

**Oak Park and River Forest High School  
201 N. Scoville  
Oak Park, IL 60302  
An Instruction Committee of the Whole Board  
October 14, 2010**

An Instruction Committee meeting was held on Thursday, October 14, 2010, in the Board Room. Co-chair Dr. Lee opened the meeting at 7:38 a.m. Committee members present were Terry Finnegan, Dr. Ralph H. Lee, Dr. Dietra D. Millard, Amy Leafe McCormack, and Sharon Patchak Layman. Also present were Steven T. Isoye, Superintendent; Amy Hill, Director of Assessment and Research; Philip M. Prale, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction; Nathaniel L. Rouse, Principal; and Gail Kalmerton, Executive Assistant/Clerk of Board.

Visitors: Kay Foran, Communications and Community Relations Coordinator (arrived at 9:13 a.m.); James Paul Hunter, Faculty Senate Executive Committee Chair; Dale Craft, PE Division Chair; and Dr. Allan Alson of School Exec Connect (arrived at 9:21 a.m.).

**Approval of September 16, 2010 Instruction Committee Minutes**

It was the consensus of the Instruction Committee members to accept the September 16, 2010 meeting minutes, as presented.

**Update on School Improvement Plan (SIP)**

Mr. Rouse provided the Committee with a copy of last year's 56-page School Improvement Plan (SIP). The state has moved to a new model for the SIP; it is now an online reporting system called Rising Star. Rising Star is a navigational tool that guides everybody in the organization in the same direction. It provides a structure for improving performance and it is built using indicators of effective practice. It helps schools build and sustain momentum. The 38 indicators of effective practice organized into three areas at the District level are 1) District Context and Support, 2) District Change Process and 3) District-School Expectations. The 79 indicators of effective practice of the school and classroom are organized into the categories of 1) Continuous Improvement, 2) Learning Environment, 3) Educator Quality, and 4) Teaching and Learning.

The Rising Start Program is a response to the need for accountability. This new system asks schools to look at a continuous improvement model that can be changed periodically, with formal visits every two years. The District's first six responses to the plan's questions were sent to the District's RESPRO coach to make sure the responses were acceptable and it is waiting for a response. There is an October deadline for the series of descriptors which will be given to the Board of Education at a later date and the final plan will need approval by December 13, 2010. District 200 considers this to be a continuous document.

The state is also trying to be competitive for the Race to the Top funds. The state will be able to support schools with RESPRO funds if the funds wanted are for activities itemized in the SIP.

Schools are waiting for the State's monitoring device. Dr. Lee asked if the Board of Education would receive a report that included 1) what the District said it would do, 2) what the District did do, and 3) what were the results. Mr. Isoye suggested providing a dashboard-type of report in the spring. OPRFHS does use its past SIPs to evaluate programs put in place. An example of that was Agile Mind. This program was included in the SIP and the Board of Education received periodic updates on its effectiveness. It was dropped because it was not found to be effective.

Clarity was sought about the importance of SIP relative to the closing of the achievement gap, as RtI has been touted as being a way to assist in that and a key element of SIP. Mr. Rouse stated that the Board of Education has received several reports on the District's RtI efforts.

Mr. Rouse previewed the online form with the Board of Education and highlighted what and where the information was to be inputted. When one goes to the dashboard portion, one will be able to see what progress has been made.

Mr. Rouse stated that the SIP Team will be composed of parents, faculty, and staff and it is scheduled to meet two times per month for 90 minutes. The discussion will be about the data, what is to be included in the SIP, and what changes must take place based on the AYP scores and the data. A Statement of Assurance Document must be signed by Dr. Millard, Mr. Isoye, and Mr. Rouse as a testimony as to what they will be held accountable. The Board of Education will receive periodic updates. Mr. Isoye apologized in advance for the Board of Education possibly feeling uncomfortable with the state deadlines for submission. Ms. Patchak-Layman stated that this work was still real and valuable, even if rushed, and she felt that parents should be involved in the creation of the SIP. Mr. Isoye stated that while the plan would not go out to all parents within the assigned timeline, it would be presented to Citizens' Council in November.

Mr. Rouse stated that the District is currently aligning its curriculum to standards and the Board of Education and community will be receiving periodic reports on this. Monday mornings are used by staff to strengthen the curriculum to the Common Core Standards. Dr. Lee asked when the Board of Education could evaluate what has been done and whether it worked. While no information about professional development has been inputted on the template, Mr. Isoye stated that internally the administration has to move forward with its own team. While the Board of Education will be able to see the indicator definitions and the research involved, it should not use these to set its goals as SIP will address only reading and math based on the PSAE. Because the expectations of the Board of Education include other areas, Mr. Isoye cautioned not to consider this a strategic plan. Mr. Prale added that the SIP has been used to bring data together; previously the District did not have the data infrastructure to do this and reiterated that the Board of Education had received reports on the programs and the changes that had been made, e.g., the Agile Mind Program, etc.

Dr. Millard concluded the discussion by saying that the SIP had taken on a new importance, something desired by both the state and the District and Mr. Isoye had included as a major piece of his goals.

### **Summer School 2010 Report**

Mr. Craft reviewed the highlights in his Summer School Report.

- 1207 students participated in 651 academic and enrichment opportunities
- The curriculum included:
  - 13 sections of Health Education
  - 6 sections of Art Foundations
  - 5 sections of Consumer Education
  - 4 sections of Applied Keyboarding
  - 9 Sections of English
  - 6 Sections of History
  - 16 Sections of Math
  - 4 Science field study opportunities in Africa, Costa, Rica, Tennessee, and Florida
  - Drivers' Education, and enrichment courses in pottery, computer animation, and musical theatre were also offered

In addition, the District extended the academic year into the summer for some students through a program designed to earn credits towards graduation. The program contained a study skills class and a regular or enrichment course. This program was offered to cohorts of students transitioning from the eighth grade to ninth grade, students transitioning from freshman to sophomores, and students transitioning from sophomores to juniors. A variety of options were provided to students with financial needs, including \$90 grants from the District and the Oak Park Youth Township Service's Work/Study Volunteer Program.

Mr. Craft reported that while budgets are always a consideration, this year's summer school experienced a surplus of approximately \$23,000, which will be put back into the General Fund. He noted that tuition has not risen in three years.

Mr. Craft thanked the administration, teachers and support staff who sustained a positive atmosphere for teaching and learning, especially to Linda Hayes, the summer school secretary. He also stated that a dean of discipline position was added and that was helpful.

Mr. Craft suggested that improvements to summer school might include 1) extending it to be a year round school for some students, 2) offering more classes, etc., and 3) rethinking the 9 to 10 and 10 to 11 transition programs, etc., asking if it is the best program and starting point for these students. Mr. Prale noted that participation decreases for the upperclassmen in these programs because some students matriculate in one direction or another or they will not commit. Some students in the 8 to 9 Program have not completed the sender district's eight-grade curriculum.

Dr. Lee asked: 1) are the reading scores of freshman known prior to entering the high school, 2) can the school identify that information, 3) would a Board of Education policy be necessary to affect reading scores in the ninth grade, and 4) if so, what kind of planning would be required. Mr. Prale stated 1) for many students the District determines reading scores when they come to summer school, but to have reading scores for all incoming ninth grade students, those students would have to be tested while still in their sender districts, 2) to accomplish that either District 200 or sender district staff would need to be paid for the time it would take to test those students, 3) the high school does not have an easy way to test these students before the summer; and 4) while a Board of Education policy is not needed, funding would be. Mr. Isoye noted that motivation is also a factor; some students may not want to come to the school during the summer. He added that accelerated reading programs do exist and that both feeder schools use MAP testing as a formative assessment: District 200 may explore that option.

When asked whether two-week enrichment seminars had been offered previously, Mr. Prale responded affirmatively, e.g., a History of Chicago which was taught for three weeks, two-week career courses were offered, etc. However, in the end, a different experience was preferred. Ms. Patchak-Layman suggested offering courses that were more interest-based. Ms. Hill stated that Triton College plans to expand its summer camps, bringing more opportunities for the students. A question was raised about the future purpose of summer school. Should it remain as is or should it try to accomplish something more specific? Another question to consider is whether summer school should be market driven, as it is now, or something else. This may be a topic for future discussion. Mr. Finnegan, while acknowledging the voluntary aspect of summer school, noted that it was important for the District to be explicit about what is needed to go to a four-year university and for the families to be open to that expectation.

It was noted that of the 1,200 students enrolled, 50 were non-district students and 31 had enrolled in Driver Ed.

### **Preview of Course Proposals**

Ms. Hill provided the Board of Education with the course proposals for a preliminary review. More proposals may come forward and some of these may be deleted as they are vetted by different groups. These courses will be brought forward again at the November Instruction Committee meeting and again at the regular November Board of Education meeting for approval. Discussion ensued.

Ms. Patchak-Layman questioned the reasoning for the proposed writing course as the *Academic Catalog* now says that intensive writing is covered in “x” courses. Why is this course being proposed when the Board of Education has said it wants all students to write better? Is intensive writing being covered in another class? Why is this just not part of regular English class? If that is not possible, then the *Academic Catalog* should be reviewed for what is being defined.

Relative to Project Lead the Way, Ms. Patchak-Layman asked how much of the funding was coming from grants. From an initial discussion in the spring, she understood that

the science labs were being reconfigured and more space was being used. She felt the Board of Education was looking at this proposal in isolation from perhaps other desired programs by different departments and that once the Board of Education approved these courses, a path was set.

Dr. Lee was more concerned about what the school is rather than the specific courses in the classroom. Mr. Finnegan asked if there were occasions when some people did not agree with people signing off on these courses.

Another question arose about what money was needed beyond what was budgeted for the digital keyboard courses, i.e. what other resources are necessary to support this class.

Ms. Patchak-Layman asked what steps the District had taken to include as many Special Education students in regular education courses as possible, rather than providing a separate track course for Special Education students, referring to the proposed course of African-American Studies. Were adding Special Education aides and/or team teaching considered? She wanted a firmer understanding of Special Education in terms of being able to match the work of those courses to the regular school curriculum. It was explained that schools are required to provide the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) and separate classes are provided because some students cannot be accommodated in the regular program. Mr. Isoye suggested that Ms. Halliman, Director of Special Education, be present at the November Instruction Committee meeting, if possible.

Another concern was the focus of the Business Education course about music and whether the intent was to expand the course from a focus of sports entertainment or was it to focus on sports and music entertainment. Mr. Allen wanted to know the specific outline of this course of study.

### **Credit for the Music Performance and Publications Areas**

Beginning with the class of 2015 (freshmen entering in the fall of 2011), sophomores, juniors, and seniors enrolled in music performance courses and/or publications courses would have their grades earned in those courses included in their GPA calculations. For publications courses, a further clarification would be that the courses count for elective credit rather than for English credit.

Further discussion will occur with the Fine & Applied Arts Division Head Roodhouse, people who were part of the original Philosophy of Grading Committee, District 97 and District 90, etc. The intent is for this to be included in the *Academic Catalog* with next year's freshmen and with no grandfathering.

In music performance, the following courses would be folded into the GPA calculations for sophomores, juniors, and seniors:

- Concert Band 1-2
- Concert Orchestra 1-2
- String Orchestra 1-2 (currently called Concert Orchestra II 1-2)
- Symphonic Band 1-2
- Wind Symphony 1-2
- Jazz Ensemble 1-2
- Symphony Orchestra 1-2

- Wind Ensemble 1-2
- Treble Choir 1-2
- OPRF Chorale 1-2
- A Cappella Choir 1-2
- Musical Comedy Workshop

In publications and broadcasting, the following courses would be included in the GPA calculations for sophomores, juniors, and seniors:

- *Tabula* 1-2
- *Trapeze* 1-2
- *News scene* 1-2

Skyward computes the GPA through course codes. The process should remain the same for selecting students for different levels.

### **Update on Student Cohort information**

In response to the previous month's inquiry relative to the growth analysis of cohort students, Ms. Hill reported that a beginning template had been developed to review this information. At this point, nothing significant has been learned about those students other than taking Advanced Algebra is a success path; not getting to the Advanced Algebra level is not a growth plan. This confirms what is already known. The file will continue to be reviewed and anything new that is learned will be brought to the Board of Education's attention.

### **Adjournment**

The Instruction Committee meeting adjourned at 9:39 a.m. on Thursday, October 14, 2010.