

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

**An Instruction Committee
June 18, 2009**

An Instruction Committee meeting was held on Thursday, June 18, 2009 in the Board Room. Dr. Millard opened the meeting at 7:35 a.m. Committee members present were Dr. Ralph H. Lee, Amy McCormack, Dr. Dietra D. Millard, and Sharon Patchak-Layman. Also present were: Dr. Attila J. Weninger, Superintendent; Philip M. Prale, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction; Amy Hill, Director of Research and Assessment; Nathaniel L. Rouse, Principal; and Gail Kalmerton, Executive Assistant/Clerk of the Board.

Visitors included Linda Cada, Director of Special Education and Cindy Milojevic, and Assistant Principal for Student Activities.

Approval of May Instruction Committee Minutes

It was the consensus of the Instruction Committee members to accept the May 19, 2009 minutes of the meeting by acclimation, as presented.

Review of ARRA Funding Plans

Per the Board of Education's request, Mr. Prale reported on the following:

Plans for ARRA IDEA, Part B funds

- Purchase hardware and software to support Special Education students and classrooms, as well as to improve tracking of student information.
- Fund service-providers to provide physical/occupational therapy, auditory services, social work, and psychologist services.
- Contract for group counseling services for Special Education students.
- Fund parent seminar on transitional planning for students with significant cognitive disabilities.
- Provide professional development for all faculty on tiered instruction.
- Provide release time for an external coach to develop delivery systems for multi-tiered interventions.
- Fund construction in the Adaptive PE facility and provide a lift for access for special needs students to the fourth floor center hallway.

Plans for ARRA Title I funds

- Expand reading pull-out program piloted this school year. ARRA Title I funding will cover two periods of reading pull-out targeting ninth grade student reading below grade level.
- Continue to support supplemental educational services and professional development activities according to federal guidelines.

The detailed breakdown was included in the packet.

These funds will purchase Skyward module which will allow general education teachers to access information about special education students. Mr. Prale encouraged technology purchases versus adding ongoing salary expenses, as technology is an expense that does not necessarily reoccur. The purchase of math software is part of the learning communities' research on how to increase AYP scores. The math Learning Team in Special Education spent significant time researching the best technology; its job now will be to learn the software and teach others. Substitute pay was not built into the budget, as Mr. Prale did not believe there would be the need for any additional days. A speaker will address the needs of TEAM and LD families in the evening, another speaker will be scheduled during the time the Learning Team meets, and the professional development activity is scheduled for a Saturday.

Report on Professional Development Activities

Mr. Prale stated that the professional development activities for the 2008-09 school year were as follows:

- Teacher Collaboration Teams
- Professional Development Committee (PDC) Work (a joint committee of faculty and administration which planned activities to address goals established by the Board of Education and superintendent)

Mr. Prale outlined the fall faculty activities which included the opening and closing of school activities and the January 26, 2009 Institute Day, a bi-district effort with Districts 97 and 200, to bring in a Dr. John Diamond to update faculty and staff on achievement research and to improve communication and address pressing school issues.

The Collaboration Teams set goals, met Monday mornings during the modified schedule, and issued a report summarizing their work. These teams are also called learning teams or professional learning communities and their purpose is to provide teachers with time to improve teaching skills, develop curriculum, instruction and assessment materials, and assess the impact of their work on student performance. Division Head are responsible for monitoring the teams and ensuring their work aligned with the goals of the District.

Division Heads have reviewed the bulleted items. Dr. Lee asked how satisfied Mr. Prale was with the results of the late arrival plan. Mr. Prale responded that his satisfaction was 50 percent. While some divisions did very exciting work, other divisions did not. Dr. Lee commented that in some divisions, the work appeared productive and not in others. That is a dilemma. Just as every hour spent on testing is an hour of lost teaching the same is true of this program as well. He asked if the budgeting of time had been considered. Mr. Prale said it was a cost benefit analysis. The District is not increasing Learning Team time out of instructional minutes as they are meeting after school. He had debated with the English teachers who wanted a half day off to do reliability; he offered to pay them for the hours between 3 and 6 p.m. and for dinner, but they disagreed.

Update on Restructuring Plan

Mr. Prale presented an edited version of the draft of the Restructuring Plan. The purpose of the Restructuring Plan is to encourage the District to take intensive and far-reaching interventions to revamp the operation and government of the school.

Administrators, teachers, the West 40 RESPO consultant, and community members who are familiar with the school and school improvement efforts have reviewed this plan and had offered suggestions.

Ms. Patchak-Layman asked that this plan be more than AYP as a measure of attainment of AYP.

It was the consensus of the Instruction Committee members to recommend to the Board of Education that it approve the Restructuring Plan at its regular June Board of Education meeting.

Stipend Review Committee Annual Report

Ms. Milojevic distributed the Senior Supplement, an addition to the Tabula, which included a listing of where seniors planned to go for post secondary education. Ms. Milojevic provided the Committee members with an update on current clubs and activities, a review and analysis of them for next year, and where the District is in terms of the reporting of data as it relates to co-curricular. The Stipend Review Committee work consisted of the following:

Two New Stipends

- Athletics/Adaptive Gym/Cardio Room Supervisor. Currently, OPRFHS offers Health and Wellness classes to faculty two days per week, and therefore have supervision coverage in the Adaptive Gym on Mondays and Thursdays. This proposed stipend position would provide supervision on Tuesday and Wednesday, and would allow faculty, staff and students to utilize the facility after school in a supervised manner. In addition, it would provide another supervised area for students to complete P.E. make sessions.
 - Level 5, ½ stipend in the 5-8 year index = \$3, 838
- Activities/a new club – Service Learning and Leadership. Students in the club will be active participants in the community through volunteer involvement with local agencies such as PADS, Hephzibah, The Oak Park Food Pantry, etc. The students will have a hands-on role with this new Service Club.
 - Level 6, 5-8 year index = \$2,866

New Club Requests

- Nine new club proposals were submitted for consideration for next year. Funding allowed for only one new club *The Service Learning and Leadership Club*. The eight other proposals were: Animal Care League Support Club (will suggest to be included in New Service Club), Athletic Managers Club, Horror Movie Club (absorbed into Film Club), Fashion Club, Fishing Club, Fencing Club, Paintball Club, and Guitar Club.

Stipend Level Changes

- Three requests were made and approved by DLT to increase stipends from Level 5 to Level 4 due to growing student participation numbers as well as expanded offerings. They are Spoken Word, Gospel Choir and Biology/Environmental Club.

At-Risk Clubs

- Ten clubs had participation levels that are a bit lower than what the faculty contract requires, and are considered “at risk.” Personal conversations were held with each sponsor, with the goal of expanding membership next year.

Discontinuation of Clubs

- Dissolution of two clubs due to low participation levels:
 - French Club
 - Freedom Readers (will continue the mission, under the umbrella of ACTSO)

Student Participation Rates

- Student participation data for 2008 was entered into Skyward this fall. The numbers reflect that 1,800 students participated in activity related co-curricular offerings last year (excluding athletics). Based upon a student enrollment in 2008 of 3,079, that is a 58% participation rate. (Note: the national average is 60 percent.)
- The entry of roster data for each club/activity for 2009 is being completed. Early in the summer, a final report will be submitted that compares participation rates from last year to this year.
- That report will include the percent of student participants and key demographic information.
- This report will be shared with the Board of Education once complete.

Everything that Ms. Milojevic does is directed by the Faculty Senate Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA), which spells out the stipends based on the number of years of experience, number of students involved, etc. In March, the District began to evaluate the current clubs and activities for the following year, e.g., when they meet, their performance, and who participates in the club, etc. Stipend levels relate to the clubs. As the membership of the group increases, a sponsor takes on more responsibility and thus will be rewarded with more.

Ms. Patchak-Layman asked how the stipend level changes fit into the budget. Ms. Milojevic responded that there is an allocation of money for stipends. Sponsors are invited to return if their evaluations show that they are doing their jobs. Should the sponsor be invited back, his/her years of service puts him/her on a particular salary lane. As that salary lane changes, it may constitute the sponsor receiving a larger stipend. If the club has a certain number of students and meets a certain number of times, the District needs to reimburse the sponsor appropriately. The CBA has the names of the clubs listed in it. It also says that the club should have fifteen (15) members with three-

quarters of them being active members. Ms. Milojevic stated that a lot of clean up has occurred since she started, and it was ongoing. The sponsors now understand the process and know they have to report data.

A question arose regarding the club Freedom Readers and it was explained that the club consists of girls working with ACT-SO to nurture reading and the love of reading.

Ms. Milojevic reported that last time there was a report on student participation was in 1996. At the time, students were asked in their homerooms what activities they were involved. Ms. Milojevic's mission was to find out how many students were involved. While discovery of this information has been challenging, each year it has gotten better. This year 85 percent of the sponsors responded. Ms. McCormack suggested holding their stipend back until they did respond.

Ms. Milojevic stated that the data was part of the Skyward system. Athletes cannot compete unless there is an IHSA roster, which is included in Skyward. Ms. Milojevic is most interested in finding out those students who are not involved in anything and then give that information to the counselors. Generally, fifty-eight percent of students are involved in cocurricular activities, not athletics; more females are involved than males; and the ethnicity of students involved in cocurricular activities is similar to the school's demographics.

When Dr. Lee asked what the percentage of African-Americans engaged in extracurricular activities were compared to the percentage of White students, Ms. Milojevic said that this data is not available for last year, but it will be in the future.

Mr. Rouse and Ms. Milojevic will work on a format and bring a detailed report in August; it will include class year, gender, race and percentage of students involved, either overall or club-by-club detail. Ms. Patchak-Layman also asked for thumbnail sketches for each club and then a composite report. It was noted that while participation is high with freshman students, it drops in the sophomore and junior years.

Ms. Patchak-Layman wanted to know how stipends could be increased because of the District's fixed cocurricular budget. Dr. Weninger noted this was a concern. If the goal is to increase the level of participation, then the level of funding will also have to increase in order to accommodate new programs. Discussions are occurring with Ms. Witham about adjusting the budget accordingly. Dr. Lee asked to what extent was money limiting student participation. Is it too limiting? Dr. Weninger responded that at this point, it is not too limiting but the District has to be careful not to make it too limiting. The school budget allocated for stipends is \$287,000.

Ms. Patchak-Layman learned that OPRFHS funds IHSA competitions, just as it does for athletics and other pre-designated groups.

Draft Plan to Implement Student Achievement Domains and Components

Ms. Hill provided a two-year implementation process plan which identified the administrative responsibility for each domain. The draft assumes a continuous improvement. Ms. Hill stated that the guiding statement that provides an overall purpose for the Student Achievement Domains and Components is as follows:

Oak Park and River Forest High School will develop, assess, and revise programs through which all students achieve their maximum potential in each of the following domains.

She also stated that the term “programs” refers to the regular programs of teaching, learning, and assessment across all curricular; targeted interventions to support students with demonstrated needs; and co-curricular offerings.

The Curriculum and Instruction Office would primarily oversee efforts in the following Domains:

- Domain I, Academic Knowledge
- Domain II, Key Cognitive Strategies
- Domain III, Academic Engagement
- Domain V, Information Literacy and Technology Literacy

The Principal would primarily oversee efforts in the following Domains:

- Domain IV, Habits/Modes of Work
- Domain VI, Social-Emotional Wellbeing
- Domain VII, Post-Secondary Planning and Readiness
- Domain VIII, Citizenship and Civic Responsibility
- Domain XI, Valuing Diversity

Ms. Hill provided a proposed sequence of activities and calendar in the report and noted that by 2011-12 the Student Achievement Domains and Components for Measuring Institutional Excellence would be fully implemented.

She also stated that the reports would include a single summary cover sheet, followed by separate reports for each measure. The reports would follow the standard format for all reports to the Board of Education and would contain the following elements:

Background: The overview should state the intent, goal, or purpose of the program or information collected. A theory of action may also be included and any supporting information.

Summary of Findings: The information may include but would not be limited to course selections, grades in specific courses, standardized test scores, survey responses, attendance and discipline records, and student demographic information. Data should be disaggregated by race, gender, and other factors as appropriate (e.g. grade level, special education); a summary statement evaluating the school’s progress toward achieving the benchmark (to include longitudinal comparisons beginning in 2011)

Note: data tables may be appended but would not be included in the summary section.

Recommendations (or Future Directions): Proposals for maintaining, adjusting, or eliminating existing programs, or recommendations for new courses of action, based upon the analysis of the data.

Ms. Hill asked for the Instruction Committee members' input, noting that there was a convergence of the Board of Education working on its goals and this plan. Dr. Millard felt that the most important point to consider was what was feasible. Ms. Hill explained that she had attempted to start from the end and move backwards to determine how long it would take to get the data. Because of the timeframe for developing the document, she had not had a chance to vet this internally. Division Heads have not seen the latest document but would later in the day and they have an in-depth discussion about this in August.

Reports have to be created in order to be able to mine the data; it is a matter of collecting the bundled data. It will be the Division Head's responsibility to identify the course outcomes in terms of key cognition and to work backwards for a design process, to make sure that the outcomes are in place, to collect data on student performance, achievements of those outcomes, and to make instructional changes based on that analysis.

Dr. Lee asked 1) how it would be known when certain things were done over a one-year period; 2) what could be accomplished in 2009-10; and 3) when would the Board of Education get status reports. He also asked when the Board of Education could expect to receive last year's GPA reports disaggregated by race and gender. He was told that it would be included in the academic indicator report to be presented in September, as stated on page 2.

Ms. Patchak-Layman asked how the school would measure the academic progress or institutional excellence of those students receiving private tutoring. How can their progress be measured against those who do not receive private tutoring? In the case of a student receiving private tutoring, one must ask, where does the actual learning occur? If half of the class receives private tutoring or has a public library card and does well, then she surmised that learning was occurring outside of class. Ms. Hill stated that it was discovered that it was difficult to compare the students who were bumped up in math or who had overrode the recommendation because in many cases it was in part because often they had outside tutoring. Other family contributions having an impact on student achievement would be more difficult to document and to only pick out one type of intervention and track it down would then overlook the other factors. Ms. Patchak-Layman felt this was more than measuring institutional excellence. As one does Mastery Manager and as one has the specifics of what one is looking at, one would see whether the whole sequence had produced results. Ms. McCormack agreed with Ms. Hill that there were many variables, e.g., student study groups, etc.; the school cannot cover the gamut, so this is the best it can do. Mr. Prale stated that the system is not built for causal proof. Correlations can be found between patterns of students, but when talking about excellence, the school is talking about the four pillars: faculty, students, parents, and community. The District looks for patterns that cause institutional excellence. The school is looking for correlations vs. causations.

Ms. Patchak-Layman stated that the District wants all who take AP chemistry to score a certain amount and to be able to say that the students who took that class scored a 3, 4 or 5 or that the pass rate in the class was 100 percent. Mr. Prale stated that the District will make the assumption that what was happening in the class was producing these results. If these students had significant tutoring in order to achieve an A's and B's across all subgroups in the chemistry program, the school would feel satisfied, but it would ask why. When looking at Agile Mind students, the District found that while African-American students used computers more, they had similar outcomes as whites. Ms. Hill responded that the model assumes that there is continuous improvement and that teachers in chemistry are using Mastery Manager to look at classroom data and, therefore, are making instructional changes to help students.

Dr. Millard concurred with Ms. McCormack that the school cannot factor in all of the variables. While the District has to make families aware of the opportunities available to them, she did not know how the District would quantify them.

Ms. Patchak-Layman remarked that this was not a document that measured institutional excellence because if all of the things happened as listed, OPRFHS would be an excellent institution. Dr. Weninger stated that this document has evolved from the initial goal of telling the District how it will know institutional excellence and develop into the forays described. The document codifies 1) those values on which the District will agree that students should have; 2) the tools of measurement; 3) the benchmarks for attainment; and the direction when a student does not achieve the previous three. This document would focus the District's effort on coordinating much of what it is attempting to do. Dr. Millard added that it was not just what happened during the day that determines what a student does. Ms. Patchak-Layman remarked that institutional excellence is supposed to define what happens here at OPRFHS. Ms. Hill stated that the SIP Team had asked about the other pillars, e drilling the information into the students and narrowing the focus by test preparation, it is not excellent. If the District does this in the context of a rich curriculum and it maintains the other elements of its work, then it is talking about excellence documents. Ms. Hill was unsure if there would be an effort to define other domains.

Dr. Weninger was unsure if a parent would want to be asked if he/she provided tutoring for his/her students. Tutoring is a cottage industry. Parents do things that contribute to a student's success. The school can only control what it can control. Dr. Lee felt a parent would feel the question about tutoring would be an invasion of privacy. Ms. Patchak-Layman has heard that tutoring has to be provided because learning does not occur in the classroom. Ms. Hill, as a parent of a child who struggles, responded that she has provided much tutoring to her child. She sees this from both sides of the coin. In looking at RtI, there is the sense that when instruction is most effective, 85 percent will get it and 15 percent will need extra interventions. There will still be a 5 percent of the students, even with that second level of intervention, who will not receive the outcomes. She does not hold her children's teacher responsible for her child's difficulties, as it is a function of how the child's brain functions. She accepts the responsibility of having to provide additional supports. She understands that the school's resources are limited and that her

child needs many hours of additional support. Ms. McCormack noted that some parents put their students in higher level classes than they should be in and, thus, they need the extra help to move beyond their capability. Mr. Rouse added that parents in these situations will say that they will provide additional tutoring so that their children are placed in higher level classes. The school also offers tutoring before, after, and during school. Some parents may elect for their students to go for outside tutoring because they feel it is incumbent upon them to do so. Students go to the math tutoring center every hour of the day. Students need additional help based on their level and challenge and the tutoring does not reflect the teaching in the classroom.

Dr. Lee asked what the “Growth Mindset” concept meant. Ms. Hill explained that the growth mindset is characterized by intelligence that can be grown through effort. One can be born with a fixed amount of intelligence that limits or predicts future success, yet through one’s own efforts, one can be better at anything by doing specific and purposeful action that can push him/her beyond his/her current test scores. Students who have the growth mindset are more interested in taking on challenges to stretch and grow than those who have the fixed mindset. Research supports that nurturing the growth mindset produces significant changes in outcomes. Dr. Lee asked for more information on the author of this concept, Carol Dweck.

Ms. Hill stated that while there are some pieces available for longitudinal data, they are not available in every area. Dr. Lee wanted the longitudinal data on reading scores, i.e., reading across the curriculum program going back several years. It would be useful to know how successful the District has been in its efforts. He believed that some things that have been taken for granted are useful, but supporting information is not available in order to evaluate. He was more concerned about going back in time with longitudinal studies in the areas possible, i.e., taking what is available on a limited framework and going forward. He asked for detailed expansion of what was being presented, e.g., reports, data analysis. Dr. Weninger stated that the District has data that goes back five years, e.g., reading, GPA, etc. Dr. Lee would like to see the plan expanded not only with the data that will be collected but the past data as well.

Dr. Lee added that he was very impressed and happy with the work that has gone into this project. Dr. Millard concurred.

Ms. Patchak-Layman asked what benchmarks and indices would be used for Domain 2. Ms. Hill responded that Ms. Neuman focused on No. 8, Problem Solving, and No. 5, Reasoning Argumentation and Proof. The index for reasoning argumentation and proof is the students’ ability to accurately do geometric proofs and this will be measured in all geometry courses by semester and by other assessments throughout the school year. One could take the interpretation or analysis and in the core history courses, in American History and World History, there would be an index of the student’s ability to write a response to a document based question (DBQ), and that would involve the student looking at historical evidence and developing a coherent argument in answer to a specific prompt that asks the student to analyze and provide the analysis that goes into answering the questions. That would be done in all World History and all American History courses.

Dr. Millard stated that the value of achievements was listed, but it would vary subject to subject and division to division. That work is still in progress for each division to develop.

Ms. Patchak-Layman asked if other divisions besides math had a benchmark for problem solving. Ms. Hill responded that problem solving occurs in every curriculum, but there are core components to problem solving. Ms. Patchak-Layman asked if the process was documented. Dr. Millard suggested that Ms. Patchak-Layman meet with Ms. Hill on this specifically. Ms. Patchak-Layman suggested that a value of achievement is one of improvisation. Ms. Patchak-Layman felt that some things had nothing concrete in place. In the examples given, there is a teaching component. Ms. Patchak-Layman asked if there were an interdisciplinary aspect of those components so that the District can say problem solving was accomplished because everyone takes geometry. Ms. Hill said all divisions would have problem solving as a benchmark; it is relevant in every discipline. Ms. Patchak-Layman stated that there are core components/skills that go into problem solving. Is that process documented somewhere in terms of the process for any of the analysis? Are there processes that go into problem solving? What has been described in the document is the outcome. Dr. Millard suggested that if any of the Board of Education members had other indicators of achievement to submit to bringing them directly to Ms. Hill.

Ms. Patchak-Layman asked where in the document student knowledge of learning styles, aptitudes, and interests was. The response was Domain 3, under self monitoring. It too has an instructional component.

Dr. Lee stated that this document was at least an outgrowth of the goal set last year to define student achievement and the racial achievement gap. How far is the school from having an initial, imperfect statement to describe the racial achievement gap, as it is not addressed in the document? He was concerned about making visible progress toward defining the racial achievement gap. This document is an outgrowth of 2007 when it was said that institutional excellence needed to be defined. Dr. Weninger stated that he would provide Dr. Lee with an imperfect definition by the end of the summer. Dr. Lee felt this was just as important as the broader goal and he wanted concrete steps.

Ms. Patchak-Layman asked if passing grade was still a D. The response was yes. One could have an unweighted GPA of 2.0 and still have a D. Ms. Patchak-Layman expressed concern that some domains had nothing in place that was concrete.

Adjournment

The Instruction Committee adjourned at 9:53 a.m. on Thursday, June 18, 2009.