

**Oak Park and River Forest High School**  
**201 N. Scoville**  
**Oak Park, IL 60302**  
**An Instruction Committee of the Whole Board**  
**August 17, 2010**

An Instruction Committee meeting was held on Tuesday, August 17, 2010, in the Board Room. Dr. Ralph H. Lee opened the meeting at 7:35 a.m. Committee members present were Terry Finnegan, Dr. Ralph H. Lee, Dr. Dietra D. Millard, Amy McCormack, and Sharon Patchak Layman. Also present were Steven T. Isoye, Superintendent; Amy Hill, Director of Assessment and Research; Philip M. Prale, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction (departed at 8:03 a.m.); Cheryl L. Witham; Chief Financial Officer (arrived at 8:30 p.m.); Nathaniel L. Rouse, Principal; and Gail Kalmerton, Executive Assistant/Clerk of Board.

Visitors: James Paul Hunter, Faculty Senate Executive Committee Chair; Janel Bishop, Assistant Principal for Student Health and Safety (departed at 8:37 a.m.); Debra Mittleman, Outreach Coordinator; and Devon Alexander, Coordinator of the Conversations about Race Facilitator Development Program.

**Approval of June 17, 2010 Instruction Committee Minutes**

It was the consensus of the Instruction Committee members to accept the June 17, 2010 meeting minutes, as presented.

**Discussion of Committee Operations**

While this was planned to be a discussion at the Board of Education retreat, Dr. Millard outlined the workings of the Committee meetings as she intended.

- In order for all Board of Education members to have more involvement in the agendas and discussions related to committees and in an effort to be more efficient and collaborative, co-chairs will be assigned to lead the committees.
- The co-chairs will meet with the administration monthly to jointly set the agenda.
- The co-chairs would alternate chairing the committees.
- The co-chairs will have the responsibility of keeping the length of meeting to 90-minutes.
- Consideration of Committee member suggestions will be included on the agendas/dockets as placeholders for discussion at more appropriate times, i.e., a calendar of reports.

**Report on FREE, MUREE, HARBOR, and OMBUDSMAN**

Ms. Bishop provided the annual report on the Females Reaching for Educational Excellence (FREE) and Males United Reaching for Educational Excellence (MUREE) Programs.

The mission of these programs is to assist Oak Park and River Forest High School students with the following:

- ❖ building productive relationships with fellow students, teachers, adults, and community members;
- ❖ experiencing increased academic success;
- ❖ achieving emotional, social, and physical well-being;
- ❖ making a successful transition to adulthood.

The program changes this year included adding a counseling component/counselor to the programs.

The following is a list of weekly topics that were covered by the facilitators:

- ❖ Peer mediation
- ❖ Conflict resolution
- ❖ Relationships, abuse
- ❖ Setting goals – future plans
- ❖ Self-esteem, self respect
- ❖ Life skills – hygiene, etiquette
- ❖ Opportunity to feel heard by others
- ❖ Sexuality
- ❖ Health issues
- ❖ Substance abuse
- ❖ Gang involvement
- ❖ Preparing for a Job Interview/Resume Writing

Additionally, the participants benefitted from the following enrichment/bonding/volunteer activities:

- ❖ Borders Bookstore visits
- ❖ Concordia University & Triton College visit
- ❖ Viewing of “Precious” the movie
- ❖ “Just Us Girls” Seminar @DePaul University
- ❖ Conducted 2-week Food Drive and donated 7 boxes of food to Oak Park Food Pantry
- ❖ Attendance at school plays and programs such as Black Professionals Day and Wake Up
- ❖ Visit to the Shedd Aquarium
- ❖ Goal setting
- ❖ Journal writing
- ❖ Seasonal celebrations
- ❖ Birthday outing to a restaurant to celebrate participant birthdays
- ❖ Basketball
- ❖ Combined session with FREE and MUREE for “Relationships” topic
- ❖ End of the year trip – Navy Pier Luncheon Cruise

Ms. Bishop was confident that these groups were making a difference in the lives of these students even though the discipline stats did not reflect that fact. However, most of the discipline infractions were attendance related. Each week the groups meet on different topics, deal with social/emotional issues, and participate in enrichment activities. The order of the meeting topics has not influenced participation. In the future, data will be used to determine how many times students contact the group facilitators outside of the meetings. Dr. Lee commended the purpose of these programs which was to keep these students from becoming dropouts. While discussion ensued about offering more groups to more students, it was explained that another session had been started, but the participation had dwindled. There are three of our facilitators for each group. If more students were interested, the District would review its resources, e.g., facilitators and funds, etc., and try to accommodate this interest.

### **Report on Ombudsman and HARBOR ACADEMY Schools**

It was suggested that the Board of Education members a tour Ombudsman and HARBOR. Discussion ensued about as to what a student’s GPA was before attending Ombudsman or

HARBOR. Mr. Isoye stated that these schools are strict in terms of discipline. If a student is sent to one of these schools, it is because it is a better placement for the student. If the student violates the rules, he/she must return to campus. If a student is sent there because of an expulsion held in abeyance and he/she does not follow the rules, he/she will be removed from the program and expelled. While the GPA is a good reference point, GPAs are established early in a student's high school career, making it difficult to gain significantly after that. Students may do well at HARBOR as compared to when they started at OPRFHS. Grades at these schools are pass/fail, so, in fact, the GPA may not change.

Ms. Bishop concluded by stating that five students would have been expelled if these educational options had not been available in this District.

### **RtI Update**

Mr. Rouse provided the Committee with background information as to the impetus for implementing RtI and what agencies assisted in its formation, e.g., Illinois ASPIRE which focuses on designing and implementing a multi-tiered early intervening services model, Flexible Service Delivery Project Standards-Aligned Classrooms, and Illinois Reading First. RtI is an overall school improvement process designed to provide scientifically based, appropriate instruction all students, not just special education students, in a multi-tiered early intervening services model. Dr. Nikki Paplaczkyk, the District's Program Director for Support Services, is also the ASPIRE North Coach to help implement RtI. Faculty members John Costopoulos and Sarah Rosas are the District's RtI coaches. This summer the RtI team worked to develop ways to provide professional development to faculty and staff on the RtI initiative. This team will also help to develop the School Improvement Plan (SIP) which drives instruction within the District. A data retreat with West 40 has been scheduled for September 27 to review achievement data to inform the direction of both SIP and RtI initiatives.

Mr. Rouse recommended the following in order to be compliant with the state mandate for implementation of a core, scientific research-based progress monitoring process for RtI.

#### **1. .4 Release for RtI Coaches**

Hiring RtI coordinators to monitor the implementation process would be the minimum re-allocation of resources to accomplish the goal. A description of coordinating responsibilities and how they will assist in the implementation efforts is forthcoming. The RtI Coordinators will be required to submit quarterly reports outlining their work to the Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction and to the Principal.

John Costopoulos – Science Teacher (Math/Science RtI Support)

Sarah Rosas- English Teacher (English/History/Language Arts RtI Support)

#### **2. RtI Implementation Committee (4 teachers + Division Heads)**

Each division will be required to have one teacher per grade level/content area that is responsible for working with the division head to ensure that RtI and progress monitoring is supported within the division. A quarterly report will be submitted by division heads to the Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction and the Principal to support the division's efforts.

### **3. RtI Lead Teacher Team**

Lead Teacher Team consists of one representative from each division and serves as a department liaison for RtI that meets regularly with RtI Coordinators. These Teacher Leaders are required to support the Division Head in the implementation of RtI in their divisions, and report progress to the RtI coordinators at their monthly meetings.

### **4. PDC**

The Professional Development Committee should support the RtI Implementation process by providing professional development for faculty on progress monitoring, tiered interventions, differentiated instruction, and new Special Education requirements during the 2010-2011 school year.

### **5. Collaboration Days**

Effective the 2010-2011 school year, all late start Mondays, save agreed upon PD-approved by both the Principal and the Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, and will be designated for RtI implementation and sustainability within divisions.

In addition, the Monday morning Teacher collaboration teams will address the following questions:

- What do we want our students to learn?
- How will we know when they've learned it?
- What will we do when they don't learn it?
- What will we do when they do learn it?

Teachers will work in course-alike teams and focus on College Prep and Transitions level courses. The 2010-11 Proposed Plan for Lunch and Learns is as follows:

- September Topic: Fall 2010 Illinois Guidelines for Special Education Eligibility and the Impact on All Classrooms
- October Topic: Developing Rubrics as a Progress Monitoring Tool
- November Topic: Literacy Interventions Across the Curriculum
- December, January, February Topic: TBD (Social Emotional)
- March Topic: Fall 2010 Illinois Guidelines for Special Education Eligibility and the Impact on All Classrooms
- April Topic: Developing Rubrics as a Progress Monitoring Tool
- May Topic: Literacy Interventions Across the Curriculum

Mr. Rouse recommended that the summer curriculum development for the 2010-11 school year be used only for differentiated instruction, curriculum alignment for progress monitoring, or the development of curriculum that increases cultural diversity and sensitivity related.

Mr. Rouse provided Illinois ASPIRE's schedule of workshops and their agendas.

### **Race and Student Achievement Professional Development Update**

Mr. Rouse reminded the Board of Education of its number one goal last year "OPRFHS will provide an inclusive education for all students by reducing racial predictability and

disproportionality in student achievement and reducing systemic inhibitors to success for students and staff of color.” Mr. Rouse provided a summary of the budget submitted to support the Board of Education’s goals and a job description for the Coordinator of the Conversations about Race Facilitator Development Program position. Devon Alexander, the Coordinator, presented a series of questions and responses used in this Courageous Conversations about Race Facilitator Development Program, its objectives, the projections for the coming year and a syllabus of the program. The Courageous Conversations about Race Facilitator Development Program is designed to build a cohort that possesses the knowledge of the content, process, and protocol outlined in Pacific Educational Group’s text. This group is learning how to facilitate Courageous Conversations about Race. This group is not attempting to develop a Systemic Equity Transformation Program.

Below is a list of the recommended needs.

- Pacific Educational Group Presentation – Reach out to the company in order to find out about its Systemic Equity Transformation Program for secondary school districts.
- Development of Leadership/Infrastructure – Deepening the leadership’s understanding of the intersection of race and education, the culture of how race-work is done at OPRFHS, and authentic/institutionalized support for a systemic equity transformation program.
- Racial Equity Assessment – The district needs to assess the culture around race/race-work in the OPRFHS school community.
- Systemic Equity Plan – Since 2007-08, Courageous Conversations has been presented as professional development work that the entire district would engage. The district did not and does not have a Systemic Equity plan for doing district-wide Conversations about Race professional development.

The Beyond Diversity training is a two-day workshop designed to help teachers, parents and administrators consider the implications of racism, exclusion and prejudice on student learning. The District will hold a workshop on October 12 and 13 for Board of Education members, the administration, and the Courageous Conversations Cohort 1 and 2. Approximately 70 participants will be invited.

The Board of Education will be asked to approve a copy of the revised contract with Pacific Education Group at its regular meeting on August 26.

The Beyond Diversity Training will include two cohorts of approximately 40 to 45 individuals composed of staff, faculty, and administration. Mr. Rouse asked what the Board of Education wanted to do besides the Beyond Diversity Workshop.

When asked what type of information the Board of Education would like to receive throughout the year from Mr. Rouse, the responses were as follows:

- 1) The State’s requirements in terms of compliance as the assumption was made that it would be used as an evaluation to meet that standard compliance;
- 2) Whether all teachers are trained in PBIS as mentioned in PEG’s flow chart and what is the expectation to the baseline and if those teachers were working at all levels, i.e., Basic, Regular, and Honors, etc.

Mr. Rouse continued that districts were working with the Regional Office of Education to ensure that they were looking at scientifically based research to monitor progress. The State has not provided a template for this work. RtI is not new; it is something that has been utilized in elementary schools, just as PBIS has. Thus, RtI has not been developed for a high school environment and information has to be shifted from K-9 to 9-12 because the information is skewed. Much of PBIS speaks to the elementary tenants. Discussions are occurring. However, the School Improvement Plan should drive instruction and that PBIS is part of the SIP.

The District is working with a model of RtI where the faculty will work with a cohort of teachers through the division. On Monday mornings, the District will look to see if this model is being implemented and will monitor those results. The biggest piece of RtI will be progress monitoring, e.g., determining where the student is at a particular time and deciding whether there is a need for differential education. Data must be used to improve instructional practices.

Dr. Lee assumed that RtI was going to be the high school's major thrust in improving academic achievement for all students and that will be the largest single issue in this move. He wanted to see what RtI truly accomplished. Mr. Rouse stated that the SIP will drive RtI as it is a component of it. RtI is best practice and differentiated instruction, something that is already being accomplished, and the high school is confident that it can meet the requirements of the state. It is named differently because of Special Education. The rationale for RtI is that in the State and in the Nation there is an overpopulation of students designated as Special Education. So, the government has said that educators must show data that says they are meeting the students' needs.

Mr. Hunter added that the unspoken part of this falls on the shoulders of the faculty for the monitoring of this data. He felt a better job should be done of selling what the teachers are already doing well. RtI means that the faculty will have to complete more paperwork which will leave less time for teaching and if the form is filled out incorrectly the administration will reprimand the teacher. This is another unfunded mandate. Dr. Lee concurred. Dr. Lee continued that the Board of Education has planned for resources that may relieve the teacher of the time necessary to fill out paperwork. He suggested that the infrastructure may need to be different from what is currently in place.

Mr. Isoye met with three RtI Committee members. While OPRFHS does have many best practices in place, this discussion allows the District to take an audit of them and determine whether there are other areas to help people. Best practices may have a bell curve and RtI coaching will help teachers. Mr. Isoye continued that everything on this meeting's agenda was about coaching, e.g., FREE and MUREE, Parent Outreach, RtI, etc. Coaching is typically very successful and he was impressed with what he had heard about RtI. RtI is a model about instruction and that should be remembered; while not be the driving force but it should be kept in mind when looking at best practices in meeting the needs of all students. The key to working with the State is to work with West 40, as it will be the filter as to the documentation and paperwork. FREE and MUREE is part of RtI, as it is the affect of domain. The strategies in place and these three reports are remarkable even though for a small population of students. The fact that the resources are available is remarkable.

## **Outreach Coordinator End-of-Year Report**

Debra Mittleman, Outreach Coordinator, reported that the District's goals for parental involvement were incorporated into the SIP which called for an Outreach Coordinator to "organize, implement, and evaluate efforts to support all parents, but in particular the parents of underachievement students and to consider ways to expand that support with afternoon and evening parent education programs...and "enhance and build upon the existing connections to the parent networks of our African-American and Special Education parent networks and the School Improvement Plan team in order to develop and strengthen family/school connections, engage parents in their children's learning and improve student and academic social learning." As such, OPRFHS hired Debra Mittleman, a community member and parent, as the Outreach Coordinator.

Ms. Mittleman reported that her focus on parental development for the 2009-2010 school year was as follows:

- Resources currently available at OPRF to support students academically, socially and emotionally.
- Community resources available to help and encourage students.
- Enrichment opportunities available to students.
- Grant and scholarship money available to help finance enrichment and educational opportunities.
- Resources available which can be accessed from home via computer to support students academically.
- Effective communication between OPRFHS and parents.

The parents targeted for contact in the past school year included those with students in the 8 to 9 Program and the 9 to 10 Program, Title I parents, the parents of 2013 students who failed to meet the College Readiness Benchmark in math or reading based on the EXPLORE test results, and the parents of students identified by PSS Teams. Ms. Mittleman contacted these parents by scheduling individual parent meetings so that she could introduce herself, explain the summer assignments, give an overview of OPRFHS's parent organizations, and the resources available to help students academically. She also wanted feedback from them in the following areas:

1. What was the best way to communicate with them moving forward?
2. What topics did they want to see covered in future parent meetings or seminars?  
and
3. What were their main challenges or concerns during the transition from middle school to high school?

Ms. Mittleman also provided connection meetings/seminars on the following subjects:

- Intro to Parent online Tools
- Intro to Agile Mind
- Percy Julian Symposium
- OPRFHS Innovative Science Curriculum
- Reading Plus Seminar

Ms. Mittleman asked parents to take a parent survey at each Parent Connection meeting and received approximately 100 responses throughout the year. Ms. Mittleman sends out an electronic copy of "The Parent Connection" newsletter which includes a recap of the information covered at

the last meeting, support program information, scholarship and grant information, and information on the next meeting. Her original list of possible contacts included over 400 students. As the year progressed, she started focusing on the bottom 200 score-wise.

The Plans for the 2010-2011 School Year include:

- One-On-One Parent Meetings With Incoming Freshmen Parents (Summer 2010)
- Monthly Parent Connection Meetings (Monthly From September- May)
- Parent Connection Newsletter (Monthly As A Follow Up To Parent Connection Meetings)
- Work With Districts 97 And 90 To Align Parental Involvement Goals And Initiatives (Ongoing)
- Participation In Appropriate Professional Development Seminars (Ongoing)
- Implement Parental Component Of RtI (Ongoing)
- Participate In School Improvement Plan Process (Ongoing)

Ms. Mittleman's contact with parents by being a liaison for parent volunteer support such as the Volunteer Breakfast, Parent Action Committee (Teen Drug and Alcohol), and Parents who Care (Parent Mentoring Group). She feels that some of her programs do for parents what extracurricular activities do for students. She tries to filter the material they receive.

Board of Education members asked for follow-up information:

- Information to determine the following:
  - What has been accomplished and what resources have been put into this position?
  - Should this position be expanded?
  - Should this position be curtailed?
- Student GPA, discipline record, attendance record, etc.
- Where did the student come from, e.g., a feeder school, transfer student, etc?
- What is their involvement in cocurriculars? Would participation in FREE an MUREE groups keep these students out of cocurricular activities?
- Had the parents offered suggestions on how the school should work with them?

### **Additional Instructional Matters for Committee**

Ms. Patchak-Layman asked for information about how many students were coming back to the school as a result of transitioning and what their progression would be over first semester.

### **Adjournment**

The Instruction Committee meeting adjourned at 9:43 a.m. on Tuesday, August 17, 2010.