

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

**An Instruction Committee of the Whole Board
October 19, 2006**

An Instruction Committee meeting of the Whole Board was held on Thursday, October 19, 2006, in the Board Room. Dr. Greenwald opened the meeting at 8:26 a.m. Committee members present were 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; 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, Director of Community Relations and Communications, Sheila Hardin, F.S.E.C. Representative; Barb Nelson, P.T.O. Chair., and Uche Anigbogu, Tabitha Watson, Tomas DeMedici, Philip Peery, Nico Marquez, and Christina Perez, students who participated in the M.S.A.N. Student Leadership Conference.

Acceptance of Minutes

Hearing no amendments to the minutes of September 21, 2006, the Committee accepted them, as presented.

M.S.A.N. Student Leadership Conference

Mr. Edgecombe reported that the Minority Student Achievement Network (M.S.A.N.) held its Student Leadership Conference in Green Bay, Wisconsin, September 26-29, 2006. Six students participated and all were present at this meeting. Each gave a report on a portion of the conference. Mr. Edgecombe noted that it was a great group of students and they had much fun. Students who participate in these programs learned leadership skills to create action plans that may be used to change things within their school regarding race.

Students arrived in Green Bay on Wednesday morning. Ms. Perez reported that Erin Gruwell, author and teacher, was the keynote speaker of the program. Ms. Gruwell grew up in a rich neighborhood and did not have to worry about gangs. Her first teaching job, however, was in a different environment and she was apprehensive. She struggled with the student emotional issues because they had to deal with the strife of their friends dying due to gang violence, etc. She decided to help these students through books such as *The Diary of Anne Frank* and *Romeo and Juliet* by relating the stories in these books to their lives. The students connected with the characters in the books and with Ms. Gruwell. It was an inspiring story as these students overcame all odds. Statistically, they were not supposed to succeed. Now, they are successful members of society.

Thomas DeMedici spoke about the next morning's activity was relative to thinking outside of the box, taking risks and asking for help. There was an exercise where they were to rework a puzzle in a form different from what was presented. At the end, no one had figured that the flat puzzle could have been turned into a 3-d cube. It was also a lesson on the importance of asking for help. No one should take on more than they can do and that it is not a sign of weakness to ask for help or collaboration. There were also real world examples of leadership skills. The exercise included extending McDonald's consumer base to the world. They were given a specific consumer base and asked to come up with the most economically efficient method of extending it to the world market. He felt the leadership workshop was great because it made them understand that collaboration does not mean a sacrifice in leadership, etc.

Tabitha Watson and Philip Peery reported that Thursday evening was spent visiting individual colleges. At the University of Wisconsin in Green Bay, a teacher spoke to them about racial stereotypes, etc.; this usually is the result of ignorance. People do not know how to relate to one another. A second speaker, John Ashley, gave his personal account of his educational story, how he dealt with racial stereotypes, and how he made sure he became a confident human being. They toured the campus, met students and had an opportunity to buy college gear from the bookstore, etc. A college fair was held and the following schools attended: Butler, Cornell, Purdue, Vanderbilt, etc. This was very informative.

Uche Anigbogu reported that when visiting St. Norbert's college, they viewed a video called "Students at Pueblo," created by six African-American students. It was about overcoming obstacles, prejudices, and assumptions made by staff, faculty and other students. They believe that the film can change people's perspectives if they are able to see other people's viewpoints. Conversation ensued about the students' different experiences. After some teachers viewed the video, they realized that they were not treating everyone the same and made adjustments. The students felt that results would be obtained if action were taken. If there is strength and spirit, there will be a positive resolution.

Nico Marquez emphasized the fact that last year's action plans were not fulfilled to the extent desired and the students were remorseful about that fact. Last year was their junior year and they found it academically challenging. This year they plan to do just one thing and that was simply to lecture to junior highs. They want junior high school students to take the right initiative. He and one other M.S.A.N. participants will address Citizens' Council on November 2. Plans will be made to make presentations to P.T.O. as well.

The students then presented a slideshow of pictures taken at the conference. Mr. Edgecombe and Ms. Monica Swope were the chaperones.

Ms. Ranney congratulated all of them for making their focus speaking to junior high students about what they learned. Dr. Greenwald echoed the sentiment that the more they could share the better it would be for the whole community.

Professional Development Update

Mr. Prale presented the latest draft of the organizational chart of the learning teams established in the various divisions as part of the professional development program for this school year. Division heads have been working with faculty to focus these teams and to make the best use of the eight late arrival schedules that are part of this year's school calendar. Mr. Prale reiterated that this was a living document. The information that is learned from these teams will be used to determine the structure of next year's programs. When asked if the topics were assigned to or generated by the divisions, Mr. Prale replied that some items were pressing and the divisions were asked to consider them. Other divisions had their own issues. Some divisions are working on curriculum. Ms. Ranney felt that the program for World Languages Day needed revision. Mr. Prale concurred and noted that it was on the list.

Regarding curriculum guide development, Ms. Ranney asked if they were expected to be completed during the hours scheduled for professional development hours for this school year and whether it became a part of the teacher's performance evaluation. Mr. Prale felt it was possible that it would be part of the performance evaluation. If a teacher would become the primary author or a leader, it could be reflected in his/her growth. However, the evaluation program is open and allows other areas to be considered as well, i.e., organizational skills.

Ms. Ranney asked if the curriculum guides were posted on the website. Mr. Prale replied that the Technology Committee has discussed that issue and those responsibilities that go with that. In looking at assignments, there are continuity issues in terms of the presentation scheme, i.e.. What software should be used? Things often become out of date quickly making it a necessity to alter the website. The question becomes, "How rapidly can the website be updated?" Teachers are being asked what form would be reasonably efficient, not burdensome, and helpful to the parents. They are looking for that balance and a product that will provide them. The Technology Committee members said it would help if the curriculum guides could be posted and forgotten about. The Skyward Steering Committee will look at this as well. Presently, a parent can email a teacher and the teacher can send the curriculum guide as an attachment. Mr. Prale also affirmed that the teacher contact information is standard in the overview of the course that is distributed. Ms. Hardin added that most parents realize how to contact their child's teachers.

Discussion ensued regarding online registration for parent teacher conferences. Ms. Ranney noted her preference for this feature. Mr. Prale explained that every year the best way to register parents for parent/teacher conference is reviewed. There are online programs available, but the programs are expensive. Usually, they require an annual

license and a per student fee as well. Presently, O.P.R.F.H.S. is using a very inexpensive software program that was modified and staff is manually putting in the information.

School Profile

Ms. Hill presented the Committee with the *School Profile*, which had been received the previous day. The *School Profile* accompanies every transcript sent to colleges. It provides colleges with a good sense of O.P.R.F.H.S. and contains important information for admissions offices. Colleges know what programs a student chooses. Ms. Hill eliminated some information this year, i.e., the names of all the administrators and the PSAE results. While the PSAE results too were received just yesterday, Ms. Hill did not believe they were useful for college admissions.

Ms. Hill reported that AYP data is not yet available.

Course Proposals

Ms. Hill presented the Instruction Committee members with a booklet that contained the course proposals for the 2007-08 school year. The proposals were first being submitted to the Instruction Committee to give the members an opportunity to provide input at the start of the process that the school uses for considering, recommending, and approving course proposals. Of the twenty (20) proposals, seven would create new courses, twelve propose course revisions, and one calls for the deletion of a course.

A summary of the course by the divisions was provided (attached to and made a part of the minutes of this meeting).

Discussion ensued regarding the field summer course to the Antarctica. The trip will cost approximately \$3,300. Dr. Millard voiced her opinion that all students should be encouraged to participate and that O.P.R.F.H.S. should help students find the resources they might need to participate. Ms. Ranney concurred. Dr. Millard continued that she and Dr. Goldberg personally believed in the experience of going to India and had personally raised funds for those unable to pay for the trip.

Mr. Rigas suggested first asking everyone to apply, then screening the applicants and finally, finding the money. He suggested that the parent groups could fundraise specifically for this purpose. Dr. Greenwald concurred and stated that it would not be a change to their basic philosophies, but an addition of a rich academic experience for students.

Ms. Nelson stated that this idea was forming. She was working together with a cross section of the parent groups interested in fundraising for activities that involve scholarship-type financing. She is attempting to form a roundtable to explore the opportunity of adding something to the budgets for broad-based scholarships, as well as teacher recognition. She invited Board of Education members to participate.

Mr. Rigas stated that raising a lot of money does not take a huge effort. The Bolin Scholarship raised over \$100,000. Every year it provides scholarships for students, renewable for four years and the fund keeps growing. Ms. Ranney concurred.

Ms. Nelson stated that there is an annual publication that indicates all of the classroom opportunities available.

Typically, the students' fees pay for the two chaperones, as faculty members are not expected to pay for the trip.

Mr. Rigas questioned why the computer science classes in the math division were not included under the proficiency requirement. He questioned why these students would have to take a computer class when the computer science classes were more advanced. Mr. Prale felt that was a consideration for Instructional Council and a policy decision for the Board of Education, as the computer proficiency requirement was mandated as a graduation requirement of the high school. The Computer Proficiency Requirement began in 1995 as one of the three required Applied Arts credits. Mr. Prale acknowledged that this could be revisited. Mr. Rigas did not want to have mandated requirements in order to protect a division.

Adjournment

The Committee adjourned at 9:35 a.m.