

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

**INSTRUCTION COMMITTEE MEETING**  
**November 10, 2014**

An Instruction Committee meeting was held on November 10, 2014. Dr. Gevinson called the meeting was called to order at 7:40 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; Karin Sullivan, Director of Community Relations and Communications; Sheila Hardin, Faculty Senate Executive Committee Chair; and Gail Kalmerton, Executive Assistant/Clerk of the Board.

Visitors: Thomas Cofsky, Board of Education member, Claudia Sahagun, World Language Division Head, Marci Verdi, OPRFHS World Languages faculty member; Janel Bishop, Alysia Walton, and Michael Byars, Student Interventionists; Gladys Wright, OPRFHS staff member; Kris Ogden Raino and Anna Chavez Schaider, community members.

**Visitor Comment**

None

**Minutes**

Ms. Patchak-Layman moved to approve the Instruction Committee minutes of October 14, 2014; seconded by Dr. Moore. A voice vote resulted in motion carried. Dr. Gevinson abstained.

**Update from World Languages Division**

Ms. Sahagun and Ms. Verdi shared how Google Classroom and Google Docs is used in the World Languages Division to review assignments, watch streaming videos, and organize assignments. An online textbook, Estudio, has embedded links with audio, outside websites, etc. Students are able to keep their textbooks at home and logon to its site when they come to class. Google Forms and an online program, Flubarro, have online grading; students can receive feedback within two minutes of taking a test. Using Google Draw, students are able to work on the same project with a venn diagram. Using these tools, students are able to pull in graphics, custom images, etc. The level of engagement is high, and students like using Chromebooks. The advantage to using Chromebooks is that they are accessible all of the time versus scheduling and physically going to a computer lab a couple of days per week. Computer labs are still being used for recordings, however. For teachers, the learning curve has not been too difficult because of the help from TLC and students are familiar with technology. While students may not necessarily have more conversation because of Chromebooks, their on-task behavior is greater, i.e., conversation, writing, reading, etc., across all grade levels. Placement exams using Chromebooks will be administered to incoming freshmen in Spanish and French. Next year, Italian will be on line with Chromebooks.

The World Languages Division is exploring the guidelines and requirements needed for OPRFHS to offer a Bilitarcy seal. A committee will be formed and it may bring a recommendation to Mr. Rouse and Dr. Isoye to have a Bilitarcy seal on the transcript. Middle schools have indicated an interest in this as well. Students would have to prove a state-approved proficiency level.

Student progress is measured by comparing where they were to where they are. The biggest growth has been in Spanish and French because District 97 has a program in which all students are taking Spanish or French and, thus, they want to continue that at the high school. While German has increased, enrollment in other languages has remained constant.

The Committee unanimously supported moving this report to the full board of education.

### **Second Semester Discipline Report**

Annually, the Board of Education receives a summary of second semester discipline. Mr. Rouse referred to the report in the packet, noting that this year a recidivism report had been added and he asked if there were any questions. He noted that fewer students were committing consequences on more than one occasion.

Eighty-five percent of detentions are due to tardies. First and second period have the heaviest volume of tardies. While questions were asked about whether students were more compliant in serving their detentions during lunchtime, it was reported that students have the opportunity to serve their detentions before school or after school or during their lunch periods. For the past 2 years, students have been allowed to serve their detentions via a restrict lunch or while in the Tutoring Center. Other incentives are the big events at the school, i.e., homecoming, prom, etc. The administration will explore the percentage of detentions assigned, but not served.

Concern was raised about students losing time when they have to seek out a person to get a Plasco ticket, and then keep track of it. An alternative suggested was to send an email or a text to the student and/or the parent(s). This may be particularly time-consuming in PE classes as students have to change back to their regular clothes, find a security person, change back into the PE uniform and then turn it in to the teacher. Many students lose points for not wearing their uniforms. Mr. Rouse offered to speak with these students and noted that the handbook identifies where students should go to get a pass to class and when to serve their detentions.

A question was raised as to whether ISS changed behavior, as a large amount of students are not in class and not getting the instruction time they need and deserve. Input from SIDs, teachers, and students will be sought at the discipline retreat. Dialogue needs to occur about the reasons for the behavior. The student experience, in that voice, would be desired along with qualitative data.

The macro level of student behavior, being respectful, etc., has changed. At the recent Tradition of Excellence assembly, the students responded well to the awardees. One awardee spoke about his career as a math professor, another about nuclear arms, and the last about economic work and a conglomerate of for-profit colleges.

The administration was asked for a comparison of how the halls have changed over time and what that feels like.

The Committee unanimously supported moving this report to the full board of education.

### **Student Discipline Retreat**

Dr. Moore reported that she would soon learn the themes that came up in the interviews with the facilitators of the Student Discipline Retreat. Hopefully, the retreat scheduled for December 6 at the Library will be based more on using the information and subsequently having dialogue with administrators, staff, and students.

### **Calendar**

A 2015-2016 school calendar was brought for preliminary consideration. This calendar has been discussed by a faculty committee selected by the FSEC and also shared with representatives from Districts 97 and 90. It outlines start and end of school dates for staff and students, and winter and spring breaks and legal holidays. This proposed 2015-2016 calendar abides by the number of student contact and staff attendance days stipulated by the school code and existing agreements.

Discussed ensued about why Veterans' Day was being observed on that day rather than on a Friday or a Monday. One member felt that even though previous Board of Education's had supported observing it on that day, it should be reconsidered and coordinated with Districts 90 and 97. Discussion also ensued about the unevenness of days between first and second semester, a total of 8 days and the concern of the early start and the early finish, as the community did not have an expectation that school should be completed by June 1 nor why school had to start before Labor Day. A member noted that having finals before winter break did not prohibit the exploration of quarter or trimester systems. Another member concurred noting that the requirements do not change for students in a shorter semester and that students were under pressure to complete the required curriculum. Another consideration is the PARCC assessment in the spring and the District's attempt to make everything even is without understanding how the new assessments will affect the calendar. One member felt that the District should be tallying pupil instructional days to gauge that level, rather than student contact days, as tests are considered exam days and not instructional days.

It was the consensus of the Committee to move this to the entire Board of Education at its November meeting.

### **PARCC Discussion**

Ms. Hill prepared a report on Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC), which are the new school accountability measures for the State of Illinois. Beginning with the 2014-2015 school year, the Illinois State Board of Education requires school districts to administer the PARCC assessments, a common set of K-12 assessments in English Language Arts (ELA) and mathematics. Currently, 12 states and the District of Columbia are planning to administer the PARCC test, but 23 states had originally signed up for this assessment. The assessments are aligned to the new Common Core State Standards adopted by Illinois in 2010. The new standards place greater emphasis on academic rigor, critical thinking, problem solving,

and college and career readiness. The purpose of the PARCC test is to determine whether students are on track to graduate from high school ready for college and career.

If the District decided to not to use this test, it would be foregoing the NCLB consolidated grant of \$380,000, and, perhaps, other sanctions. The state accountability system is monitored by federal government, ESEA.

During the weeks of PARCC administration, other classes will just be in their classes.

Two members questioned the need to participate in the test noting that the only positive was that the District would not lose its funding and they felt that if the District thought this testing was not good for the students, it should make a statement to that effect to the parents and other constituents. The negative side included the fact that 1) there was no clear benefit to students for taking it, 2) it could be detrimental to those who do not do well on the test, 3) it was an expensive administer, 4) significant class time lost, 5) the test is not tested, 6) it may not be a valid test, 7) it will not gauge growth, 8) it may have no application to anything depending on whether other states drop out, and 9) the early ACT will hurt students as students cannot take the test later. Because of that imbalance, Dr. Gevinson felt it was incumbent on the District to take a stand on the test and make it known that it is problematic educationally for the students. The administration responded that the advantages may be less apparent, as norming the ACT for first year college students was problematic as well. The advantage from the growth perspective is that it is not currently aligned to the SAT. This system, in theory, could give better predictors and a growth model over time. Faculty comments have been positive and that it might be good to challenging the students in this way. There are huge challenges, however; legislators need to make decisions. Another member was concerned that a student may have to watch a movie to fill time because other students in his/her class were taking the tests. The testing time for both the ELA and Algebra is 9.5 hours which is not concentrated and student schedules will be disrupted. Discussion ensued about the fact that there were interesting innovations in the construct of the test as it was being designed with the principals for universal design, the kinds of constructive responses that were reflected in the March time frame that teachers want their students to know. One member reiterated that it might not be a bad test, it was just bad for students.

### **Adjournment**

At 9:19 p.m., on November 10, 2014, Dr. Gevinson moved to adjourn the Instruction Committee; seconded by Dr. Moore. A voice vote resulted in motion carried.

Submitted by Gail Kalmerton  
Clerk of the Board