

**Oak Park and River Forest High School
201 N. Scoville
Oak Park, IL 60302
120**

**An Instruction Committee of the Whole Board
December 7, 2009**

An Instruction Committee meeting was held on Monday, December 7, 2009 in the Board Room. Dr. Ralph H. Lee opened the meeting at 7:40 a.m. Committee members present were John C. Allen, IV (arrived at 8:30 a.m.), Jacques A. Conway, Terry Finnegan, Dr. Ralph H. Lee, Amy McCormack, Dr. Dietra D. Millard and Sharon Patchak Layman. Also present were Dr. Attila J. Wening, Superintendent; Philip M. Prale, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction; 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; Janel Bishop, Assistant Principal for Student Health and Safety, Jack Lanenga, Director of Data Systems; Esther Lieber, Site Director, and Rebecca Montoya-Kostro, Director of Regional Safe Schools of HARBOR Academy; and Chuck Feldman of the Oak Leaves.

Approval of November Instruction Committee Minutes

It was the consensus of the Instruction Committee members to accept the November 12, 2009 minutes of that meeting, as presented.

Harbor Alternative School Update

Ms. Leiber and Ms. Montoya-Kostro provided background information on the start of the regional safe school programs. It was an outcome of West 40 Act 393 enacted in 1993 to give expelled students a fresh start and for home schools to have safe environments for those students who benefit from a more traditional setting.

The following information was presented:

- A PowerPoint presentation
- Three end-of-the-year state reports
- Highlights of OPRFHS students
- A student demographic report
- A listing of all courses offered at HARBOR
- A listing of APLUS course offerings

HARBOR Academy serves sixty-three (63) students, and approximately twenty-eight (28) are OPRFHS students. The PowerPoint presentation included some of the activities in which students have participated, e.g., a project led by an intern from the School of the Art Institute, community service projects, and featured photos of the classrooms, e.g., computer room, exercise room, etc. The exercise room allows PE credit to be offered. Students wear uniforms. At HARBOR Academy, students are allowed to take online courses from APLUS Learning for credit, as only

five teachers lead all of the necessary classes, teaching students with varying ability levels. Students may take up to eight courses online.

HARBOR hosts a Family Night periodically where the children serve a meal to their parents, play board games, and programs of interest are provided, etc.

Significant time is spent on social/emotional issues with the students and the parents. Students who do not comply with HARBOR's rules can be removed from the program, but it is the home school that makes the decision to expel the student. OPRFHS has not had to expel students who have attended HARBOR. After a student has returned to the main campus, decisions are made as to whether he/she is capable of dealing with its peer drama. Sometimes students will call HARBOR and ask to return because they once again become overwhelmed.

The staff at HARBOR has tried to find grant money to have a transition position to track student progress after they return to the high school. Ms. Bishop added that many of the students who have attended HARBOR did not do so as a result of disciplinary action but rather on a voluntary basis.

When asked how the state budget affected HARBOR, it was noted that its budget had been reduced by 10 percent. While this did not affect the programs offered, it did reduce the salary increase for staff.

Other services provided to students include the following.

- Referral to social services, e.g., OPRFHS counseling services, drug rehab, etc.
- Parenting classes–parent nights
- Life skills training, a full credit class
- School-to-work consists of career discussions, field trips to colleges and businesses (discussions are ensuing about a proposed school-to-work program)
- Parenting classes for students (only one student was sent to Parenthesis for this)
- Behavior Modification
- Individual/Group counseling
- Community Service

When students return to their home school, parents give authorization for HARBOR staff and school counselors to communicate. HARBOR makes a recommendation as to whether the student should continue at HARBOR or return to the main campus. If the student returns, social worker services are suggested. Students who have done well in a small environment need to have that environment maintained; they need safe “arms” when they return.

When asked if HARBOR students were allowed to participate in co-curricular activities, Ms. Bishop replied that while some do, it depends on the situation.

Dr. Millard supported the administration's tracking of these students, e.g., why they were referred to HARBOR, how they did when they attended HARBOR, and how they did when they returned.

Dr. Lee thanked Ms. Leiber and Ms. Montoya-Kostro for their presentation.

Algebra I-2 Block

Mr. Prale provided a written update on the Algebra 1-2 Block Program. The report provided information that included how the Algebra 1-2 Block Program was introduced to the school in the 2006-07 school year and an analysis of it since that time. The program provides students with an average of 120 minutes of additional class time each week, the equivalent to an extra semester of math each year. The first students who completed the Algebra 1-2 Block course are now current seniors and they took the ACT-PSAE in April 2009.

I. Information Regarding Meeting State Standards and Algebra Course Taken

The following Tables 1-4 provide a summary of the algebra course taken by student and whether or not the student reached the meets or exceeds level on the math portion of the PSAE. Student data comparing white students and African American students are shown. Other subgroups are not shown because the representative samples are too small to yield any conclusions.

1. Class of 2009 students who took Algebra 1-2 and the ACT-PSAE	Number of students	Meet or Exceed	% of total
Total enrolled in Algebra 1-2 and with a PSAE score	208	139	67
White students enrolled and with a PSAE score	124	93	75
African American students enrolled and with a PSAE score	56	27	48

2. Class of 2010 students who took Algebra 1-2 and the ACT-PSAE	Number of students	Meet or Exceed	% of total
Total enrolled in Algebra 1-2 and with a PSAE score	204	147	72
White students enrolled and with a PSAE score	117	91	78
African American students enrolled and with a PSAE score	45	27	60

3. Class of 2010 students who took Algebra 1-2 Block and the ACT-PSAE	Number of students	Meet or Exceed	% of total
Total enrolled in Algebra 1-2 Block and with a PSAE score	76	34	45
White students enrolled and with a PSAE score	27	15	56
African American students enrolled and with a PSAE score	36	9	25

4. Class of 2010 students who took Algebra 1-2 Block or Algebra 1-2 and the ACT-PSAE	Number of students	Meet or Exceed	% of total
Total enrolled in either Algebra course and with a PSAE score	280	181	61
White students enrolled and with a PSAE score	144	106	74
African American students enrolled and with a PSAE score	81	36	44

The above information suggests that Algebra 1-2 Block is not promoting significant changes in the percentages of Algebra program students who meet or exceed state standards (comparison of Table 1 and Table 4); however, the total number of students who meet and exceed increased for the Class of 2010. It may be worth noting that the number of students enrolled in basic level math in the ninth grade decreased from 154 to 114 for the Class of 2010. One possibility is that the Algebra 1-2 Block places more students in the regular level program providing access to more academic rigor.

II. Information Regarding Meeting State Standards and Second Year Algebra Course Taken

After considering the correlation of the students taking Algebra 1-2 Block and attaining a meets or exceeds on the PSAE, a table was generated showing the second year algebra course for the students who took Algebra 1-2 or Algebra 1-2 Block. The course totals are summarized in Table 5 below.

5. 2nd Year Algebra Course for Class of 2010 students who took Algebra 1-2 Block or Algebra 1-2 and the ACT-PSAE	# Meets Standards	# Below Standards
CAT/CATA	32	4
Advanced Algebra	105	28
Intermediate Algebra	15	38

Students who meet standards took Advanced Algebra or a course at a higher level. According to Table 5 above, the modal class for students who have not met standards is the Intermediate Algebra course.

III. Information Regarding Growth on ACT-type tests and Algebra Course Taken

Finally, a series of tables was created showing the average growth for students from EXPLORE or PLAN to the ACT-PSAE. The growth averages for the math subtest score and the composite score were tabulated and are contained in Tables 6-8 below.

6. Class of 2009 – Growth from EXPLORE to ACT-PSAE for students who took Algebra 1-2 during the 2005-2006 school year

(Matched scores only. No Exceeds or Academic Warning Students included)

Meets State Standards	White Students (n = 84)	African American Students (n = 23)
Average Growth Math	4.7	3.5
Average Growth Composite	5.4	4.0

Below State Standards	White Students (n = 26)	African American Students (n = 27)
Average Growth Math	1.4	1.9
Average Growth Composite	3.4	2.2

7. Class of 2010 – Growth from PLAN to ACT-PSAE for students who took Algebra 1-2 during the 2006-2007 school year

(Matched scores only. No Exceeds or Academic Warning Students included)

Meets State Standards	White Students (n = 89)	African American Students (n = 26)
Average Growth Math	4.8	3.4
Average Growth Composite	4.9	3.3

Below State Standards	White Students (n = 24)	African American Students (n = 15)
Average Growth Math	2.3	1.6
Average Growth Composite	2.5	1.6

8. Class of 2010 – Growth from PLAN to ACT-PSAE for students who took Algebra 1-2 Block during the 2006-2007 school year

(Matched scores only. No Exceeds or Academic Warning Students included)

Meets State Standards	White Students (n = 15)	African American Students (n = 9)
Average Growth Math	4.1	4.9
Average Growth Composite	5.0	3.2

Below State Standards	White Students (n = 11)	African American Students (n = 25)
Average Growth Math	2.0	1.3
Average Growth Composite	2.5	1.7

The above tables show a consistency similar to other growth analyses of test data.

Additional tables showed a consistency similar to other growth analyses of test data. Gaps appear between white and African-American students and between students who meet and those who score below state standards. However, a relatively small number of African-American students who took Algebra 1-2 Block showed high growth on the math subtest between the PLAN and the ACT test. It was suggested to look at their experiences more closely. And, for each pair of growth averages, the average growth for the composite score is greater than average growth for the math subtest EXCEPT for the African-American students in the class of 2010.

Thus, the administration recommended continued review of the program's effectiveness and consideration of the following:

- Continue to offer Algebra 1-2 Block, but more effort should be made to align the curriculum standards and assessments more closely with the Algebra 1-2 program.
- Improve the percentages of students who take either Algebra course and meet or exceed on the ACT-PSAE. The Algebra 1-2 Block class has been effective in reducing the number of students who enroll in the transition or basic level ninth grade math courses while maintaining the percentage of students who meet and exceed. More growth progress would be realized by reducing the number of students who take basic level math and increasing the percentage of students who meet standards.
- Consider supplemental math courses for students who, after completing Algebra 1-2 or Algebra 1-2 Block, are not projected to meet state standards. Students who enroll in Advanced Algebra are better prepared for the PSAE exam and are more likely to meet state standards. A supplemental math course for targeted students, either as a summer school or a regular school year course, could lead more students to enroll in Advanced Algebra or in a more challenging math course in their junior year.

From the class of 2009 to 2010, there was an increase of 72 students in the Algebra I program, including a nearly 50% increase of African-American students in the Algebra program with a roughly equivalent portion meeting or exceeding standards, so that a greater number of African American students met or exceeded standards in the class of 2010 compared to the class of 2009. Table 5 shows results from a second analysis to see how students they fare on the PSAE based on enrollment in different second-year algebra courses. Students taking Advanced Algebra or higher were more likely to meet or exceed standards.

Mr. Prale concluded that the growth patterns in most of the tables presented mirror the general academics: white students tend to score higher, and composite growth for all students tends to be greater than math growth. The one exception to this pattern was for African-American students enrolled in the block program, but there were only nine such students in the sample. It is interesting and worth looking into that. (Table 8).

Ms. Hill noted that OPRFHS has not adopted ACT readiness standards as its standards. OPRFHS standards include state standards, many of which are aligned with ACT, as well as its local standards.

Referring to graphs 6, 7, and 8, it was noted that growth by African-Americans is larger than others in two of the graphs. Consideration is being given to ironing out some of the variations where there is a matched program across the two. Ms. Hill added that the Algebra learning team will examine and review the curriculum including looking at student data on classroom assessments and determining how their instruction may be altered. When asked how students get caught up, the reply was that the high school needs to strengthen the articulation with the elementary districts.

Ms. Patchak-Layman asked if when teachers disaggregate data, did they also disaggregate what happens instructionally between the African-American and the White students. Are there things that occur with white students that could be isolated in order to identify changes that need to be made to the program? Ms. Hill responded that teachers have done this work to examine their curriculum and instruction and they would like to do more differentiation. However, she was not sure it would break down by race, but rather by student need. If a need for differentiation was found, they would then have to ask whether they should address something for African-American students.

Dr. Millard asked if the school could target certain students and require them to take a particular course. Ms. Hill stated that the culture at OPRFHS is not one of mandate, because there could be a number of reasons why a student could/should take a course. However, one element of the culture is that parents do have the final say. If a parent had a reason why the student should not take the course, it would be honored. Mr. Rouse stated that when eighth grade scores are received discussions are held with the parents; ultimately the parents have the final say on the recommendations. When asked what happens when a parent goes against the school's recommendation, it was noted that the previous math chair had tracked requests for overrides and what additional tutoring was given. Ms. Patchak-Layman did not feel parental requests for overrides were not wrong. She asked if the high school had ever attempted to address the issue of whether or not there are such things as OPRFHS standards as opposed to all standards being set by the parents. Parents are not allowed to set behavior standards, but they are allowed to set academic standards for course entrance. Where are there academic standards being set by the high school? Mr. Rouse replied that standards are set via the *Academic Catalog*, but how parents interpret the standards may be a different issue.

Dr. Weninger noted that two of the three recommendations concerned students. One recommendation had to do with professional development of teachers. All teachers had the Algebra Block training but currently professional development is the working with the team on best practices. As such, a decision was made to administer tests, which assess all of the instructional material up to that point, every two weeks. Thus, some of what is happening is because 1) two teachers attended motivating classes last spring on assessment and now are advocating teaching the class differently; and 2) the team by effectively working together has introduced innovations in individual teaching.

Progress Reports

Test Prep ACT/PSAE Prep Programs Class 2009

Ms. Hill had shared the results of three test prep programs used by OPRFHS students 1) EXCEL Edge; 2) Revolution Prep, and 3) College Admissions Prep (CAP) in her written report. Excel Edge and Revolution Prep are offered to junior students at large and CAP is a for-credit course that runs during the school day second semester which is targeted for juniors identified from prior standardized test scores as being on the margin of potential for meeting PSAE standards. The highest scores achieved by students were in the Excel Edge program, followed by Revolution Prep and then CAP.

Ms. Hill reported on the success of the CAP program. Of the 126 students targeted for participation in the CAP course, 38 enrolled, 16 enrolled in Excel Edge, and 72 did not enroll in any test prep program offered through the high school. CAP students' average ACT scores were equal to or slightly lower than average scores for non-participants. Their average score in math was slightly better than the 16 ExcelEdge participants' average math score, but the ExcelEdge participants had higher average ACT scores in English, Reading, and Science than did CAP students. CAP student's rate of meeting and exceeding standards in reading was the lowest.

CAP students outperformed non-participants in their growth from the sophomore year Instructional ACT to the junior year PSAE-ACT in all subject areas. The differences in English and Math were slight, but in Science CAP students grew on average a full point more than non-participants. CAP students' growth exceeded that of ExcelEdge participants in Math and Science, while ExcelEdge participants showed more growth on average in English and Reading.

The District will continue to work with the private companies Excel Edge and Revolution Prep. Based on the growth analysis, test scores increase more as a result of enrollment in CAP than when students do not participate in test prep programs, the District will run two sections of that course second semester. The results of the program will not be known until the District receives PSAE results in late summer.

Ms. Hill was told by the counselors that opportunities for test preparation during the day have proven worthwhile for those students who have taken advantage of them.

Additional Instructional Matters for Committee

While no additional items were discussed, it was noted that a report on grading would be shared at the January Instruction Committee meeting.

Adjournment

The Instruction Committee meeting adjourned at 8:56 a.m. on Monday, December 7, 2009.