

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

**An Instruction Committee of the Whole Board
March 13, 2008**

An Instruction Committee meeting of the Whole Board was held on Thursday, March 13, 2008 in the Board Room. Dr. Millard opened the meeting at 7:35 a.m. Committee members present were Valerie J. Fisher, Dr. Ralph H. Lee (arrived at 7:45 a.m.), Dr. Dietra D. Millard, and Sharon Patchak Layman (arrived at 8:25 a.m.). 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; Claudia Sahagun, Richard Mertz, Debbie Neuman, Emily Foley, Steve Gevinson, division heads (all departed at 8:00 a.m.); Richard Deptuch, Assistant Principal for Student Services; Fred Galluzzo, Counselor; James Paul Hunter, Faculty Senate Chair; Barbara Nelson, PTO Chair; Terry Dean of the *Wednesday Journal*.

Discussion of Course Selection Process for Incoming Ninth Graders

At the request of a Board of Education member, Mr. Prale invited the Division Heads to provide information regarding course selection for incoming ninth graders.

A summary of the process is as follows:

- 1) Freshman Orientation: Course selection packets were distributed. Don Vogel encouraged parents to speak with the Division Heads prior to meeting with their counselors in February. Of note, approximately 80 percent of the parents participated in the orientation.
- 2) Class of 2012 Open House: Parents were provided an opportunity to talk with Division Heads regarding course placement.
- 3) Counselors Meeting: The last week of February, counselors provided information to the parents, including the fact that the Division Heads are the persons parents must talk with about overrides.

Discussion ensued.

Q: How do parents get the override form?

A: They are included in the course selection packet.

Q: Is the form online? If not, why not?

A: No, the form is not online because the District wants to keep the form proprietary. The forms, however, can be sent via regular mail or e-mailed in a PDF format.

Q: How do middle school teachers share information about the students with the high school?

A: It is through a checklist from each of the divisions. It includes a comment section and descriptors of the skill sets. Many Division Heads also have direct conversations with the middle school teachers about individual students.

Q: Do middle school teachers make recommendations?

A: No, they make comments in the comment section. Sometimes the words “information” and “placement” are used in ways that make that course selection process less clear. Middle school teachers provide “information” regarding course selection, but it is the high school’s responsibility to make the course selection. Division Heads know the skill level that a student must have to succeed in high school classes. Ms. Neuman added that if a student were placed correctly in a class, he/she should be able to earn an A. It was suggested that the correct language be used across all districts, as part of the Counselors’ PowerPoint presentation and included in the *Academic Catalog*.

Communication between the middle school teacher, parent and the Division Head is extremely important. When asked how many phone calls, emails, etc. Division Heads get from parents asking to change the recommendation upwards, the responses were as follows: English- 26; Science - 28; Math - more than 50 with the summer step-up program conversations; and World Languages - 8 to 10.

When asked how many phone calls, emails, etc., are received from parents asking the division to change the recommendation downward, the responses were as follows: Science - 1; Math - 1; World Languages - 2.

When asked why District 200 would make a course selection that differs from a comment from the middle school, Division Heads replied that it varies by division. In math, teachers are asked for math data points that show a student’s conceptual knowledge. In order to succeed in a class, students must have a specific knowledge basis and the District relies on the Division Heads to know the appropriate placement for students with certain skill sets.

Dr. Gevinson stated that parents often call asking if the District has the correct information about their child, as they want to have a conversation. Fewer phone calls are now received, a possible indication that more division heads are adopting English’s protocol of speaking with each middle school teacher, one by one. Ms. Foley acknowledged that there has been a 50 percent decrease in overrides over the past five years in science.

Mr. Deptuch reported that several years ago eighth-grade teachers were asked which course they would recommend. The process used now has produced more accurate course selection. Eighth-grade teachers did not want to make recommendations and objected to filling out profile sheets; however, a year later they developed that same format to be used with the transitioning of elementary children to middle school.

Q: Of the overrides requested, how many were from African-American families.

A: The number was disproportionately low.

Q: How can the District make this process clearer to the parents? It has been four years since the last Joint Board of Education meeting with District 97. Ms. Fisher was surprised that District 97 expressed huge concerns regarding transition issues; she felt there was a misunderstanding.

A: Dr. Weninger suggested creating a chart similar to the school's appeals chart.

PSAE Plans

Ms. Hill provided the following written summary of the testing arrangements for the PSAE on April 23 and 24.

Test Registration

- On Wednesday, April 2, all juniors will register for the PSAE-ACT.
- That same day, all freshmen, sophomores, and seniors will participate in one of two surveys: the Illinois Youth Survey or a school climate survey.

April 23-24 Testing

On Wednesday, April 23 and Thursday, April 24, we will conduct standardized testing of our freshmen, sophomores, and juniors.

- No classes will meet on these two days.
- Seniors will not attend on these two days.
- Testing will take place in classrooms.
- Faculty and staff will be assigned to proctor tests and/or to serve in supporting roles.

Wednesday, April 23

- Freshmen will take the pre-ACT PLAN test.
- Sophomores will take an instructional ACT.
- Juniors will take Day 1 of the PSAE (ACT Plus Writing).
- Tentative student dismissal time is 12:30.
- Divisional staff development activities will occur from 1:00-3:04.

Thursday, April 24

- Freshmen will engage in career and course orientation activities with their counselors and with faculty from Fine and Applied Arts and Business Education.
- Sophomores will take practice WorkKeys Reading and Math tests.

- Juniors will take Day 2 of the PSAE (WorkKeys Reading and Math tests and ISBE science test).
- Tentative student dismissal time is 11:00.
- Divisional staff development activities will occur from 11:00-3:04.

Other Logistics

- Each grade level will test on a different floor and/or a different area of the building to minimize potential disruptions from variations in testing schedules.
- Students will be assigned to classrooms in groups of 25-30.
- Students testing with accommodations will test in locations least likely to be disrupted by the end of standard-time testing.
- Special Education faculty and staff will proctor students testing with accommodations.

Discussion ensued:

Q: What is the Illinois Youth Survey?

A: It is a survey about drug and alcohol use, issues about safety in the community and in the building, if the students have access, what is the access, etc. This survey is given across the state.

Q: Will a climate survey be given?

A: No, Ms. Hill is continuing to work on the data from the previous climate survey as well as determining how it will be used.

Q: Are there any recommendations on the concerns that were identified?

A: Ms. Hill will be prepared to make recommendations after the data is mined further.

Q: Will the survey tell us where to work?

A: Ms. Hill brought a subset of the data that related to adult behaviors. Students were asked about disrespect from adults to students. Students were asked about prejudice, inconsistent application of rules, etc., within certain subgroups.

MSAN/RPC Winter Meeting Update

Mr. Prale provided the following written material.

“Minority Student Achievement Network participation for the high school includes attendance at national conferences, Governing Board, and Research Practitioner Council (RPC) meetings. The most recent RPC meeting was held February 27 and 28 in Rosemont.

- The 2008 Annual Conference will be held in Madison, Wisconsin June 24-26, 2008. Keynote speakers will include Gloria Ladsen-Billings and Ron Ferguson.

- Districts were asked to identify speakers from their schools to lead breakout sessions in one or more of the conference strands: literacy, math, relationships, equity and access, inclusive education/disproportionality.
- The Student Conference will be held in Madison on September 25-27, 2008.
- Christine Fowler Mack of Cleveland Heights reported on the November Literacy Mini-Conference.
- The group participated in an activity that modeled critical friend protocols.
- The new MSAN website was previewed and discussion included the status of the shared database housed at WCER.
- On Thursday, the RPC had a discussion of de-tracking efforts across districts. Discussion included the Rockville Centre School's experience with de-tracking and the experience of representatives from the Brookline schools who visited Rockville Centre Schools.
- Madeline Hafner, Executive Director of MSAN, shared a brief overview of de-tracking literature. In short, she noted that student achievement increases when academic standards are increased. She also noted that less research existed on changing belief systems of teachers. More research exists on differentiated curriculum and instruction.
- The RPC agreed to take the issue of de-tracking up in more detail at additional meetings."

Mr. Prale recommended that the Board of Education continue its support of District 200 efforts in MSAN and consider attending the national conference in June.

Discussion ensued. Dr. Lee asked for information that would enable him to follow what was discussed, e.g., the last three bullet points of Mr. Prale's materials and de-tracking efforts across the districts, including some of the literature mentioned, as it seemed to be in the exploratory phase. Mr. Prale offered to provide articles written about Rockville Centre, which has pursued de-tracking its programs. Dr. Lee asked if Rockville Centre had evaluated that initiative. Mr. Prale offered to distribute the information regarding Rockville Center to all Instruction Committee members. Mr. Prale also offered a summary on the presentations at the 2006 MSAN National Conference.

Two transcripts were presented, one from 2006 and one from 1986. The 1986 students from Rockville Centre with their terminal math and English classes as being basic and regular and in 2006 students finishing up with AP Calculus. Discussion ensued about what it would take all students coming through that high school in the past twenty years to obtain an International Baccalaureate (IB) diploma or pass the Regent Exams. It was determined that the achievement of students in the earliest grades had to be addressed. Strong commitments were made by the community, the administration, and the faculty that no student would go through the program and not have AP Calculus and IB English. Considerable time was spent on curriculum interventions, e.g., developing curriculum and rethinking how math was taught in the lower grades. Rockville Centre High School has a different demography than OPRF, for example it is smaller, approximately half the size of OPRF. Also, O.P.R.F.H.S. does not have the IB curriculum; it has the Advanced Placement Program.

Q: How does the de-tracking concept fit in?

A: All students access the accelerate level; there are no basic or regular track classes.

Q: Can this only be done if it is a total K-12 Program, as opposed to starting at the ninth grade?

A: It is more easily accomplished with a K-12 system, but it could be accomplished in District 200's system. However, it would likely be more difficult and it is even more complicated when there are multiple elementary districts. The administration at O.P.R.F.H.S. spends much time communicating with sender districts to improve student achievement; the sender districts are supportive.

Dr. Lee was encouraged by everything he heard.

Q: Is there anything that prevents O.P.R.F.H.S. from taking advanced math classes and making them block classes, just as Algebra Block 1 and 2.

A: The most significant challenge would be accessing enough time. Blocks are challenging in the current school day schedule. Once a course takes two periods, it leaves a student with less flexibility in his/her schedule. If the school had a nine- or ten-period day, then there would be more opportunities. The school could explore after school programs, however.

Ms. Patchak-Layman added that the school was not limited to having students in the building for just eight periods. If the staff were staggered, classes could go to four or five o'clock. Mr. Prale stated that would be a contractual issue for teachers. Ms. Patchak-Layman noted that many students must work and the school could move the whole schedule from 11 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Programs do exist in schools that have more flexibility built in. An extended day to offer block schedules for all of the courses being offered could be one avenue to consider if the District's goal is to have children be a part of the advanced curriculum, rather than just targeting the lower achievers. Mr. Prale noted Ms. Witham should be involved in this conversation early as there would likely be significant financial implications. Ms. Patchak-Layman noted that this communication was part of the brainstorming process. One should not initially say something cannot be accomplished. Part of having community and Board of Education communication is to say that all things are possible. While there are considerations, the school districts have many collective dollars. If the goal is stated, then the districts can direct the dollars to get to that goal. Mr. Hunter reported that the District had explored a modified block schedule several years ago. It was found that it would be too expensive and it would drive enrollment in elective courses down. Mr. Prale added that 75 percent of the faculty at the time did not favor it and there was concern from Math and World Language teachers about not having daily practice sessions. Mr. Hunter disagreed with Mr. Prale's assessment that the faculty's opinion about block scheduling was the primary reason the schedule was not adopted. Mr. Hunter felt the financial impact was the more important reason at the time. Ms. Patchak-Layman responded that as things change and the District goes forward, it describes its goals, determines where the emphasis will be, and renewed conversations can begin. Dr. Lee agreed with Ms. Patchak-Layman that these things

were possible; however, in order to do them, one must have a clear idea of exactly how one would do it and what one would have to gain in making the sacrifices. If that assessment is not completed, then there is no basis for going into such a program. Ms. Patchak-Layman continued that when one looks at new staff in terms of longevity and their training, which will be more commonplace, it may not seem so out of the box given what is happening across the country. In response to Mr. Hunter's comment that this would be expensive and drive down electives, Ms. Patchak-Layman stated that one might have team teachers teaching drama tied in with English class work. Often children lose the opportunity to do drama, because they are departmentalized.

Textbook Recommendations

Ms. Hill presented the Mathematics Division recommendation to use of Stats: Modeling the World in the course 247: AP Statistics. The recommended text would replace the current text The Practice of Statistics. The new textbook contains many more real-world applications, which will encourage the students to read the text. Problem sets are more challenging and representative of the AP exam.

The Business Education Department recommends use of Sports & Entertainment Marketing in the course 640/2: Sports and Entertainment Marketing. This first edition soft cover text aligns the course topics as either "sports" or "entertainment," rather than combining the career fields. It is more sensible to teach the areas separately. The recommended text would replace the 2001 edition of the text published by Thomson.

Ms. Hill supported these recommendations.

Dr. Lee commented that he hoped a greater number of students had the opportunity to get into the areas of specialization. He was amazed at the opportunities available, i.e., sports versus entertainment marketing. If one multiplies that opportunity by 200 or 300, one could have descriptions of the opportunities available to the upper half of the achievers in the District. He hoped that in 25 to 30 years lower achievers would have the opportunity to meet their needs, just as the upper half does now.

Ms. Patchak-Layman noted that the readability score for the statistics book was a GL 9 level and she was accustomed to seeing an AP text as being GL 12+. For consistency sake, if other textbooks were more readable, perhaps it would be easier for more students to succeed in AP courses.

It was the consensus of the majority of the Instruction Committee members to recommend that the Board of Education approve these textbooks at its regular March meeting on the Consent Agenda.

Math Initiatives

Mr. Prale and Ms. Neuman collaborated on the following written material.

“The Math Division has pursued several initiatives in past years in order to improve student achievement results. Two programs are the Algebra 1-2 Block Agile Mind program and the summer school step-up in math courses.

“The Algebra 1-2 Block Agile Mind program was described in detail in a February 2007 Board Instruction Committee report. Briefly, the Algebra 1-2 Block course incorporates the Agile Mind Algebra program, an online math curriculum that is interactive and visually oriented. The program helps students solve algebra problems, monitor their own progress, and study for and take exams online. In the Algebra 1-2 Block course at OPRFHS, students have additional class time each week that is equivalent to an extra semester of math each year. Some of that additional time is used for applying to the Agile Mind program. The goal for the regular level ninth grade program is to standardize the teaching and learning in regular level math courses, to prepare students to meet standards on various assessments, and to prepare students for post-secondary mathematics. The Algebra 1-2 Block Agile Mind program combined with the Algebra program address that goal.

“The many summer school step-up in math courses advance students from the basic to the regular and from the regular to the honors levels. Courses include Pre-Algebra 8 through Advanced Algebra as well as Plane Geometry 1-2.

“Summary of Findings

“Regarding Algebra 1-2 Block Agile Mind:

- Results for the Algebra 1-2 Block Agile Mind program as measured by grade distribution show that students enrolled in the Algebra 1-2 Block Agile Mind program had grades slightly lower than students taking Algebra 1-2.
- Failure rates were similar for both groups Algebra 1-2 Block Agile Mind and Algebra 1-2.
- This distribution is similar to results from the program for last year.
- Differences in grades from last year include some A grades appearing in Algebra 1-2 Block and an increase in the number of students enrolled in Algebra 1-2 Block.

“Regarding Summer Step-Up Math:

- This opportunity started in 2004; enrollment was small in 2004 and 2005 and had little impact. Of the students who took summer courses in 2005 and who are current seniors, two are enrolled in our AP Statistics course, earning a D and C respectively. The other four are enrolled in our Calculus Concepts course, earning an A, C, D and F.
- In 2006 and 2007, a Plane Geometry 1-2 course was offered to motivated and talented students in the Algebra program. Students who take the Plane Geometry summer course have the opportunity to take advanced algebra as sophomores and are better positioned to meet and exceed on the PSAE.
- Eighteen of the twenty current junior students from the 2006 summer class are enrolled in courses typically taken by seniors. All of the eighteen students earned

a C grade or higher. All of these students have been recommended for AP Calculus AB, AP Statistics or Calculus Concepts for senior year.

- The twenty-four current sophomore students from the 2007 summer class are enrolled in Advanced Algebra class, typically a course for juniors. First semester grades are: 7 - As, 9 - Bs and 8 - Cs. These students will be recommended for College Algebra and Trigonometry or College Algebra and Trigonometry Honors for the coming school year.
- Last year all Integrated Geometry and Algebra Program 2 (IGAP 2) students who had started in the Foundations of Algebra 1-2, basic level program, were invited to take Algebra 2 in summer school. These students have had mixed results in their grade performance this year.
- Last year motivated, stronger math-skilled Foundations of Algebra 2 students were invited to enroll in the summer Algebra 2 program. More positive results are apparent from this group than the IGAP 2 group.
- We anticipate two full-year Plane Geometry classes this summer.
- We will offer Intermediate Algebra F, and Advanced Algebra F in summer school, courses designed for students to move from the regular to honors or honors to accelerated level courses.
- Preliminary results on standardized test scores for students taking step up math courses show promise for meeting state standards in math. More results will be available this summer after 2008 testing is complete.

“Data tables summarizing these results are attached as an appendix.

“Recommendation

- Continue support of both programs.
- Expect follow up reports of achievement test scores in the coming months.”

Discussion ensued.

Q: Is the District looking at staff members who are having an impact as it looks at the curriculum material, because if students do not understand what a teacher is saying, they think about something else?

A: Agile Mind has a program Academic Youth Development (AYD) which recommends bringing in July B- and C-level students who could be influential to establishing relationships between the students and the teacher to form a bond, and, ultimately, pay more attention in the classroom. That is one specific intervention staff are applying to address the interest issues.

Q: Does the District talk to junior and senior students to get their feedback? When a student gets a string of D's and then suddenly a B, are they asked what moved him/her? Was it a presentation? Was it something the teacher was doing?

A: The District does not have a way to speak to those students. It would be a good idea to learn about what classroom experiences allowed them to achieve.

Ms. Patchak-Layman suggested one way of gathering that data would be for students to fill out a survey. Dr. Millard suggested expanding that conversation to students who are and are not achieving.

Dr. Lee noted that the written report made things more concrete for him, e.g., improving student achievement. He believes that the Board of Education is going to have to feel comfortable in deciding how much the District has accomplished in the area of improving student achievement. The Board of Education is going to have to be in a position of judging, in some way, whether the District is meeting the goals of student achievement and what the measurement will be. He used the analogy of diving competition. He has no idea as to how a dive could be judged a 9 or 10, but he understands that those judges have to understand what is involved in diving and the complexity or the difficulty of a certain move. Yet, Board of Education members have taken the position that they are going to be ordinary citizens who do not have to develop any expertise in judging what it is they are trying to judge. He believes that is a mistake. He believes there are certain things that the Board of Education has an obligation to understand that members of the public do not. The Board of Education needs to be able to get into the complexity that the average member of the public does not want to hear. In order to do that, time and effort is necessary to develop that expertise. The Board of Education has not done the work that is necessary to understand what is meant by student achievement. He was not proposing that the Board of Education members become experts, such as Mr. Prale or Ms. Hill or Dr. Spight, but they must still have to understand things that the average taxpayer would not think about doing. He continued that the data tables attached to this report had the grades of each student in a math course. While he found that uninformative, he does not have the expertise to determine if that level of specificity is needed rather than a much broader accord.

Dr. Lee proposed that a subcommittee of two or three board members serve as a subcommittee to the Instruction Committee to work with whomever the Superintendent designated for the following purpose:

- 1) State a specific goal in the Board of Education in the development of expertise in the evaluation of movement in the level of achievement in the District;
- 2) Establish a framework for adopting the measures by which movement in student achievement shall be measured; and
- 3) State the plan by which the Board of Education intends to increase its own expertise in evaluating movement in achievement levels.

He continued that the Board of Education would have to take into consideration the amount of time that Board of Education members have as well as the amount of time the administration has. These are judgments that have to be made in order for these to be realistic, e.g., 1) how much expertise can be expected of the average Board of Education member to evaluate movement in student achievement. He wanted the Board of Education to do this because it has an obligation to learn more than it knows and to be able to evaluate and understand more of what Mr. Prale is saying. He has a very complex level of understanding and reminds the Board of Education that one cannot come up with

a blanket judgment on any issues as they are all complex. Yet, the Board of Education does not have the understanding of the complex issues. He did not propose that the Board of Education become as expert as Mr. Prale is, but just more than they are currently.

Dr. Millard asked for clarification. She felt conflicted about her role as a Board of Education member to say that she needs a certain level of experience. The Board of Education has hired a superintendent and must hold him accountable for the information. She continued that there was no question that the longer she is a Board of Education member, the deeper her understanding of the issues. However, she hears a piece in Dr. Lee's proposal that says Board of Education members need to be educational administrators. She understands why he might want that, but she did not know if it should be her immediate role as a Board of Education member. The Board of Education has Dr. Weninger to hold accountable to achieving that goal.

Dr. Lee clarified that he was not talking about making Board of Education members educational experts. He was not going to tell Mr. Prale he was doing something wrong. He would like both the Board of Education and the administration to come to an agreement on just what measures would be used to measure student achievement, to come to some common understanding as to how specific or gross these measures will be, and to deal with it in an a more organized fashion, rather than a scattergun approach. He felt there was a need to have a common understanding of just how much or how little detail was needed, e.g. for the program for math, he found it hard to say how well the District did. It was a report on what the District is doing, comments on how well some students were doing, yet he did not have a good idea as to whether the program accomplished what it intended to accomplish.

Mr. Prale responded that in public high schools in Illinois, the standard is whether students meet or exceed a single, eleventh grade test. The Board of Education has never adopted a standard, but the Board of Education has reflected on and accepted the information from the State in the School Report Card, which also includes test participation and graduation rates. The District has internal measures that project results further. The Board of Education has asked for interim reports on a semester basis as well as the data tables.

Dr. Lee believed that the Board of Education was at this point because it had not said where it wanted to go originally or how it got there. He believed a concise manner was not communicated to the Administration on how to give reports. Yes, the Board of Education has asked for all kinds of reports in a scattered fashion, but not in an organized way. He believed the Board of Education and the administration need to come up with a common understanding to decide on just what level of complexity the Board of Education agrees it can handle. Because this was not discussed, the Board of Education sits back and the administration tells it what might be valuable. That is not effective. He wanted the Board of Education to be much more deliberate in what it was doing; not to tell the administration what it is doing is wrong, but to have common agreement on what it is the Board of Education intends to do, how much time it expects to spend on doing it,

and the level of complexity. If the Board of Education came to such an agreement, it could be more intelligent in asking for and evaluating the data. He did not believe in just sitting and listening to reports. He believes the Board of Education and the administration can devise something that is reasonable.

Dr. Millard reiterated Dr. Lee's request as being able to measure if something such as an initiative were being successful. The Board of Education has asked and stated that it does not need outcome measures on each of the initiatives. If she does not understand a report, she can say to Dr. Weninger or whomever that something more explicit than what was given was needed. She did not know if she could set out a reasonable measurement of each of the activities to help students do better. She asked if this should be a subcommittee of the Board of Education or should the Board of Education ask Dr. Weninger, in conjunction with the administration, to please look at an initiative and come back with measurable measures. The measurement may be a test score, or the number of students in the activities, or the number of students in honors classes; yet, she did not know if she could construct a tailored measurement for each item. Dr. Lee suggested discussing his proposal before making that decision. Dr. Millard felt she had to rely on the information given as to whether she felt there was an impact on student achievement; that was made clear to Dr. Weninger. Dr. Lee continued that there are now seven separate opinions on what is needed; the Board of Education has not agreed on anything. There was a consensus to continue to discuss this proposal at the next committee meeting.

In continuing the discussion on the math initiatives, Dr. Lee asked Mr. Prale to summarize how well the District did on its goals. Mr. Prale responded that the summer math was accomplishing goals by allowing students to advance. They seem to be attending additional advanced math classes and the students are successful in those classes. The jury is still out on the Agile Mind program. While Professional Development for staff has been positive, the results of this program will not be fully known until the students take the standardized test scores. Dr. Weninger added that the report provided was based on one semester's grades. In another month, the District will not have additional information. Dr. Lee surmised that the District would then continue the program next year. He asked what kind of criteria would be used to determine its continuance.

Ms. Patchak-Layman asked if the students who get A's in Algebra Block and Algebra 1 & 2, know if they could move up to the next level of math. An A usually means that the students have mastered the material in that class to the point that they have exceeded. Mr. Prale responded that they could move up with the summer step-up program. Ms. Patchak-Layman asked why it had to be a summer school concept. Mr. Prale responded that the students would have received certain concepts in advanced freshman math courses, not the Algebra Block 1-2 or Algebra 1-2, which would make it easier to succeed at the accelerate level. Ms. Patchak-Layman asked if the District knew what those concepts were and if there was a learning module to accompany it. Mr. Prale was unsure if it were a learning module in the way she described it, but it was conceivable. Ms. Patchak-Layman asked if the school were in touch with the students who received

A's and wanted them to move up. Mr. Prale stated that would be a discussion between the counselors, the parents, the teachers, and the students. Dr. Weninger stated that the District trusts that the math teachers who have students who are exceeding are telling them to move to the next level; there are students who are doing that who should not move on, however. Ms. Patchak-Layman stated it is a matter of providing checks and balance. The District is not in the situation it is now because everything else was being done correctly. The District can only move up if it does certain steps. She asked if there were a break along the communication trail.

Update on Student Achievement

Dr. Weninger noted that because of the various administrative items he was involved with at that moment, e.g., the principal and assistant principal searches, SEIU issues, etc., a more formalized report would be provided at the regular March Board of Education meeting. He did note the following:

- 1) Names were being collected for the African-American roundtable;
- 2) Names were being solicited for the communication advisory committee;
- 3) Discussions were occurring about the definition of institutional excellence;
and
- 4) A review of current initiatives was occurring.

Dr. Weninger informed the Committee members that because one of the three candidates for the principal position had withdrawn, a third candidate would be brought back for the regular cycle of round robin, community forums, etc. He cautioned that the process might not be complete by the regular March Board of Education meeting.

Adjournment

The committee adjourned at 9:47 a.m.