

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

**An Instruction Committee of the Whole Board
November 5, 2007**

An Instruction Committee meeting of the Whole Board was held on Monday, November 5, 2007, in the Board Room. The meeting opened at 7:35 a.m. Committee members present were Jacques A. Conway, Dr. Ralph H. Lee, Sharon Patchak Layman (arrived at 7:40 a.m.), and John P. Rigas. Also present were: Dr. Attila J. Wening, Superintendent; Jason Edgecombe, Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources; Jack Lanenga, Assistant Superintendent for Operations; Phil Prale, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction; Amy Hill, Director of Instruction (arrived at 7:58 a.m.); 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; James Paul Hunter, Faculty Senate Chair; Dale Craft and Monica Swope; O.P.R.F.H.S. faculty members; O.P.R.F.H.S. students Uche Anigbogu (senior), Jeremy Aregood (junior), Jonathan Cox (junior), Vidaur Durazo, (junior), Irene Izaguirre-Lopez, (senior) and Tabitha Watson (senior); and Terry Dean of the *Wednesday Journal*.

Approval of Instruction Committee Minutes

The Instruction Committee minutes of October 17, 2007, were approved, as presented.

Report on MSAN Student Conference

The following students Uche Anigbogu (senior), Jeremy Aregood (junior), Jonathan Cox (junior), Vidaur Durazo, (junior), Irene Izaguirre-Lopez, (senior) and Tabitha Watson (senior) participated in the 8th MSAN Student Leadership Conference in Arlington, Virginia, October 17-20, 2007. The chaperones were Jason Edgecombe, O.P.R.F.H.S. Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources, and Monica Swope, O.P.R.F.H.S. faculty member. Ms. Swope reported that it had been a great experience.

The purpose of this conference is for the participants to engage in discussions about improving the effectiveness of their schools, interacting with and learning from their peers across the country, developing the spirit of involvement, the tools for gathering knowledge, and the leadership skills to initiate action in their communities.

O.P.R.F.H.S. students explored organizations, institutions, and universities unique to the D.C. metropolitan area while participating in educational and social activities. The students were chosen to attend the conference because of their leadership skills.

The conference agenda included the following:

- 1) Opening Plenary Session
- 2) Evening Tour of Washington DC
- 3) A tour of the Library of Congress/Congress
- 4) A Wakefield Evening Activity
- 5) An Ice-cream Social
- 6) College and Career Tours
- 7) Dinner Cruise and Dancing on the Spirit of Washington
- 8) A Closing Plenary

The students provide an overview of their experiences and a comparison of this conference to last year's conference. Of particular import to the students at the Conference was the development, implementation and accountability of an action plan when they returned home.

The students also visited colleges, e.g., American University, University of Maryland, George Washington University, Howard University, George Mason University, etc., attended a day-long seminar at the Association of American Law Schools where the students were able to network with law professionals, visited the local law school, and networked with students throughout the United States and the Library of Congress.

While at the Library of Congress, Mr. Cox viewed archives regarding minorities; decorative, symbolic items; one of the first Bibles; and learned about folk music from different parts of the country. The group of students he was assigned attempted to meet with Senators at their offices; they spoke with personnel from Senator Obama and Congressman Davis' offices about what it was like to work there. Mr. Cox felt the most interesting part of the conference was talking to diplomats in the State Department about their experiences outside of America; the students learned that the idea of minorities is different across the world. Mr. Cox found this conference an enriching experience. He noted that the conference may have been more rewarding if during the visits to the schools, information could have been learned about closing the achievement gap.

The students felt the hosting school did a great job of organizing and encouraging student networking. The relationships and friendships forged during the conference are in place for the future.

The students' action plans were as follows:

- 1) Continuation and enhancement of the process put in place last year where teachers selected students who had trouble taking finals. A week prior to the finals, talk with them about their anxieties, test taking skills, etc. It is believed that freshmen can be helped in this manner;
- 2) The pairing of transfer students with current students in order to motivate the new students to participate in differing activities and to grow new friendships. Members of the J. Kyle Braid Club and the Athletic Club will participate in this activity as well.

- 3) The reaching out to eighth graders about what they can do to prepare themselves for high school, e.g., review study habits, talk about peer pressure, etc.

The students presented a slideshow of some of their activities while at the conference.

Mr. Edgcombe noted appreciation for the Board of Education's support of O.P.R.F.H.S.'s participation in this conference.

Ms. Patchak-Layman asked how many students would participate in the implementation of the action plans. The response was the six students who attended the conference would do so with additional requests for help from J. Kyle Braid members and others, as necessary.

Ms. Patchak-Layman asked if there were any schools in Washington, D.C., that stood out as having a climate they would want at O.P.R.F.H.S. While nothing specific was noted, the students said it had been a great experience to meet with other students and they would continue to share their ideas and talk about the resolution of issues through the MSAN group on Face Book.

Ms. Patchak-Layman asked if they were working with psychology teachers to help document whether change was occurring because of the help being given to the freshman students. The response was that this could be a future consideration.

Mr. Conway asked to attend the next MSAN student meeting.

Summer School

Mr. Craft presented the Committee with the following written report as well as a budget summary of last year's Summer School Program (attached to the minutes of this meeting).

"The Oak Park and River Forest High School's summer program served 1168 students with combined paid registrations totaling 1630 opportunities for enrichment or remedial credit. There were 14 sections of Health, six of Art Foundations and Consumer Education, and four of Keyboarding. The English division presented nine offerings to help students improve their academic performance. The history division offered two general classes and four classes for remediation credit. The mathematics division ran fourteen sections of courses allowing students to fulfill a credit due to a failure or to advance their mathematics course work. Driver Education continues to be a popular offering and again was filled to capacity. We continued to offer enrichment courses in pottery, photography, computer animation and musical theater. The science division offered four stimulating field study opportunities in Tennessee, Florida, Costa Rica and Canada.

“An ongoing challenge is to have summer school classes reflect the same high quality curriculum as the regular school year. In light of this, an attempt was made to evaluate and improve the health education curriculum for the summer session. We were fortunate to have the district’s primary health teacher, Jeremy Colquhoun, work on standardizing the curriculum and offering a common exam based on district expectations. Jeremy also joined us as a teacher this summer and provided a vital link to the six other non-district teachers. Classroom observations of non-district teachers in other subject areas also challenged me to seek improvement in our Consumer Education offerings before the next summer school session.

“The summer school budget ended with a slight deficit of \$235.71. We worked diligently to hold down expenses and cancelled several classes when enrollment did not justify another section. We piloted online registration with RevTrak on a limited basis and found the system to be a great convenience for the community. We plan to fully implement this process for next year’s registration.

“The Oak Park Youth Township Service again provided close to \$3500 in funding for students in need through the Work/Study Volunteer Program. Thirty-five students participated in the program to subsidize the cost of either academic classes or sports camps. Altogether, these students performed over 750 hours of volunteer service for the benefit of the Oak Park and River Forest communities.

“In this transitional year for summer school leadership, I am grateful for the opportunity and was pleased in the general operation of summer school. Few problems arose regarding discipline, and overall, a positive atmosphere for teaching and learning was sustained, thanks to the combined efforts of the teachers, deans, and support staff. Many thanks go to Summer School Secretary, Linda Hayes, for taking care of the many details and especially registration. A special thanks goes to Lyn LeFevre for helping with the brochure during Linda’s emergency absence during the winter. Special recognition needs to go to Michael Averbach and Phil Prale for help in the transition and administrative wisdom.”

Discussion ensued. Mr. Conway congratulated Mr. Craft on the outstanding job he did as the summer school director. Mr. Craft said that the directorship had been a positive experience for him, personally, and, hopefully, for the students. When asked, Mr. Craft stated that he would accept this position again, if offered.

Ms. Patchak-Layman asked whether student grades were reviewed to see how well they did in summer school versus the same classes offered during the regular school year. If so, did they do better in summer school? While that data had not been tracked, Mr. Prale felt summer school might be an easier experience because summer school requires fewer hours.

Mr. Conway asked how summer school instructors were evaluated on their performance. Mr. Craft responded that when he took this assignment, he reviewed the health curriculum with the regular health teacher, Mr. Calhoun. His goal was to do an

evaluation of non-district teachers and he accomplished that goal for the teachers of health and consumer education. Monica Swope interned with him and she also did observations. The result of the observations was that the health teachers were competent teachers but that consumer education teachers were lacking. Next year, the health teachers will be invited back and he will attempt to replace two consumer education teachers. The fourteen sections of health offered in Summer School fulfilled all community requests.

When questioned about the behavior of students during the summer, Mr. Craft reported that there were one or two fights off campus, but nothing else.

Ms. Patchak-Layman asked if students were queried after having a make-up or remedial experience in summer school and doing well as to why they did well. Mr. Prale replied that conversations do take place with the freshman students, but not the math step up programs. The success rate is not tracked, but Mr. Prale felt that would be something to consider. When Ms. Patchak-Layman asked if regular teachers have an evaluation about their experiences or the materials covered, Mr. Prale responded that Debbie Neuman talks with math teachers about it.

Requested Information

Mr. Prale presented the Instruction Committee members with the following report:

“At the October Instruction Committee meeting, two board members asked for additional information regarding the distribution of student test scores in the area of reading. The attached graphs are a start to fulfilling the information request.

“For clarification of the graphs a few key points should be made. First the student information in these graphs pertains to current juniors, the graduating class of 2009. Second the graphs use linear regression analysis instead of scattergrams. This choice was made because for this analysis the linear regression is a preferred statistical model. A linear regression extracts the underlying tendency or pattern in a set of data points to the extent that the pattern is statistically warranted. A scattergram does not describe the patterns adequately. It would render a cloud of data points that would be hard to interpret. It should be noted that by using a linear regression approach the sense of clustering that a scattergram would show is lost; since the number of data points is absent. However, what is gained is an exhibition of the slope or ratio of one variable to another variable. In this case, the relationship between WGPA and a standardized test score.

“The standardized test scores used were the ISAT, EXPLORE, and IACT scores as they compared with the WGPA for these students from the current junior class. Also, on the graphs race 1 is the designation for white students and race 2 is the designation for African American student. These graphics and the linear regressions are considered statistically significant at a high level. Furthermore, the correlation between the

EXPLORE and the IACT is high and a comparison of those graphs on the last two pages of this document shows a similar pattern with an important difference, a slight tendency towards convergence when the WGPA increases. This difference will need to be examined as we move forward.

“These graphs represent a continuing commitment to reviewing the effectiveness of our programs and learning how to improve instruction and achievement. We hope to bring additional information to future Instruction Committee meetings.”

Discussion ensued. Dr. Lee observed that the data on thereof the four graphs suggests that if the school did nothing different, the gap would continue to increase. Only the fourth graph shows a tendency to converge rather than diverge. Mr. Prale noted that it was the most recent pattern. While there is a gap, there is a slight tendency to converge when the GPA gets above 3.0; then, there is a narrowing of those scores.

Dr. Lee asked if the school knew how to help those students who were on the cusp or above. Mr. Prale stated that the CRISIS trainer asked the faculty what the school did well. The answer to that question is that the school accelerates those students who already have a basis of skills. When the ACT scores of senior students were reviewed, those scores resembled the ACT scores of students who were always honors students. The school made them honor students.

Mr. Prale explained to Ms. Patchak-Layman that African-American students with an EXPLORE score of 19 or above were at the college-readiness level as freshman and would be at the upper end in the next graph. Mr. Rigas observed that an African American student could have an EXPLORE score of 19, not taking honors classes, and getting between B and C grades. If the same student were in an honors class, that student would be getting a B, which would have a higher weight; that would move the scale up. The standardized scores are an indicator of scores and he would expect them to be closer. Mr. Prale concurred that course selection affects GPA. He suggested that the school might want to think about weighting the grade of C. Mr. Rigas cautioned that the school did not want to do anything just to make the charts look better. Mr. Prale noted that the motivation could be to make the students feel good. Mr. Rigas concurred that course selection was critical and that savvy students/parents advocate for higher courses. The parents of students who are not savvy are not advocating for their students. Mr. Prale reported that two-thirds of the school’s students take honors courses, but he was not sure how many were committed to taking seven or eight and how well they did.

Dr. Lee asked if the discussion were that the weighted grading scale structure itself, with no other factors, was creating a part of the achievement gap. Mr. Prale responded that it was only if one read the achievement gap by GPA. The modal grade in an honors course is a B; the modal grade in a regular course is a C. Dr. Weninger stated that a weighted grading system counts for more in honors courses and exacerbates the gap. Dr. Lee interpreted that to mean that they must remember that one factor in the achievement gap is an artifice that is created by the system used, but the real causes do not lie in the artifice. Mr. Prale stated that many things came into play, e.g., counseling, courses, and

savvy parents. The school needs to be cognizant of what it can do better. Dr. Weninger added that grading philosophy, access to courses, instruction, rigor of classes, counseling to take higher courses is systematic and also part of the solution. Dr. Lee agreed that things must be looked at from many angles.

Mr. Prale noted that teachers are collecting reading data and the school will continue to monitor it.

Ms. Patchak-Layman, in looking at EXPLORE, asked about potential plans of action to help to remedy the situation. Where would these plans move the school? She wanted the school to error on the side of student potential. If students were doing well in the middle school, she wanted to see them put in honors classes. If students got high scores on the EXPLORE test, but did not do well in the classroom, she wanted them placed in honors courses, even if there were a disconnect. Mr. Prale will ask division heads to work with regular classes to built bridges to the honors classes.

Ms. Patchak-Layman noted that on the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) website there was a numerical model on ISAT and PSAE. How well the numbers went together was either a 62 or 72 percent. She wondered if the number that Dr. Spight had identified matched.

Learning Team Summary for 2007-08

Mr. Prale provided a summary of the structure and emphasis of each learning team. The information describes the professional development activities and plans for the eight late arrival days. At the end of the school year, he will prepare a report on the activities and outcomes of the learning teams. Mr. Prale continued that divisions attempted to link their work to a goal of the district and identify it as a divisional goal. This work occupies the entire building, including the deans, the counselors, and the administrative team.

Ms. Patchak-Layman commented that history has shown that there was not a lot of increased student learning at the school. In looking at the Measures and Outcomes Section, she asked if the teachers expected the goal to be better development of curriculum which would affect student learning by a certain percentage, e.g., 10 percent or 5 percent. Ms. Patchak-Layman did not believe the teachers were using information they already had. Instituting a standardized student writing program is a response to current unsatisfactory results. So when History set the goal, she assumed its conversations highlighted an area that would give students the ability to achieve at a higher level. Were they working with the English Department? Mr. Prale noted that four years ago, the History Division, while meeting with the English Division, saw its material as more discrete, and the English Division looks for literary analysis and self reflection. Ms. Patchak-Layman reflected that students have had writing in one place since third grade.

Ms. Patchak-Layman asked what would be used as measurements of school climate. Mr. Prale suggested the asking of students. He continued that Mr. Collins, in the ED

Program, is the closest thing the school has to having a school-within-a-school. The students are very much into themselves and what they are trying to do. By using the Positive Behavior Intervention and Support Model (PBIS), the school hopes to more effectively target the 120 students in that program. Mr. Collins has committed to having conversations two to four times per quarter (regularly) with students and families. PBIS is a tracking system. Mr. Conway asked for frequent reporting of this effect on this program; he wanted to see patterns addressed. Mr. Prale noted that Mr. Collins had already adjusted his program based on September and October information. Mr. Prale continued that telephone conversations were very important as they allow him to build relationships with those families who are then not reluctant to talk with him. The students in this program are Special Education students. Dr. Lee wanted to see aspects of this program applied to students not in Special Education. He asked: What aspects work well enough and would be appropriate for the regular program? What can the school learn from this that can be applied to 700 or 800 students. Ms. Patchak-Layman stated that PBIS was implemented in all of the District 97 schools. There is already a cohort of students who have had PBIS for at least one or two years. For some students, it is what helps them to achieve. When the program is taken away from them, their support is gone.

Mr. Prale added that the Division Heads requested this chart to allow more transparency between divisions.

Update on the Plan to Raise Student Achievement (the Plan)

Dr. Weninger provided the Board of Education with an update on the Plan to Raise Student Achievement that included the following (attached to and made a part of the minutes of this program):

- 1) a cover memo,
- 2) an input/feedback calendar;
- 3) minority student target programs identification; and
- 4) a draft implementation chronology – three tiers.

Dr. Weninger reviewed this information with the Committee. He noted that the following discussions were occurring:

- Instructional Council discusses the Plan at each of its meetings;
- Faculty input is being sought in morning and afternoon meetings in December;
- Discussions with students are occurring during lunch periods;
- Conversations with each of the representatives of the parent groups has occurred;
- Community forums in November and December;
- Meetings with the Research Team who collaborated on the Learning Performance Report; and
- Meetings with DLT and BLT.

Dr. Weninger noted that the second document was the result of the conversation at the October Board of Education meeting asking for identification of those programs that would address minority student achievement, recognizing that even these programs will touch other students, i.e., non minority students.

The last document was part of the initial document. It will change as discussions with stakeholders are held. Some things have already been implemented, e.g. the transfer student/parent program and its expansion with the J. Kyle Braid Club members and the students who attended the MSAN Student Leadership Conference, as well as parents and staff involvement.

Dr. Weninger asked the Board of Education to delay the approval of the Plan to Raise Student Achievement until the regular January Board of Education meeting. He asked for this extension so as to be able to obtain more feedback from the stakeholders. Dr. Weninger continued that the Board of Education has slated time at each of the Instruction Committee meetings and the Board of Education meetings in December and January to discuss this proposal.

Ms. Patchak-Layman asked if Dr. Weninger intended to meet with representatives from the middle school. Dr. Weninger noted that he had met with the two superintendents and they will be working to implement his proposed articulation model. Mr. Prale, in his articulation efforts, will discuss the Plan initiatives as well. Ms. Patchak-Layman asked if middle school parents would have an opportunity to comment. Ms. Foran responded that information about dates and times as possible transitional activities had been sent to the middle school's PTO List Servers. Ms. Patchak-Layman suggested sending a personal letter to the parents. Ms. Patchak-Layman also suggested scheduling a joint board meeting with Districts 90 and 97 so that 1) work with the other boards of education to have these plans in place; 2) explore the back and forth articulation; 3) make sure that District 90 and 97 boards were aware of the plan and they were able to give feedback. Dr. Weninger stated that this was the Board of Education's decision to have a joint board meeting.

Ms. Patchak-Layman asked if Student Council could take the lead in getting student feedback, as a way to build its leadership skills, particularly on the student part of the plan, as opposed to the adults' portion. Dr. Weninger noted that Student Council would be involved.

Dr. Lee felt a critical piece was missing; it was not a deficit on the part of the administration but on the part of the Board of Education. The deficit is a clear definition of where the Board of Education intends to head as opposed to sitting in a position that it does or does not agree with the administration's direction. He wanted to see more educational leadership on the part of the Board in two areas. He proposed the following resolutions be approved at the next Board of Education meeting:

Resolution 1: Be it resolved, that this board considers the continuous narrowing of the academic achievement gap between black and white

students in this district to be its top priority, including priority over new initiatives to raise the academic achievement levels of the student body as a whole, provided that such prioritization does not substantially lower the academic achievement levels of any other group of students.

Resolution 2: Be it resolved, that this board considers the improvement of the reading skills of those students whose levels of academic achievement are lowest to be the primary and most intense focus of those approaches to be considered in raising student achievement.

Dr. Lee continued that the Board of Education had not taken a position on this and it would influence the planning. If the Board of Education believes that narrowing the achievement gap is a first priority, then the Board of Education needs to clarify that as it would behave differently. By having the Board of Education declare that narrowing the achievement gap is its first priority does not mean that it is going to stop spending money on honors programs. The school has already developed skill for dealing with that. The school is not good at meeting the needs of the lowest performing students. He believed the Board of Education must establish this as its first priority and clearly state to the public that it is now ready to undertake a problem of clearly focusing on the needs of the lowest performing students. While it has been said that narrowing the achievement gap was its number one priority, he did not know if it had been openly declared to the public; it is then a matter of changing educational policy which says the school does not focus on improving the reading skills of students, as that responsibility belongs to someone else. Actions have shown that the focus has not been on the needs of the lowest performing students. He suggested that the school consider the reading levels of students with the lowest abilities and achievement until the efforts are not worth it. He believes that the Board of Education should show leadership and specify policy direction.

Ms. Patchak-Layman wanted to have this conversation in the development of the District goals, so that there was an understanding of the Board of Education desires. She was glad for the discussion now but she would have preferred it at the onset of the Plan. Ms. Patchak-Layman wanted Special Education as part of the Plan, as Special Education students are also a part of the achievement gap; the school has an obligation to the students here and an external obligation to the State of Illinois and NCLB to make sure all students are achieving at their highest potential and not being left behind; special education students need extra consideration and planning. Dr. Lee's proposals did not identify African-American or regular students, but students with the greatest need, even though there is a preponderance of African-American students with the greatest need; it did not, however, omit Special Education students.

Mr. Rigas felt the second proposal to be of an implementation/plan/strategy and less of a policy. Dr. Lee disagreed, noting that at the last Instruction Committee meeting, the administration made three specific recommendations to the Board of Education in that area. Discussion occurred, but no action was taken. Dr. Lee felt it was important for the Board of Education to take action. Mr. Prale noted that the recommendations were to the administration as well. Dr. Lee noted that while the standard procedures for 30 years had

been to accept the administration's recommendation, having the Board of Education take action is a policy initiative. The school's current policy is that it does not teach reading. While reading is spread across the curriculum and teachers take one-day workshops to make them experts at the teaching of reading, Dr. Lee asked how a competent reading professional would be identified. He wanted to either change that direction by approving an educational policy initiative or explain why it should not approve it. He did not believe this would interfere with the progress of what is taking place. Mr. Rigas asked if Dr. Lee felt the recommendations would not go forward. Dr. Lee preferred the Board of Education supporting or rejecting the recommendations, as opposing to just talking about them. He continued that some community members think the Board of Education has established closing the achievement gap as its highest priority, yet the Board of Education has not said that. He felt the Board of Education should say whether closing the achievement gap was its highest priority or not.

Ms. Patchak-Layman stated that the Board of Education's purpose is to set school policy, e.g., set the direction, make changes, and introduce new ways of doing things based upon its reading of the problems, what the community says, and where the community wants to go. While she assumed closing the achievement gap was the school's highest priority, it is also a priority of the state and of the nation. Her main concern over what has been presented in the Plan is that she did not know what would happen second semester with the current seniors in need of support to be the best learners as they leave the school. Dr. Lee assumed there would be no major changes for second semester, because a system cannot change that fast. Ms. Patchak-Layman wanted enough flexibility that when things are noticed, the school has the flexibility to do things. The school has committed more than 90 percent of its resources in the contracts signed, the classrooms built, and the major commitment of resources to change the major direction of the school. She did not look for things to happen overnight, except that the Board of Education can vote to head in a specific policy direction. How the system reacts can take more than months, in terms of long-term change, but it has to start with a specific direction.

As to why Dr. Lee proposed these resolutions to the policy committee, he stated that there is established procedure for changing policy in which documents are taken through first and second readings within a minimum of a two-month timeframe. Given the fact that the Board of Education hopes to do things more quickly, he wanted to take the necessary action to help the process move in the direction desired, as opposed to going through the elaborate procedure of writing a policy. Thus, Board of Education resolutions reflecting that would be appropriate.

Mr. Conway noted that he could support Resolution #1, but not Resolution #2, because it is more than just reading that causes the deficiency. Dr. Lee explained that this was why he chose to use the word primary. If the school believes other factors are more important than a student's ability to read, the school should focus on those factors. There is nothing more serious than one's reading ability. Mr. Conway stated that reading is on the Board of Education's watch, but it is limited to what it can do. Dr. Lee stated that the school has taken the position that reading is not on its watch for 30 years.

Ms. Patchak-Layman said students were not limited by the amount of time they come to school; the school has flexibility to expand their day, to stagger their day, to offer them outside independent opportunities. Part of putting programs in place requires knowing the students' needs by talking with them and finding out things such as whether the science teacher is also a reading specialist. If the goal were to improve reading, times during the day can be structured to do that and/or outsourcing can be used. When Mr. Conway noted there were limited funds for outsourcing, Ms. Patchak-Layman noted that the school needed to reassess where it wants to put its money.

Discussion ensued as to how to proceed. There was consensus to present these resolutions to the Board of Education for further discussion and approval at the November Board of Education meeting, even though only five members would be present. If the first resolution fails, the second one will be mute. It was noted that only five Board of Education members would be present at that meeting.

Dr. Weninger noted that the proposed Plan to Raise Student Achievement was presented in the way it was because raising student achievement is more than just raising reading skills, etc.; it is more systemic. Student discipline could be argued as more important than reading. While it may appear that this proposal is a shotgun approach, these are the things that are believed to raise student achievement, particularly for minority students. Behind that thinking in order to come down to what the school was going to do first, second, third, was getting input from a part of a wider group of participations and the Board of Education. With that input there would be reflection on bringing it all together. The process to get there is focused. He asked what would be the net effect of Resolution 1. Will it be a part of the policy manual or is it a resolution for the foreseeable future to guide the school's work in terms of District goals. Dr. Lee stated that the intention is that the net effect to influence the foreseeable future, which means what happens between now and next June. While it could result in Board of Education policy, it did not have to do so. He was more concerned about having the Board of Education state its desire, as it has not done so. Dr. Lee told Dr. Weninger that while he had done an excellent job of presenting a very substantial bit of what influences student achievement in general, which is appropriate for his position, it was also appropriate for the Board of Education itself if it wishes to focus and concentrate its efforts on more than one part of what is proposed.

Ms. Patchak-Layman asked how the Board of Education would proceed with the document presented. Would the Board of Education see the feedback from the groups noted so that they could make decisions based on that feedback? Dr. Weninger offered to provide a summary. Was this a rolling activity where there would be changes after each of the meetings or after the next couple of months? Dr. Weninger's intention was not to compile all of the feedback and then in January make massive modifications. His intention was to take feedback along the way make modifications, and then inform the Board of Education of those modifications at each of its meetings. Ms. Patchak-Layman foresaw a problem when asking for community and faculty feedback. If changes are made, the first group to discuss this would not have the benefit of giving input on the changes. If it is a rolling process, how would he incorporate the totality of groups with different ways of proceeding? Dr. Weninger stated that he would not react to one group

or several groups but would bring input back to the Board of Education and the Board of Education will direct him on how to proceed. The Board of Education should set the direction. When he brings information to the Board of Education, he is looking for it to set the direction. Ms. Patchak-Layman reiterated that the Plan dated October 25 was the Plan everyone would see. Dr. Weninger confirmed that. He continued that while he was the author of the Plan, many people shared with him their ideas, but asked that their names be left out of it. Ms. Patchak-Layman asked to see a list of community and parents with whom he spoke. She also had difficulty with participatory decision-making, because there was no community input on the Plan. The other parts of the Plan should have been generated with more input from community, parents, and students. The Board of Education only has control over the high school and it is difficult for the community to be part of that. Dr. Lee asked if Ms. Patchak-Layman were reacting to the origin of the ideas. She replied that the community has input into this Plan, but there has not been open communication as yet. Dr. Lee noted that there had not been time for that but he assumed there would be. Dr. Weninger acknowledged that Ms. Patchak-Layman would have taken another approach to creating this Plan, but with the limited amount of time available and his understanding that the Board of Education's goal was the achievement of minority students; his approach was to meet with numerous individuals and groups. While Ms. Patchak-Layman may feel the community was in a reaction role, he believed the Board of Education employed him and the administration to lead and to develop a plan to raise student achievement. The administration is soliciting feedback from people inside and outside of the building. If the Board of Education says to go back to ground zero that would be its decision. Ms. Patchak-Layman suggested going forward with the detail on the high school's part of the Plan and then move on to the other parts of the Plan. She felt this was the most important work of the Board of Education and it has policy and financial ramifications. The conversation needs to happen before the setting of policy and making financial decisions, etc. Mr. Conway and Mr. Rigas were interested in the community's input. After receipt of that input, the Board of Education has the opportunity to give direction. Ms. Patchak-Layman was cautious because the timeframe did not allow that kind of input.

Ms. Patchak-Layman asked for a staff report on what would happen to the senior students, and suggested holding a senior seminar. She stressed that the school had to do something about those students; and suggested bringing forth the science careers that would be available to them. Dr. Weninger concurred but stated that there were scheduling, budgeting, and other things to make it impossible to react in the way she wanted. Ms. Patchak-Layman stated that if they were thought of as individual students and they wanted more help in reading, the school should provide that. Mr. Prale noted that the school provides that support; it helps them find the right fit of community or four-year colleges. He continued that the PSAE does nothing more than tell about one day of the students' lives. The school continues to look for the best placements at all times. AYP tells the school how it is doing; that is the reason for the new science course recommendations. A cost benefit analysis would show that using those scores as a way to target students in their senior year would not have the benefit desired. Dr. Lee noted that it was the counselors, staff, and administration's responsibility to react to the needs of the individual student, not the Board of Education. Ms. Patchak-Layman said that the

Board of Education can make sure that each piece of information goes somewhere. There is a systematic approach and there should be an individual approach; that is the part that the Board of Education plays. While Mr. Conway stated that there is an accounting on the students and the communities as well, Ms. Patchak-Layman stated that the school had to extend its hand. Mr. Rigas added that there were so many programs going on within and outside of the school; a hand is extended all of the time and Mr. Prale and Ms. Hill constantly try to bring new programs and they are always making adjustments. Mr. Lee noted that if there were a specific proposal, the Board of Education could act on it. Mr. Rigas noted that the difference is that there is a plan, a proposed, long-term attack on the achievement gap; that does not mean everything else stops. In the short term, there is a constant reviewing of the programs in the Plan.

Mr. Conway was principal-for-the-day in Chicago and was surprised to discover that the board at the John F. Kennedy High School has a policy that all seniors have to apply to at least three colleges. Those students always prepare for the next level so that when they apply for college, they know what is needed. This requires the counselors to sit with the students to work on this project. Counselors should be more involved in the students' lives. Dr. Weninger noted that with the addition of a College and Career Center, he would like counselors to have 7 to 10 session per year with small groups of students to identify their plans. This would start in their freshman year. Ms. Patchak-Layman felt this could be implemented now as it is not a big project and counselors are meeting with their students.

Ms. Patchak-Layman asked if there was an estimate of how much gain a student would make with the Plan. How would student achievement be measured? Dr. Weninger responded that there was no estimate. Ms. Patchak-Layman concluded that the basis of including these actions is some best practice for implementation. She asked if the Board of Education could see a bibliography of the research background.

Ms. Patchak-Layman asked about the state's E-Plan which will expire in March 15. She asked how the work on this Plan would translate into the plan needed for the State. Mr. Prale noted that West 40 is RESPRO and it will develop a timeline for the SIP Committee. He will work with Doug Dirks to bring up to date. Membership on the committee includes community, students, administrators, etc. Ms. Patchak-Layman asked if community membership changed. It was noted that the school asks the parent groups to send representatives. He noted that faculty and staff members are also on the professional development committee.

Adjournment

The committee adjourned at 10:29 a.m.