

**Oak Park and River Forest High School
201 N. Scoville
Oak Park, IL 60302
An Instruction Committee of the Whole Board
January 20, 2011**

An Instruction Committee meeting was held on Thursday, January 20, 2011, in the Board Room. Co-chair Finnegan opened the meeting at 7:37 a.m. Committee members present were John Allen (arrived at 8:31 a.m.), Terry Finnegan, Dr. Ralph H. Lee, Amy Leafe McCormack, Dr. Dietra D. Millard, and Sharon Patchak Layman (arrived at 7:42 a.m.). Also present were Dr. Steven T. Isoye, Superintendent; Michael Carioscio, Chief Information Officer; Amy Hill, Director of Assessment and Research; Philip M. Prale, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction; Nathaniel L. Rouse, Lauren M. Smith, Director of Human Resources; Cheryl L. Witham, Chief Financial Officer; and Gail Kalmerton, Executive Assistant/Clerk of Board.

Visitors: Kay Foran, Community Relations and Communications Coordinator; James Paul Hunter, Faculty Senate Executive Committee Chair; Margaret Skiver, John Phelan, and Rance Clouser (departed at 8:54 a.m.), community members.

Approval of December 9 Instruction Committee Minutes

It was the consensus of the Instruction Committee members to accept the December 9, 2010 meeting minutes, as presented.

Review of Changes to Assurances for Special Education

Approval of the Special Education Written Assurances is required of the Board of Education. Ms. Patchak-Layman expressed several concerns:

- 1) The assurances are really policies and as such the Board of Education has the practice of having first and second readings. She also felt that the Board of Education's Policy 6500, Special Education, and its procedures had not be considered when these assurances were written; and
- 2) Special Education students who are on suspension should receive more services for the first ten days than regular education students.

Mr. Prale stated that the District is obligated to follow state law and established guidelines. The Board of Education's policies are second to state law, just as contracts are over policies. Any time the District applies for federal or state grants, it must assure the granting agency that it is participating with the state agencies. The Board of Education's policies should follow the law. However, Board Policy 6500 should be reviewed in light of updated assurances approved by the Board of Education.

Relative to some questions asked by Dr. Millard about page 76 relative to child find, Ms. Halliman later explained the following.

Child Find

- Schools are obligated to actively seek out students who may require special education services that attend private schools. Thus, letters are sent to Trinity and Fenwick during each semester inquiring if they have any students who require or may require special education services. Contact information is provided for the parents and staff members that work with those students.
- Either the parents or the school can request special education testing for a student attending a private school.
- These students are treated just as the OPRFHS students requesting testing. They are referred to the screening team that makes a determination to either move forward with testing or not based on the information presented at the screening.
- If the decision is to test the child, then an evaluation is conducted, an eligibility meeting is held, and a determination as to whether the child is eligible for special education or not is made.
- If child is found eligible for Special Education Services, then an Individual Service Plan—ISP (not an Individual Education Plan – IEP) is made. These are only for student attending public schools).
- This is the last step in the Child Find Process

Providing Special Education Services

- Schools are obligated to provide special education services to students attending Private/Parochial schools ONLY if they have been allocated Proportionate Share money from the federal government through the IDEA grant.
- \$1,348.00 was allocated for the 2010-2011 school year; at Ms. Holliman's previous district, \$17,000 was allocated.
- The amount is determined by several factors including SES of students and reported enrollment from Private Schools to ISBE.
- The services provided are determined by the public school after conducting a "Timely and Meaningful Consultation (TMC)" meeting with the private high schools and the parents who home school their children that live within the boundaries of OPRFHS. The District is required to conduct these meetings before October 15th and to send the information to ISBE. OPRFHS had its meeting October 8 and only one person from Fenwick attended.
- The District used the money for Hearing Itinerant services which was shared as a need by the attendee from Fenwick.
- When the \$1,348.00 is spent, OPRFHS has no further obligation to provide services to anyone who has an ISP attending a private/parochial school or who is home schooled.

Mr. Finnegan acknowledged that the current document presented was more detailed than in the past and he appreciated all the Committee members' concerns. Because this approval was needed as soon as possible, it will be forwarded to the Board of Education for approval at its regular January meeting and Policy 6500, Special Education, will be added to the PEG Committee docket for further discussion.

Technology Plan

Mr. Carioscio presented the PowerPoint on a draft of the Technology framework of different sections to be modified as different needs arise. Technology within the building is here to support the School Improvement Plan and Mr. Carioscio works with Mr. Rouse on this issue.

OPRFHS has approximately 1,000 computers for instructional purposes, faculty technology support is provided through the TLC and the Library, 30 interactive boards and 60 computer projectors for classroom use. Computers are kept on a five-year rotation. Technology is still not consistently used in the building and Mr. Carioscio feels that the school has to agree on how technologies will be used in instruction.

Discussion ensued about the possibility of students using their own laptops. While the baseline requirement of this plan would not change, the District would have to determine how to implement student owned equipment. While that is an unknown area at this time, the District is trying to learn more by implementing various pilots, including the use of online textbooks. The cost of textbooks for last year was close to \$500 for some students, though the cost for most students was less. This is close to the same cost as some laptop computers. A textbook committee has been convened to review various models and an online materials subcommittee has been convened. However, all publishers are not in agreement on the newest technology and use both CD and web-based books.

Dr. Lee was concerned the some aspects of the timeline were subject to the influence of goals adopted by the Board of Education. He felt this ambitious five-year plan would and he suggested more flexibility in it relative to the Board of Education's goals. He felt there should be an explicit link between this plan and the annually adopted, short-term goals of the Board of Education. Mr. Carioscio responded that this was his interpretation of the current Board of Education goals. A technology budget would be presented in March, dependent on the Board of Education goals; he would continuously solicit feedback on next steps. Dr. Millard felt the Board of Education needed longer-range goals. Ms. Patchak-Layman wanted to know the infrastructure relative to the business and student areas of technology. What was the benefit of the cost for the students in the classroom? As technology changes, are different chairs or tables, needed, etc.? If a white board is used or if all students have a computer, will students learn more? Mr. Carioscio responded that some of these things are foundational and in order to move forward every classroom must have a projector and a commitment from the teacher to use technology. The approach is to get data closer to the classroom and the best way to do that is electronically. Many teachers know what data is available but are restricted because of their lack of technology; they must be liberated by allowing technology to be part of their classrooms.

District 200 personnel will visits associate districts in order to know how technology savvy the students are when they enter the high school. Mr. Finnegan stated that the Board of Education is interested in the return on investments but did not want to micromanage situations. He wanted to hear about the conversations with the teachers/division heads, students, etc. and what will work the best for them.

Ms. Patchak-Layman asked for documentation as to how effective technology has been within Special Education and an analysis of how students performed academically with the technology. Mr. Carioscio stated that Lisa Vincent is the point person for adaptive technology and a technology inventory is being created so that we can determine what technologies are most effective. She has a number of anecdotal stories. Ms. Patchak-Layman stated that because technology is very expensive and it has to be balanced with a limited budget, decisions have to be made as to where the best use of the dollars is. When does the discussion occur about the cost of student/teacher relationships? She wanted enough information to lay the framework and to balance all of the dollars. Dr. Isoye felt that was an important point and the conversation within a strategic plan is where those decisions would be made. However, he felt it would be inappropriate to put this on hold until a strategic plan occurs.

Additional Items

Ms. Patchak-Layman asked for an update on the School Improvement Plan (SIP), Institute Day and the transition of eighth graders.

SIP

Regarding the SIP, it was noted that Division Heads were looking at and assessing the indicators about teaching and learning. An update will be provided at the February Instruction Committee meeting.

Transition

Relative to class placements, Ms. Patchak-Layman was concerned about the District's heavy reliance on the EXPLORE test if the goal is to remove systemic barriers for minority children as the numbers show that African-American students have less success with that test. It appeared as if the kinds of criteria were already in place to determine who will or will not fit into an honors class and that the overall number of who is or is not in an honors class is disproportionate. In some ways, that seemed to be inconsistent with some of the other goals of giving assistance to some students in their classes. She felt the goal was to remove the barriers to having the greatest number of options available when selecting classes for the following year. The College Board recently decided to change the AP test for biology and it was no longer about memorization but rather a more hands-on and problem-solving approach. She hoped that this would trickle down to the rest of the instruction at the high school and the elementary schools. She suggested looking at whether students were good problem-solvers and intellectually curious, giving consideration as to what is happening at the college level, and getting these students into the classes that have these opportunities.

Ms. McCormack asked for specific suggestions or targeted areas of discussion. Mr. Finnegan and Dr. Lee noted that this would be a lead agenda item at a future Instruction Committee meeting.

It was stated that all minority students do not score subpar when they enter the high school and parents have the ability to override the course recommendations.

Institute Day

The January 24 Tri-District Institute Day will include a team from Rolling Meadows High School on RtI and articulation and then Division Heads will lead breakout sessions.

Adjournment

The Instruction Committee meeting adjourned at 9:08 a.m. on Thursday, January 20, 2011.