

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

**An Instruction Committee of the Whole Board
February 21, 2008**

An Instruction Committee meeting of the Whole Board was held on Thursday, February 21, 2008 in the Board Room. Dr. Millard opened the meeting at 7:45 a.m. Committee members present were John C. Allen, Jacques A. Conway, Valerie J. Fisher, Dr. Ralph H. Lee, Dr. Dietra D. Millard, and Sharon Patchak Layman. Also present were: Dr. Attila J. Weninger, Superintendent; Jason Edgecombe, Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources; Cheryl Witham, Chief Financial Officer; Phil 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; John Stelzer, Athletic Director, James Paul Hunter, Faculty Senate Chair; Dr. Carl Spight, O.P.R.F.H.S. Institutional Researcher; Jason Dennis, O.P.R.F.H.S. Faculty Member; Wyanetta Johnson, Burcy Hines, A.P.P.L.E.; Barbara Nelson, PTO Chair; Terry Dean of the *Wednesday Journal*.

Acceptance of Minutes

The minutes of the January 16, 2008 Instruction Committee meeting were accepted, as presented.

Plan for Hiring of Coaches

John Stelzer, Athletic Director, was asked to provide the Board of Education members with information regarding the hiring process for coaches. Mr. Stelzer reported that previously there was no formalized hiring process for coaches. Mr. Stelzer was the Assistant Athletic Director for three years. In his first year as AD, he delineated, in writing, the categories of head coaches based on time, season, and safety issues. The goal of the District is to hire more minority teachers and coaches and to have more teachers involved with co-curricular activities. When asked to define minorities, Mr. Stelzer stated that to him they were African-American, females and Hispanics. The administration has brought more attention to athletics and activities in the hiring process and is obtaining the support of the division heads. There is now a stated emphasis on co-curricular involvement when looking at potential teacher candidates. As more minority faculty teachers are hired in the district that will be reflected in co-curricular activities. If an inside candidate were not found, Mr. Stelzer would advertise on the IHSA, IDA, and the IBA websites in order to find qualified coaching candidates. Whether the coaches are employees or not, the coaching stipends are the same.

Mr. Stelzer continued that while the District looks for teachers who are also coaches, those teachers who cannot coach are not penalized. Division heads do not have a mandate to hire a teacher who can also be a coach. The administration feels the District can hire the best teacher who is also willing to go that extra mile to see a student in a different light and, more importantly, for the student to see the teacher in a different light, but this is not mutually exclusive. There is a cooperative relationship. Committee members acknowledged the importance of this balance and Dr. Weninger reiterated that the administration has expressed its desire to hire the best teachers for the classroom and then the best teachers for the co-curricular activities, as there is a direct correlation between achievement and co-curricular. The District will not hire first a coach and/or sponsor and then a teacher; the primary contribution should be the classroom; however, other things can be contributed. A teacher spends 48-minutes a day in a class and when the student has the opportunity to see that teacher in another venue, there is value to that. With approximately 1,000 students participating, athletics and activities are an important part of their development.

Mr. Conway asked Mr. Stelzer if he thought the hiring process was better now; Mr. Stelzer responded that it was both better and the same. Mr. Conway continued that he had coached for six years and was involved with children for many years and that he had his own biases. He asked for an explanation of the evaluation process. Mr. Stelzer reported that he uses a document that was developed for head coaches and for assistant coaches. While the process is not as formalized as it is for the faculty, it does include observations of practice and games as well as evaluation of their skills as a coach, how they plan practices, relate to athletics, manager their coaches and staff, etc. Head coaches evaluate their assistant coaches.

Dr. Lee felt that being a good coach was synonymous with being a good teacher. He did not feel a winning coach and a good coach were synonymous because a good coach will bring out the best of every member of the team. Mr. Stelzer concurred and stated that discussion occurs about the contrast between winning and developing. The teaching of youth sports has less concentration on winning. The scale of that differentiates from freshman year to varsity. The coaches' conversation is on development or teaching in high school sports; it is a conversation about balance. It is the expectations of the high school that coaches teach sport skills and life lessons.

Dr. Lee asked for the GPAs of those in athletics and Dr. Millard asked for the graduation rate. Dr. Lee envisioned adding a requirement that all students be involved in co-curricular activities.

Ms. Patchak-Layman asked if all PE staff were coaches. Mr. Stelzer responded no and that the requirement of doing so was dropped in 1981.

The Committee members thanked Mr. Stelzer for his report.

Discussions of Board Resolutions

Dr. Millard stated that OPRFHS has had a gap for decades and she had resurrected a copy of the Learning Performance Report from 2003, which dealt with this issue. She continued that the Board of Education hired Dr. Weninger to focus on academic achievement with an emphasis on minority students. She was appreciative of Dr. Lee's resolutions and Mr. Allen's idea to hold forums in the continued pursuit of the District's goal. Dr. Millard had asked Mr. Prale to provide her with the ethnic breakdown of the school's population; approximately two out of three of the 840 minority students are African-American. The Board of Education acknowledges that it has to deal with the academic achievement gap and that the District's composite nature of its top goal is to guarantee that the Board of Education offers the opportunity to close the gap to anyone not achieving. As such, she proposed amending Board Resolution 1 as follows:

“BE it resolved that this Board of Education considers the academic achievement gap between non-minority and minority students to be its top priority.”

Dr. Lee then read a statement that he had sent to the Board of Education members previously, noting that he had not violated the Open Meetings Act, as there had been no discussion of it via email.

“I am writing to indicate that I am willing to accept and vote in favor of the changes in the two resolutions recommended by Franczek Sullivan, as they currently exist (attached), in spite of the fact that I am not in total agreement with them or with the necessity for making the changes. My reasons for disagreement are stated below. My reasons for agreement are these: The recommended changes still preserve most of what I wanted to accomplish, while my reasons for disagreement do not constitute sufficient cause for the expenditure of time and energy that would be expended in a public debate. As I feel that we have seen recently, public debate of all debatable issues does not necessarily benefit the Board, the District, or the taxpayers. However, I hope that you will read and consider what I am saying below.

“A careful reading of the Franczek Sullivan research report will show that their research was limited strictly to one area: that of the use of race or racial references in the assignment of students to schools. I agree completely with their findings and recommendations within the contextual boundaries that they repeatedly described throughout the document. At no time did they make reference to case law or judicial opinions regarding race-consciousness in the allocation of time and attention to student achievement on the part of school boards, which the first resolution was all about. There were no racial references in the second resolution, and it is unclear why they would consider its wording to be legally unsound, or their recommended changes more sound legally. I can understand that they may like the alternative wording better, but is this the purpose of having legal counsel?

“I deliberately chose to use race-conscious wording in the first resolution because I believe that a pretense of being color-blind in dealing with the achievement gap would be

foolish, and that to be truly and deliberately color-blind in the face of the current and historical relationships between blacks and whites on this continent would be staggeringly foolish. I sense, however, that no one on our board seriously proposes that we be either dishonest or naive, and this is why I see no reason to extend our struggle over wording, at least for now.”

Dr. Lee added that he did not strongly oppose the changing of the wording, but he was in opposition because he felt that the opposition from the community is based on a fear that the School Board is giving black students something they do not deserve. That is not legitimate. When it comes to labeling emotions as being legitimate or not, he was reminded of his grandchildren who were afraid of the dark when they were between 3 and 6 years old. It only took buying a \$3.95 night-light to allay their fears of the dark, rather than making them fearful. He acceded to the fear, so he did not oppose changing the wording, in spite of the fact that he did not really agree with it. Mr. Conway and Ms. Fisher also supported the change.

Ms. Patchak-Layman did not support the change as she said that the Board of Education could say that the rationale for focusing on African-American achievement was that it was a matter of clearing up state standards and at a minimum of making AYP. Using the State of Illinois’ numbers, the greatest disparity in making AYP is between the African-American and the White Students. It depreciates from any other group. The Board of Education needs to work on its highest priority of African-American students being able to move forward. Other than making a definition change, she did not want to water the resolution down to a global minority.

Mr. Allen concurred with both Dr. Lee and Mr. Conway. However, he was upset with the law firm’s opinion, saying that it was not applicable to the Board's resolution, but based on cases involving affirmative action and school admission. The Board, he stressed, was not resolving issues about those enrolled at the high school. He asked, "Who is going to sue us? What harm has been established? Based on what? If someone did sue, what would they have to prove?" The best anyone could do would be to sue for an injunction to stop the school for implementing the measure, but that is not irreparable harm. Dr. Lee agreed that the arguments presented by the law firm were insufficient lawful reasoning to amend the resolution, yet he would support amending it for the reasons he stated previously. Mr. Allen concluded that the school needed new lawyers because he was "offended" and "embarrassed" by the opinion.

Ms. Johnson noted her disagreement at amending the resolution.

Dr. Millard had explored a resolution that was adopted by a school in Los Angeles in November and reference to it sent to the Board of Education by a community member as substantiation that other school districts were taking similar action. Dr. Millard continued that the resolution took five years to craft and includes the language “culturally relevant education to benefit African-American and all students. The school did not target one racial group. What has happened at OPRFHS in the past three months is extraordinary. Both Dr. Lee and Mr. Allen have allowed us to deal with this subject in a way that we have not before and she applauded that fact. She wanted every student to

feel they were included and she believed the focus must be on African American students who are not achieving.

Dr. Lee stated that if the wording being proposed now had been made a year ago, he would not have supported it. One reason for not opposing it now was that he does not feel the change in the wording will alter the path and he wanted to move forward to the business of concrete proposals for doing what needs to be done. He did not believe making this change at this point would do harm.

Board Resolution 2

Mr. Prale provided information regarding the difference between literacy and reading as follows:

“BACKGROUND

“In November 2007 the Board of Education passed a resolution stating that it “considers the improvement of the reading skills” of low achieving students would “be a primary and one of the more intense focuses of those approaches” considered for improving student achievement. On February 9, 2008, Mark Janda referenced this goal as concerning literacy. I corrected his rereading of the resolution, which prompted a brief discussion of the distinction between reading and literacy.

“SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

- Reading is making meaning from text. Reading combines two distinct sets of skills – decoding and comprehension - with the background of the reader and the context of the material to create meaning from the act of reading. Unique understandings of text that come from unique backgrounds are part of reading and the teaching of reading. The demands of content area reading have prompted teachers to address the ways in which students retain specific information and how students use metacognitive (how one thinks about thinking) strategies to enhance learning.
- Literacy incorporates reading, writing, speaking, and listening as part of a complex of communication arts. Literacy uses reading and all other skills to gain and share information in an increasingly information-rich world.
- Literacy is expressive and receptive; reading is receptive.
- Literacy, as an outcome for students, extends beyond the reading definition presented above. Literacy involves additional student learning processes including engagement and concentration on what is being read, creation and manipulation of ideas, exploration and discussion of one’s thoughts and perspectives and those of other people.
- A literacy program provides students with affirming, not marginalizing, school experiences. A literacy program adds esteem for students as it improves reading ability. The program rewards students with higher test scores and provides them with a voice in their learning and their school experiences.
- Other districts have acted at the Board level to establish literacy as a district focus. For example, the Board of Education of the Windsor, Connecticut Public

Schools agreed in June 2003 on a goal to “Improve achievement for all students in the academics giving particular attention to literacy, and reduce the disparities in performance among all groups of students.” Windsor Public Schools is a MSAN member district.

“RECOMMENDATION

The Board of Education should consider stating its resolution in terms of improving student reading and literacy instead of focusing only on student reading.

Dr. Lee stated that his reason for focusing on reading was that he believed the school had a policy, for at least thirty years, of not dealing with reading, and only dealing with literacy outside of reading. OPRFHS has a policy that the teaching of reading is the responsibility of Districts 90 and 97. He wanted to see that changed. While the current policy is to assign students to English and Literature classes, it has not worked and he wanted this examined.

Mr. Prale had provided background information regarding reading and literacy. He stated that current research recommends doing both. He stated that OPRFHS has courses, not in Special Education but taught at the basic level, that explicitly address reading instruction. Those courses are not designed to keep students at the basic level but to move students to the regular track. The goal is to access the most rigorous curriculum. The intention is to teach reading at every level. About five years ago, OPRFHS started tracking reading scores of many students. Reading scores are obtained at the beginning and end of the freshman years of college prep students and at the end of their sophomore year. He concurred with Dr. Lee’s focus and that was why the information was being tracked. A reading report was given to the Board of Education in 2006. Mr. Hunter concurred with Mr. Prale on reading not being an independent subject. In the field today, reading is an aspect of the field of literacy. He concurred with Mr. Prale’s recommendation that the high school should focus on both reading and literacy.

Dr. Lee asked how literacy is reported to the Board of Education. Mr. Prale stated that one measure was the level of success students had in English and history courses. This measure compares the rates of students earning grades of A’s and B’s versus D’s and F’s. Mr. Prale stated that text-based courses, e.g., biology, history, and math, all use reading and literacy. Literacy affects all courses. Dr. Weninger was not in favor of an either/or proposition. OPRFHS should measure both reading and literacy as a single measure as to whether a student can read and that measurement is not available. Literacy is about how students engage in all activities in the school, e.g., co-curricular, tardiness, etc. Ms. Patchak-Layman suggested developing a diagnostic assessment that would show if they were able to read at the twelfth grade level at graduation. She continued that if it were found that English 1 students with reading levels exceeding grade level, the school would focus on the lowest readers. Ms. Patchak-Layman asked for the data on which students were not reading at grade level at the time of their graduation. The administration stated that its responsibility was to make decisions about time and resources and that is why it focuses on grades nine and ten primarily.

Dr. Lee stated that the current wording of the resolution was based on a perceived deficiency. He wanted to know what percentage of graduating seniors read at grade level or at what grade level. That is what he called a deficiency of information. Mr. Prale pointed out the cost of providing that information is of finances and time; would they be more valuable to the students versus the school board. The resolution itself would lead to such a discussion. Dr. Lee believed that the changing of the resolution would direct the school board away from the resolution and, therefore, maintain status quo.

There was no consensus to change Board Resolution 2. There was consensus to amend Board Resolution 1, as proposed by Dr. Millard, at the February Board of Education meeting.

Discussion of Ideas to Raise Student Achievement

Dr. Weninger distributed an update on raising student achievement (attached to and made a part of the minutes of this meeting). He noted that assistant principals would be added to the second to the last page, above IV. The entire plan presented in October would continue to be a roadmap and probably brought to the Board of Education for implementation in the future.

Ms. Patchak-Layman asked how these recommendations would be measured and when and why are the proposals on the table as to why they will move the school forward. How will the school know if these recommendations are successful?

Dr. Weninger responded that while the effectiveness of the African-American Leadership Roundtable on student achievement may not be measured, its purpose is to make the school aware of what the Roundtable sees as inhibitors to African-American learning and the way in which the school communicates. The school is looking to find out things from African-Americans, e.g., how to reach out to African-American parents to become more involved in their students' lives. Dr. Weninger envisioned the committee would own this responsibility and he did not envision the school having to provide any funding. Some of the best practices have shown recently that when schools show concerted effort to meet with parents in the community, in homes, in churches, etc., attitudes change. It was noted, however, that if faculty were required to meet outside of the school day, it would have contractual implications and that would have to come back to the Board of Education for consideration. Dr. Lee stated that there are things that cannot be measured but yet contribute to student achievement, e.g., clean floors and nice smelling bathrooms. That effect cannot be measured but it is a contributor. He wanted to spend time on agreeing what measures would be used to evaluate closing the achievement gap. He believed there were only two measures: the GPA and the progress on the NCLB criteria for the state. He believed the superintendent needed the blessing of the Board on the initiatives to move ahead next September. He believed what was presented was a stopgap that would allow the school to do something useful in September but to continue to spend time and attention on items that reached beyond the 2008-09 school year.

Dr. Weninger stated that any requirement that the school would make on parents or students would come to the Board of Education for approval, e.g., a requirement for parents to attend school on certain occasions, etc.

Dr. Weninger commented that he acknowledges that the school can only control what it does, as noted by Ms. Patchak-Layman, but also acknowledged that the Board of Education and the school must recognize that measurable achievements will not be made without all of the community behind the students. He holds firmly and research shows that one will not make measurable gains in student achievement without the four pillars—students, parents, community and school. Changes are not be made between 8 a.m. and 3 p.m. and that is important to understand. Ms. Patchak-Layman disagreed stating that the school is the priority and that is where the effort should be put, as the school has no control over the community or the parents. Dr. Weninger responded that the Board of Education employed him to focus on minority student achievement and asked him if he “got it.” The Board of Education also employed him to lead. It is not a copout to say everyone has a responsibility. The school has not shirked the responsibility of what it does. However, leadership looks at everything that could affect student achievement and it calls for sending a clarion call to everyone in the community that he/she must have a role. One begins long-term lasting improvement by creating bedrock foundations on improvement, then continuing that momentum forward, and defining institutional excellence. What are the goals? What are we doing now? Are they working? What are the measurements? What should be discarded? Looking at the initiatives and evaluating whether they will be in place or not next year is the process right now.

Dr. Lee stated that his comment about a stopgap was not meant to diminish the plan; it is a starting point but not necessarily the primary focus for the next 15 years. He believed if the Board of Education decided to determine to debate the starting point in detail, the administration would be waiting a year to figure out what should have been done in September. He believed it was important for the Board of Education to approve the presentation as a starting point. He also believed the four components had differing weights and what the school does is of greater importance than the community. Dr. Weninger restated that the proposal was for the coming year. He believed the four pillars were not equal and that they need to begin to integrate and coordinate things to support student achievement. His assumption is that all students can achieve and it is dependent upon what they and the school do. This plan is the beginning of that, and not just in theory as there is discussion of expanding Agile Mind, College Prep, Learning Support, Reading, 8 to 9 Connections, etc. While doing that, the school must say where it is heading. He asked the Board of Education if the school should define institutional excellence as listed under III, Professional Development Committee (PDC). Monthly reports would be brought to the Board of Education. Dr. Weninger asked one or two Board of Education members to be part of the group to define institutional excellence as well. Mr. Allen, Dr. Millard, Mr. Conway and Ms. Fisher responded affirmatively. Ms. Patchak-Layman concurred but said the community should be involved and the Board of Education should lead the charge to define it.

Dr. Lee was concerned about 1) to what extent was the Board of Education elected to represent the community as opposed to being something separate and a part from the community; and 2) if the Board of Education's primary role is to say yes or no to what has been developed step-by-step through a lengthy and involved process, if the Board of Education is not involved in the details, the Board of Education is in the position at the end of the process to say yes because to say no brands everything previously done by faculty/administration as a waste of time. He reiterated the need for monthly reports to the Board of Education and for Board participation in the stakeholder group. Ms. Fisher nominated Dr. Lee to be part of the stakeholder group. The Board of Education will be given what the PDC has already developed as the first step towards institutional excellence.

Discussion ensued as to whether these meetings would be open to the public. While Ms. Patchak-Layman said not inviting the public prevented them from hearing the work of the committee and it classifies this as an administrative activity versus what at the end will be a Board of Education policy, the rest of the committee members disagreed. Dr. Lee stated that the school district has a right to protect itself from undue pressure and community members are already a part of the PDC.

Dr. Lee asked if it were Dr. Weninger's intention that what is outlined for the Board of Education was only to set direction. Dr. Weninger concurred; the largest bulk of the work in volume and size is administrative. The administration will inform the Board of Education of what it is doing for students beyond this year's freshman class. To Ms. Patchak-Layman's question about whether professional development was only for freshmen, Dr. Weninger responded that the District would attempt to look at staff development for all staff.

Dr. Lee noted that the other proposals were still on the table so how did Dr. Weninger see those as being on the table in relationship to what is being proposed here. Dr. Weninger responded that defining institutional excellence, defining professional development, and reviewing and evaluating current programs and initiatives are bedrock pieces, but by the time the incoming freshman class becomes seniors, the District might propose an internship plan for students or a community service component to their education. He viewed other proposals as being recommendations as this moves forward. The District cannot do everything at once.

Dr. Lee wanted to see an investigation as to whether teacher expectations of students enrolled in basic level courses are as high as their expectation of students in non-basic courses in areas where it would be appropriate to have the same expectations, e.g., the amount of time spent doing homework. If valid, how would that fit into this plan and how would the Board of Education approve that request. There were two places where the academic rigor and expectations of students in the basic transitional classes would be necessarily a part of the conversation without making it a formal board topic, e.g., systemic barrier under III 1, D, 1 or defining institutional excellence. Dr. Millard stated that it could be if the Board of Education chooses to identify something, the members could bring it to Dr. Weninger and to the committee for review.

Dr. Weninger concluded that he would bring the proposal with the amendments discussed that day to the February Board of Education for Board of Education approval. Dr. Lee was concerned about a culture within the school and most other schools, i.e., the assumption that underlies the ability group itself as reflected in faculty values. He believes the best teachers are needed to teach basic courses. Dr. Lee believes such a value in itself results in these students being viewed by teachers and administrators as being at the bottom of the ladder. He had seen no evidence of any culture change at this point from 1980's when this happened. He wanted to explore whether that culture still existed at the high school. Dr. Weninger stated that the question of whether new teachers were assigned basic or transitional courses was asked of Division Heads and their response was negative. He suggested creating a spreadsheet to get the data to determine whether that is the case, i.e., look at the teacher, the gender, the race, and the teaching experience, and what they teach. This information would then be brought to the BOE via the Instruction Committee. Mr. Hunter added that he has always taught basic students; he believes too that his division head and the administration feel he is a good teacher. Dr. Weninger's preference was to teach basic students. Because Dr. Lee had additional questions, Dr. Weninger suggested that he send them to the administration and it will collect the data about the assumptions and bring that to the Instruction Committee meeting. Dr. Lee agreed so long as the data is collected is a significant factor. Dr. Weninger suggested that he included how he wanted the data collected. Dr. Lee clarified that he did not believe this had anything to do with the discrimination of black teachers, but the organization of the curriculum and the beliefs that stem from that.

Ms. Patchak-Layman voiced several concerns regarding the plan to raise student achievement. They were:

- 1) A definition of an achieving system is needed. How do academics fit into the achievement system with the freshman programs?
- 2) Do the initiatives occur during the school day or out of the school day?
- 3) Special Education students are not addressed.
- 4) In Science, there is a disparity between achievement levels, and this is not addressed.
- 5) This plan only targets freshman students; three-quarters of the student population is not addressed.

Ms. Hill responded that the course proposals approved by the Board of Education included significant changes to the science program and she outlined what they were. It was also noted that there were no double period labs.

It was also noted that six of the thirteen initiatives occurred during the day and six of them focused on special education students. With RTI, students are intervened on their behavior in advance of their being classified as special education.

Dr. Lee noted that when he was teaching, if a student could not read his/her textbook, it was a bigger issue than math or science.

It was reiterated that the money for the initiatives was phase in money set aside by the Board of Education.

Review of SIP Draft

Ms. Hill prepared a written report for the Board of Education on the SIP plan, as noted below:

“BACKGROUND

Over the past several weeks the School Improvement Plan (SIP) committee has met to review the SIP. Suggestions and changes have been made based on input from members of the SIP committee, West 40 consultants, and a peer review team. The SIP draft attached to this memo covers the 07-08 school year and uses the 2007 e-plan template. Originally this plan would have been submitted using the 2006 template for the school years 06-07 and 07-08. However, late posting of the 2006 PSAE data caused a disruption in the normal schedule used by the state.

“Looking ahead, when the SIP submission deadline is announced based on 2008 PSAE data, OPRFHS will be required to submit a two-year SIP plan, using the 2008 e-plan template. The plan will cover the 08-09 and 09-10 school years. Even if OPRFHS makes AYP based on the 2008 calculation, a SIP will be due because the school will still be in status, having made AYP for only a single year. If OPRF does not make AYP based on 2008 PSAE data, the district will be required to submit a restructuring plan. The restructuring plan will be submitted using the e-plan restructuring template. Once the restructuring plan is approved, the district will not be required to update the plan annually, although the plan may be changed as conditions dictate.

“This information has been confirmed with Doug Dirks, West 40 consultant, and Carol Diedrichsen, ISBE Education Consultant.

“SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The SIP draft covers a limited, specific number of areas determined by the Illinois State Board of Education and presented in the template. The draft is guided largely by the template and the data from the high school’s report card and is presented for review by the Board of Education.

“RECOMMENDATION

- No specific action is required of the Board of Education at this time.
- In March, the SIP will be brought to a special board meeting for action. However, comments and feedback on this draft from the Board of Education are always welcome.

Discussion ensued as to why only reading and math were highlighted in the report and if the school were able to define additional things. Ms. Hill said that the report was very specific to address deficiencies.

Ms. Patchak-Layman stated that the goal was to make AYP. Had OPRFHS made AYP based on safe harbor, she asked if these numbers would have been different. Ms. Hill stated that if the school had made AYP, it would have made AYP for two years and would have been off the watch list. She stated that safe harbor was within reach next year. While Ms. Patchak-Layman had additional concerns about special education, etc., Dr. Millard encouraged her to meet with Ms. Hill separately to discuss these further.

Update on Initiatives

Behavior Interventionist Position Update

The following report was given to the Board of Education:

“BACKGROUND

Last year faculty, staff and administration proposed the creation of a Behavior Interventionist position as part of the Emotional Development (ED) program as part of the Special Education program; the BI position added 1.0 FTE to the staffing of the program. The faculty member hired for the position was trained in PBIS (Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports) and the accompanying student information system for tracking student attendance and behavior information. The Behavior Interventionist’s full schedule is composed of tasks related to improving student behavior and teachers’ interaction with students in the ED program. These tasks include contacting the parent/guardian of each ED student (120 students) at least twice during each quarter, problem-solve student/student and student/teacher situations, maintain student in-class attendance, and utilize time-out interventions more effectively.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

- Contacting the parents/guardian was appreciated and has started a good foundation for future discussions, particularly with the families of freshmen and sophomore students. Every family was contacted; several families were contacted more than the two times required by the program.
- Tardies remain an issue and through collaborative efforts from faculty and staff, the ED staff believe they are making progress. Incentive programs have been established to encourage student on-time behavior.
- Unexcused absences are being addressed by targeting 25 students with letters home and a copy of each student’s attendance sheet. The attendance office has been invaluable in these endeavors.
- Daily contact with the Discipline Deans and the AP for Student Health and Safety has led to quick problem-solving and reduced the severity of some situations.
- Quarterly academic rewards have been established for students who earn Honor Roll (3.00 GPA) status, and recognition has been provided for those who pass all classes.
- Results for the first semester of the school year show the following trends:
 - The number of discipline referrals generated by behavior of ED students is consistent from that of a year ago. However, the distribution of the referrals varies from a year ago and implies a reduction in some areas of focus and an increase in other areas. For example, compared with a year

ago, gross misconduct referrals are reduced and dean intervention referrals are increased.

- At the end of semester 1 last year, January 2007, 12 students from the ED program were placed off campus as a result of behavior infractions of the Code of Conduct. At the end of semester 1 this school year, January 2008, three students from the ED program have been placed off campus as a result of behavior infractions of the Code of Conduct.
- Also all 12 students placed off campus as of January 2007 have been brought back to the high school. Several of those students continue to exhibit appropriate behavior.
- The reduction in off campus placements related to the ED program, overall, from 2007 to 2008 is 8.6% (69 to 63).
- The reduction in off campus placements related to the ED program, overall, from 2006 to 2008 is 24% (83 to 63).

RECOMMENDATION

- Continue to support and monitor the Behavior Interventionist position, aiding in the development of classroom strategies to reinforce positive student behaviors and elicit stronger parental involvement.
- Continue to track discipline and off-campus placement information.”

Learning Support Reading Update

The following report was given to the Board of Education:

“BACKGROUND

Learning Support Reading (LSR) students are identified based on reading scores and teacher recommendation as being capable of college preparatory work; however, they have not exhibited the academic history, internalized strategies, or confidence to ensure their success at the college preparatory level. LSR was initiated as a support mechanism to help 9th grade students develop confidence and academic strategies for success.

LSR is one daily instructional study period during which a teacher and his/her students focus on the skills and strategies necessary for success in high school. During the supervised personalized study and interaction time, the teacher focuses on aspects of academic life including organization and study skills, reading comprehension and writing skills, affective school behaviors (problem solving, talking with authority figures, solving peer problems, promptness), and becoming a community of learners (encouraging students to participate in extracurricular school-sponsored activities).

The data review for this update compared 22 students enrolled in LSR who took regular level courses only with 139 ninth graders who also took regular level courses only. The basis of this comparison is that the goal for LSR is to support and accelerate the achievement of struggling regular level students to the level of most regular level students.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

- The first semester data for LSR show that students enrolled in LSR and other regular level courses only earned lower grades than the larger group of 9th graders who are also enrolled in regular level courses only. No acceleration of learning, as shown by grades, is evident for the group of LSR students.
- Discipline outcomes for the larger group of 9th graders who are also enrolled in regular level courses only are better than those for students enrolled in LSR.
- Comparing result to students in LSR a year ago, students in this program have not shown significantly different outcomes.

RECOMMENDATION

- A revision of the LSR program is required, making LSR more closely aligned with the English 1-2 program. Students placed in LSR should have the same teacher for their English 1-2 class. Currently this is not part of the scheduling for the LSR students.
- The curriculum for LSR should have a stronger reading improvement strand and a sequence of activities to improve students' literacy skills across content areas."

Update on Collaborative Teaching Model and 8 to 9 Connection

The following report was given to the Board of Education:

“BACKGROUND

The two programs listed above focus on ninth grade students who come to the high school with academic and behavioral challenges to their learning. 8 to 9 Connection is a six-week summer program designed to aid in the transition of incoming 9th grade students who have been deemed at-risk by Districts 97 and 90. The goal is to improve the student behaviors in academic and social-emotional areas and to reinforce appropriate school conduct. Students are recommended to attend based on academic performance during middle school, test scores, teacher observations, and other indicators. Some of the students are *required* to attend the program in order to receive their middle school diploma, while others are *recommended* due to issues that were occurring at the middle school level. While the program is not designed to meet the specific needs of Special Education students, they may be considered for the program on a case-by-case basis. Thirty-six students from last summer's program are currently enrolled at the high school.

The Collaborative Teaching Model (CTM) that began this year is a teacher-driven initiative in which teachers formed a multidisciplinary team to serve a core of students who took classes at the basic or transition level. The goals of the program are to increase academic achievement and reduce the reading achievement gap between basic and regular level students and to reduce the number of discipline referrals that students in the program receive. These teachers, from four core academic divisions, share the same students over the course of a single day. The teachers received PBIS (Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports) training, curriculum development support, and scheduling that allowed them to meet during their non-instructional preparation period each week.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

- Basic level students who participated in the CTM program collected fewer discipline referrals when compared with students who took basic level classes but were not in the CTM classes. Participation in CTM classes appeared to result in fewer discipline referrals.
- Basic level students who participated in the CTM program had stronger academic outcomes as shown by grades when compared with students who took basic classes but

were not in the CTM classes. Participation in CTM classes appeared to result in better grades.

- Students who participated in the 8 to 9 Connection summer program and the CTM had better grades than students who were in the 8 to 9 Connection and were not in the CTM.
- Students who attended the 8 to 9 Connection program and were enrolled in one or no basic level classes do not have better behavior or academic outcomes.

RECOMMENDATION

- Consider extension of the CTM approach to include more students. Provide the students in the model with additional support services and academic support.
- Survey students from the 8 to 9 Connection program who were not in the CTM and review their course patterns to determine how to better provide support for those students.”

Mastery Manager

Ms. Hill provided the Board of Education with background on Mastery Manager as follows:

“Last fall, the Board of Education approved a three-year contract with Goldstar Learning to provide the district with access to Mastery Manager, a web-based tool for scoring and analyzing student assessments. This update summarizes the ways in which faculty are using Mastery Manager as a platform for data-based instructional decisions.

“SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Teachers in the following divisions and courses have used Mastery Manager to score common assessments:

- English Division: AP College English, Semester 1 pre-test and final exam
- Business Education: pilot Semester 1 exam in one section of Consumer Education
- Science Division
 - Chemistry and ChemCom, Safety Test
 - ChemCom, Quarter 1 Exam (two of three teachers)
 - Chemistry 1-2, Semester 1 Exam (two of five teachers)
 - Biology 1-2, Semester 1 Exam (two of seven teachers)
 - Environmental Science, Semester 1 Exam
- World Languages Division
 - Spanish, all levels, Semester 1 exams
 - Spanish 5-6A, Quarter 1 exam
 - Etymology, Semester 1 exam
- Math Division
 - Algebra and Algebra Block, Quarter 1 and Semester 1 exams
 - Plane Geometry, Semester 1 exam

“Additionally, we scored nearly 800 EXPLORE tests for incoming freshman students and are in the process of aligning test items with ACT College Readiness Standards. This work will provide the foundation for a growth model of assessment for all our students, to include the freshman year PLAN, sophomore year Instructional ACT/WorkKeys, and junior year PSAE.

“Teachers and Learning Teams have used the data from these assessments in a variety of ways. Item analysis indicating poor student performance has led some teams to develop better test items, while others have used professional development time to make revisions in curricula and instruction to address what appeared to be weak areas across a program. Some English teachers have provided students with detailed standards-based feedback and have asked students to analyze their own areas of strength and weakness among course standards.

“FUTURE DIRECTIONS

- Enhance teachers’ ability to use Mastery Manager data by providing additional training on the variety of student performance reports available
- Work with Division Heads to expand the number of courses using Mastery Manager, particularly at the basic/transitional and regular/college prep levels
- Develop a context of professional trust that empowers teachers to effectively query student performance data to identify necessary changes in test items and in curriculum and instruction
- Support and provide appropriate professional development to facilitate improvements in curriculum and instruction resulting from analysis of student performance data
- Provide all teachers of incoming freshmen with individualized, detailed information about their students’ EXPLORE performance, broken down by learning objective
- Align select curricula with ACT College Readiness Standards to facilitate effective teaching and learning toward student mastery of those standards

Textbook Review

The Board of Education will approve all textbooks brought to it by the administration under the consent agenda of its regular Board of Education meetings.

The Science Division recommends use of Exploring Biological Anthropology: The Essentials in the course Anthropology. The recommended text would replace the current text Anthropology. The text is thorough and covers all the important topics in biological anthropology.

Adjournment

The committee adjourned at 11:56 a.m.