

**Oak Park River Forest High School
201 N. Scoville
Oak Park, IL 60302**

**Strategic Plan Steering Committee Minutes
January 7, 2013**

Dr. Isoye opened the Strategic Plan Steering Committee meeting at 7:02 p.m., January 7, 2013 in the Staff Café of the OPRFHS, 201 N. Scoville, Oak Park, Illinois.

Members:

Nina Allen, Thrive Counseling Center	Larry Landfair, Community Member
Dr. Allan Alson, Facilitator	Dana Limberg, OPRFHS
Jan Arnold, Park District of Oak Park	Sophia Lloyd, OPRF Community Foundation
Marge Balchunas, OPRFHS	Pat Maunsell, Facilitator
Rebecca Teasdale, Oak Park Public Library	Melanie McQueen, Parent
Mary Jo Burns, Ascension School	John Messina, APPLAUSE
Leah Carlin, OPRFHS	Kerry Nelson, PTO/P4SS
Dick Chappell, River Forest Community Center	Carolyn Newberry-Schwartz, Collaboration for Early Childhood
Aleta Clardy, Community Member	Sharon Patchak-Layman, OPRFHS
Anthony Clark, Community Member	Regina Peterson, OPRF Scholarship Foundation.
Randall Clark, Community Member	Phil Prale, OPRFHS
Robert Cole, Village of Oak Park	Janice Pryce, Citizens' Council
Dr. Edward Condon, River Forest Elementary Schools	Bobbie Raymond, Alumni Association
JP Coughlin, OPRFHS	Brian Reilly, OPRFHS
John Duffy, Community Member	Latroy Robinson, Student
Valerie Fisher, OPRFHS	Nathaniel Rouse, OPRFHS
Joyce Gajda, OPRFHS	Anna Schaidler, Roosevelt PTO
Kathryn Gargiulo, OPRFHS	Joanne Schochat, District 97
Nancy Guarino, Community Member	Steve Schwartz, OPRFHS
Dr. Tina Halliman, OPRFHS	Carollina Song, Gwendolyn Brooks PTO
Sheila Hardin, OPRFHS	John Stelzer, OPRFHS
Nancy Heezen, OPRFHS	Jessica Stovall, OPRFHS
Burcy Hines, APPLE	Karin Sullivan, OPRFHS
Maria Hoyer, Community Member	Drew Swope, Student
James Paul Hunter, OPRFHS	Rick Tanksley, Oak Park Police Department
Dr. Steve Isoye, OPRFHS	Jane Townsley, Parent
Stephanie Jackson, Community Member	Mark Trinkka, Hephzibah
Mary Johnson, Student	Jason Tyszko, Community Member
Kris Johnson, OPRFHS	Alysia Wallace, OPRFHS
Ambria Jones, OPRFHS Student	Brenda Jones Watkins, Triton College
Grace Kavinsky, Student	Kimberly Werner, Supported Education Association
Ray Kennelly, Dominican University	Cathy Yen, BOOSTERS
Kathy Kern, Parenthesis	

Members not present: Maria Hoyer, Nancy Guarino, Burcy Hines, Stephanie Jackson, Larry Landfair, Janice Pryce, Jason Tyszko, Anthony Clark, and Ronald Clark, community members; Jan Arnold, Park District of Oak Park; Bobbie Raymond of Alumni Association; Wyanetta Johnson of APPLE; James Paul Hunter, Dana Lindberg, OPRFHS faculty members; Steve Isoye, Superintendent; Alysia Wallace, Marge Balchunas, John Stelzer, Brian Reilly, OPRFHS Staff; Jan Pryce of Citizens Council; Dr. Edward Condon of District 90;

Brenda Jones Watkins of Triton College, Latroy Robinson, Grace Kavinsky, Drew Swope, Mary Johnson, students, Mark Trinkka of Hephzibah; Robert Cole of the Village of Oak Park; Chief Rick Tanksley of the Oak Park Police Department and Cathy Yen, BOOSTERS.

Visitors: Rich Mertz, OPRFHS Faculty Member, and Rebecca Bibbs and Jon Langley of the *Oak Leaves*.

Updates of Evening

Focus Groups – Data and Discussion

Dr. Alson reviewed what had occurred at the December 17 meeting with regard to values. The survey deadline was extended until January 6. The results will be shared at the Saturday, January 12 meeting.

Focus Group Results

Ms. Maunsell then reviewed a PowerPoint presentation that provided an analysis of the focus group data. She shared that it had been a great process as many stakeholders participated and from them, a breadth and depth of information was learned. The Committee members were commended on their efforts to make people aware of these opportunities, as those efforts were productive. The stakeholder groups included students, faculty, administrators, staff, and the community-at-large. A breakdown of the number of people who participated in each group and their estimated ethnic representation was provided. Note: A majority of the staff and faculty participated in the August 2012 Institute Day Focus Groups. For each stakeholder group, two categories of analysis were provided: 1) Strong agreement across stakeholder groups; and 2) Mixed agreement across stakeholder groups. The analysis of the results did not reveal a third category—a strong disagreement across stakeholder groups. Ms. Maunsell reviewed the results of each stakeholder group, which was provided in the packet.

Student Feedback

Students were complimented for having the courage to discuss issues such as race, and what did and did not work with regard to teaching styles and effectiveness. Several African-American students spoke about being the only person of color in their classes and it became a personal issue for them. The conversation did not lead to the students offering solutions to problems.

Faculty Feedback

Ms. Maunsell noted that there was high regard for colleagues. One of the points of interest was that teachers felt more support was needed from administrators in terms of professional development, etc. Administrators too felt that teachers needed more support. Another item regarding communications was that teachers did not understand why a program ended. Relationship building has class size implications.

Administrator Feedback

Administrators feel that while they converse about what needs to occur in the building with regard to diversity, race, special education, it does not necessarily reach the entire school community, etc. This is an issue of communication. An alignment between the policies and the procedures is needed.

Staff Feedback

The staff noted that recruiting and retaining a diverse staff was necessary. While teachers want to build relationship with students and other staff members, the building is losing its personal touch. The mailroom is no longer necessary as everyone now is directed to a website. Staff felt that rules needed enforcement. They, too, did not understand why a program failed or succeeded.

Community Feedback

The community focus groups did a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analysis and Ms. Maunsell noted the articulation between high school and the feeder groups and the support of the high school. She reviewed the slides of the presentation.

Information was then shared with the committee as to what stakeholders were saying that could inform the strategic plan in the areas previously identified as emerging themes.

Equity

Strong agreement across stakeholder groups

- Expectations and achievement gaps exist and is a problem
 - Better understanding of diversity and issues within OPRFHS are needed
 - Address inequities and tracking system

Mixed stakeholder views

- Tracking
 - Inevitable: just strengthen transition and college prep levels versus needs to change—African-American students are stuck in low tracks.
 - Parents' Role
 - Want to support all students versus some parents know how to work the system which perpetuates inequities

Holistic Community Education

Strong agreement across stakeholder groups

- Strong commitment and engagement in education across all stakeholder groups
- Differences in academic and social preparation by elementary district and individual middle school.

Mixed Stakeholder Views

- Focus on all students versus perception that to support achievement for all will take something away from students currently achieving

Transformation Teaching, Learning, and Leadership

Strong agreement across stakeholders

- Inconsistency in instructional delivery, quality and expectations
- Support for instructional improvement (e.g. coaching, PD)

Mixed Stakeholder Views

- Preparing all students for college? What does it mean?
- Consistent Expectations

Supportive Learning Environment

Strong agreement across stakeholders

- Need for more personalization and relationship building within and across stakeholder groups

Mixed stakeholder views

- Behavior/Discipline
- Drugs/Alcohol/Fighting

Facilities and Finance

Strong agreement across stakeholders

- Need for alignment of resources to support equity
- Must prepare for enrollment growth
- Technology must be upgraded and consistent throughout the school

Mixed stakeholder views

- Fund balance

Threads running throughout all stakeholder groups across all categories

- Equity
- Communications
- Academic Expectations
- Need for consistent instructional leadership through OPRFHS
- Seamless quality of connections across institutional entities

Rather than offer solutions to their own problems, students addressed their roles as students, e.g., getting their homework done, etc. Note: an editorial submitted for the student newspaper, *Trapeze*, specifically addressed some solutions in the November 16 issue.

Ms. Maunsell informed the Committee that while the focus group sessions were recorded and she took verbatim notes, anonymity within the group had been stressed. If the group wanted more examples they could be provided, but Ms. Maunsell stated that she and Dr. Alson had worked hard to provide an analysis that was comprehensive and reflected what was heard across the groups. A question was raised about not understanding what was meant by a “disconnect between teachers and administration”? It was explained that teachers wanted administrators to be in the classroom more and to talk with them more about doing their jobs in order for administrations to understand the struggles of being a good teacher. The administrators had wanted more information about the quality of instruction, the need for improvement, and instruction for students.

Several committee members felt that the data provided was valuable and sufficient, as it reflected a common current with all schools that have this diversity and middle class. Ms. Raymond had asked what OPRFHS could do to take what other inspirational ideas schools in the United States with similar perceptions had taken. She wanted to take the next steps. Mr. Duffy was disturbed by the analysis, as he did not feel the focus on professional development, inequities in the schools system, etc., was explicitly stated. He was concerned about quantitative data. He too was tired of analysis, noting that MSAN had spent years gathering data and not enough action. Dr. Alson noted that over 100 people had volunteered to come and speak at the focus groups and that this was the best data from those who attended. Every group was enthused and supportive of OPRHFS, yet they did say there was room for improvement. In analyzing the data, there was clear intent to capture strong agreement, mixed, and strong disagreement. However, no strong disagreement was found.

Next, the Committee participated in an exercise where they were to create two grids, one for equity, and one for holistic community education. Committee members were asked to list under each of these the implications of forming “equity” and “holistic community education” goals.

Next Steps

Saturday, January 12 Details

The details for the January 12 all-day meeting were as follows:

- 1) Location – 3rd floor library
- 2) Time 9 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.
- 3) Purpose – dive more deeply into equity and holistic community education.

February 4 – draft statements will be reviewed around the values mission, vision, and goals,

The dynamics of the task forces will be as follows:

- Approximately 12 people
- Additional staff and/or community members may participate
- The task forces will have the same diversity as the Steering Committee

- The task forces will meet during February, March, and April.
- Steering Committee members will be asked for their preference of task force.
- The goal will determine goals.
- The task forces will report to the Steering Committee May 6, at which time the Steering Committee members may respond.

The Steering Committee will meet in March, April, and May. The Board of Education will receive a first read of the Steering Committee's plan at its June Committee meeting and it will be asked to approve it at its regular June Board meeting.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 9:02 p.m.