

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

**INSTRUCTION COMMITTEE MEETING**  
**December 8, 2015**

An Instruction Committee meeting was held on December 8, 2015. Dr. Gevinson called the meeting was called to order at 4:36 p.m. in the Board Room. Committee members present were Fred Arkin, Dr. Jackie Moore, and Dr. Steve Gevinson. Also present were Dr. Steven T. Isoye, Superintendent; Philip M. Prale, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction; Nathaniel L. Rouse, Principal; Sheila Hardin, Faculty Senate Executive Committee Chair; and Gail Kalmerton, Executive Assistant/Clerk of the Board.

**Visitors:** OPRFHS Faculty Member Toni Biasiello

**Minutes**

Dr. Gevinson moved to approve the minutes of the October 13, 2015 Instruction Committee, as presented; seconded by Mr. Arkin. A voice vote resulted in motion carried.

Dr. Gevinson moved to approve the minutes of the November 10, 2015 Instruction Committee, as presented; seconded by Mr. Arkin. A voice vote resulted in motion carried.

**Follow-up on Technology Presentation**

At the previous meeting, the Instruction Committee members had asked what other institutions were doing outside of OPRFHS to affect student learning. Of the 12 schools whose Chief Information Officers were surveyed, only those at Districts 90 and 97 responded, seemingly an indication that everyone struggles with measuring the educational impact of technology. While it was suggested that in order to know more about how technology impacts instruction principals and curriculum and instruction directors should be surveyed who have gone to 1:1, it may still be unclear because they may not have gone into it with a particular achievement goal in mind. While using technology has allowed personalized learning, e-learning, flipped classrooms, etc., whether it has increased achievement is not clear. OPRFHS bought chromebooks to facilitate the PARCC testing, which contributed to chromebooks becoming the device of choice. While discussions have occurred about allowing students to bring their own devices, it may be too problematic for the faculty to support students having different devices. At this time, the District has 2,400 Chromebooks in carts, in addition to the 430 devices that go home with students. Eventually, the plan is for all students to have a device to take home. The District also has IPAD carts. The focus is now on the faculty's ability to work with the electronic devices in their classrooms in order to provide the best instruction possible.

The discussion of equity will continue as to which students have the most need for 1:1 deployment of devices. Students will be held responsible for bringing their devices each day to school. Though, the school presently has several alternatives for students, it in the future, it might not as manageable to continue this level of service.

OPRFHS originally contracted with BryghtBytes to help survey the school and community on technology questions. West 40 has now purchased it, and OPRFHS is blending its contract with them in order to be able to share survey data and lend validity to the direction OPRFHS is pursuing. The plan is to survey the school and community twice every year.

## **FTE Report**

The Instruction Committee unanimously recommended forwarding this report to the full BOE at its regular December meeting. The information in the report is generated through Skyward.

## **New Graduation Requirements - Civics**

The Instruction Committee unanimously recommended forwarding the New Graduation Requirements--Civics report to the full BOE at its regular December meeting as an informational item. Ms. Biasiello chaired the committee that vetted many options for this required course, i.e., embed the curriculum in the American History or AP Government course, offer a single class, and require tracking. This course was unanimously approved by the History Division and everyone was excited about teaching it. The reason it is appealing is that it is an untracked class in which students will learn to be citizens with their peers. Discussion ensued.

One member was excited about having a foundational class that provides an informed and educated opinion, as opposed to just a passionate one. Service learning means that students will have skill sets that are matched with community needs, which will need to be nuanced and organized and will require professional development. Dr. Isoye, Ms. Spivy and Dr. Moore spoke with Senator Harmon about civics and service learning. This class will lend itself to many opportunities, i.e., working with the Community Foundation SAY program, etc. One member echoed the positive sentiments about this course but questioned why another course was being discontinued. The administration responded that divisions are asked to consider sunseting classes that have low enrollment.

Note: The civics requirement will be acknowledged in the Policy Manual. This will be an additional requirement for the class of 2020. The administration would like as many students as possible take this class during the regular school year, but students who transfer in or other students in special circumstances would have a summer option.

## **Articulation**

The Instruction Committee unanimously recommended forwarding the report on articulation forward to the full BOE as an informational item at its regular December meeting. The report included the plethora of ways in which OPRFHS and its sender districts articulate with each other and how OPRFHS articulates with other entities within the community. They included:

- Dr. Isoye, Superintendent, works in collaboration with the sender districts, meeting monthly with the other superintendents to discuss common issues, to look for ways to share resources, and to broaden conversations.
- Dr. Isoye collaborates with high school districts that send students to Triton College through the Des Plaines Valley Region – Education for Employment. He works directly with Triton through the School College Alliance (SCA). The DVR focuses on ways in which to support schools with career pathways, dual credit, and various grant dollars. Through the SCA, the group of high school and elementary school superintendents work with Triton to examine data and examine our current math and English language arts continuums.
- Dr. Isoye also collaborates with both the Oak Park Management Council and the River Forest Management Council. These councils, which are made up of the executive directors or superintendents from various governing agencies, share issues and discuss ways to support each other.
- Dr. Isoye works in partnership with the West Cook superintendents through the West 40 Intermediate Service Center to discuss state mandates and other regional issues.
- Mr. Prale, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, collaborates with sender district administrators to plan the official calendar, meeting in the fall to identify each district's

start and end dates, to align winter and spring breaks, and as many national holidays as possible. Staff consider options for scheduling professional development time across multiple districts.

- Mr. Prale also articulates with Triton College on dual credit and because of administrative changes at Triton, new articulation opportunities are in the future.
- Mr. Altenburg, Chief School Business Official, works with community business managers and colleagues from Districts 90 and 97 quarterly to share budgets, discuss EAV, new construction, all items related to the tax levy, health insurance and Affordable Care Act (ACA) legislation, building maintenance, shared services, best practices in safety and security measures, and effective strategies for communicating school finance with the community. At times, business managers from all Oak Park and River Forest taxing bodies are invited to attend. The Chief Financial Officer for the Village of Oak Park, the Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations for District 97, and the Chief School Business Official for OPRFHS also meet quarterly to review TIF distributions from the Village of Oak Park in accordance with the TIF settlement agreement reached a few years ago.
- Ms. Sullivan, the Director of Communications, meets regularly with District 90 and District 97 communications colleagues to maintain a relationship among the three districts, share information and communications strategies, and apprise one another of any potential high-interest issues. The three districts recently collaborated on creating a consistent procedure for announcing school closings. All three districts have issued similarly worded notices to stakeholders announcing that, whenever possible, a weather-related school closing will be announced by 8:00 p.m. the night before. If a final determination cannot be made by then, a decision will be communicated by 5:30 a.m. the next morning.

In addition, the process of transitioning students from 8th grade to 9th grade involves extensive planning and articulation across not only the three large public school districts in these communities but also communication and planning with the nonpublic schools. For each of the steps noted below, District 200 administration and staff send communications to parents and administrators in sender districts. The schedule is as follows:

- October: the Student Activities Director works with middle school staff to plan a series of “Welcome to OPRFHS” events, including field trips by middle school students to the high school where they participate in tours led by OPRFHS student mentors. During an evening meeting, OPRFHS students participate on a panel to answer questions for middle school parents.
- November and December: the Director of Assessment and Research receives basic directory student information from the sender districts and coordinates placement testing, setting up the Division Heads to process the data points and place incoming 9th graders in courses by early January.
- January: the Principal, the Assistant Principal for Student Services, and the Student Activities Director present information and answer questions at each of the area middle schools. Transition to high school evening programs are held for parents where they receive initial course placements and view Division Head presentations on the curriculum and placement process.
- February: An Open House evening is held at which all clubs and activities are highlighted. Later that month parents attend small group meetings with counselors to discuss course options for the coming year.
- Summer: Incoming 9th graders have the option to attend summer school, and as many incoming 9<sup>th</sup> grade students attend as rising 10th and 11th graders combined.

For the past 9 years OPRFHS has funded a 4-1/2-week transition program for approximately 42 incoming 9th grade students who have underperformed in the middle school; the program is called the 8-9

*Connection.* These students are identified by the middle schools. If a student completes this summer program, it signifies the student’s completion of the middle school program. These students tend to struggle with attendance, discipline, and executive functioning issues. Collaboration with sender districts includes identifying students and their specific learning needs and assets and sharing of staff for the summer transition program. Teachers in the summer program are hired from Districts 97 and 200. Teachers co-plan and co-teach the separate sections of the 8-9 *Connection* program. The program focuses on enhancing student reading and writing skills, math readiness, and adjustment to the high school, and includes an evening program for families.

A question raised by a committee member was: how can the trajectory of students who are involved in disciplinary issues like tardies be changed, etc., because this behavior does not start at the high school. It was noted that in middle school it is hard for students to be tardy, but students move from class to class at the high school and it is easier for them to take a “second” lunch. Through the use of the data warehouse tool, the high school can be more attentive and get information from feeder districts. Another factor that was discovered was the students in the 8 to 9 transition program did not have a good nutritional foundation and through the vision of Mr. Prale, Kris Johnson, Dr. Walker-Qualls, Mr. Altenburg, and the Oak Park and River Forest Food Pantry, the students were provided sack lunches and snacks every day and that seemed to help with issues of attentiveness.

**Presentation of Proposed 2016-2017 Calendar and Preview of 2017-18 (draft) Calendar**

The Instruction Committee unanimously recommended forwarding the Calendar for the 2016-17 School Year and the preview of the 2017-18 School Year to the full BOE at its regular December meeting for approval. Highlights for the 2016-17 were as follows:

August 22	Freshman Attendance Day
August 23	First Student Attendance Day
December 26-January 6	Winter Break
March 27-31	Spring Break

**Achievement Topic Update**

A report on how Division Heads are using the new data warehouse tool will be a future discussion.

**Adjournment**

At 5:31 p.m., on December 8, 2015, Dr. Gevinson moved to adjourn the Instruction Committee meeting; seconded by Dr. Moore. A voice vote resulted in motion carried.

Submitted by  
Gail Kalmerton  
Clerk of the Board