

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

INSTRUCTION COMMITTEE MEETING
January 14, 2014

An Instruction Committee meeting was held on January 14, 2014. Dr. Gevinson called the meeting was called to order at 6:36 p.m. in the Board Room. Committee members present were Dr. Steve Gevinson, 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; Nathaniel L. Rouse, Principal; Karin Sullivan, Director of Community Relations and Communications; Sheila Hardin, Faculty Senate Executive Committee; and Gail Kalmerton, Executive Assistant/Clerk of the Board.

Visitors: Board of Education members Dr. Ralph Lee and Thomas F. Cofsky; Mr. Altenburg, Chief Financial Officer; Julie Frey, OPRFHS Math Division Head.

Visitor Comment

None

Approval of Minutes

Ms. Patchak-Layman moved to approve the minutes of the December 10, 2013 Instruction Committee minutes, as presented; seconded by Dr. Moore. A voice vote resulted in all ayes. Motion carried.

Requested Information on Class Size

Dr. Gevinson moved to send the class size report to the Board of Education at its regular January meeting with the recommendation that the administration and the faculty look at several approaches to setting class size in various divisions, tracks, and programs within the school, considering 1) Strategic Plan goals, 2) work load equity, 3) practices and peers in other districts, and 4) costs and benefits to students, seconded by Ms. Patchak-Layman. A voice vote resulted in all ayes. Motion carried.

Dr. Gevinson felt it would be worthwhile to look at class size, not in the context of the contract, but as a joint study team. Because this was an important aspect of education in this school, he wanted to understand the method used. Mr. Rouse explained the process.

- 1) A systematic approach was used to register students, i.e., first seniors, then juniors, then sophomores, and then freshmen. The following target class sizes are used:
 - a. Transitional Courses – 16 to 18 students
 - b. College prep Courses - 18 to 24 students
 - c. Advanced placement Courses - 26 to 28 students.
- 2) Take that course and divide by indicators.
- 3) Historical data determines whether another section should be added.
- 4) The process starts in March when recommendations are made on hiring based on student interest.

Dr. Gevinson summarized that the FTE number determines the number of sections offered. Dr. Moore shared that some students drop out of AP & Honors classes because they find the classes too challenging. She was surprised that AP and Honors class size kept increasing. What is not shown in the report is where students move to when they change classes. In terms of philosophy, what would help determine the necessary number of FTEs?

Ms. Patchak-Layman noted that changes were occurring within class structures, i.e., co-taught classes or college-types of classes, etc. Instructors lead large groups and then break off into smaller groups. How can the high school talk about classes, philosophy, new ways to deliver instruction, what class totals would be, and what the tradeoffs might be? If the goal is to get more Special Education students into regular classes, then the number of students enrolled could be lower. The study group should look at class structure as well.

New Business

Educational Initiatives

Dr. Gevinson wanted the Board of Education to consider how much it wanted to spend on special initiatives rather than focusing on just taxing people less, abating the debt, bond and interest payments, and capital expenses. Dr. Gevinson felt the District needed to consider unexplored avenues such as the AVID program which has the goal of getting students into college, and/or a full-blown advisory program, and/or an expanded resource center similar to that of peer schools, etc. He wanted a discussion about whether the Board of Education should charge the administration to come up with a menu of options, including pilot programs. He wanted the Board of Education to look at the educational implications of its funding, knowing that the goal is to reduce the amount of funding it has. He wanted to consider what initiatives should be added to improve the experience of students and staff, and what programs needed to be replaced because they are not working well, etc. He acknowledged that this would be time consuming and prioritization would be important. Both Ms. Patchak-Layman and Dr. Moore wanted this idea discussed at the next committee meeting before moving this to the Board of Education. Ms. Patchak-Layman, during the discussion of Board of Education goals at the Policy Committee meeting, asked for an accounting of why a program started and/or stopped, what were the expected outcomes of a program, what were the positive and negatives of a program, how was it funded, and what assessment was used to measure achievement. Dr. Moore felt it would be helpful to coordinate this with the Strategic Plan.

Dr. Isoye too acknowledged the time commitment of joint committees and the fact that the administration may have to ask the Board of Education what items it wanted to curtail. Ms. Patchak-Layman noted that giving numbers to the District's targets would help determine the prioritization.

Ms. Patchak-Layman noted that the Department of Education came out with new advice on discipline in the schools and she asked for an update as to how that would impact the high school and how it would tie into the *Code of Conduct* conversation and Joint Review Committee involving discipline.

Adjournment

The instruction Committee adjourned at 7:10 p.m. on Tuesday, January 14, 2014

Submitted by Gail Kalmerton
Clerk of the Board