

# Oak Park and River Forest High School

## **Parent Teacher Advisory Committee (PTAC)**

### **Conference Room 201**

**Thursday, April 30, 2015; 3:30 – 5:00 pm**

**Present:** Lauren Achurra (Faculty), Brian Beyers (SID), Linda Francis (Parent), Steve Gevinson (BOE), Naomi Hildner (Faculty), Stephen Jackson (Parent), Justin Maxwell (Student), Nate Rouse (Chair), Carolina Schoenbeck (Faculty), Jonathon Silver (SID), Deloris Collins (Recorder)

**Absent:** Janel Bishop (SID), Qiana Carswell (Parent), and Alisa Walton (SID)

**Visitors:** Stephanie Crane (Student) and Ryan Borgdorff (Student)

### **Call to Order & Roll Call:**

The Parent Teacher Advisory Committee (PTAC) meeting was held on Thursday, April 30, 2015 in Conference Room 201. In the absence of Nate Rouse who will be joining the meeting at 4 p.m., Jonathon Silver called the meeting to order at 3:35 pm.

### **Approval of Minutes:**

Comments to the visitor section were revised to indicate that Karin Grimes is a member of the community. She indicated that she recently retired as a school social worker, that her children graduated from OPRF and she wants to keep informed about what is happening at the school.

A motion to approve the minutes of April 23, 2015 was made and approved by all.

### **Visitor Comments:**

None.

### **Committee Recommendations:**

There was discussion about the new PSS Team and the support it affords in covering student attendance for the SIDs. Since we will not be outsourcing the substance abuse person, it was questioned if this position could substitute to cover the duties of the attendance interventionist. There was more discussion around how we envision this person doing the job in a non-putative fashion and other processes we could put in place if the SID is involved with an emergency situation and a student needs help with an attendance issue. An idea came forth to use technology to remind students about their upcoming detentions. Since most students have phones, text messages could be sent to remind them to serve their detention. Justin Maxwell indicated that this would be overwhelming to see all the reminders coming to his phone. Steve Gevinson stated that he would like to see other ideas using technology in this area.

It was shared that Skyward does not log tardys and that Plasco is one of the best software programs available for tardys. The student representative felt it important that students see a person asking them why they are not going to class and that sending messages to their phones won't change their behavior. We must get to the root cause of why a student is tardy, without being punitive. It was shared that the lock-in and the opportunities that peace circles provides allow for students to waive their detentions. Snowball is also an option and opportunity. For students who want to change their behavior, there are some opportunities. It was stated that some students don't serve their detentions as they know that they will be bailed out of it.

As attendance patterns develop before the problems start, Ms. Grimes shared that it is important to have personal interventions available for disengaged students. In School Suspensions are too late to change a student's patterns. Ms. Grimes felt that personal relationships are needed and that it's more than just attendance and academic achievement, and that someone to work more diligently with students is required.

Mr. Silver shared that safety is the first priority and when they become aware of looming fights, they address them immediately. Fights have gone down from past years. He also stated that with the new team, the SIDs will have more time to devote to attendance. It was questioned if when students are brought in to receive their detention slips, could we at that point have them to meet with a therapist as a way to have the face to face? Mr. Silver responded that we have the capabilities to see when a student has received their 3<sup>rd</sup> warning, but it is difficult for the SIDs to meet with students especially on days when lots of "stuff" breaks out.

It was questioned by Mr. Gevinson what can we do to make it work with all the new people who have been approved for hire? How feasible is it to have a person to see someone within a day or two to talk with an interventionist? He also asked if the SIDs' job allows time to be set aside to handle attendance, without emergencies coming up? He felt that by coordinating services and with the use of technology, we should be able to diminish tardies by approximately twenty percent and the SIDs should be able to do it. Mr. Silver responded that the SIDs can address attendance, but not consistently.

Mr. Rouse introduced a rotational model in which each SID focus only on attendance issues for their student one day per week and the other SIDs would be involved in building management. The SIDs and Counselors have very different conversations with their students. This rotational model will give statistics to compare as we move forward and for next year. Although we were not approved for the attendance interventionist, the job responsibilities and duties have been vetted, so we are in a better position for next year. Ms. Francis spoke about the punitive approaches and her hope was that the counselors would be more involved. It was shared that the PSS Teams meet weekly to discuss student concerns. Mr. Rouse shared that code of conduct thresholds have been lowered and some of the punitive approaches have been replaced, however some of the students did not respect the changes and the changes were not a deterrent to their behavior.

Mr. Rouse will write up recommendations from this group's discussion for academic honesty, IDs and more intervention for attendance, including restorative justice practices. Recommendations will be shared prior to the report to the Board.

A group of 16 students will be going to Malcolm X College on Saturday to discuss student discipline. The hope is that recommendation will come out of the retreat. A full student discipline retreat will be held in the fall. There will be a leadership course for Juniors and Seniors in which they be connected to freshmen in their study halls. This pilot program will address different issues and based upon its success it could become larger for next year. There is an application process for this year long class.

**Adjournment:**

Nate Rouse moved to adjourn the PTAC Meeting at 5:05 p.m. The move was seconded by Jonathon Silver.