

Oak Park and River Forest High School
201 N. Scoville
Oak Park, IL 60302
An Instruction Committee of the Whole Board
June 16, 2011

An Instruction Committee meeting was held on Thursday, June 16, 2011, in the Board Room. Co-chair Finnegan opened the meeting at 11:25 a.m. Committee members present were Terry Finnegan, Dr. Ralph H. Lee, Amy Leafé McCormack, Dr. Dietra D. Millard, John Phelan, and Sharon Patchak-Layman. Also present were Dr. Steven T. Isoye, Superintendent; Michael Carioscio, Chief Information Officer; Amy Hill, Director of Assessment and Research; Philip M. Prale, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction; Nathaniel L. Rouse, Lauren M. Smith, Director of Human Resources; and Gail Kalmerton, Executive Assistant/Clerk of Board.

Visitors: Kay Foran, Community Relations, and Communications Coordinator and Janel Bishop, Assistant Principal for Student Services.

Approval of May 19, 2011 Instruction Committee Minutes

It was the consensus of the Instruction Committee members to accept the May 19, 2011 meeting minutes, as presented.

Joint Committee on Student Behavior and Discipline – Summary Report

Mr. Rouse highlighted the information in the report by the Joint Committee on Student Behavior and Discipline. The report provided the names of the committee members, the committee's purpose, and the process it used for making its recommendations. Discussion ensued.

Mr. Rouse appreciated Dr. Lee's concern that the Board of Education has not given the administration enough direction as to whether the administration was being too lenient or too strict regarding enforcement of the rules. Dr. Lee felt the administration leaned toward leniency, generally. Mr. Rouse asked the Board of Education to consider two specific areas, i.e., cellphones and unexcused absences. The administration finds it very difficult to address 28,000 unexcused absences. Parents do not like it when their students' cell phones are confiscated. Dr. Lee was concerned about the District's inability to enforce the rules because the students defy the consequences. The administration will provide the Board of Education policies from other schools to consider in this regard.

Discussion ensued about the parent's right to excuse his/her child's absences. While there are policies and procedures that provide a specific timeline for the parent to excuse his/her child, many times at the end of a quarter, parents demand that all of their students' unexcused absences be waived for the entire quarter. Ms. McCormack spoke about her own experience in reporting absences and wondered whether parents understood the process. Mr. Phelan concurred and suggested that this be part of the parent orientation. The Committee suggested sending a parent/guardian a letter informing him/her of his/her child's absence and allowing students eight unexcused absences for all classes rather than the stated four per one class.

Discussion ensued about having a future Board of Education discussion on two or three items that it could implement to support the administration.

Mr. Rouse reported that an addendum to the *Student Handbook* would be printed when the process and procedures have been developed relative to the modified closed campus.

Ms. Patchak-Layman was interested in determining the reason why a student was absent or late for class so that the District could help him/her change his/her behavior with positive instruction/intervention. Ms. Patchak-Layman wanted to know the reason why a student behaved in a particular manner. Was it because of 1) miscommunication, 2) cultural miscommunication, or 3) the student tried to respond but the response from the adult was off the mark, etc.? While the District has consequences, it has no process to help the students learn the behaviors that would allow them to continue their academic career. She felt the Code of Conduct should be positive and reflect the District's expectations. While Mr. Rouse concurred, he noted that when a student is late, it is a disruption to the class and any intervention at that time would take even more time away from instruction. Dr. Isoye felt that the District's continued exploration and implementation of PBIS would help in this regard. Mr. Rouse explained that the District's progressive current discipline model includes addressing the infraction, issuing a consequence, having a one-on-one conversation with the dean, meeting with the parents, etc.

Ms. Patchak-Layman disagreed with the recommendation of prohibiting students from attending co-curricular events because they did not serve their detentions. She felt that co-curriculars were positive interactions. Ms. McCormack concurred.

Ms. Patchak-Layman asked how the state standards matched the kinds of things in the *Code of Conduct* and how the District instructed students on them. She believed a discussion of earned privilege in a public institution was necessary with regard to the open/closed campus.

Mr. Phelan felt the time allotted for the discussion of the *Handbook* was inadequate and he had many questions regarding it and the Code of Conduct. It was noted that the Student Handbook reflects the expectations and the rules and regulations of the District and the Code of Conduct states the consequences when a student does not follow them.

Dr. Isoye suggested that the Board of Education have a philosophical discussion about student discipline at a future retreat or work/study session.

Ms. Patchak-Layman asked that if Recommendation No. 3 under attendance procedures had been applied this year, how many classes would have been dropped. She noted that this was a double change, because not only were tardies going to change into unexcused absences, it would be an automatic class drop. Mr. Rouse explained that the Board of Education policy now says that students with four unexcused absences are to be dropped from the class. However, this is not being done because of the overwhelming number of unexcused absences. In order to be aligned with the Board of Education's policy, an automatic letter will be sent to parents to inform them that the dropping of a class has begun and that parents can appeal. Teachers are struggling with students that are repeatedly skipping classes at the volume they. Dr. Lee asked if the District had the resources to handle the volume of work that will occur. Dr. Millard noted that this was a communication issue as well as an issue of expectation. Discussion should occur with students about the philosophy of coming to class without a pass. It should be made clear

that they have to learn to be responsible. Mr. Finnegan reiterated that it was the student's responsibility and the teachers must be supported.

Ms. Patchak-Layman suggested that the recommendations be listed separately on the June Board of Education agenda so that they could be voted on separately.

Residency Report

Mr. Rouse provided the annual residency report for the 2010-2011 school year. The residency confirmation officers include Ron Dibbern and Frank Kennedy of RWD & Associates. The report included the following information:

- total number of cases for the 2010-2011 school year
- number of incoming transfer students
- number of incoming transfer students
- number of "live in" cases
- number of guardianship/custody matters
- total cases cleared
- total cases pending
- tuition assessed by District #200

The Board of Education asked to receive information as to whether the number of residency issues was rising. When asked what drove the number of cases up, whether the standards had changed, and if they were being applied in the same way, Ms. Bishop responded that the state of the economy has had an impact on the number of residency cases. A family who owns a home in Oak Park or River Forest and enrolls their student has an easy enrollment process because it can provide a tax bill. For those who rent, a landlord verification is needed as well as copies of utility bills. Many parents are living with their parents or the guardians are living with other relatives.

Discussion ensued about the cost to the District to check residency. OPRFHS does not have an annual residency process, as some districts do. Dr. Lee stated that the taxpayers were asking for this service and its efforts did save the District money. Ms. Witham and Dr. Isoye planned to meet with District 97 about shared residency services. The Board of Education felt this would be positive and that an intergovernmental agreement might be needed in order to have communication between the two districts. The administration was advised to get legal advice with regard to this agreement.

Ms. Patchak-Layman noted that the District needed to consider and be respectful of families who were struggling and reaching out to other family members and friends during this economic time. Ms. Bishop acknowledged that they were doing so.

Professional Development Opportunities

Mr. Prale and Ms. Hill presented the annual report on Professional Development activities for the past school year. Professional development activities were guided by the question, "How does our full-faculty professional development time help us develop learning targets that increase the equity of our students' experience across our programs while also increasing academic excellence?" Discussion ensued.

When asked what was done with the grade distribution data and the final performance data, Mr. Prale stated that teachers would reflect on their practices and then revisit those practices. The goal of the Divisional Teacher Collaboration Teams is to use student outcome information, formative assessment information, and summative information and to look back on and improve instruction. World Languages already uses multiple formative assessments. When asked if the information is carried over from one division to other division, i.e., the process, analysis, outcomes, etc., Ms. Hill stated that various teams have been asked to share their process and experience. Some overarching activities will be undertaken to improve the SIP and the goals of the District. How the teams pick their interests next year may or may not have an impact on these activities. Mr. Prale stated that the core academic teams focus on course outcomes, i.e., the SIP and goals. He also stated that writing is embedded in the learning targets: Ms. McCormack asked for more information on that in the future.

The Board of Education will approve the Institute Day agendas for next year at its regular June Board of Education meeting.

Dr. Millard reiterated that the Board of Education retreat discussion later that day would be the format of the committee meetings and the subjects of future work-study sessions.

Adjournment

The Instruction Committee meeting adjourned at 9:17 a.m. Thursday, June 16, 2011.