classroom academic interventions) occurred. Staff has also attended RTI Conferences in May of 2006 and 2007. Regarding the 8 to 9 program, the District is pushing forward where necessary. A large number of students are doing O.K. The District's challenge is to know how to take the learning and push it into the classroom where it can be measured. The District wants to identify the students who will benefit the most and then have the teachers use those learning strategies.

Ms. Patchak-Layman asked about accommodation requirements. Where Special Education law is reviewed and overviews and instructions are given as to how the law reads, what is the follow up to see that it is being followed. Mr. Prale reported that parents gets a survey at the end of the IEP sessions to determine whether parents were

dissatisfied with the interaction or the services being received. Ms. Burke reported that she did not receive a survey at the end of her staffing.

Dr. Millard asked what the District was doing for individual matters and faculty members to assist them, i.e., teacher sabbaticals, seminars, conferences, initiatives, etc. Mr. Prale noted that there were teacher grant programs to support attending national conferences or area workshops, etc.

Ms. Patchak-Layman shared that District 97 wanted shared institute days with District 200 and asked if that were part of that discussion. Mr. Prale stated that Districts 200 and 90 have not been able to coordinate their calendars. The focus is now on January 2009. Ms. Patchak-Layman asked if there were opportunities for divisions to work with District 97 divisions. Mr. Prale responded that while the Fine Arts Learning Team has had more articulation with the middle schools, District 97 is on a different time schedule. The high school has late arrivals. Dr. Millard urged that the high school continue to try to coordinate its calendar with District 97.

Report on the Initiatives

Mr. Prale presented the Committee members with the following written report.

“Introduction

This report identifies and summarizes current outcomes for some of our programs that focus on gaps that exist in our learning community. Included in this report are updates on the Algebra Block/Agile Mind Program, the Minority Achievement Committee (M.A.C. Scholars), College Prep Scholars, the 8 to 9 Connection, the Learning Support Reading classes, and SOLO. Since this report continues from the report made in February on these programs, descriptive summaries have been omitted. Dr. Carl Spight provided data staging and analysis.

Algebra 1-2 Block/Agile Mind Program

“Preliminary data from the Algebra I Block/Agile Mind program suggest some improvements on the overall algebra program. Data sets reviewed include the end of spring semester grades (for school years ending in June 2007, June 2006, and June 2005) and the semester 2, June 2007 Algebra I final exam scores.

“Using the June 2007 final exam scores and the grade distribution data from that year, a correlation was established between the data sets, suggesting that grades for Algebra I Block and Algebra I classes correlate to the standards measured on the final exam. In other words, the grades are a fair representation of what students learned.

“Looking then to the overall distribution of grades in regular level algebra courses (Algebra I Block and Algebra I) over the past three years, the following pattern is observed.

	A/B Grades (%)	C Grades (%)	D/F Grades (%)	Total # of Grades
June 2005	42.1	32.5	25.4	209
June 2006	40.2	34.7	25.1	219
June 2007	40.2	34.2	23.1	286

“The impact of the Algebra I Block/Agile Mind program seems to be an increase in the number of students enrolled in regular algebra at the ninth grade level without a significant shift in the distribution of grades within the program. Reviewing the number of enrollments at the other levels of the algebra program, it seems that since the implementation of the Algebra I Block/Agile Mind program, student enrollments have shifted towards the regular algebra program with approximately 20 students moving from the basic level algebra courses into Algebra I or Algebra I Block and approximately 15 students moving into regular algebra from the honors level algebra program. This in part accounts for the increase in the 2007 enrollments in the regular algebra program.

“We still need to analyze the performance of these students on standardized tests; the analysis will be made available as soon as the scores are delivered to the high school. If the results are available before the board meeting, I will forward the analysis to the Board.”

The discussion that ensued regarding this portion of the report included Mr. Prale thanking Ms. Hill for her work with the Mastery Manager program. The administration thinks that Algebra is a gateway course that leads to success in Algebra II, and correlates with college resource. More students are taking Algebra and there is no difference in the distribution of grades. Interesting patterns of results appeared when comparing the distribution of grades of African American and White students. In the Algebra I classes that meet five times per week, the distribution of grades does not significantly vary when disaggregated by race. However, in the Algebra Block sections, there is a difference. The modal grade for White students is B or C and the modal grade for African-American students is C or D. What would it take to erase the gap in that modality? It would take affecting the performance of 12 students. The administration feels it can address this directly by working more directly with the teacher and the division head. By creating a test that standardizes curriculum, by having a program that addresses the gap, and by giving teachers the time to review their practices, the District hopes to successfully address these issues.

Minority Achievement Committee (M.A.C.) Scholars

“A review of the performance data for students involved in this program, either as mentors or as potential scholars, showed that when compared with African American male students as an aggregate, these students performed better in all areas in which we measure academic success. These areas include the number of A and B grades earned, the number of honors classes attempted, and the overall weighted grade-point average. In short, these students exhibited promising results as a group of leaders and role models in the school.

“Caution should be noted when determining a causal relationship from these data. It is possible that the sponsors of the program selected well, identifying outstanding students for the program. The selection effort included identifying upper classmen who serve as mentors and lower classmen who have the potential to elevate their performance to the level of their mentors. It could be that the program activities lent a supportive environment for students who already had potential for high achievement. However, the correlation of students participating in the MAC Scholar program and their higher level of achievement should be noted. The recommendation is to continue support of these students and this program, while remaining cognizant of the need to determine any specific effect of the program. The district should be supportive of high achieving students in all areas and for that reason this program deserves continued support”

Mr. Prale added at the table that the District found that the Mac Scholar students achieved towards the top end of the performance range.

College Prep Scholars

“These students were compared with the larger set of non-honors taking students in the freshman class. The data for these students show that the College Prep Scholar students, for the most part, resemble non-honors taking freshmen students. Areas in which the comparisons are evident include the number of A and B grades earned and the number of D and F earned. College Prep Scholar students were identified as being on the academic margin between the basic and regular levels, and who with appropriate support could achieve, as would other regular level students. In that way, the program and the teacher in that program have succeeded with these students.

“As noted above the district needs to analyze the performance of these students on standardized tests; the analysis will be made available as soon as the scores are delivered to the high school.”

At the table, Mr. Prale noted that he wished for more students in this program. The students are pushed into regular level classes and a teacher is assigned to work with them. These students are achieving at the mean. The College Prep Program is a “bump-up” program. Currently there are 12 minority students in the program.

8 to 9 Connection Program

“The overall data regarding the students in this program is still not promising. Individual students from this program have succeeded in the school, attending class regularly and passing most or all classes. However, analysis of the attendance patterns for these students shows subsets of students with distinct behavior patterns. One group of students attends regularly and succeeds; other students have low rates of unexcused absences and tardiness and/or some contact with the discipline system; a third group has a much higher rate of poor attendance and behavior incidents. The third group needs a stronger learning

context for their lives at the high school. Either this group needs stronger tracking and intervention from the academic or the pupil support services areas of the building. Until those interventions come forth and demonstrate effectiveness, these students will continue to struggle in our school.

“A current recommendation is to make changes in the summer program, including smaller classes and the addition of student leaders in the program. Also, approximately thirty-six students who enter basic level freshman courses will participate in a collaborative teaching and learning model that will include coordinated curriculum, literacy training, and PBIS strategies for intervening in and preventing behavior problems.”

At the table, Mr. Prale stated the District struggles with this program. Three years ago, a number of freshman students were challenging to their teachers and to their Deans of Discipline. Many of them had mandatory summer school. In collaboration with District 97, District 200 moved mandatory summer school to this building and provided two teachers, as does District 97. In past years, students had 90 minutes of reading, math and study skills. This year the program has four sections with student aides and four groups of nine students move every 45 minutes. Social workers are teaching social skills. These students continue to be a challenge. District 200 receives the list of students from District 97.

Mr. Rigas acknowledged that this program has the highest number of at-risk incoming freshmen and asked if the parents were involved. Mr. Prale reported that it has a parent component that ran six nights over the summer. Thirty-seven students are enrolled in the program. Mr. Rigas said this would be the place where the District must work diligently with the parents. He asked if this was where there needs to be an adult mentor, a student mentor, such as with the Mac Scholars Program, etc., a cross pollinating between that and some other programs. Mr. Prale responded that the subtext is connecting these students. There are student mentors—three juniors and one graduated senior—who enjoy the work. Does there need to a parent-mentoring program? Ms. Patchak-Layman stated that the work still must be accomplished even without the parents’ help, i.e., calling the student in the morning, going and getting them, etc. The District needs to find out what help the students need. Dr. Millard felt that parents were a key factor in the process. Ms. Patchak-Layman asked if the school was as welcoming as it could be. Mr. Prale noted that the District was inviting them to meetings, which included a tour of the building with Dr. Weninger. The school works hand-in-hand with Family Services on this program, as well.

Wyannetta Johnson said that A.P.P.L.E. would have no trouble working with these students. She also said that A.P.P.L.E. has the best turnout of parents of any other parent group in the high school. A.P.P.L.E. gives the school the information and the school uses it, i.e., tutoring during the study hall. She stated that the school must work with A.P.P.L.E. She, herself, felt isolated. Young parents have not learned to be great moms and dads. She knew the work of Family Services, but the same problems exist. When

people look alike, it is easier for them to relate; these parents have to feel comfortable. She asked the school to give A.P.P.L.E. the challenge.

Learning Support Reading

“These students were compared with the larger set of non-honors taking students in the freshman class. The data for these students show that the Learning Support Reading students, for the most part, differ from non-honors taking freshmen students in important ways. These students earn fewer A and B grades and earn more D and F grades. The weighted grade point average for these students is comparable with the larger group of students. This program has had less success with these students in the area of grades earned, but the net effect of the freshman year is comparable.

“As noted above the district needs to analyze the performance of these students on standardized tests; the analysis will be made available as soon as the scores are delivered to the high school.”

Mr. Prale stated that this program was similar to the College Prep Scholar model. Students receive extra minutes instead of an extra study hall. While it is beneficial, the PLAN scores were not as good as hoped.

SOLO

“The SOLO program underwent a number of changes this year. A math teacher and an applied arts teacher were scheduled into the program on a daily basis. The period for the program was changed, and the dean-counselors were engaged more fully for program placement and support. The number of students in the program peaked at twenty-two in late April. Some of the students participated in SOLO on a part-time basis, rotating out of the program for additional classes per their individual needs.

“The goal of SOLO is to provide students who might not otherwise attend school an opportunity to earn credits and graduate from the high school. This year, eight students graduated from SOLO, three at the end of the fall semester and five at the end of the spring semester. SOLO is expected to have between fifteen and twenty students enrolled for the fall 2007 semester.”

There are 15 to 20 students in the SOLO program. More teachers have been provided and the students love math teacher, Neal Weisman. This program has been successful. If the program has more than 22 students, more resources would be needed, i.e., teachers and space.

Discussion ensued about the report. Mr. Rigas asked about the level of students when they enter high school. Where achievement is the desired effect, a comparison is needed of current student levels from where they were. Mr. Prale agreed. He stated that next year the District would have EXPLORE Test scores at the 8th grade level and PLAN Test

scores at the 9th grade level. The District will be able to break out the PLAN scores by which students and areas of the program.

Mr. Rigas continued that while the Board of Education gets much information throughout the year, it is in different bits and pieces. The Board of Education needs to see an aggregate of those reports into a single report. Meeting AYP is only one measurement of achievement. He asked what for the other measuring points, besides AYP and ACT scores. Progress was not seen until the last two or three years. A comprehensive report is needed. Mr. Prale agreed it would be an interesting exercise. He had one caveat as he looked at the math data last week. When the data for the 289 students was taken together, it looked O.K. However, when Dr. Spight brought more data forward and dug deeper, another picture appeared. Mr. Rigas wanted the District to disaggregate data by feeder schools, including private schools.

Ms. Patchak-Layman asked if teachers know anecdotal information about students and whether that correlated with the data. Relationships are key. Mr. Prale responded that while the District is waiting until all numbers are received before making any adjustments.

Dr. Lee asked what “block” meant in the school setting. Mr. Prale responded that all freshmen were required to enroll in study halls, or a music program, or be in Academic Strategies. Block Algebra students are in the 40th to 60th percentile on the standardized test. They receive a double period of math instead of the study hall. When asked whether block teachers acted as mentors in other areas, Mr. Prale stated that it was less of a factor than in College Prep, as there was more computer instruction. Advisors can be dean counselors, coaches, etc.

Dr. Lee wanted to see indications of what worked and what did not work, i.e., literacy report. How well are students doing in terms of literacy? Where do the black students stand compared to white students and the average with that criterion? If that cannot be quantified, one must acknowledge not knowing the differences. It is important to say what is and is not known, as compared to what was done in the past. Is there a way to measure progress? If reading were considered an important part of student achievement, would it not make sense to say this is where Black students are in respect to reading skills and where they were before? Alternatively, if there were no way to determine that, there is no way to assess progress. Mr. Prale stated that the District has tracked reading for four years and a 2006 report details the activities. The Agile Mind Program’s progress is in the following report on the initiatives.

Dr. Lee asked when the Board of Education could expect to see that report, i.e., the entire issue of closing the gap, i.e., reading, math, etc., a report on whatever available components, and indications of current status versus what caused the realization of a problem. Mr. Prale said that he could provide a report, including the state report, which gives a picture of juniors who meets the state standards, and a disaggregation of the state data sometime after the opening of the next school year. Ms. Hill added that the District also publishes a state report of the recent grading class and does disaggregate ACT and

SAT Scores. While it does not demonstrate growth, it is snapshot. The more comprehensive report that would track 700 or 800 students and the District does not have that data readily available. Mr. Prale stated that the Board of Education wanted reports on the individual program implemented. The ACT report shows progress. He could match scores together for the last three or four years, including the Gates MacGinitie test scores, and look at “slices” of time.

Code of Conduct and Student Behavior Contract

Mr. Edgecombe explained that, typically, at the end of the year, the Board of Education is provided with information about changes in the Code of Conduct. The changes were listed below. Language adjustments were made for clarification purposes and disciplinary adjustments were made to be more appropriate for the infraction.

In addition, at the Board of Education’s request, the Administration reviewed and revised the behavioral contract to ensure that students were held accountable and that it mirrored changes in the Code of Conduct.

Mr. Edgecombe explained that these were procedural changes, not policy changes. Discussion ensued. Mr. Rigas stated that the Code of Conduct did not constitute policy and his concern was about having policies that carry the weight of municipal law. Ms. Patchak-Layman felt this gave guidance to the administration on how they were to respond to the policy and the way the Board of Education interprets the policy. This is independent action in terms of administrative rule, but it is the action of the Board of Education that makes policy. Dr. Millard did not see this as a distinct policy. The Board of Education sets policies relative to the health and safety of the school.

After a discussion of the procedures, the Board of Education signaled that it had no objection to the procedural issues.

Ms. Fisher stated that the Code of Conduct was developed as a response to a community concern that there was not an equitable distribution of consequences by the dean counselor division. Ultimately, the administration developed a code to address that inequity.

“The proposed changes for the Code of Conduct matrix were as follows:

Infraction	Proposed Changes	1 st Offense	2 nd Offense	3 rd Offense	4 th Offense
Possession of Cell Phone	Violation of Cell Phone Policy	From A to B			
Possession of Weapon	Add: ## (Police notification is mandated)				
Filing a False Report	From Class III				

	to Class II				
Leaving School w/o Permission	Remove				
Truancy	1 st offense starts at B	B	B	C	Cη
Violation of Student Behavioral Contract		From E-F to C-F	E-F C-F	E-F C-F	F

The following infractions were recommended being changed from Class III to Class IV:

- Arson/Bomb Threat/False Alarm/False 911 Call ## \$
- Battery
- Distribution/Intent to Deliver an Illegal Substance ##
- Mob Action
- Possession of Fireworks
- Possession of Illegal Substance ##
- Possession of Controlled Substance ##
- Possession of Weapon ++”

Dr. Lee asked for an orientation session on the Code of Conduct. He suggested this could be at a future meeting and felt it would be appropriate to have the new superintendent and principal involved.

Discussion ensued regarding the infractions recommended. The Instruction Committee members did not want such a harsh reprimand for the first violation of either the Cell Phone or Truancy policy. The Instruction Committee members also wanted more flexibility when a student violated a behavioral contract.

Ms. Patchak-Layman stated that the school needed an opportunity for continuing learning and they should be reflected in the Code of Conduct, i.e., anger management vehicles, etc. Mr. Perna stated that any time a student is placed on a behavioral contract it is because they have violated a Class III infraction. The behavioral contract lists the interventions that will occur. In addition, any Class II violation means an intervention for the student. The PSS Team (Deans of Discipline and Counselors) continually discusses students’ behavior. Ms. Patchak-Layman continued that when someone is guilty of having a moving violation, one of the consequences could be to watch a four-hour video. To her, that was learning the facts and figuring out new behaviors. She felt there was a comparable activity for in school suspensions and after school detentions.

It was the consensus of the Instruction Committee members to amend the following recommendations.

Infraction	Proposed Changes	1st Offense	2nd Offense	3rd Offense	4th Offense
Possession of Cell Phone	Violation of Cell Phone Policy	A	B	C	D

Truancy	1 st offense starts at B	A	B	C	C
Violation of Student Behavioral Contract		C-F	C-F	C-F	F

Dr. Bridge stated that the District interacts with students and on behalf of faculty in ways other than the Code of Conduct. Many venues are used to help students avoid getting into the discipline systems. The District is pursuing PBIS, so that it is more informed about interactions that will keep student behavior from escalating to a punitive level. The District is trying to create a process that is more consistent and fair when a child is brought into the discipline system. It was been a long journey and it would be hard for a new Board of Education member to come up to speed. These recommendations are the result of yearlong discussions and are historic. Mr. Edgecombe added that the Code of Conduct has responded to the issue of inconsistencies across dean counselors. It is a fair conversation to have, however, about whether the consequences from the start are appropriate and whether enough is being done in the intervention area to keep students from being repeat offenders. He expressed the concern that as the intervention discussion continued, he hoped it would not die under its own weight. The issue of discipline takes a tremendous amount of time, i.e., counseling or meting out consequences so that the child does not appear before the Board of Education.

Dr. Millard suggested that this was an issue for next year.

Ms. Fisher responded to Ms. Patchak-Layman’s issue regarding a small piece of the Code of Conduct that was being reviewed by the administrators in charge of that, but it has implications of a much larger issue. The hardest thing a Board of Education member has to do is to consider whether to expel a student from the institution. It is gut wrenching. Ten years ago when a student was expelled, they were expelled. No further education was offered to them. O.P.R.F.H.S. has ultimately developed alternative schooling, and O.P.R.F.H.S. pays for that education. Another prong of the expulsion involves counseling. The Board of Education takes very seriously the individual student’s needs and what will become of them. This Code has undergone many alterations over the years. The reason that the cell phone consequence had a stricter consequence was because previously cell phones were not allowed in the building. The Code of Conduct has one bottom line purpose and that is to provide security and safety of the 3,000 students, most of who behave themselves, in order for them to be educated in a secure environment. If someone has a weapon, that must be dealt with seriously.

Mr. Edgecombe explained that the recommendation was to remove “leaving school without permission because it is synonymous with truancy.

Dr. Millard asked for reports on cell phone usage in the building soon after school starts.

Ms. Patchak-Layman asked how one would classify a first offense. Was it 12 calendar months? Was it year to year? She was informed that a first offense was in any school

year. At the end of the school year, it is wiped out. Verbal offense warnings must be in written form.

Appropriate Attire

The Instruction Committee members were presented with the language to be included in the Student Handbook regarding appropriate attire. The Committee members discussed the definition of appropriate attire. Mr. Prale stated that if a student's dress were disruptive to the educational setting that would be the criteria that would allow teachers or administrators to act. This language is to be used as guidelines only; they are not rules or regulations. These will be provided to parents and students.

Dr. Millard reiterated that these were guidelines and on anything immodest and indiscriminate, gave any individual faculty member the ability to call the student on it. The idea is to establish some guidelines as to what is acceptable and what is not. She stated that one should try to focus on the affect that any of this has on any of the classrooms; that is what these guidelines are intended to reveal.

Alternative Programs

Mr. Perna presented the Instruction Committee members with the following report on alternative programs.

"HARBOR Academy (Helping Adolescents Reflect on Building Opportunities for Renewal). Harbor is a West 40 Regional Safe Schools High School located at 6525 North Avenue in Oak Park. Classes are from 9:30-3:00 with their school calendar mirroring that of O.P.R.F.H.S. This program serves students who are in good standing as well as those students who have been expelled held in abeyance. Students in good standing who attend Harbor Academy are considered "Pilot" students in contrast to expelled students. Special Education students may attend Harbor Academy, but the school's total Special Education enrollment cannot exceed 10%. It is generally not the practice of the district to assign Special Education students to Harbor Academy. Students are accepted on a case-by-case basis and are eligible to earn up to seven credits a semester including elective credits. Harbor currently employs four full-time teachers, a full-time social worker, an Administrative Assistant and a Site Director. The ratio of students to staff is no more than 10 students to one adult. The facility was just recently improved to include two additional classrooms and a state-of-the-art fitness center. The current facility can accommodate up to 50 students.

"Ombudsman. The North Central Association of Schools (NCA) and the Southern Association of Schools accredit Ombudsman. Classes are held at 3326 N. Harlem, Chicago. Students enroll in one of three 3-hour sessions. The curriculum is computer-based with the student progressing at his or her own pace with the guidance of an accredited teacher. Academic emphasis is on reading/language arts, mathematics, science concepts, and social studies. This program accepts students in good standing as

well as those students expelled held in abeyance. Special Education students are not assigned to the Ombudsman program.

“Enrollment Data. During the second semester of the 2006-2007 school year there were 31 students receiving an education at our two off-campus alternative schools:

- 19 students attended Harbor Academy; 2 expelled students held in abeyance will return to O.P.R.F.H.S. in good standing for first semester; 5 pilot students will continue their education at Harbor; 2 students expelled held in abeyance will continue their education at Harbor first semester; 6 students graduated (4 pilot students and 2 expelled students); 2 pilot students were remanded to Special Education for services; 1 pilot student was dropped for lack of academic progress; 1 expelled student held in abeyance was transferred to Ombudsman due to safety concerns.
- 12 students attended Ombudsman; 1 pilot student completed graduation requirements; 1 student expelled held in abeyance completed graduation requirements; 3 pilot students will continue their education at Ombudsman; 2 expelled students held in abeyance will continue their education at Ombudsman; 2 pilot students were dropped for lack of academic progress; 1 pilot student withdrew from the district; 2 expelled students held in abeyance were expelled for violation of the held in abeyance contract.

“Conclusion. The students attending both alternative programs are unique individuals with unique needs. Most students are placed at an alternative school as a result of having major discipline issues and/or attendance problems and, as a result, may exhibit educational deficiencies. The success of students being educated at an alternative school has to do with many factors. Some students do quite well and request to stay at the alternative school rather than return to **O.P.R.F.H.S.** Many of these students have indicated that they like the smaller class size, the smaller school environment, or feel that they need to be removed from a negative influence that, at the home school, was a barrier to learning while other students feel quite the opposite and can’t wait to return. Some of these students feel the education/curriculum is not challenging, they miss their friends, or they generally object to the over-all change.

“Implementation of Recommendations from Semester I Report

1. A short survey instrument (see attached) has been developed and sent to the homes of students attending both alternative placements. The survey will measure the satisfaction level of both the students and parents regarding the curriculum, instruction, support services, physical environment, and matriculation process. The results of the survey will be analyzed over the summer and will be included in a future alternative school report.
2. The school’s Institutional Researcher has been provided with the ID numbers of the students that have returned to O.P.R.F.H.S. from an alternative placement at the end of each semester. I have requested that a report be developed that will reflect, in part, the impact the alternative programs have on student achievement.
3. The results of the survey instrument, anecdotal information, and the report developed by the Institutional Researcher will provide information regarding student transition

from alternative placement back to O.P.R.F.H.S. The results of the analysis of this information will be included in a future alternative school report.”

Ms. Fisher and Dr. Millard appreciated the addition of the survey.

Ms. Patchak-Layman asked the administration to address the fact that the educational curriculum at alternative schools was not challenging. She asked what the checks and balances in terms of the curriculum were. Mr. Edgecombe responded that there were none at Ombudsman. Students are not going to these programs for academic purposes; it is an opportunity for them to get credits for graduation. Any student who is an academically capable will have less than they want at an alternative school. Ms. Patchak-Layman asked if there were an opportunity for any conversation in that regard. She was informed that Ombudsman was a corporation. HARBOR Academy is a smaller institution and has limited resources. Mr. Perna remembered only having Ombudsman years ago and then HARBOR was opened. Ombudsman has changed in the ten years that he worked with them. It has broadened its curriculum base and now has more components. It is also more sophisticated about finding the entry level of students. It is more open to certain things, such as agreeing to report student attendance weekly. Ms. Patchak-Layman did not want to see students penalized educationally, stating that a wide range of challenging curriculum can be completed via computers. Senior Board of Education members suggested Ms. Patchak-Layman visit both alternative schools to see the quality of those schools.

Textbook Approval

Ms. Fisher recommended approval of textbook, *Authentic Happiness*, for the History Division, at the regular June Board of Education meeting.

Dr. Millard recommended approval of the textbook, *Emotional Intelligence*, for the History Division, *at the regular June Board of Education meeting*.

Mr. Conway recommended approval of the textbook, *Psychology: Themes & Variations*, 7th Edition, for the History Division, at the regular June Board of Education meeting.

Ms. Fisher noted that when Policy 20 is amended the Board of Education members will no longer review textbooks; they will only approve the superintendent’s recommendation of the textbooks.

Adjournment

The committee adjourned at 10:43 a.m.