

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

INSTRUCTION COMMITTEE MEETING
August 18, 2015

An Instruction Committee meeting was held on August 18, 2015. Dr. Gevinson called the meeting was called to order at 4:37 p.m. in the Board Room. Committee members present were Fred Arkin and Dr. Steve Gevinson. Also present were Dr. Steven T. Isoye, Superintendent; Philip M. Prale, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction; Nathaniel L. Rouse, Principal; Sheila Hardin, Faculty Senate Executive Committee Chair; and Gail Kalmerton, Executive Assistant/Clerk of the Board.

Visitors: Jennifer Cassell, Board of Education member; Tod Altenburg, Chief School Business Official; David Ruhland, Director of Human Resources; John Stelzer, Athletic Director; Regina Topf, Student Activities Director; Jonathan Silver and Brian Beyers, Student Intervention Director (SIDs).

Minutes

Dr. Gevinson moved to approve the minutes of the June 16, 2015 Instruction Committee, as presented; seconded by Mr. Arkin. A voice vote resulted in motion carried.

Participation Report

The Instruction Committee members present unanimously recommended that the Student Participation Report be moved forward to the Board of Education as an informational item. It was thought to be a well-done report. As to why there was a 7% increase in participation this year, the response was that the Hip Hop Club had become an official club and serves over 50 students, mainly African-American. The exact demographics of the club will be sent to committee members. The participation rate of 72% of the student body is the highest level of participation in Mr. Stelzer's tenure. While the intent is to increase student participation and the reaching out to students is actively occurring, some sports have maximized out because of the limited facilities and/or funding for coaching, other sports are reaching their capacity, i.e., tennis. Girls' tennis is growing and in the past it averaged 40 to 50 participants. It is perceived as a no-cut sport. This year a fourth team was added in order to accommodate approximately 66 students. Note: while some groups have decreased participation, requests are being received to start other clubs or activities. More activities are needed for those students who are not involved in anything. Each year a stipend review committee meets to review the clubs and activities to determine its sustainability and cost. Having resources available is paramount. Student participation in activities allows students to develop time management skills, keeps students in the building for longer times after school, and C-Pass to Play allows student athletes to be monitored.

Discipline Report

The Instruction Committee members present unanimously recommended that the report on Student Discipline be moved forward to the Board of Education as an informational item. Two 2014-15 Second Semester Discipline Reports were presented: 1) Without No Failure-to-Serve Detentions (500 infractions), and 2) With Failure to Serve Detentions (2260 infractions), in order to be able to hone in on the 500 infractions. A comparison of the data from the 2013-14 school year to the 2014-15 school showed that the infractions, other than failure to serve, had decreased in every category and overall by 2%. Consequences averaged 5 or 6 per day. Class 5 infractions (expellable infractions) only occurred 8 times for the entire year and only 4 students were recommended for expulsion.

The infractions were broken down by grade level and gender. Sophomores had incurred the highest number of infractions such as when they did when they were freshmen. The percentages of black versus white students and IEPs were similar.

When asked about how the administration intended to mitigate these numbers, it was noted that the District now employs 5 in-house social workers. Based on the work that the social workers did last year, communication with staff and parents has driven these numbers down and that trend should continue because of increased resources. The more parents are involved, the more successful students will be and that is good for school climate overall.

One member commented that the drop in infractions was remarkable and it can be attributed to the work the school is doing. One member asked if institutional racism played a part and, if so, how that could be addressed. The district continues to have a racial equity strand, reflects on race, and will support a student-led discipline retreat in order to add the student voice. Culture and timeliness are components. The biggest resource is the faculty and staff working cooperatively with each other and having difficult conversations with each other. The District emphasizes more intentional relationships among students to staff, staff to staff, student to student, i.e., spirit culture, SEL, equity strands, additional staff, creating an environment that allows things to be accomplished differently and implementing intervention systems that will challenge students to think about their behaviors, help them earn the credits they need, and eliminate unsuccessful behavior. Students will take on more ownership and responsibility.

Discussion ensued about whether Plasco was the best system to use in terms of tardiness; is it consistent with a relationship-centered approach? Has consideration been given to the block-club concept, as it could have considerable impact on problem of tardiness and failure to serve detentions? Faculty and administration feel that Plasco does help with relationships. Teachers no longer have to address a student's being late to class. The consequence piece is taken away from the teacher/student relationship. The purpose of implementing Plasco was to eliminate that friction so that teachers could concentrate on teaching and learning. This year social workers will dialogue with students who are issued detentions because of lateness. Because faculty move to different classrooms during the day, they cannot participate in a block club. The District is also addressing the hallway issue by piloting a program designed by social workers. Students who end up with detentions will have a dialogue with the social workers as to their reasons for being late.

One member suggested commencing an internal standing committee that meets during the school year, as opposed to the meeting schedule of the Parent Teacher Advisory Committee (PTAC). Its purpose would be to look at the various aspects of discipline and determine solutions. Its recommendation could then be brought forward to PTAC.

Student Growth Workgroup

The Committee was updated on the work by the joint committee composed of faculty and administration with regard to the student growth component of the teacher evaluation. This work commenced as a result of Senate Bill 17 and the Performance Evaluation Review Act (PERA). Dr. Isoye serves on the PEAC. The teacher performance observation documents have been revised and incorporate student growth measures. The faculty appreciates joint committees as they are efficient and effective. While only 9 teacher pilot projects first semester will incorporate student growth measures, that number will increase second semester. Because this process is ongoing, the joint committee will continue to revise and adapt it.

A joint committee will be formed by November 1 to develop a system to be introduced in the 2016-2017 school year. It is important for all parties to be aware, i.e., the Board of Education, the faculty, Human Resources Department and outside counsel. Teachers are being sought to develop ideas on assessments of courses. The first round of teachers will submit work from the summer. The assessments must be validated; teachers are not being asked to write new assessments at this time. A comment was made that assessments should be based on standards, not driven by the test. As the district looks at its current practices of classroom-based instruction,

student growth measures will be useful. The administration is also gathering information from other members of CADCA. The faculty was thanked for being great partners in this endeavor.

West 40 Agreement

It was the recommendation of the Instruction Committee members to recommend that the Board of Education approve the agreement for the Alternative Learning Opportunity Program at its regular Board of Education meeting under the Consent Agenda. Board of Education approval is needed to sustain the funding for a student advocate in the school credit recovery program. OPRFHS works with West 40 on this program and it is monitored by the Assistant Principal for Instruction.

Preliminary Discussion on Reading Program Audit

The Instruction Committee members present recommended that a report go to the full Board of Education that included the comments made by committee members as to what they would like the administration to explore with regard to the reading program. This will be under the discussion portion of the regular board meeting agenda. The committee asked for the following review:

- 1) What is the efficacy of the current reading program?
- 2) Are other reading programs available?
- 3) What is the cost per pupil with this program as compared to other program?
- 4) Who would be capable of doing an audit of the program?

If committee members have additional questions, they should email them to Mr. Prale.

Adjournment

At 5:32 p.m., on August 18, 2015, Dr. Gevinson moved to adjourn the Instruction Committee meeting; seconded by Dr. Moore. A voice vote resulted in motion carried.

Submitted by
Gail Kalmerton
Clerk of the Board