

Oak Park and River Forest High School

Parent Teacher Advisory Committee (PTAC)

Conference Room 201

Thursday, March 12, 2015; 3:30 – 5:00 pm

Present: Lauren Achurra (Faculty), Janel Bishop (SID), Steve Gevinson (BOE), Naomi Hildner (Faculty), Stephen Jackson (Parent), Nate Rouse (Chair), Carolina Schoenbeck (Faculty), Jonathan Silver (SID), Deloris Collins (Recorder)

Absent: Brian Beyers (SID), Aleta Clardy (Parent), Justin Maxwell (Student), Alisa Walton (SID)

Visitors: Qiana Carswell (Parent), Linda Francis (Parent)

Call to Order & Roll Call:

The Parent Teacher Advisory Committee (PTAC) meeting was held on Thursday, March 12, 2015 in Conference Room 201. Nate Rouse called the meeting to order at 3:35 pm.

Approval of Minutes:

A motion to approve the minutes of March 5, 2015 was made by Steve Gevinson with the following corrections: add Lauren Achurra to attendance and list Stephen Jackson as a parent. The motion was approved by Carolina Schoenbeck.

Comments:

None.

Purpose:

Mr. Rouse indicated that the focus of the work on this committee would be the Code of Conduct and whatever trends, issues or other concerns we need to address. The Code of Conduct has been re-vamped in several ways over the past several years. The Suspension Reduction Program morphed out of giving students an opportunity to reduce their suspensions. In the 2013 Code of Conduct, students soon realized that they could be suspended and have that suspension reduced in half. We now only give a suspension reduction on Jeopardizing my Education and for the 1st offense only.

All students must receive the Student Handbook by Illinois School Law at the start of the school year. Our task is to deal with the Code of Conduct and to make recommendations to the Board of Education. The BOE approves the Code of Conduct and the Student Handbook at the same time. The process for printing the handbook was shared. It was also noted that the West Suburban Conference is a principal group of high schools that meet monthly and share the student handbook, ideas and other concerns. It was questioned that if there are other pieces of discipline, where do we recommend they should be explored as those discussions would be profitable to share with the BOE.

Discipline is a broad subject and it would be hard not to discuss subjects like peace circles and things that may deal with policy.

The Code of Conduct speaks to student's behavior during school. The Extra-Curricular Code of Conduct is more stringent and governs students who participate in sports and activities. In the effort to provide more clarity, it was presented to the committee the idea to have the Extra Curricular Code of Conduct placed in the Student Handbook. It was suggested that we could place this piece after the Code of Conduct or maybe in the section that has the extra-curricular activities information. There was a recent incident involving student athletics and leaders at a party and although all were not drinking, they were still held responsible to the Extra-Curricular Code of Conduct. Students have been appealing their suspensions for this offense.

We have been getting fewer appeals due to the revised and updated Code of Conduct and the work of the SIDs. We will be prepared to have conversations with the BOE about statistics for the 1st semester report on discipline for the 2014-15 school year in April. Our biggest consequence is Failure to Serve Detentions. We have tried to link tutoring to Failure to Serve Detentions. When we link Failure to Serve Detentions to events like prom and games, students who attend these types of activities are motivated to serve their detentions. We are currently at 80% Failure to Serve Detentions and 20% is in the other categories.

It was noted that there are no procedures for plagiarism and that the teachers must note it. There is also no consequence through the Code of Conduct. Although there is a policy that deals with this subject, there is no procedure. It was stated that we are able to add a procedure to the student handbook. As a committee, it was asked what would we envision as a procedure for academic dishonesty. Handbooks will be brought to our next meeting from the West Suburban Conference schools so we can look at what those schools use as a procedure. We can also take a look at our old policy. There was a debate and the decision was made to remove plagiarism from the discipline area and add it to the counseling area. Some divisions will report plagiarism and some will not. There is no consistency. Although we cannot change school policy, we can define plagiarism.

It was shared that we have to be more intentional about explaining and talking about the Code of Conduct and the Student Handbook. A way to make students aware of expectations is by having the student model it or via video. We can determine and make a recommendation on how to have conversations with students within the first two weeks of school about the Code of Conduct. Although we ask students to sign off on the Student handbook, they have not read it. It was suggested that the handbook information should be shared during assemblies, along with the discipline statistics. If there were a Code of Respect, maybe students would feel differently about it.

It was stated that it is important to look at the rigors of the teachers who write referrals on students. No names are needed but it was felt that this information is useful. It was shared that there is a report on students who receive multiple Ds and Fs and it links students with teachers. If there is a trend, the SIDs are aware as they see the referrals. It

is a classroom management concern and although no report is written, there is an awareness of what is going on. It was asked what is the intervention to stop a certain behavior. The SIDs work on a case-by-case basis and it was reported that there are many interventions. Many of the issues with students in which teachers write referrals are investigated. The practice is that the SID, teacher and student meet to talk about both sides of the concern. The SID will always talk to the students. Some of these conversations are not able to be put in a document. The SIDs have been having these “restorative justice practices” going on for many years. Ms. Bishop’s restorative justice stories speak to restorative justice practices versus being biased or giving preferential treatment to some students. Mr. Gevinson was asked to observe and shadow a SID so he would see how this practice happens on a daily basis.

Adjournment:

Mr. Rouse moved to adjourn the PTAC Meeting at 5:05 pm. The move was seconded by Mr. Gevinson.