

OAK PARK AND RIVER FOREST HIGH SCHOOL
201 North Scoville Avenue
Oak Park, IL 60302
INSTRUCTION COMMITTEE MEETING
May 18, 2015

An Instruction Committee meeting was held on May 18, 2015. Dr. Gevinson called the meeting was called to order at 4:32 p.m. in the Board Room. Committee members present were Fred Arkin, Dr. Steve Gevinson and Dr. Jackie Moore. 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; David Ruhland, Director of Human Resources; Sheila Hardin, Faculty Senate Executive Committee Chair; and Gail Kalmerton, Executive Assistant/Clerk of the Board.

Visitors: Sara Spivy and Jennifer Cassell, Board of Education members; Tod Altenburg, Chief School Business Official, Jonathan Silver, OPRFHS SID.

Minutes

Dr. Gevinson moved to approve the minutes of the April 14 Instruction Committee, as presented; seconded by Dr. Moore. A voice vote resulted in motion carried.

Textbooks

Dr. Moore moved the adoption of the instructional materials, as presented, forward to the Board of Education for approval at its regular May meeting; seconded by Mr. Arkin. A voice vote resulted in motion carried.

Walkthroughs

Dr. Gevinson moved to forward the Update on Classroom Walkthroughs Report to the Board of Education at its regular May meeting as an informational item; seconded by Dr. Moore. A voice vote resulted in motion carried.

Ms. Hill reported that a group of faculty and administrators have formed a Walkthrough Committee whose purpose has been to collect data about student engagement by conducting brief classroom visits. The protocol is to capture “snapshots” of engagement at objective points in time across an entire day. Four rounds of Walkthroughs (3 or 4 minutes each) have been conducted each of the past two years. They focused on student behaviors evidence of cognitive student engagement. Data was included in the report. The most commonly recorded category was Teacher-Led Instruction (36% overall), followed by Student Work with Teacher Engaged (30 overall). OPRFHS’s data are lower compared to typical ranges. Student disengagement was recorded less than 1% of the time (3-5% is typical); student work with teacher not engaged was recorded in 6% of visits (compared to 5-10% in the national data). Note: 190 visits were completed in the first round, but the frequency of these last two categories was noticeably lower in the fourth and final round. The committee was composed of faculty members from every division and administration. In coming years, feedback to the teachers observed may be provided. The data has been used for faculty-wide discussions; however, those discussions have not been well attended. Anecdotally, teachers would prefer having the data for their own learning. The Committee will address some ideas to inform its practice.

The Committee is using a systematic approach to moving through the master schedule and the building. Classroom teachers are observed only once and counselors and psychologists are not included in these observations. The observations are not evaluative. Committee members have had conversations about engagement and how to help them in cognitive tasks in regard to learning. One member found the

discussion rich, but was unclear how the data would be used to inform discussions or how the data could be connected as to what was good and what was not good.

One member had been disappointed that the Strategic Plan had not come forward with TESA, a teacher-observing-teacher program. While it was noted that discussions had occurred about a similar program which may come forward to the Board of Education, it would not make sense to have walkthroughs and a more elaborate program.

Restorative Justice

Dr. Gevinson moved to recommend a one-topic item for a Board of Education retreat on Restorative Justice; seconded by Dr. Moore. A voice vote resulted in motion carried.

The Committee was informed that SIDs are currently practicing Restorative Justice and, when possible, it is being done informally by staff members. It is not being practiced systematically, however. If the District wanted to go that route, one member felt a committee composed of community members, parents, and students should be formed to study it.

Dr. Moore noted that several of the proposals coming through the Strategic Plan Committee had aspects of Restorative Justice embedded in them, i.e., peace circles and peer mentoring, etc. On May 2, a group of students went to a program at Malcom X College sponsored by CPS that talked about student leadership and discipline, and Restorative Justice was its gateway and theme throughout that program. OPRFHS students had their own planning committee on May 9 with Chicago VOYCE and that was part of the discussion. She has met several people who do this work in Chicago and others nationwide, but she met the director and co-director of Community Chicago Justice Youth Initiative (CJYI) recently and they are working with Dominican University which has interns who are learning how to work in the juvenile justice system and schools. They are already working at middle schools and they talked about their trainings around the country, not only with youth, but with adults and about their understandings of readings, workshop environments, etc. She supported a 2½ hour Board of Education-level retreat as a good step to have a better understanding of the vocabulary and what Restorative Justice means and should the youth have a bigger role in issues. This could require outside preparation in addition to a facilitated conversation.

Dr. Gevinson concurred and noted that he co-authored a book called Increase the Peace, which was about preventing gun violence in the schools.

Reading Program

Dr. Gevinson moved to recommend that the Board of Education be presented with the Reading Report as an informational item at its regular May meeting.

This is an annual report. The reading program is a multi-tiered system of supports that is responsive to reading needs via computer, individual readings, small group discussions, etc. The primary assessment tool for the program is the Scholastic Reading Inventory (SRI), an adaptive reading comprehension test that provides an assessment of reading levels. The results can be used to measure how well readers comprehend literary and expository texts of varying difficulties. Every student is assessed and most students are at level. The District is meeting the goals and is continuing the work into the math area, i.e., Star Math.

Discussion ensued about the data, noting that in the class of 2012-13, 58 students were below level in the most intensive range and 80 students were not reading at the college prep range. After 9th grade, those

students in College Prep courses are enrolled in support classes and will continue to be tested. This report shares how the District is progressing with the reading program in general.

A concern was raised that students were unaware of the resources available to them and while some have made tremendous gains, they are still be in need of support as they have to take remedial classes in college. This member asked about ways to infuse an attitude of literacy into every class so that there is scaffolding and the expectation is that one understands the materials. It would take the stigma of not being able to read away and, thus, may change student behavior, i.e., cutting classes, discipline issues, etc. When the administration talked about inviting literacy coaches to division meetings to talk about how to include literacy into the classroom, two members wanted to have discussions with the literacy coaches and staff. The District has seen upticks in students who meet the requirements of reading and teacher have a different mindset. The District does not have an independent measurement for the reading program.

One member reflected that approximately \$10,000 was being devoted to resources for each of the 58 students, i.e., double period, 2 teachers, and aide in 6 classes, one of which was Special Education. The other 100 students also had special needs but not at that level. Has the District thought about having the reading program audited and then comparing OPRFHS's results to those of other schools?

Adjournment

At 5:32 p.m., 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