

OAK PARK AND RIVER FOREST HIGH SCHOOL
201 North Scoville Avenue
Oak Park, IL 60302

INSTRUCTION COMMITTEE MEETING
October 14, 2014

An Instruction Committee meeting was held on October 14, 2014. Dr. Moore called the meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. in the Second Floor Library. Committee members present were Dr. Jackie Moore, and Sharon Patchak-Layman. Also present were Dr. Steven T. Isoye, Superintendent; Amy Hill, Director of Assessment and Research; Philip M. Prale, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction; Dr. Gwen Walker-Qualls, Interim Director for Pupil Support Services; Nathaniel L. Rouse, Principal; David Ruhland, Director of Human Resources; and Gail Kalmerton, Executive Assistant/Clerk of the Board.

Visitors: Counseling Division members Jennifer Hoffmann, Kris Johnson, Esteban Medina, Peter Nixon, Julie Fuentes, and Carolyn Ojikutu; Cindy Milojevic, Director of Student Activities; John Stelzer, Athletic Director; Tom Cofsky, Board of Education member.

Minutes

Ms. Patchak-Layman moved to approve the Instruction Committee minutes of September 16, 2014; seconded by Dr. Moore. A voice vote resulted in motion carried.

Update on Student Services Division

Ms. Hoffmann, Assistant Principal of Student Services, introduced her Counseling Division staff.

The packet posted on line contained written information on the following:

- A Typical Week as a Counselor at OPRFHS (although there really is not a typical week or day).
- What students should expect from their counselor in each of their high school years
- A description of what the Pupil Support Services Teams (PSS Teams) do to support the students and the members of each team

Discussion ensued about the amount of time it takes to know students individually to understand their needs, as well as who are involved in their lives. The course selection process spans across four years, starting with freshman placement tests. Freshmen are intensely monitored and if a change is necessary in their courses, much conversation needs to occur. Counselors reach out to the student, to the teachers, and to the families in order to understand the students' goals during high school and after high school, and they try to expose the students to as much as possible while attending OPRFHS. Course recommendations are discussed with the students. As the students change and as their needs change, so will the four-year document.

Discussion ensued about the counselor caseload. Counselors generally feel that they are maxed out on the number of students on their caseload, presently at 276. The state's caseload recommendation is 250. Even 250 would be considered high at OPRFHS, as counselors do not feel they are able to meet everyone because of the number of students they have across all grades with differing needs including that of Special Education and 504 plans. Social workers handle IEPs and Youth Therapists run many groups and see students individually. Counselors felt that an advisory program would be beneficial. Freshman study halls were adjusted by PSS Teams and as a result, they were provided with information that they needed. It was successful. While no data is being kept as to the number of contacts students made with the School Resource Officer (SRO), if the SRO is needed by the counselor and/or the SRO is in need of the

counselors that does occur. Students find the SRO approachable and he works closely with the Student Interventionist Directors (SIDs).

One member was concerned about the students that the counselors did not see because of lack of time. The Board of Education sees discipline issues and it sometimes questions the back story about how one student was missed and if that was the result of the magnitude of their work. Ms. Johnson said that she was part of the Strategic Plan's Holistic Education Task Force and it suggested finding ways to work collaboratively in the community to help students. It takes everyone, the parents, the teachers, the coaches, the grandparents, etc., to put arms around the students. It is a community issue.

One member noted that some families do not feel a connection with their student's counselor and that the course selection process is rote and not personal. While some students are afforded inspiration, belief and motivation. Consistency is lacking. Is that dependent upon the individual counselor? Ms. Hoffmann stated that counselors share with each other what they do in different scenarios to normalize things. That is effective. All counselors have the same concerns. When anecdotal stories arise, they talk about them, and expectations are laid out as to what the counselor can do and what he/she can push the student to do. Time constraints are an issue and the wish is to spend more time with the parents and the students. It was also noted, that sometimes conversations occur with students that are not related to the parents.

When counselors were asked for their thoughts about what they needed from the Strategic Plan perspective, one counselor noted that she needed more time, as that was her most valuable commodity. It was suggested that data be kept as to what occurs during the day in order to be able to tell the story.

It was the consensus of the committee to bring this memorandum to the Board of Education as an informational item.

Student Participation in Extra-Curricular Report in 2013-14

The Student Participation in Extra-Curricular Report includes data for both Athletics and Activities/Clubs. The extra-curricular program consists of 29 sports programs with 85 team levels and 75 activity programs, including clubs and performance groups.

The first two data sets provided the number of students involved in athletics and the number involved in activities. The total number of non-duplicate students participating in at least one extracurricular activity was 2,306 or 71% of the total student population. This number is status quo from last year. The current national average for participation in high school activity programs is 61%.

A comparison was made of grade point averages and attendance records between participating students and non-participating students. Data showed that students who participate in an extracurricular activity on average have a higher GPA and fewer unexcused absences. While there is not a direct correlation between these factors, research shows that students involved in activities and athletics are able to build and foster relationships with additional adults in school and therefore have the potential to build stronger bonds with the OPRF community and foster healthier social-emotional connections.

While 75 clubs and activities are currently funded with a paid sponsor stipend, 9 additional "non-official" student groups (approximately 110 students) met during the 2013-14 school year and APA has a total of 40 students which are not represented in the race and gender data due to confidentiality concerns. The non-official student groups included Amnesty International, Chinese Cultural Society, Cooking Club, Current Events Club, Fellowship of Christian Athletes, French Club, Hip-Hop Club, South Asian Student Alliance, and Vegetarian Club. The administration and the stipend review committee continue to work with these groups to move some of them in an official club status.

Data was compiled regarding discipline and code of conduct violations for student-athletes and students involved in competitive activities during the 2013-14 school year.

	1 st Offense	2 nd Offense	3 rd Offense
Athletic/Activity Consequences	29	7	0

Methods by which the administration is informed and investigate extra-curricular code of conduct violations include:

- 1) Violations which occur in school or at school events are reported to us by the SIDs, in these cases the extra-curricular consequence is issued after the SIDs complete their investigation and have issued a school consequence.
- 2) Violations which occur in the community are reported by the Oak Park or River Forest Police Departments via the school resource officer.
- 3) Violations which occur outside of school can be reported by parents or community members and the administration works closely with the principal and SIDs to determine if a consequence needs to be issued.

The Student Handbook is updated annually with IHSA and WSC rule changes (e.g. IHSA concussion testing procedures, etc.) Legal counsel was contacted with regard to the Athletic Registration/Permission Form. SIDs gave their input and detailed information regarding athletic/activity consequences are now included in discipline letters sent to students and parents.

One member asked if the numbers by race for students in non-athletic activities were available. How can the school determine what clubs/activities students would be interested in through these numbers? It was noted that the activities are different from athletics. Unofficial clubs give a barometer as to whether they can grow into something larger, i.e., Hephzibah Buddies, as its membership is approximately 70 students. While a teacher wanted to start a hip hop club, a stipend could not be added, and so they reached out to students in the dance club and now there are 40 students per week in the recording studio. Discussions are occurring with Mr. Altenburg about changing the culture and having resources available for stipends on a more flexible basis. Dr. Moore suggested going to the source to discover what may be of interest to the students that is not currently offered.

Because participation of Special Education students is not tracked, it was suggested that it be included in next year's report. The District administers a survey to students asking them if they were involved and if not, why not. Some students are positively engaged outside of school. The District is being proactive by finding groups and meeting them where they are at and providing activities for them. In athletics, they look to hire minority coaches. Last year there were over 80 students on the freshman football team because the coaches were getting students out of their PE classes and signing them up. However, using the same approach this year, only 49 students signed up. They are also working with the feeder groups to know which students are coming into the building and to get students better prepared.

It was the consensus of the committee to send this report forward to the Board of Education at its regular October meeting as an informational item.

Summer School 2014 Report

The Summer School Program was a 28-day program offered over a six-week time period in June and July of 2014. The courses provided 1,177 students with 1,567 completing academic and enrichment opportunities. Enrollment increased slightly over last year.

The most popular courses remain Health (14 sections), Driver Education (8 sections), Art Foundations (7 sections), and Applied Art Courses (5 sections). Credit recovery courses and sections were consolidated

into one large section of students who used an online curriculum. Additional staff included a program coordinator, a counselor, four teachers, and one support services staff member to support 76 students who earned 136 credits over the six weeks, a decrease of 4 students and 33 fewer credits earned than last year. Practices and organization is being examined for the credit recovery program for the 2015 year.

A goal had been set to increase the number and percentage of A and B grades earned by students in academic courses and developed additional supports for students in summer school and while that goal was accomplished, the increase was not distributed equitably across racial groups.

Dr. Qualls noted the following:

- The budget for the musical ran over because of the cost of costumes, competition from District 97's play, and the license for Spam A Lot was very expensive.
- Next year, the enrollment process will start later in the day to make enrolling for classes more equitable for working parents.
- The intervention program will be continued next year and more Concordia students will be invited to help.
- While attendance was good, when students were late, the interventionists reached out to those students and did home and work visits.

Data was requested on whether the structure of the program, i.e., 4-week versus 14 days, had any impact on grades, particularly by race and subject.

It was the consensus of the committee to move this report forward to the Board of Education at its regular October meeting as an informational item.

Review of Course Proposals 2015-16

The Board of Education had reviewed the course proposals for the 2015-16 school year at its September 23, 2014 meeting with input from the Instruction Committee. The proposals were being reviewed by parent, student and teacher groups. Two revisions were suggested by ACT and counselors which were highlighted in the cover sheet, one in Fine and Applied Arts and one in Physical Education.

Referring to the Company Dance Class, one member was concerned about offering a class that had a prerequisite of independent activities or extracurriculars because the school was not providing the basics to excel for that course. This is an audition class. It was suggested that if a prerequisite was necessary it should be forwarded to the Board of Education at its regular October meeting.

Testing Coordinator Position

The administration recommended that Craig Barnard be retained as a testing coordinator/consultant on a contractual basis for the 2014-15 school year. The memo in the packet outlined the rationale, benefits, and financial implications. A position description was attached. The recommendation was forthcoming because of a number of recent personnel changes at OPRFHS affecting critical testing areas. At the same time, developments at the District and state levels have accelerated the demands for data analysis and introduced new testing requirements. This pilot program will allow the District to perhaps determine a better way to handling its testing needs and improve services.

Discussion ensued. One member thought the salary should be \$300 per day, based on the work of others in the building, i.e., Thrive, etc. The rationale for the higher pay rate was due to the consulting work of advising the District as to the most appropriate structure for managing the aspects of test coordination. One member understood the need for a testing coordinator, but was unclear how that person could also provide an unbiased report on the system when he/she was the system. Confusion existed as to the

consulting aspect and one member would be more comfortable with a timeline that would address that aspect of the work in terms of when that data would be collected as to how the job should work, i.e., a proposal that says what would be done and the cost as nothing in the job description indicated how much time would be spent on the consulting aspect. Dr. Moore was not prepared to make a recommendation.

This will be forwarded to the Board of Education as a separate action item at the regular October meeting and a request was made to provide the rationale for the consulting aspect that is not part of the document.

Additional Instructional Matters for Committee

None.

Adjournment

At 9:13 p.m., Dr. Moore moved to adjourn the meeting; seconded by Ms. Patchak-Layman. A voice vote resulted in all ayes. Motion carried.

Submitted by Gail Kalmerton
Clerk of the Board of Education