

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

**Strategic Plan Steering Committee Minutes
February 11, 2013**

Ms. Maunsell opened the Strategic Plan Steering Committee meeting at 7:03 p.m., February 11, 2013 in the Staff Cafe of the OPRFHS, 201 N. Scoville, Oak Park, Illinois.

Members:

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

Members not present: Maria Hoyer, Burcy Hines, Larry Landfair, John Duffy, Kimberly Werner of SEA; Bobbie Raymond of the Alumni Association; Ray Kennelly of Dominican, John Stelzer, Brian Reilly, JP Coughlin; OPRFHS Staff; Ray Kennelly of Dominican University; Wyanetta Johnson of APPLE; Robert Cole of the Village of Oak Park; Mark Trinkka of Hephzibah; Brenda Jones Watkins of Triton College;

Visitors: Rebecca Bibbs of the Oak Leaves and Jon Langley.

Welcome and Overview of Evening and Revision Process

Ms. Maunsell welcomed the committee members. At the last meeting, comments were shared about the draft values, vision and mission, and goal statements created from previous conversations. The committee members also participated in a gallery walk where they noted their agreement or disagreement with the statements. Ms. Kalmerton gathered those comments into a spreadsheet. The gallery walk tracked the conversations noted in the spreadsheet. A team of external and internal committee members helped to rewrite the drafts. Ms. Maunsell thanked John Messina, Cathy Yen, Phil Prale, JP Coughlin, Jessica Stovall, Karin Sullivan, and Dr. Isoye for their help in this endeavor. The team had done much aligning and revising to make sure the statements followed a cohesive path and that they were simplified and substantive. Some phrases were bolded to provide the big ideas in the statements. Discussion ensued.

Those who participated on the writing team shared their thoughts on this experience. They included:

- 1) What was striking was the degree to which Ms. Maunsell, Mr. Prale, and Ms. Sullivan had of what people had said and then referencing it. Their work was “agenda-less”. The process can be trusted.
- 2) If a revision was made, all of the comments were reread to insure the original intent was reflected. Significant time was spent thinking about the Berkley vision statement. Ms. Stovall felt this captured that vision.
- 3) Mr. Prale concurred, noting that the team members reviewed what they had heard and read, as they worked through the statements, continually asking themselves if they had met the collective challenge set forward. It was as thorough as it could be given the time constraints.

The Committee then spent about 15 minutes reviewing the value statements collectively. Following that, comments were shared with the entire committee. They included:

- 1) Consider making a more affirmative word choice: “is” or “this is” vs. “should”
- 2) What does #2 mean? Is that professional development or Human resources? Note: the team tried to get at professional development and distributed leadership.
- 3) First eight are good. What does “adult performance” in No. 9 mean? Is that faculty and staff? Is performance linked to performance reviews?
- 4) Number 10 needs to be more direct with regard to financial accountability and responsibility of community, as many more community members do not have children in schools. Who is the “school community”? What does “allocating resources” mean?
- 5) Appreciative of the bolded phrases because they were easy to capture.
- 6) Be more transparent with No. 10. Note: the discussion of the writing team focused on equity. While good fiscal stewardship is important, it was not the concern the team had in mind. Perhaps this sentence was too broad.
- 7) Great
- 8) The term “special education status” carries a stigma.
- 9) Instead of “learning differences” students with special needs, change to “different ability levels.”
- 10) With regard to differentiated instruction, a concern was expressed as to whether the school was promising it would do that, as it seemed prescriptive. Note: suggested language change to read, “Meet students at their needs.”
- 11) With regard to No. 3, are all students capable of success? What is success? Is it academic achievement? Note: the team felt that making the clear statement that all students can succeed was important because it is a clear value versus some students may not be able to do well. Historically that does not occur in education and the reason for the statement. In terms of what it means, it could be how the student defined success and achievement, or it could include a wide range of acceptable definitions of success. If only one definition of success is adopted, is that limiting? Since this is to be a value statement, the better choice was to go with an open one, recognizing that many legitimate

ways to define success exit. While it was not stated, it could mean prepared for whatever a student wanted post-secondary life.

- 12) Caution about literalism, i.e., strong trusting relationships. A trusting relationship means students do not have to wear IDs and all of the doors are open. A safe environment today means two different things.
- 13) The phrase “purposefully allocate all resources” is revolutionary and all in the room must agree with it.
- 14) Recommendation to use “appreciation of literacy....” Use other kinds of statements that explore cognitive/social emotional skills. Organize it better, add more skill sets. Are particular skillsets being called out over others? Is this what is valued or should there be a reference to skill sets, cognitive skills, transition, and recognition? Suggest 21st Century skills, etc.
- 15) Note that the word “must” is only used once and the word “should” is used 6 times. Does the “must” statement hold more value?
- 16) People can usually only memorize five value statements. This list is much longer. Note: This reflects the Committee’s conversations from the beginning. The desire is to be succinct and reflective of the community’s values.
- 17) These should be used in the decision-making process.
- 18) The value statements were originally categorized, but the committee asked that they not be clumped together. Some statements seemed more important than others did. While communication is very important, the student experience is more important.
- 19) First on the goals was holistic education, but not for the values. Why?
- 20) Nothing here is unique to OPRFHS. Consider adding a mission statement for the task forces and the implementation as to what is great about OPRFHS—it values students. Note: In looking at districts around the country, while a commonality exists in values, the difference is where the emphasis of energy and commitment is placed.
- 21) Value statements about education resonate to the extent that they are and should be universal. If there is something unique, then serious consideration should be given as to whether it would fit here.
- 22) Diversity is unique to OPRFHS, but where should it be included.

Vision and Mission Statements

Ms. Maunsell stated that the writing team spent time eliminating jargon and simplifying the vision and mission statements. The writing team felt that the totality of the vision and mission statements covered the same territory as the Berkley statement, but differently. The team also considered whether it were arrogant that OPRFHS aspired to be a “national model,” differing views were raised about that terminology. OPRFHS is in a position to excel in excellence and equity. If it extends that excellence across the board, it means that the achievement gap is a solvable problem. Comments were then shared.

Vision

- 1) ...“will be a national model,” from a student standpoint, sounds pompous. Suggested: “we will be a leader for educational excellence.”
- 2) Instead of “will be a national model....” use “should be...” or striving to be....” It sounds better to strive towards perfection.
- 3) Striving to be a model that others would like to follow is good for others to follow.
- 4) Name the issue to be fixed—the achievement gap, instead of saying “increase educational opportunities and outcomes.”
- 5) Reflect the communities’ needs, rather than the nation’s needs, as they do not drive the communities need.
- 6) Keeping the phrase “national model” will reflect the desire of a certain strand of the community who want a school with a national reputation.
- 7) Is this an internal or external document? If an internal document, then name the problem. If for the entire community, people should not be able to say that it is not their problem. Who is the audience

for this? Ms. Maunsell stated that it was for everyone, an internal document that derives decisions. The mission and vision statement will be posted on the website.

- 8) Consider replacing “provide educational opportunities...” instead of “increase educational opportunities”
- 9) Does “nurtures the human spirit,” refer to the whole person, rather than a religious connotation?
- 10) “Does OPRFHS not “allow all students”? Suggested replacing “allow” with “empower”
- 11) Replace “human” potential, instead “unique” potential
- 12) Where would careers fit? College or career in first. Something should be named as career. Value statements should say post-secondary life.
- 13) Much of the data was academic transitional data, calling it out in the vision statement is worthwhile.
- 14) The sentences need to be clearer.

Mission

- 1) Some members felt the statement was too lengthy. Suggested eliminating unnecessary phrases. Replace “ever-changing global society”, as it holds no meaning, with “evolving global community.”
- 2) Students may be proud of OPRFHS but they may also not be connected. Suggested, “school is also vital to the community and something in which the community takes pride.” For the school to be successful, it must be transparent.
- 3) There is more than one way to be connected to the school.
- 4) What does “community participates fully in the life of the school” mean? Much of the life in the school is teaching. “participates fully” is an awkward add-on statement.
- 5) Vision statement is at the 30,000 ft. level, but should something measurable be included in the mission statement?
- 6) Replace “community participates fully in the life of the school” with “community is encouraged or is able to participate fully in the life of the school.” Many people ask to participate in the life of the high school.
- 7) Family is absent from these.
- 8) Only one statement deals with communication and transparency, and the collaboration piece is confusing. What is the degree of community engagement?
- 9) Include the word “positive.”

Goals

The task forces will use these goals to drill down further and develop action steps. Once the plan is adopted, the school will look at implementation and include the faculty. Many more steps will occur once there is agreement on the goals.

Holistic Community Education

1. Who are the educational institutions? What about social services agencies?
2. “educational institutions” was limiting. Note: The team did not want to lose the importance of articulation with D90 and D97.
3. Replace “both” with Oak Park and River Forest”
4. What is well known? End after “adults” in order to distill and avoid repetition.
5. Who are the adults?
6. Issue of well-known goes back to trusting relationships. Note: The team struggled with broadening or limiting the language. An educational institution is anyone. Any adult is any person in the community who has an impact on the student.
7. When talking about adults, use “faculty and staff”

Equity

- 1) Match with the value statements, income, gender, etc. Note: The vision statement defined equity in a broad way. In theory, vision and mission are longer term, and the goals are short term, specific to the school.
- 2) Narrowing the vision and mission, narrows the goal. Something more inclusive should be used. With reference to narrowing, if this goal were achieved in five years, it would be known as to changes had to do with those statements.
- 3) Is it “environment” that is being sought? Note: the environment talks about beliefs. Equity is not mentioned anywhere but here. If it is important, make it more than just a goal. If not, leave as is.

Goals are for a period of 3 to 5 years. What the District is really saying is that in five years, this is what will happen.

Supportive Learning Environment

- 1) Individual identities means that each person is different and the goal is to provide the support each student needs.

Transformational Teaching Learning and Leadership

- 1) What does “Student progress is quantifiable and documents the transformation of student learning and achievement through specific teaching practices.” mean? Does each student have an IEP. Note: The team wanted to be specific about teaching students and if the student was achieving the goals. Historically that has not occurred.
- 2) If student progress is quantifiable, then it should say “academic” progress. If the first sentence reads, “monitor student progress,” then one cannot say just quantifiable. If the first sentence says “will monitor student academic progress,” then one can say “quantifiable” in the second sentence.
- 3) Make the statement shorter and attainable.
- 4) “safe place for adult growth” sounds disjointed.

Facilities and Finance

- 1) Not all things can be student centered; it should be centered on what the school needs in its financial plan.
- 2) Achievement should be the direction, but a connection to the community and fiscal responsibility should exist.

The next meeting is March 18, 2013.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 9:11 p.m.