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

INSTRUCTION COMMITTEE MEETING
February 18, 2014

An Instruction Committee meeting was held on February 18, 2014. Dr. Gevinson called the meeting was called to order at 6:40 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; Dr. Tina Halliman, Assistant Superintendent for Student Services; Sheila Hardin, Faculty Senate Executive Committee; and Gail Kalmerton, Executive Assistant/Clerk of the Board.

Visitors: Board of Education member Dr. Ralph Lee; OPRFHS faculty and staff members Jonathan Silver, Alisha Walton, and Nikki Paplaczyk; Miranda Johnson, Assoc. Dir. Loyola University School of Law and Kathleen Hirsman, Loyola University School of Law.

Visitor Comment
None

Approval of Minutes
Dr. Moore moved to approve the minutes of the January 14, 2014 Instruction Committee minutes, as presented; seconded by Ms. Patchak-Layman. A voice vote resulted in all ayes. Motion carried.

Overview of New Federal Guiding Principles on Discipline
Ms. Patchak-Layman introduced two representatives, Miranda Johnson and Kathleen Hirsman, both from the Discipline, Education Law and Policy Institute at Loyola University School of Law, whom she had met at a forum sponsored by the American Bar Association from the Council of Racial and Ethnic Justice. The forum topic was The Schools to Prison Pipeline—What are the Problems and What are the Solutions? that was in response to the new Federal Guiding Principles on Discipline that came from the Department of Education and Department of Justice in January. Ms. Patchak-Layman invited them to give an overview on these new Guiding Principles. Ms. Hirsman, also an ELL teacher prior to becoming a lawyer, has worked with school districts as their legal counsel and now teaches at Benedictine, Concordia, and Loyola Universities. Ms. Johnson's background includes being a social studies teacher in a residential school before becoming a lawyer, participating in a Fulbright Scholarship to Tanzania and working there for three years, attending law school and receiving policy degrees from NYU and Princeton, clerking for a federal judge and being an attorney for an advocate for a children's organization in New York, as well as being a 1993 alumni of OPRFHS. A link to the guiding principles and resources was provided in the packet.

This presentation was for information only, not legal advice. Dialogue and discussion as to what the Guiding Principles mean and what technical support can be expected from the Department of Education and the Department of Justice continues. This conversation is part of a larger discussion on how to adjust and respond to the Guiding Principles. Discussion ensued about the zero tolerance policies in the 1990's as it was a time of rigid rules, no mitigating circumstances, and pre-determine discipline imposed without consideration of any extending circumstances. The new Guiding Principles help address unintended consequences of zero tolerance policies.

While the Guiding Principles do not represent changes to federal laws, they do represent recognition of the body of research that has arisen about the results and impacts of exclusionary discipline policies on students of color and underrepresented groups. The Guiding Principles represent the interest of the federal government and the Departments of Education and Justice in disproportional impact, signaling an interest in monitoring and enforcing the Guiding Principles. The Office of Civil Rights is actively seeking opportunities for investigation and the ABA is setting guidelines for advocates in terms of issuing complaints to that office. They, too, provide support of technical assistance to schools. Additional research includes 1) evidence-based practices of success, 2) ways to create positive school climate, 3) the fostering of restorative justice, 4) looking at discipline as a teachable moment, and 5) the creating of change in the student's life through the culture of education. A Guiding Principles package includes a "Dear Colleague" letter that describes how schools can meet their obligations under federal law to administer student discipline without discriminating based on race, color, or national origin, both intentional and unintentional practice. It also includes a Directory of Federal School Climate and Discipline Resources, an Overview of the Supportive School Discipline Initiatives, as well as additional resources such as *Rethinking School Discipline*, discipline data gathered by the Office of Civil Rights, Frequently Asked Questions, a mini-factsheet, and a press release. More challenging is the second prong of analysis—disparate impact, meaning that schools also violate federal law when they evenhandedly implement racially neutral policies and practices that, although not adopted with the intent to discriminate, nonetheless have an unjustified effect of discriminating against students on the basis of race. The provided flow chart helps to determine whether a discipline policy has had an adverse impact. A reference was made to the OPRFHS Board of Education's observance that a disproportionate number of African-American students receive Failure-to-Serve Detentions. Based on those numbers, the policy of giving in-school suspensions and out-of-school suspensions could be having a disparate impact. If so, the next question would be based on what is offered in the Guiding Principles. Is the discipline policy necessary to meet an important educational goal? The Departments will consider both the importance of the goal that the school articulates and the tightness of fit between the stated goals and the means to achieve it. The policy of detentions may be important to the school because it wants to stop disruptive behavior such as going into unauthorized areas in the school, verbal abuse, truancy, etc., because these behaviors do not contribute to education in the classroom. If the discipline policy is important to meet the educational goal and there is a good fit between a policy of detentions and the education goal, the next question to be asked is, are there comparatively effective policies or practices that would meet the school's stated goal with less of a burden or adverse impact on the disproportionately affected group?

The Guiding Principles emphasize researched-based practices in student discipline. A quick review of Google Scholar did not provide research that supported detentions as being effective. More support was found for programs such as OPRFHS's suspension/reduction program, counseling and other interventions, as well as other programs such as a restorative justice program. Fenger High School has now gone from deans of discipline to deans of conflict resolution and trained them to use peer juries, student-to-student mediation, and restorative justice on voluntary basis. It has reported a sea change in the student population, as there is now more ownership of discipline, more of a sense of community, more resolution of conflicts between peers, and different thinking by students about conflict. All of these are opportunities for teachable moments. The Guiding Principles focus on climate and prevention, how the disciplinary strategies can be tiered, changing the culture and climate of the school, setting clear appropriate expectations and consequences through codes of conduct and community discussion and engagement, and improvement and striving for equity which goes to data collection and monitoring to ensure the desired outcomes. As an alumnus, Ms. Johnson knew that OPRFHS provided a world-class education and there were no limits as to what it can do to prepare students for the world. At OPRFHS, she learned lessons about equity, diversity, and inclusion and while all are lifelong lessons, some were less positive. It is not about just what happens in the classroom, but what happens in the building, who is included and who is excluded. A part of education is looking at the discipline policy to determine how it effects both high performing and low performing students and it is an opportunity to think about what

types of things schools can teach. Many times it is about social/emotional learning, learning appropriate behavior, and learning how to resolve conflict, etc.

Ms. Hirsman responded to administrative questions posted to her.

Q: Does the Athletic Code of Conduct, extracurricular activities, come under jurisdiction of Department of Education and Department of Justice?

A: Attending school is a right and participating in sport and extracurricular activities is a privilege. Because they are treated differently, schools have more leeway in terms of the rules and expectations for participation on teams. OPRFHS's athletic code of conduct is in effect 24 hours, seven days per week the entire year versus the mandatory school program. To the extent that the imposition of the policies has a disparate impact on students in a protected category based on their racial background or disability, the Departments of Education and Justice have the authority to scrutinize what is occurring. Telling students up front that they may not participate in an activity for a certain time because they were found to be at a party where alcohol was served is permissible. However, if it has a disparate impact, the federal agencies may investigate.

Q: What is the guidance on students and drugs?

A: The guidelines do not specifically address drug and alcohol offenses and whatever is in place is not going to be significantly affected by this discipline guidance. There can be no zero-tolerance rules for possession, consumption, being under the influence. However, consider whether excluding a student from school because of a violation is in the best educational interest of the school and the student. The shift is to go from punitive measures to alter a student's behavior to emphasizing engagement in the educational program. Drugs are rampant in some schools and while students need to be disciplined, schools also need to look at proactive measures.

Q: What data should be collected?

A: The Office of Civil Rights (OCR) instructions are for schools to collect the following data: A recordkeeping system should include demographic information for all students involved (disaggregated by race, sex, disability, age, and English learner status), as well as a description of the misconduct, grade level of each student referred for discipline, attempts to address the behavior prior to the referral for discipline, witnesses to the incident, prior history of the student, referring staff member, discipline imposed, and law enforcement involvement, if any.

Q: Does there need to be a formal complaint lodged before federal review?

A: Many avenues can be used to examine practices in the school district, including a complaint brought by an individual, committee member, advocacy group. OCR will review information brought to it and determine how it wishes to proceed. If a formal complaint is brought forward, the OCR will notify the district and do a thorough investigation including the interviewing of personnel. The recommendation was to work with the OCR. Compliance reviews will occur based on geographically targeted areas in addition to complaints brought forward to it. School districts will ideally want to resolve the conflict in a settlement agreement. OCR serves as the enforcement branch, it provides technical assistance, and it wants to be viewed in a positive light. School counsel should be involved in any investigation.

Q: How are alternative schools affected?

A: OPRFHS is responsible for what takes place in alternative schools under the Safe School Act and off-campus special educational settings if it places students in them. It is important for OPRFHS to be aware of their policies and how the students are being dealt with under the policies.

Dr. Gevinson noted that the Parent Teacher Advisory Committee is reviewing the discipline system and thinking of revisions. This committee is open to the public and has specific requirements under The

School Code of Illinois. Ms. Hirsman will provide the contact information for Fenger High School and a couple of schools who have had success with a restorative justice program. OPRFHS was complimented for looking at these guidelines. The committee appreciated Ms. Patchak-Layman bring this subject forward. The information will be shared with the full board.

Update on Rising Star

The State of Illinois requires schools to develop a school improvement plan based on the rating received on the School Report Card. In previous years, the school improvement plan was filed with the state on a biennial basis. OPRFHS filed one plan because of its single-school district composition. The document and forms were not user friendly for the development, implementation, and evaluation of an ongoing plan. In 2010, the State Board of Education collaborated with Rising Star to provide a new platform for school improvement documentation. Rising Star required staff to develop a District Plan and a School Plan. Toward the end of 2013, Rising Star developed a new template for merging the district and school plans. The state requires the Board of Education to approve the plan, which was linked to the information in the packet.

The plan has four components: 1) District Data, 2) Assess Indicators, 3) Create A Plan, and 4) Monitor Plan. The District data are based on data from its report card and other data collected and monitored, including the achievement data that are presented to the Board of Education at the start of the year.

The section titled Assess Indicators requires districts to examine indicators provided by Rising Star. The indicators are linked to research on the practice described by the indicator. The indicators are large-scale concepts provided for school improvement by the state. Some indicators are required while others are optional. The District is required to record activities that support the various indicators. In essence, Rising Star is a continuous log of school actions and improvement efforts. Many of the items recorded have been a part of presentations to Boards and work performed in various years to support Board goals. Due to the volume of the reporting required, Dr. Isoye provided a snapshot of the topics incorporated in the continuous log from 2010 to now.

Large-scale themes in the assessment of indicators include:

- Restructuring - The administrative restructure, included changing the Superintendent/Principal position to separate roles, moving Deans to the administration as Student Intervention Directors, creating the role of the Assistant Principal for Instruction, and reassigning duties within the existing structure, the forming 11-month division heads, and creating the ACT.
- Professional Development - The professional development area also focuses on technology, showing technology implementation in classrooms. However, the District has difficulty finding time to embed technology-specific PD.
- Common Core - The work of the common core and course mapping are a part of the plan. This focus is on core courses and will eventually extend to course electives. Mapping is part of the preparation for the new state assessment.
- Literacy - Over the past few years the District has implemented a reading and literacy program that includes Read 180 and the availability of Literacy Coaches and a revision to the core math program, creating extended math classes in algebra and geometry. Support for teachers in helping students achieve in both areas is documented.
- Performance Evaluation - Evaluation is a topic in the plan. The District uses a performance model developed by Charlotte Danielson. It will continue to work on the implementation needs as required by the state.
- Formative Assessment - There is a large emphasis on formative assessment, which allows teachers to monitor the progress of student learning. Teachers modify lessons or differentiate instruction based on the needs of the students and class.

- Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) – The focus is on building positive relationships with students, engaging them after school and in the classroom.
- Racial Equity – The District's work dedicated to race is a part of the plan. The ongoing implementation and work with PEG supports the Learning Strand and DELT efforts.
- Communications – The District's focus for the past few years has been its work to improve communications with the external community. Improvements are now being looked at internally.
- Use of Data - Access to data is in the plan to encourage the availability of data for the classroom teacher. Although data analysis is used to monitor programs, the current software does not allow the District to provide data for use in a sophisticated manner. The District is exploring ways to improve this aspect of data collection.
- School Safety - Safety is a part of the relationships the District has with various agencies. The position of the Director of Safety and Security is providing a better understanding of safety and security processes.

In the "create a plan" section, actions are to be determined to achieve the indicator. One criticism from the reviewer, Cathy Gustafson, at the state was that OPRFHS was very ambitious and chose too many indicators, making the plan difficult to monitor. "Monitor the Plan" is a tool for schools to use to monitor the plan. The state reviewer believes that that OPRFHS can transform the plan in the next year or two to reflect the work of the strategic plan. The District should also consider looking at the indicators and reassess according to the plan and use Rising Star to monitor its work. This electronic tool may help in managing the activities according to the plan in a systematic way. Dr. Isoye will be working with implementation teams on a process to make this transition. A crosswalk of the major themes with the strategic plan can provide implementation teams information to support current strategies or develop a transition. This is a living and lengthy document.

Ms. Patchak-Layman moved to place the Rising Star Program on the agenda for the regular February Board of Education meeting; seconded by Dr. Moore. A voice vote resulted in all ayes.

When asked how this would be implemented or talked about, the response was that this was the first time OPRFHS has a dedicated person as a resource to assist. It is dynamic and the District must learn how to utilize the components differently.

Mr. Rouse explained that there was cross work between the implementation teams and anything moved forward would be vetted so that there was a fidelity to the Strategic Plan and the Board of Education's goals and then inputted into Rising Star. The budget components will go through the implementation process and vetted through committees. An example of a budget change was that the Assistant Principal of Instruction needed additional assistance as the administrative charge was changed. The District is working through this change but there are issues with the software, etc. Ms. Patchak-Layman asked the following questions.

1) What does "all teachers" mean? What does that signify to the community?
2) Does full implementation mean this is the standard and it should be in all places and seen at all times or were there degrees?
3) How were priorities determined? As it becomes a working document, how does it fit together? How will it be made available to the community and how the community and other stakeholders will be a part of it and relate to it?

Dr. Isoye stated that the District has Board of Education goals, initiatives, the Strategic Plan, and the Rising Start requirements. The challenge is to merge all of them into one document. Mr. Rouse noted that all teachers will have learning targets and their own timeframe. There is no way to edit the document. Dr. Isoye used this document in the spirit of how the state wanted it and he did not delete

anything. He chose to use it as a running log. When asked if it were always full implementation once it was entered in, Dr. Isoye said it was the District's own monitoring, but he was unsure what the software would allow.

Report on Tutoring Activities
This item was tabled.

Sabbatical Leave Recommendations
Two sabbatical applications had been received for the 2014-15 school year. One was from Brandi Ambrose in the Counseling Division and the other was from Jessica Stovall in the English Division. Their applications were included in the packet. Questions arose about the specifics of what happens while people are on sabbaticals as well as questions about the sabbaticals themselves.

Ms. Ambrose would not supplant the counselors for future years. While on sabbatical, she would be researching, planning, and establishing contacts for this inaugural program. Incidental costs would be borne by the District. The Counseling Division Head supported this request, as it has been identified as a need area at OPRFHS and other districts have similar programs. A question was raised about why not use programs already developed such as the Boys' and Girls' Club, Jack and Jill, and/or different high school sororities, etc. to provide experiences such as college tours, etc.? The response was that it would have a firmer OPRFHS context, similar to the exchanges that OPRFHS provides when organized by faculty and staff, i.e., ownership and understanding of what families need. However, these concerns will be shared with the faculty member. Dr. Gevinson noted that recruiting and identifying students internally would be of great value. Mr. Kahn has done some of this work also.

Follow up on Educational Initiatives Discussion
This item was tabled.

Adjournment
At 7:55 p.m., Dr. Moore moved to adjourn the Instruction Committee meeting; seconded by Ms. Patchak-Layman. A voice vote resulted in all ayes. Motion carried.