

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

**Culture, Climate and Behavior Committee**  
**April 7, 2016**

A Policy Evaluation and Goals Committee meeting was held on April 7, 2016. Chair Dixon Spivy called the meeting to order at 7:06 p.m. in the Board Room. Committee members present were: Mary Blankemeier, Anthony Brooks, Jennifer Cassell, Lincoln Chandler, Anthony Clark, Wendy Daniels, Cathy Gustafson, Sheila Hardin, Dr. Steven Isoye, Latoya Jackson, Steven Jackson, Melanie McQueen, Ralph Martire, Lindsay Moore-Fields, Nathaniel L. Rouse, Cormac Warden, Jonathan Weintraub, Lee Williams, Val Yarrington, Kayla York, and Sara Dixon Spivy. Absent were Dr. Steven Gevinson and Naomi Hildner.

**Visitors:** Dr. Jackie Moore, Jonathan Silver, Milanne Bancroft,

**Public Comments**

None

**Welcome Remarks**

Ms. Spivy thanked the members for their one-year commitment to studying the Code of Conduct. At the end of this commitment, she hoped a new Code of Conduct would be in place. Cathy Gustafson and Lincoln Chandler were introduced as the facilitators who will help with research, study and help to make a recommendation to the Board of Education. The idea is to structure this work in the following 3 phases.

- 1) Lay the groundwork. What is discipline like at OPRFHS, how is perceived and how is it practiced.
- 2) Research best practices on intervention (more targeted practice for those in evaluated risk) and prevention (done for the community at large),
- 3) Response (what is the community response to restoring the previous culture of calm).

The agenda was reviewed.

**Introductions**

Members

- Cathy Gustafson, facilitator. Her connection to OPRFHS is professional development about West 40 and the PERA Committee. She went to North Park Academy in Chicago which no longer exist.
- LaTonia Jackson, OPRFHS outreach coordinator, has three sons who graduated from OPRFHS, and she graduated from Roger Park Sullivan High School
- Lindsey Moore Field is an OPRFHS junior
- Anthony Brooks is an OPRFHS Junior and member of the Hip Hop Club
- Lincoln Chandler, facilitator. He is working with OPRFHS on its Strategic Plan. He attended Whitney Young High School.
- Gail Kalmerton, Assistant to the Superintendent and Clerk of the Board. She attended Oshkosh High School in Oshkosh, Wisconsin.

- Wendy Daniels, 23 resident of Oak Park and went to Beverly high school. Her two older sons graduated from Oak Park, and her daughter will attend next year.
- Cordon Warden is an OPRFHS junior and a member of the Hip Hop Club.
- Mary Blankemeier is an OPRFHS junior
- Val Yarrington is a security officer at OPRFHS and attended North Central High School in Mississippi.
- Steve Jackson is a 1994 Graduate of OPRFHS.
- Ralph Martire is a D90 school board member and ex-board member of the Federal Equity and Excellence in Education Commission. His son is a senior, and his daughter is a freshman. He attended high school in Stratford Conn.
- Jennifer Cassell, District 200 Board of Education member, graduated from Proviso East High School in Maywood
- Jonathan Weintraub is the new Student Intervention Director. He also student taught at OPRFHS. He attended Downers Grove South.
- Nathaniel Rouse has been principal at OPRFHS for eight years and graduated from Elgin High School
- Anthony Clark is a 3-year OPRFHS teacher and a 2001 graduate
- Sara Dixon Spivy is a Board of Education member, Cook County public defender, and has lived in this area for three years. She wants to be educated as to how she can help.
- Sheila Hardin is an OPRFHS math teacher, a graduate of OPRFHS, facilitates the equity work for teachers and staff, and is president of the teachers union.
- Dr. Steven Isoye is superintendent and attended Rolling Meadows High School.
- Melanie McQueen is co-president of APPLE and parent of one OPRFHS graduate and 2 District 97 children. She attended Mather High School in Chicago.

#### Public

- Parent of Anthony Brooks, attended George Westinghouse Vocational High School and presently attends Triton College to be a surgeon's assistant. He is a 4.5 year resident of Oak Park.
- Dr. Jackie Moore is an OPRFHS Board member, a resident of Oak Park for 22 years, mother Lindsay and her twin Kendall, and both of her sons graduated from OPRFHS, one in 2007 and one in 2011. She attended Miami Valley School in Dayton, Ohio.
- Jonathan Silver, an OPRFHS SID. He has been at OPRFHS since 2007 and is a graduate of Stevenson High School in 2012.
- Milanne Bancroft is an administrative assistant at OPRFHS and homeowner since 1989. She began working at OPRFHS in 1993. She attended Bellaire High School in Houston Texas.

#### **Goals for CCB and the Roles of the Facilitators and Chair**

The goal of the CCB is to create a discipline code that is more holistic and takes into account where students are. The Board of Education will vote to implement the Code of Conduct for the 2017-18 school year. The chair, facilitators, administrators and Board of Education members are nonvoting members of this advisory committee. The Board of Education members on this committee will present the final recommendation to the full Board of Education, but communicates will occur throughout the time that the committee meets so that adjustments, recommendations, etc., can be discussed.

The Committee agreed to the following Norms:

1. We will work together as a community that values building consensus.
2. We will be fully present” at our meeting by being prepared and being attentive.
3. We will invite and welcome the contributions of every member and listen to each other.
4. We will operate in a collegial and open atmosphere.
5. We will be guided by the OPRFHS Mission statement which enhances successful for all students.

The Committee agreed to use of the following resources:

1. Current Code of Conduct
2. Seeding Change in School Discipline, American Educator, Vol. 39., No. 4, Winter 2015-16
3. Planning on developing a shared folder of resources

### **Open Meetings Act**

Because this is a Board-appointed committee, it is subject to the Open Meetings Act and all members must complete the Open Meetings Act Training. Committee members will be asked to confirm their attendance at the meeting because a quorum is needed in order for the meeting to occur. All correspondence should go through Ms. Kalmerton, including any questions. Also, because OPRFHS’s life is being filmed, filmmakers may want to film these meeting. Any questions should be directed to Dr. Isoye and Ms. Kalmerton. The meetings are being audio recorded and the link to the record will be included in the agenda for public review. Students on this committee can expect to receive communication at their OPRFHS email addresses.

### **Meeting Structures for the Months of May and June**

Future committee dates include April 21, May 5, and May 19. The meeting will last 1.5 hours beginning at 7:00 p.m. and ending at 8:30 p.m.

### **Overview of Current Practices and Data on Discipline as Broken Down by Age, Gender, and Race and Questions from Members**

The Committee members were asked to think about the following questions as the two First Semester Discipline Reports were reviewed.

1. What did you learn?
2. What surprised you?
3. What do you want to know more about?

The discipline reports provided data about a student’s gender, race, and age. The reports were comparable from semester to semester. Correlation between discipline and grades exist; multiple infractions do affect grades. The District implemented a suspension reduction program. Consequences are needed to change behavior, and the District needs the committee’s feedback, especially the student feedback.

Mr. Silver reviewed first the discipline report without failures. Last semester, while 1873 infractions occur, 1500 of them were due to tardiness. The Board of Education approved students assigned an OSS to go to the offsite program, MENTA, and to provide the transportation. MENTA uses certified teachers and social workers. The District closely communication with MENTA about the students. The Board of

Education will receive an evaluation before it approves the continuation of its association with MENTA. MENTA's program was developed by OPRFHS staff to replicate the high school's program.

Last year 440 infractions occurred as compared to 373 this year. This year an additional PSS Team was added which it has allowed more preventive interventions to occur. He reviewed the definitions of infractions that were listed on pages 52/53 of the *Student Handbook*. While pages 59 and 66 explain what the infraction is, not everything can be defined. Each year something happens which causes a Gross Misconduct, Class I addition. It is important for students to understand the Code of Conduct so that they do not repeat the behavior.

Class I: Gross Misconduct

Class II: (verbal warning or 1-hour detention)

Class III: Loss of instructional time, defiance of authority. Modified closed campus

Class IV: Jeopardizing My Education (10 days OSS) (Student Reduction Program). These students attend MENTA. So far this year 80 students were sent there.

The recidivism rate will be provided at the next meeting.

Anecdotally, Mr. Silver felt that infractions decreased with school security changes, i.e., adding double doors, hiring a director of campus security, a more collective effort to wear ID's, having more trained security guards, and asking students if they were aware of what they had done, per state law.

It was suggested that one member's recommendation to implement a system that would allow the student to confront the accuser be noted in the sheet that had been distributed. The administrative response to how repeat referral writers are handled was that when such observations are made, classroom management techniques are suggested to the teacher. Teaching is very different from managing a classroom, and it is critical to the learning process.

Students do have a referral process. The SIDs have administrative judgment as to what is prescribed in the Code of Conduct or something less. The appeal process is 1) speaking with the principal within three days of the infraction and if not satisfied with the principal's determination and 2) meeting with the superintendent. One member suggested doing research on the appeal process and the parents' comfortableness with the school, advocacy, and equity.

Mr. Weintraub reviewed the process:

- 1) discovery of circumstances
- 2) bring in other staff, counselors, teachers, etc. and call parents to make it a learning situation, not a punishment.
- 3) determine how to solve the communication problem, repair relationship, learn from it.

Infractions happen throughout the building, and not generally in the classrooms.

A student spoke about inappropriate behavior by a teacher and asked if teachers had consequences. Again, the administration response was that discussions do occur with faculty and staff about such incidences, but because these are personnel matters, students would not be informed of any consequences.

Discussion ensued about a student's permanent file. It was clarified that the permanent file must be kept for 65 years and contains the student's grades, where he/she lived, and the parental guardianship. The temporary file contains discipline records, attendance, etc., and is maintained for only five years. At year 5, a letter is sent home making them aware that they can take the file, or it will be expunged. A question sometimes on college applications is whether the student has had any discipline consequences. Note: this is a self-reported answer. The school does not provide that information. Parents also have the ability to look at the child's data that is being transferred from D97 to D200. One member asked for clarity to be given to parents about the records.

Dr. Isoye encouraged members to complete the form distributed, particularly question #3 about what they wanted to know more about so that the chair and facilitators could identify themes.

Mr. Chandler suggested asking the question when looking at the data about how the District got there. Does the data feel right? He appreciated the student comments and asked them to talk about their reality versus the data.

Additional comments/questions:

- 1) One member asked that the data be separated to see the actual numbers of percentages of people, i.e., is it 15 girls or 15 incidents?
- 2) Does economics make a difference?
- 3) How much is driven by legal requisites for the Student Handbook?

Again, committee members were asked to send their questions to Ms. Spivy, Dr. Isoye, and Ms. Kalmerton.

The Committee will review the Code of Conduct and look at due process at the next meeting.

### **Adjournment**

At 8:32 p.m., Ms. Hardin moved to adjourn; seconded by Ms. Daniels. A voice vote resulted in motion carried.

Submitted by Gail Kalmerton  
Clerk of the Board