

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

**Policy, Evaluation and Goals (PEG) Committee
Thursday, April 21, 2011
Minutes
Board Room**

A Policy, Evaluation and Goals Committee meeting was held on Thursday, April 21, 2011, in the Board Room. Co-chair Patchak-Layman opened the meeting 8:55 a.m. Committee members present were John Allen, Terry Finnegan, Dr. Ralph H. Lee, Amy McCormack, Dr. Dietra D. Millard, and Sharon Patchak-Layman. Also present were: Dr. Steven T. Isoye, Superintendent; Philip M. Prale, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction; Nathaniel L. Rouse, Principal; Lauren M. Smith, Director of Human Resources; and Cheryl L. Witham, Chief Financial Officer; Gail Kalmerton, Executive Assistant/Clerk of the Board.

Visitors: Kay Foran, Communications and Community Relations Coordinator; James Paul Hunter, Faculty Senate Executive Committee Chair; Janel Bishop and Jason Dennis, Jeremiah Wiencek, John Stelzer, and Monica Sheehan, Kelly O'Connor, Terry Rayburn, Roma Steinke, Lisa Lawry, and Sheila Carson, Community Members.

Ms. Patchak-Layman reviewed the timeline of the agenda with committee members.

Minutes

It was the consensus of the Policy Committee members to accept the minutes of the March 17, 2011 meeting, as presented.

Consideration for Second Reading and Action

Policy 2121, District Leadership Team (DLT) and Building Leadership Team (BLT)

It was the consensus of the PEG Committee members to recommend that the Board of Education amend Policy 2121, District Leadership Team (DLT and Building Leadership Team (BLT), at its regular April Board of Education meeting, as presented.

The last line had been struck from the original version because evaluations are completed by a variety of people, not just the Superintendent.

Policy 6133, Consultation with Parents and Teachers Regarding Title I Programs

It was the consensus of the Policy Committee members to recommend that the Board of Education amend Policy 6133, Consultation with Parents and Teachers Regarding Title I Programs, for second reading and approval at its regular April Board of Education meeting, with the following addition:

Policy, Part II, Section I, 2nd bullet: Replace “parental representation” with “a Title I parent representative”

Compact, No. 3, Para.1, Line 5: After the word “Access” add: “and contacts parents:

It was explained that the attorney recommended that the title should be broader than just Title I. An additional section was added to how OPRFHS would implement the proposed policy.

It was explained that the Compact goes only to Title I parents. Title I parents are limited to ninth grade parents in reading.

Board of Education Retreat

It was the consensus of PEG members that the retreat agenda should include: 1) goals, 2) time management and 3) a case study regarding achievement, if time allowed.

It was suggested that some preliminary polling regarding time management, committee structure, etc., be done before the meeting and for the members to read Chapter 5 of "Leading for Equity" in preparation for this meeting.

Superintendent Evaluation

Dr. Millard suggested that the current Board of Education complete the evaluation process for 2010/11 year for the Superintendent. She and Ms. Patchak-Layman worked on last year's instrument and the Board of Education had preliminarily reviewed it in January. The document emphasizes the superintendent's performance as it relates to the goals and a second component of related to leadership and professional qualities. Dr. Millard asked that Board of Education members to complete this form by Monday, April 25 and send the completed form to Ms. Kalmerton. After the Board of Education's consensus, Dr. Millard, as the Board of Education president, will bring this back to the Superintendent for final signatures. Dr. Millard asked that members provide specific comments in the instrument. Ms. Patchak-Layman added that a special task force will be created to create a more complete evaluation instrument for next year.

Closed Campus

Dr. Isoye reported that the Board of Education had scheduled a Special Board Meeting for the purpose of holding a public hearing on the closing of the campus during lunch hours on Wednesday, May 4 at 7:30 p.m. in the auditorium. This date was selected based on the election of the new Board of Education members and both their and the District's calendars. The public will be allowed three minutes of testimony.

Mr. Rouse reported that the BLT had reviewed the members' questions from its last meeting and he distributed the answers to them. In addition, CADCA member schools were surveyed. They were asked three questions that follow. Their answers to the questions were included in the packet.

- 1) Do you have any information that shows a change in student achievement patterns that followed closing the campus? If yes, was the change in achievement related to closed campus or was it related to other programs put in place as part of the closed campus effort?
- 2) Do you have any information that shows a change in student discipline patterns that followed closing the campus? If yes, was the change in discipline related to closed campus or was it related to other programs put in place as part of the closed campus effort?
- 3) Do you have any climate survey information that followed closing the campus? If yes, can you share the results of that survey?

BLT had brainstormed on what things would need to occur in the District to order to close the campus. They were:

- Due to the projected volume of Freshman and Sophomore students that would be on campus during lunch in a given period (700 plus), we would need to flip the North Café as the Jr/Sr. Cafeteria and the South Café as the Frosh/Soph Cafeteria. The three period lunch schedule would have to change.
- Students who have earned the privilege of Open Campus, and obtained parent permission, would have the insignia “OC” on their student Ids.
- The present supervisory model will need to be adjusted to ensure supervision of all doors (17) during lunch periods.
- The use of one door as the exit/entry for Open Campus, preferably by the Tennis Courts, to ensure that students are not loitering in front of the building. Students would no longer be permitted to loiter/hang out around the perimeter of the school. A swipe mechanism could be stationed there which would further provide accountability and ability to know which students are off campus at a given period. The question was raised as to whether the police liaison should be stationed inside or outside the building.
- A Kiosk of sorts in the middle of the Student Center that prohibits students from going out front doors during lunch periods.
- The Faculty Senate CBA presently does not allow teachers to supervise the cafeterias. This would have to be modified.

The Deans had indicated that infractions may increase inside the building because of more friction. Approximately 1100 students are scheduled for each of the three lunch periods and approximately half of the sophomores, juniors and seniors presently leave the building.

If the campus were closed, the perimeter would have to be increased. The wearing of ID’s would be strongly encouraged. Discussion has occurred about implementing an electronic door entering system rather than a locking system. Doors would beep when opened during the hours of 8 a.m. and 4 p.m. A security person would monitor the cameras and there would be a record of whoever entered or left the building. The cost of the software and beep sounding system is approximately \$53,000 and the new zoom cameras would be \$20,000. Zoom cameras that are phasing out the old cameras are very effective in being able to detect who is doing what.

Mr. Rouse admitted that it would be difficult to determine who can leave and who cannot without a consistent ID procedure. Both the Village and the District would have to hold students accountable to the practice if a change were made. People entering and leaving the building will have to be monitored in with a closed campus.

If a student has to come to school, he/she is the responsibility of the school. If the student goes back home directly from school, it is portal to portal (home to home). If a student should stop at a friend’s home on the way home, it would be the matter of reasonable man and case law would determine whether the school was responsible.

Mr. Rouse noted that the alternatives to open campus had been discussed and he shared some preliminary thoughts:

- Next year, Open Campus privileges can be earned by Junior & Senior students only (This makes the privilege only available to our upperclassmen, which enables us to more effectively

manage the privilege of Open Campus.) They would be issued ID's that were coded differently. Students would have to scan in and out as is now done in the library.

- The criteria for earning Open Campus Privileges would consist of students having a minimum number of attendance, tardy, and disciplinary infractions, not to mention the notion of having a GPA consistent with our current C-Pass to play guidelines.
- Juniors and seniors who meet that particular threshold would then be granted the opportunity to have their parents sign a document that provides them the opportunity for Open Campus.
- Juniors and seniors who do not meet the criteria would also be sent communication regarding their Open Campus Privilege being restricted. The District envisioned an incentive laden approach. Everyone would get the benefits. The things that could remove the incentives could be unexcused tardies, discipline infractions, GPA, etc.

Discussion ensued about the importance of this conversation. The critical piece is that of safety for students in and out of school. However, there is no data that says a closed campus will change drug use. Wearing of the lanyard is an important to the conversation. Will it allow the police to approach any high school aged student?

Other questions that were asked included:

- 1) Where would parent input happen if he/she were looking for student to come home?
- 2) What is the school's liability related to student safety during the school day?
- 3) What would be the additional costs of safety & support if the campus were closed?
- 4) How will students take make-up tests, have band activities? Will flexibility be lost if the District moves away from the 3-period lunch.
- 5) How many students go through the line, how long does it take to do that?
- 6) How many actual seats are in the cafeteria?

Ms. Patchak-Layman suggested posting to the website the highlights of this entire conversation about closed campus.

The PEG Committee members then welcomed comments from the community.

Monica Sheehan stated that she hoped for an answer to the survey that she sent to the Board of Education members the previous day in a week. She then read the following statement.

“Open Campus is a failed policy today, and it was a failed policy when it was introduced in 1971. I have many friends who were students at the high school in the ‘70s and the ‘80s. They were “good” students and athletes, and they went out at lunchtime to friends’ houses, when no adult was home, and drank beer and smoked pot. Again, these were the “good” students. Many high school students don’t have the maturity to navigate the freedom of open campus, and they are vulnerable to peer pressure, which influences them to make bad choices that can negatively affect their lives forever.

“There’s a lot more going on than just drinking and smoking pot at lunchtime. Students under the influence are driving on our streets during the school day and also during Driver’s Ed classes. What is the school’s liability? Shockingly, we have all heard about or read the disturbing story of prostitution, as chronicled in the Trapeze last year. Open campus puts students at-risk for many

undesirable consequences and gives students the unnecessary opportunity to make dangerous choices during the school day. What is the benefit of open campus? I have yet to hear one compelling argument in support of it.

“Open campus is responsible for safety and security issues both inside the building and outside it. There are the stories of drug dealers moving freely through the school every day, many of whom are not students. Drug deals going down in bathrooms and locker rooms are commonplace.

“As a member of the Board, you are enabling this activity. You are not providing a safe, drug-free environment for learning. John Williams, has told parents over the past year to “parent up” and take responsibility for their children. I say to you, “board up”, and take responsibility for students during the school day. Your inaction is enabling students, vulnerable to peer pressure, to make bad choices during the school day. School should be a safe haven. Make it so.

“Please, don’t replace a failed policy with another failed policy. Closing the campus is the only policy that makes sense. You have hired an excellent administration. “Board up” and support them with policies, and drug and alcohol deterrents so Oak Park River Forest High School can regain its stature as a school for 'those things that are best'.

Mimi Skapek, a member of the Citizens’ Council subcommittee, had presented material to the Committee members describing the things that happened in the community to bring the issue of drug and alcohol abuse of teens to the forefront and she urged them to review this before May 4. Many entities in the community, e.g., parents, business leaders, etc., have been actively working since last March to make a difference in the community. This is not just a high school issue; every entity has a component. Parents are stepping up, middle schools are stepping up, and Thrive has started a communication campaign to help determine the best way to make students aware of the alcohol consumption based on the Illinois Youth Survey. She applauded the high school for bringing this to the community. The reality is that closing the campus is only one component that can help address the issue. More importantly, it is a security issue for the community. Closing the campus will create one deterrent that might make a difference to a few kids who ended up leaving for another environment that is safer for them.

Middle schools are proactively educating the 5th through 8th graders to better prepare them for high school. Students need guidance as they are not able to process and make wise choices. Probably 100 to 200 students leave during per lunch period. A percentage of those students find themselves in situations that make them more vulnerable. She asked the high school to think of creative ways to the lunch solution and she suggested surveying other schools as well. Her daughter goes to a classroom every day to work and eat her lunch because it gives her a getaway from the crowd and eat quietly. She applauded the administration for the effort already given. She also applauded the effort to find a way to make the doors more secure; this is a huge step in the right direction.

Kelley O’Connor, a member of the HSAC, agreed with Ms. Sheehan and Ms. Skapek statements. One of the reasons for an open campus was that it gave students a chance to go out and smoke. In the mid 1990’s, many parents and community groups came together and insisted that this problem be recognized. The solution was a closed campus. She advocated for closing the campus. She learned from her daughter that April 20 is Cannabis Day and that six or seven kids were high in her class, they

were talking about it, they smelled, and yet the teacher did nothing about it. She asked the Committee to consider the safety of the children. She expects the same rules and for her decisions to be supported between the hours of 8 a.m. and 4 p.m. Parents and the school have to work together.

John Phelan, Board of Election member elect, congratulated the Board of Education and school for addressing this issue and he congratulated the HSAC for bringing it to this point. Through the campaign, he had come to know that the Board of Education members were honorable and ethical people and used their conscience to make decisions. This is a controversial issue. Dr. Lee's comments about how this started were accurate in the sense that it has energized many people to get involved, i.e., Illinois Youth Survey numbers. He said it is also a matter of safety. He was not stating a position on this at this time, but he wanted to comment that one of the things that HSAC has continued to emphasize is that substance abuse at the school will have to be addressed on several fronts. Defining the debate of open vs. closed is a narrow way to address it. The materials offered ideas such as student assistant counselor, drug testing, etc. One of the answers provided to the Committee was that drug testing was constitutional. As a result of being part of the efforts of HSAC, he learned that was only partly true. To the extent that students want to participate in extracurricular activities at the high school, it is constitutional. However, for a student who does not want to participate, it is not constitutional. There has to be a volunteer opt in policy. Opting into drug testing could be criteria for participating in open campus. Testing of hair can determine if drug use has occurred within the last 90 days. Many schools have found that to be effective in limiting drug use and getting rid of the criminal element that populates any market. He also suggested reviewing policies on substance abuse as it is now recognized as a treatable illness, but then punishes the students using it. The value of a Student Assistant Counselor would be to identify and treat students making bad choices rather than punishing them.

Additional Considerations

Dr. Isoye noted that some of the funds were available in this year's budget to contract with the IASB for its Policy Services.

Dr. Isoye reported that the report from Blueprint Education Group would soon be forthcoming.

Ms. Patchak-Layman thanked the community for offering their suggestions and comments. With regard to policies, the Board of Education is going to take a formal review of the policies with IASB Policy Services to update the Policy Manual. There will be an opportunity to look at and how the actions the Board of Education will take immediately will get reflected in the future.

Adjournment

The Policy Evaluation and Goals Committee adjourned at 11:00 a.m.