

Oak Park and River Forest High School
201 N. Scoville
Oak Park, IL 60302
An Instruction Committee of the Whole Board
April 21, 2011

An Instruction Committee meeting was held on Thursday, April 21, 2011, in the Board Room. Co-chair Lee opened the meeting at 7:36 a.m. Committee members present were John Allen, Terry Finnegan, Dr. Ralph H. Lee, Amy Leafe McCormack, Dr. Dietra D. Millard, and Sharon Patchak Layman. 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; Terry Dean of the *Wednesday Journal*; and John Falcon of the *Chicago Tribune*.

It was the consensus of the Instruction Committee members that 1) the meeting would adjourn by 8:40 a.m. in order to accommodate an anticipated lengthy PEG meeting to follow and 2) member comments would be limited to no more than three minutes. Any other discussion would be delayed until the May meeting. The discussion time for agenda item No 4 was extended by 5 minutes.

Approval of March 17, 2011 Instruction Committee Minutes

It was the consensus of the Instruction Committee members to accept the March 17, 2011 meeting minutes, as presented.

Update on Instructional Technology Plans

Mr. Prale stated that Mike Carioscio and his team helped to gather the information for this report. In February, the Board of Education was presented with expenditures for instructional technology with regard to specific projects. At the regular April Board of Education meeting, the Board of Education will approve its direction. Mr. Prale reviewed the first part of his written report on technology infrastructure, which refers to the environment in general in order to create an appropriate learning environment for students. It includes items such as a wireless building, additional projectors, content filter, tablets, web redesign and a VOIP for a total of approximately \$525,000. From the projected budget \$185,430 was allocated, leaving an unmet expense of \$340,570. These projects are considered foundational and a prerequisite to creating an information-rich instructional learning environment for the information abundant student.

Division Heads (as members of the SIP Committee) requested instructional technology for the following projects and Mr. Prale presented a video depicting how these technologies would be used.

Reading Initiative In February the Board of Education reviewed a proposal from the English Division and the Special Education Division for a district-wide reading

program that would include the purchase of specific software, READ 180, a core research-based reading program to accelerate reading by 1.5 growth on average for all students reading below grade level. The cost of this program is \$150,000, which includes instructional and assessment packages. This one-time expenditure would establish the program; annual maintenance costs would be far less. The goal of this program is to reduce the number of students reading below grade level by half in each year of the program. It is estimated that approximately 200 students in each grade level read below grade level. He showed a sample classroom setup.

Instructional
Technology in Core
Math Courses

The Math Division has requested \$18,236 for the purchase of Texas Instruments (TI) Nspire Calculators and Navigators for improving and tracking student progress in Algebra and Geometry classes at the regular and basic level. These funds would cover enough equipment to allow every student who uses the calculator to apply the technology daily. For those who use cart-based portable systems, the technology would be in use at least twice each week. These systems allow for increased student-centered instruction with more real-time assessment of every student who uses the TI-Nspire system. The goal for implementation of this technology is to reduce the number of students enrolled in basic level Algebra 2 course by half within 2 years. Funds outside the district budget will be sought for this purchase.

The video showed of how this equipment is used in the classroom. Navigators will allow formative assessment, an assessment that occurs in the moment of teaching the class. It will be used across the Algebra Program this year and across the Geometry Program next year.

Improved Science
Classrooms

The Science Division has requested \$53,655 to continue implementing instructional technology to improve student performance in science courses and encourage students to remain in the science program and enroll in advanced science courses. Also, the development of courses tied to the Project Lead The Way (PLTW) curriculum, housed in the Applied Technology (AT) department, requires technology purchases to ensure program effectiveness and fidelity. Regarding PLTW, introduction of the program already has increased student enrollment in AT courses significantly. In the 2009-2010, enrollment in AT courses was 375; in the 2011-2012 student enrollment is projected at 538. The intent is for all science classrooms/labs to have a sense of equity. Students get a better sense as to what science is. This expenditure will complete the work that was begun two years to bring essential technologies to all of the labs.

Creation of a Music
Lab and Improved
Broadcasting

The technology requested by the Fine and Applied Arts Division totals \$19,100. A proposed music lab, estimated to cost \$17,100 will promote differentiated instruction in music literacy to address classroom learning gaps instruction in piano and composition, and creative sound art

via traditional and non-traditional sequencing activities. The lab would use a co-teaching model targeting 70 freshmen students. Additional music technology available through the lab could affect classes across the music department reaching as many as 950 students. The Division Head, Ms. Roodhouse, has experience with teaching an innovative math and music program utilizing instructional technology in both curricular areas resulting in academic gains. She had proposed a course for this year, but it was not approved. She sees increased participation in the music program and a connection to math and science classes. She would like to use the music lab as a breakout room to pull out a select few in the music program for practice. Funds outside the district budget will be sought for this purchase, e.g., Boosters, etc. For the Broadcasting area, the \$2,000 reflects the cost of installing a projection board for the TV studio and classroom. The cost of the equipment is covered by the DVR grant, but additional funds are needed to cover the cost of installation.

Alignment of Media Services (Library) Program

The Media Services area has requested \$19,200 to move the two classrooms and the offices for certified staff from the second floor to the library third floor of the library. The library program touches areas of research and information literacy and serves the informational needs of students and staff. By leveraging physical changes and rewiring additional spaces as library classrooms, the library program will develop faculty and staff expertise in using information technology and streamline current operations that rely on library transactions. This project is under review by the district architects and is pending review of their plans. The librarians participated in many professional development opportunities and they wanted to rethink the library, a library without walls. As technology becomes smaller and more efficient, less space is needed, and it goes beyond the traditional walls, i.e., smarter space. The librarians would like the collection and their network connections in the same area. This is a temporary solution because a larger discussion will occur about the space in the north end of the building in a couple of years. It is an important change as the library will be focused on media services and academic technology.

Computers for Credit Recovery

The Special Education Division has requested \$5,400 for six additional computers for classes in the ED continuum to assist students in earning credit towards graduation. If a student fails a class, this is an option for earning a credit. The District receives a monthly report from APEX Learning, the company that tracks utilization of credit recovery. Currently, 37 of the 40 slots available are in use. SOLO has 20 slots and Special Education has 20 slots. The District desires more computers to allow student access i.e., only 37% of the students accessed it within the last 14 days. Teachers in the content area are assigned to these students. The District is also looking at another vendor for this type of tracking service.

The total amount of these requests is approximately \$265,000. The District is asking for approval to use the remaining \$128,430 from the River Forest TIF funds. Other funding sources (baseline savings, DVR, pre-spend, Boosters) will be used to make up the difference and balance the budget. Approval for the use of the River Forest TIF Funds will be presented to the Board of Education at its regular April meeting.

Discussion ensued about the relationship between education and social networking. Mr. Prale talked about info graphics, a way to organize information. A student/ writer/author would find the information and organize it visually. It was suggested that teachers be surveyed about how they use Facebook, Twitter and/or YouTube. Mr. Prale noted that one in ten universities access Facebook for college admissions: if it has an influence, it is more likely to have negative effect than positive effect. Some colleges tell students they can either write a college admission essay or submit a one-minute YouTube.

Dr. Lee noted that the first two initiatives have clear goals. He hoped the other three initiatives would also have 1) clearly stated goals and 2) measurements to assess the programs.

Mr. Prale spoke to the fact that it was the teachers that attended conferences who had proposed more professional development planning for teachers and the surveying of students in order to more fully understand how a student gets the connection and how the teacher facilitates that connection. The sequencing that will be part of this will give the students the ability to answer the content areas. Ms. Patchak-Layman said that when talking about instructional technology, it is good to see the other parts of it. But just knowing how to do technology does not mean that education is moving forward in different areas or that students are learning it or applying it to new situations. She looks to the instructional staff, the teachers, and other support personnel, to have those supportive conversations to move it forward.

Mr. Finnegan looked forward to community-wide discussions about those students who will enter high school and trail in the areas of both reading and math. They will struggle in everything until they reach grade level. He looked forward to monitoring the progress in both of these areas.

Dr. Millard thanked for Mr. Carioscio for his leadership in technology.

Internet Safety Lesson for Sophomores

The District responded to an Illinois State Board of Education requirement in April 2009 that students receive a lesson in Internet Safety during each of their four years of high school. The District developed a plan that to deliver such a lesson to sophomores during the PSAE ACT registration period. On April 11, as the teachers were discussing what the pressing Internet issues were for teens in general and the incident in the high school about cyber bullying, they decided to tie the two themes together. There was a push for including such things as student voices, Code of Conduct language, Board of Education policies, etc. into this lesson as well. Margo Bristow and John Condne helped students produce a DVD, a public service announcement, with students talking about their experiences around social networking, cyber/electronic bullying, and sexual harassment. A 70-minute lesson was put together to accompany the DVD. The stories of the students that emerged on the DVD were powerful.

Students were grouped first by PE class and then other elected areas that were non-tracked. Seventy teachers (2 teachers per classroom) were the proctors for 800 students. They had 48 hours notice of the assignment: the instructions to the proctors were provided in the packet.

Mr. Prale noted that some of the ideas were sourced from the ISBE and Virginia Department of Education websites. In addition, a number of colleagues reviewed and provided input on these materials. He thanked Linda Carlson, Heidi Lynch, Amy Hill, Amber Hooper, Jonathan Silver, Joe Herbst, and Gwen Walker-Qualls whose early input in this project helped shape the result and special thanks to Margo Bristow, John Condne, and the many students who spoke up in producing this material and who helped to develop the media. He also thanked Amy Hill and Lisa Evans for organizing the day. All members of Student Services influenced the information, received the materials in advance, and were asked to be available for immediate counseling after the lesson if needed, although, that did not seem to be the case.

In the evaluation sheets that were received, some students noted that they were moved and engaged. They too felt that the some of the speakers had also engaged in cyber bullying.

Mr. Rouse stated that discussion is occurring within the District about positive behavior including possible alternative advisory models during the school day in order to have more contact with students like.

Mr. Finnegan liked the deliberate naming and the defining of the topics involved. He hoped the parental input piece could be used for all classes. He felt all involved did a tremendous job.

Dr. Lee suggested that another metric would be to find out what is the level of tolerance of bad behavior by everyone else. What is the response to bad behavior as it is sometimes considered entertaining and acceptable? He found this to be as important as the bad behavior itself and suggested determining the level of tolerance that students and faculty have for some specific behavior. This might be helpful in the future. Ms. Hill stated that the District has survey data from freshmen that addresses various questions about bullying, acceptance, and frequency of events that might serve as a baseline.

When asked if there was student feedback about how well this presentation worked and what changes they would make in the future or if the students giving their stories saw the entire video, the response was that some students helped produce the video and some gave informal feedback on it. Ms. Bristol will be asked to make sure all of the students involved saw it.

Additional Items

At a committee member's request, Mr. Rouse will send an SIP Plan update via email.

Adjournment

The Instruction Committee meeting adjourned at 8:45 a.m. on Thursday, April 21, 2011.