

**Oak Park and River Forest High School  
201 N. Scoville  
Oak Park, IL 60302  
An Instruction Committee of the Whole Board  
March 18, 2010**

An Instruction Committee meeting was held on Thursday, March 18, 2010, in the Board Room. Dr. Ralph H. Lee opened the meeting at 7:42 a.m. Committee members present were John C. Allen (attended telephonically and departed at 8:44 a.m.); Terry Finnegan, Dr. Ralph H. Lee, Amy McCormack (arrived at 8:30 a.m.), Dr. Dietra D. Millard, and Sharon Patchak Layman. Also present were Philip M. Prale, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction; Michael Carioscio, Chief Information Officer; Amy Hill, Director of Assessment and Research; Nathaniel L. Rouse, Principal; Cheryl L. Witham, Chief Financial Officer; and Gail Kalmerton, Executive Assistant/Clerk of the Board.

Visitors included Kay Foran, Community Relations and Communications Coordinator; James Paul Hunter, FSEC Chair.

**Approval of February 18, 2010 Instruction Committee Minutes**

It was the consensus of the Instruction Committee members to accept the February 18, 2010 minutes of that meeting, as presented.

**PSAE Plans**

Ms. Hill presented a summary of the testing arrangements for the April testing dates in the Committee's packet as an informational item.

Discussion ensued about freshmen taking a home grown survey on school climate. If patterns could be correlated to specific student demographics, it would be worth exploring using focus groups. Because none of the administrators have had the training to run focus groups, Ms. Hill's idea was to hire outside personnel to run those groups, if that were the direction in which the school went.

A folder on the shared drive will be populated with annual reports that are made to the Board of Education or committee as a resource. In addition, Dr. Lee asked for a checklist of the components of each standardized test to be sent to Ms. Kalmerton for distribution.

**MSAN Update Mini Conference – Mentoring**

Mr. Rouse, Ms. Hill, Mr. Prale, and five other staff members (Dana Limberg, Devon Alexander, Jessica Stovall, Nimmi Weisman, and Ignacio Ponce) attended a MSAN-sponsored two-day mini conference which focused on building effective teacher mentoring and induction programs and building cultural proficiency among new teachers. Approximately seventy (70) people attended.

The event was organized and co-hosted by staff from Evanston Township High School, Madison Metropolitan School District and Columbia Public Schools of Columbia Missouri. The participants reflected on their own mentoring programs and considered how to improve. Dr. Kikanza Nuri Robins spoke on the topic of building culturally proficient induction programs in

school and district organizations, and then stayed to participate in workshop presentations and district planning portions of the agenda. A panel of teachers reflected on their experiences with induction and cultural proficiency; Ms. Limberg was OPRFHS' representative on that panel.

The OPRFHS faculty that participated in this conference and others were to meet to review the current OPRFHS mentor and induction program and will offer revisions to the existing program. Discussion is occurring about the development of either a two-year or a four-year mentoring program and will include discussion on the role of mentors, how they are selected, and their training. Mr. Prale stated that every teacher receives a teacher certificate, from initial to standard, which is the result of completing a specific State of Illinois process; OPRFHS should help them achieve this status. When asked how the high school could meld this conversation with recruitment and retention of employees, Mr. Rouse stated that the high school should do more to celebrate teachers reaching tenure. Ms. Patchak-Layman asked what part of mentoring would be accomplished through the professional development program. Mr. Prale responded that the mentoring experience could be an overlap of the teacher collaboration teams. However, mentoring has to have its own standards. Mr. Prale continued that articulation between Human Resources and the mentors is important and almost every candidate for employment at the high school has asked about mentoring program. The program should explicitly state what it wants to address. Ms. Patchak-Layman added that the costs for mentoring, including release time, should be a part of the Human Resources Department under recruitment and training. The more money spent on mentoring the less money will be spent on recruiting.

### **Sectioning Guiding Principles**

The Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, Chief Information Officer, Principal, and Director of Data Services created a process titled Sectioning Guiding Principles to be used throughout the building to reach the overall goal of maintaining the appropriate class size and maintain fidelity to the long range plan relative to FTE expenditures. Division heads were given the initial course request numbers of Friday, March 5 and the scheduling committee will meet with them to close on sectioning during the week of March 15.

Division Heads were asked for their input on class size balancing the views including the need to be fiscally responsible and the desire to be consistent class sizes across all divisions.

The Guiding Principles were as follows:

1. Division Heads will be given a starting point FTE number for their division. This number will be the same number of FTEs as last year. *This is a starting point only.* The course requests will ultimately drive the number of FTEs (up or down).
2. \*Courses with enrollments of fewer than 18 will not run unless (presently there are 60 or 70 classes that have fewer than 18 students).
  - a. They are capstone courses (to be defined by Division Heads and discussed with sectioning team such as Tabula and Newscene).
  - b. New courses needing support
  - c. Other – need discussion with sectioning teamPrevious history of class enrollment will be taken into consideration in determining which classes will or won't run ( In the future, we may want to consider having a limit

to the number of years a course which continues not to run due to low enrollment is allowed to remain on our books as an active course).

3. Use 18, 24, and 26 as target class sizes for transition, college prep, and honors classes respectively.
4. Distinguish between core academic courses and academic elective courses. Core academic courses are in English, history, science, world languages, and mathematics divisions and are related to the core graduation requirements. Core academic courses use the guidelines noted in #3 above.
5. Academic elective courses in all division are sectioned as close to 25 as possible but may be sectioned slightly higher. This does not include PE/DE classes.
6. The sectioning team will create a list of courses that will not be offered due to low enrollment by division by March 23 and will provide this list to division heads and counselors prior to finalizing sectioning in order to allow counselors an opportunity to bring students in and advise them based upon the courses that will be offered that have space.
7. Counselors will meet with students who have selected these courses by March 26 and have them select other courses prior to finalizing sectioning.
8. After sectioning, we will report all classes with enrollments of less than 18 by division.
9. Division Heads should submit ALL master scheduling requests (i.e. CTM teachers/students, Common Planning requests, REI classes, team taught classes, etc.) by April 9 to ensure that the master scheduler has ample time to accommodate the request. Requests made after this deadline may not be feasible, due to potential conflicts.

Ms. Patchak-Layman asked for a list of those classes with enrollments of fewer than eighteen and will not run.

The Administration asked that the Board of Education support this process, as its way to model the balance between fiscal responsibility and to provide an appropriate comprehensive education.

The Administration will consider scheduling some classes with lower enrollments on an every-other-year basis. With advanced knowledge, students can then develop their four-year academic plan to those courses.

Discussion ensued about how to get more students into AP classes as that had been a desire of the Board of Education. Ms. Patchak-Layman suggested giving those students needing more support for an AP class a higher numerical weight when calculating class size. The Administration cautioned that this type of structure would mean increasing FTEs. Mr. Prale added that the Wisconsin Center for Educational Research (WCER)'s recently published a short article suggesting that it is not only the number of students in a class but the kind of instruction being given that most affects student outcomes. Ms. Patchak-Layman felt the school structured and slotted students, meaning that staff could be asked if there were an interest in having a cohort of students with other teachers as is the case with Project Scholar and the transition programs. Because it is better for all students to be at a high level, Ms. Patchak-Layman suggested having smaller AP classes in the freshman and sophomore years and then AP larger classes in the junior and senior years.

**Additional Items**

Dr. Weninger had shared feeder school student data with the associate school superintendents, i.e., discipline, GPA, test scores, etc. Ms. Hill, Mr. Carioscio, and Ms. O'Shea provided him with this information. Ms. Patchak-Layman felt this should be part of the articulation piece and would be important to know for setting goals, etc., both at the high school and the feeder school levels. Mr. Prale enumerated the data that is shared with the feeder schools as follows:

- 1) The high school receives the ISAT scores of seventh graders;
- 2) More thorough information is received on the students who are registered for the ninth grade program;
- 3) The feeder schools share the characteristics of the individual students coming to the high school through division specific, content area specific dialogue;
- 4) The Assistant Principal for Student Health and Safety has conversations with the feeder schools as well.

**Adjournment**

The Instruction Committee meeting adjourned at 8:50 a.m. on Thursday, March 18, 2010.