

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

**An Instruction Committee of the Whole Board
December 11, 2008**

An Instruction Committee meeting of the Whole Board was held on Thursday, November 13, 2008 in the Board Room. Dr. Millard opened the meeting at 8:50 a.m. Committee members present were John C. Allen, IV, Jacques A. Conway (arrived at 8:03 a.m.), Valerie J. Fisher, Dr. Ralph H. Lee, 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; and Gail Kalmerton, Executive Assistant/Clerk of the Board.

Visitors included Kay Foran, OPRFHS Community Relations and Communications Coordinator; James Hunter, Faculty Senate Executive Committee Chair, Devon Alexander and Jessica Stovall (departed at 8:00 a.m.), OPRFHS English Teachers); Niall Collins, Behavior Interventionist (departed at 8:44 a.m.); Therese Brennock, ED Program Chair (departed at 8:44 a.m.), Linda Cada, Director of Special Education (departed at 8:44 a.m.); Kevin Anderson, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction (departed at 8:44 a.m.) District 97 Elementary Schools (departed at 8:44 a.m.); Brian Bolger, Technical Assistance Coordinator with PBIS in Illinois (departed at 8:44 a.m.), Bianca Bonfim and Angelica (Angel) Garland, students (departed at 8:00 a.m.).

Acceptance of Instruction Committee Minutes of November 13, 2008

It was the consensus of the Instruction Committee members to accept the minutes of the November 13, 2008, Instruction Committee meeting.

MSAN Student Conference Update

Faculty members Devon Alexander and Jessica Stovall were the chaperones of the seven students from OPRFHS who participated at the MSAN Student Conference held in Madison, Wisconsin in September 2008. Other participating schools at this conference have similar demographics to OPRFHS. The purpose of the conference was to 1) discuss what was working at each other's school, 2) tour the University of Wisconsin —Madison, and 3) listen to motivational speakers. Bianca Bonfim and Angelica (Angel) Garland, participants at the conference, spoke about the positives of the conference and the next steps.

The positives of the MSAN conference included:

- 1) communicating with other students from around the country who had similar experiences, e.g., how difficult it was to be a top minority student in a top class;
- 2) discussing how to not just close both the academic and the social gaps, but how to about going beyond them; and
- 3) the conference was very organized and it is an easy way to share ideas.

The next steps would be:

- 1) inspire students to do better and not put them in a one-way track, e.g., an honors or a lower track, etc.; mix students together with different academic levels;
- 2) invite students to give their own input on why the gap exists and how to eliminate it;
- 3) explore ways for mentors (both students and teachers) so that students might have someone to look up to and better themselves.

Mr. Alexander reported that OPRFHS and Evanston Township High School were collaborating on hosting the 2009 Student Conference. Rich Mertz, Devon Alexander, Jessica Stovall, and Phil Prale will be involved in the planning and coordination of this endeavor.

Instruction Committee members asked for more information regarding mentors and across-the-school curriculum. Angelica suggested allowing students to choose other students to mentor them. She was also unaware of any classes in the school that offer across-the-school untracked curricula other than physical education. Mr. Prale stated that Global Studies might offer that opportunity.

Report on Behavior Interventionist

Mr. Prale provided the Instruction Committee members with the following information.

“The position of Behavior Interventionist (BI) was implemented in the Emotional Development (ED) program as part of the Special Education Division in the fall of 2007. The BI position focuses on improving student behavior and teachers’ interaction with students in the ED program. The BI position incorporates Positive Behavior Intervention Strategies (PBIS) and the School-wide Information Systems (SWIS) database to track student behavior and determine appropriate program responses. Approximately 120 students are enrolled in the ED program. A report was last made on this initiative ten months ago.

“A summary of findings follows:

- Parent contacts have continued and have become an essential element of the communication pattern of the ED program.
- Student behavior patterns are consistent from last year. However, in the first three months of last school year Class III infractions of the Code of Conduct comprised 18% of total referrals for ED students. In the first three months of this school year, Class III infractions comprised 11% of total referrals for ED students.
- Student attendance, skipping class, and tardiness to class remain an issue. Collaborative efforts from ED faculty and staff have reduced instances of profanity, hallway infractions, and use of time-out interventions.
- Students passing all classes increased from 50 in the first three months of last school year to 61 in the first three months this school year. Students making the school Honor Roll (3.00 GPA) has increased from 24 in the first nine weeks of last school year to 30 in the first nine weeks this school year.
- Discipline referrals to the Deans’ offices have been reduced from 233 in the first three months of last school year to 145 in the first three months this school year.

- Academic success of students is individualized and not program based. For example, two students of the quarter were selected from the ED program this school year. Faculty and staff are exploring broader academic improvements while maintaining improved behavior systems.

“The recommendations were as follows:

- Continue to support and monitor the Behavior Interventionist position, aiding in the development of classroom strategies to reinforce positive student behaviors and elicit stronger parental involvement.
- Continue to review attendance information to improve student attendance rates to class.”

A few years after the Board of Education voted the Phase In dollars, the position of Behavior Interventionist was created by those dollars. Mr. Prale stated that this report was in response to the Board of Education’s request for regular updates on initiatives funded from those resources. The District is 1) encouraged by the work in the ED Program and 2) happy about the work the teachers were doing with students as the number of discipline incidents were down and the students seem more focused. No one in that department was working less, but more time was being spent on giving reinforcements for positive behaviors rather than for negative behaviors. Mr. Collins continues to work with the teachers on this endeavor. After two years, Mr. Collins has established the pattern, the role, and the functions for the 120 students in the ED Program. Ms. Cada added that the staff feels positive about both PBIS and the BI Position.

Mr. Bolger added that the work that had already been in progress in the ED Program was PBIS-like in nature. Many teachers in the ED Program had good practices and clear expectations for the students, etc. PBIS is not new; it is about good practices. Mr. Collins took the data portion of PBIS, which allows the monitoring of progress and, ultimately, systemizing, so that the practices are aligned with the academics and curriculum. Some schools have a discipline model that is more ingrained which makes it more difficult for PBIS to penetrate; OPRFHS was more open.

Mr. Rigas was encouraged that discipline referrals were reduced by more than one-third, as positive behavior help students in the classrooms. Mr. Prale stated that this is a process and that while the school is happy that discipline numbers have declined for the last two years, teachers must work continually and consistently to maintain these benefits. A few years ago, a more consequence-oriented approach to discipline existed.

Mr. Collins was happy with the SWIS data piece, developed by the University of Oregon. The research centered originally on middle schools and it was just expanded to the high school level. He liked the fact that SWIS was not trying to sell anything. OPRFHS uses this system to record its statistics for comparative purposes. Over 1,000 schools use PBIS in Illinois and half of District 97 schools have implemented it. Because both District 97 middle schools are part of the research, these students have familiarity with the system. He explained that because of the nature of ED students, a teacher must talk

with a student immediately about an issue, as they generally do not remember what happened 10 minutes earlier. Tracking data allows the teachers to implement different plans, look for places to make improvements, etc. To change the culture of the building/floor with positive behaviors and interventions, etc., is a three- to five-year process. A video showing positive behavior for high school-aged students was filmed with the help of John Condne at the high school. SWIS data allows teachers to know what the referrals were, where they occurred, and when they occurred, so that interventions may be targeted when an event happens. Teachers can look at the data, determine where they need to put positive reinforcements, determine which things work, and, then, change their approach.

Discussion ensued. Dr. Lee asked if Mr. Collins believed that his experience with this program had any highly specific implications that went outside the area of special education and if there were any leaps and applications the school should not use. Mr. Collins noted that a team from OPRFHS visited Addison Trail High School where it had fully implemented PBIS. It was noted that most schools do implement it school wide. OPRFHS implemented PBIS because ED personnel felt the position of crisis interventionist needed reinstatement; Mr. Prale advised that data was necessary to show the need for this position. OPRFHS was able to select offered by a great variety of things from PBIS to implement at the high school. While some things will work at one school, they will not at another, e.g., posters. Each school has to find its own way to connect PBIS with the culture of its building.

Dr. Lee asked where the high school stood in evaluating these techniques beyond the areas of Special Education. Is the high school on an active track to do something? Mr. Rouse stated that Response-to-Intervention (RtI) as part of the School Improvement Plan (SIP) is the response to PBIS; he is working with Mr. Collins on developing a framework to implement those things. Mr. Rouse thanked the teachers who worked in the ED Program for the work that they do. He has met all of the students in the program and teachers hold these students accountable. Dr. Lee stated that over the last two years, the high school has continually been discovering links between behavior and academic achievement; he was very encouraged about this program and anxious to see this continue.

When Ms. Patchak-Layman asked how soon it would be instituted throughout the entire school, Mr. Prale responded that a decision had not been made to go school wide yet. Ms. Patchak-Layman asked about the discipline consequences of those students familiar with PBIS system; as they came from a middle school that had implemented it and were familiar with it. How did they behavior in a high school that did not have it. Mr. Prale stated that the District was using SWIS and determining where events were occurring. The school was looking at the discipline statistics at the feeder schools and considering whether PBIS should be implemented school-wide.

Mr. Hunter, one of the persons involved in getting PBIS in the building, praised Mr. Bolger for not forcing OPRFHS to use a cookie-cutter process; Mr. Bolger had been willing to look outside of the box to find different ways to work with OPRFHS. Aspects of PBIS are being incorporated building-wide through the work of the literacy committee

and other initiatives. The District is still trying to evaluate whether it should go building wide. He supported keeping the BI position because it is working and it is the innovations being made in special education that apply to the whole building. Mr. Hunter acknowledged that while it will be very difficult to replace Mr. Collins when he retires, the position must be maintained.

Dr. Weninger noted that the ED program is really a school-within-a school, involving interventions and strategies in hallways and classrooms. He asked Mr. Bolger if in his work in Chicago suburban areas there were examples of schools in which PBIS has been more paced in its introduction. Mr. Bolger remarked that he had not. The relationship component is key. It is about student-to-student and adult-to-student mentoring. The best student/teacher ratio opportunity is 1:16. The next best would be group intervention. The next piece is Response-to-Intervention (RtI). On the academic side, there are academic systems; the other side has social systems. The social side is bigger than PBIS, as it involves parents, participation in clubs, activities, and athletics. What does that system of intervention look like? All students should have clear expectations. Teachers with common expectations should hold to the standards that all teachers agreed upon, e.g., tardies. Tier II is where some students need group interventions on the social system side. All PBIS is one piece, it is to look at academic and social systems to support students at Tiers 1, 2 and, 3. Whether PBIS becomes school wide or not, there will still be three tiers and encompass social, academic, and emotional learning standards.

Mr. Rigas stated that continuing to refer to the program as the “fourth floor” puts a stigma on this group of students. He also noted that he would miss Mr. Collins when he retired, as he is a true professional and dedicated to the students. He got to know him during the negotiations process at which Mr. Collins was the upmost professional.

Dr. Millard applauded District 97 for bringing this behavior adaptation to its students at an early age, as it is harder to change an older person’s behavior. Mr. Bolger reported that at the last summer conference, they found that, realistically, high schools asked for this program. He continued that a system to provide support for students in crisis should be in place; it comes back to the student/teacher ratio. PBIS teaches leading practices as opposed to a discipline approach. All adults in the building should lead by example as opposed to the more modern version of discipline, which, if student-to-student is called bullying, and, if adult-to-student, is called discipline. Teachers need to model a necessary skill set, be dependent, interdependent, and independent. Mr. Bolger clarified that PBIS does not oppose keeping the building safe, however.

Ms. Brennock thanked Dr. Weninger for approving the purchase of computers for the ED Program and for spending two entire days observing the ED Program. The ED teachers have challenging positions as they may teach students with IQs from 70 to 150 in one classroom. Dr. Weninger was also instrumental in improving the use of teacher assistants. Ms. Brennock thanked Mr. Rouse for taking twenty students to Triton to acquaint them with the facility and build alliances with the counselors.

Mr. Collins noted while the word “discipline” had been used a lot in that meeting, he stressed that PBIS for OPRFHS was a data system. Teachers find ways to treat the

students with the circumstances presented to them; it is not the teachers' fault with what was going on with the students, but it is their problem. Computers have become a part of the reward system this year and students can earn computer time.

Ms. Patchak-Layman suggested giving the language of PBIS to all teachers. Mr. Prale stated that the ED Program is not by definition of legislation a school-within-a-school, but, by virtue of the structure of the teaching day for the ten teachers involved, it created a setting where PBIS might be helpful. Mr. Hunter affirmed that PBIS consists of practices that the faculty has been exposed to throughout all of its training, including CRISS, RtI, and literacy aspects, etc. They were not trying to anoint OPRFHS as a PBIS high school. Mr. Bolger wants to incorporate aspects that work well with the OPRFHS population, as most of the research is about elementary schools. Further information will be brought forward at another time.

Course Proposals

Ms. Hill reported that this was the Instruction Committee's second review of the course proposals. DLT had not recommended going forward with some of the original proposals. Division Heads were asked to consider a three-prong focus, as the courses were considered. The criteria for a new course was 1) a sequence, i.e. logical extension of a new course, e.g., Chinese III/IV, etc.; 2) courses that provide filler needs in the special education continuum; and 3) student achievement.

In Ms. Hill's written report, she stated, "Each fall the divisions and departments undergo the Course Proposal process whereby they may advocate for the addition of new courses, explain the need to delete current courses, and propose revisions to current courses. The process of reviewing and revising the course proposals involves careful vetting by the Instruction Committee of the Board of Education, the Instructional Council, the counselors, and the District Leadership Team. Proposals were sent for review and feedback from the Faculty Senate Executive Committee, the Student Council, and all of the Board-approved parent and community groups.

"...Of the 17 proposals, 5 would create new courses, 5 call for the deletion of a course, and 7 propose course revisions.

FINE & APPLIED ARTS DIVISION

Visual Arts. Revise the prerequisite for 668 Advanced Studio Art 1-2A and for 690 AP Studio Art 1-2 to Art Foundations; Drawing or Painting, or Division Head recommendation.

Revise 661/2 Wheel Throwing by changing the course name to Beginning Wheel Throwing.

Revise the prerequisite for 666/2 Intermediate Wheel Throwing to Beginning Wheel Throwing or consent of Division Head.

Speech Arts. Delete Drama Explorations, a Summer School course, because of lack of enrollment.

Delete 101/2 Introduction to Speech Communications because of lack of enrollment.

Delete 108 Debate 3-4 because of lack of enrollment.

Revise 107 Debate 1-2 by changing the course name to Debate 1 and making it a 1-semester course.

Revise 091/2 Introduction to Theatre by changing the course name to Acting Foundations.

MATHEMATICS DIVISION

Delete 2022 Survey of Algebra 1 because of lack of enrollment.

Delete 2062 Survey of Algebra 2 because of lack of enrollment.

SCIENCE DIVISION

Revise 559 Anthropology to add Integrated Lab Science 3-4 as a prerequisite.

Revise 556 Earth Science to limit the course enrollment to juniors and seniors, thus making it a third-year transition-level science option

SPECIAL EDUCATION DIVISION

Learning Development Program. Add Intermediate Algebra 1-2 Self-Contained to provide a second year of algebra to students in a self-contained academic setting.

Emotional Development Program. Add Computer Applications, a 1-semester course, to offer an introduction to computer technology to increase students' knowledge of computer use and applications. Successful completion of this course would fulfill the computer proficiency graduation requirement.

Add Introduction to Marketing, a 1-semester course to provide a foundation to students interested in pursuing a career in advertising.

TEAM. Add Recreation and Leisure 1-2 to teach recreational and leisure skills to TEAM students, thus assisting them in developing social skills.

WORLD LANGUAGES

Add Chinese 3-4 to continue the development of the four language skills in Chinese.

The administration recommended that the Instruction Committee members recommend that the Board of Education approve the adoption of these revised course proposals for the 2009-2010 Academic Catalog at its regular Board of Education meeting in December.

Dr. Lee asked if he were looking for financial implications, would course proposals be a place to look. He was informed that in some years, course proposals have dramatic financial implications, e.g., when the graduation requirements changed, etc. The District always pays attention to the financial obligations in order to understand them and mitigate them. Dr. Lee also learned that some students do not have full schedules. If another section of a class were added, another portion of teacher might also have to be added, affecting finances. Registrations are now at 6.41 average per student. If the

District went to 6.5 registrations, it could have significant physical and financial implications.

Mr. Prale assured Dr. Lee that the District has a very careful vetting process of the course proposals.

Additional Instructional Matters for Committee Information/Deliberation

Mr. Allen objected to the District's application for a Veterans' Day waiver so that the holiday may be celebrated on a day other than the actual holiday, acknowledging that by doing, so it provided students with uninterrupted instruction for two weeks. He felt that moving Veterans' Day to another day prevented those families from celebrating and participating in the activities for that day. Even if their parents excuse them from school, they will miss a day of classes and it will cause them problems. He felt this would create another obstacle for these students.

It was noted that the waiver application was being made so that the OPRFHS calendar could be in alignment with Districts 90 and 97.

Update on Conference

Ms. Patchak-Layman reported on the summit she attended in New Orleans in September titled "Courageous for Conversations on Race." Ms. Patchak-Layman bought the license to the virtual summit and was willing to share this with the other Board of Education members. She selected excerpts from two speakers—Glen Singleton, author of *Courageous Conversations about Race*, and Tim Wise, author of books on white privilege.

While there was technical difficulties in showing the Wise presentation, Ms. Patchak-Layman noted the conference was to help people move out of their comfort zone, to help people think about the everyday things one does that contribute to having privilege. People do not talk about white literature, white history, white social sciences, but in effect, that is what is taking place. The only way it becomes representative and has more influence from literature selections and history is if someone outside that culture calls it African-American literature, African-American history, etc. The privilege that goes along with the majority is detrimental to the minority culture. There should be awareness. She noted that the crime statistics were given as example of profiling. Many African-American men are stopped for drug violations and a higher number of African-American men are in the prison system than are white men, etc. While many whites are involved in drugs and drug selling, they are overlooked or not considered part of the profile. Mr. Wise felt one must be aware of that. White people look at white as being neutral and that there are other colors; white is also a color.

Ms. Patchak-Layman reported that other speakers included Rosa Smith, who works with African-American boys, and Mica Pollack. Fifteen different speakers participated. Ms. Patchak-Layman offered to share these speeches as well at another time.

Dr. Millard asked if Tim Wise was trying to emphasize that the educational process should not have anything related to race. Ms. Patchak-Layman stated that he said everything is about race and that it is a white construct to have African-American history month, Native American Studies, etc. If everyone were included, there would be no need to make the distinctions. Mr. Prale stated that the history that is being taught has a dominate narrative that is white but that it is not explicit. Teachers have not talked about the fact that the “racing of the history” is white. One would have to discuss that and define “whiteness” as a race. That needs to be unpacked and unpack the privilege that is associated in one’s role as a participant in that privilege as the purveyor of the history and the communicator of the history in addition to the role it plays in the history as one is working toward a discussions of black history, Latino history or native American history. One must do that work first.

Mr. Alexander stated that he understood how these were part of a systemic problem. African-American history month is another construct within a system. Ms. Patchak-Layman added that part of this has to do with what is going on and what is permitted during African-American month; it is about making white people feel better about themselves. Mr. Wise does not talk about how African-American History Month, etc., was created, but how these things play out in the system today. If the institutions are being run by the dominate culture, they have to give it the O.K. to be part of the school. Part of the conversation and reason for bringing these speakers forward was to take this information to think about it personally. Does this make sense to one? The definition of anti racism, which is part of the conversation last month, and this month, is “consciousness and deliberate individual and collective actions that challenges the impact and perpetuation of institutional white racial power, position and privilege; in that is coming to terms with the whiteness and how that is perpetuated in an institution.” How does the conversation continue in an institutional construct? A number of schools have a point person who works on equity and justice; his/her job is to check it within the school and provide opportunities that are more equitable.

Dr. Lee thanked Ms. Patchak-Layman for this report. He liked the idea of finding something one thinks is worthwhile and then choosing parts of it to share. He felt it was useful.

Ms. Patchak-Layman offered to get the listing of available speeches from the conference. She felt it would be helpful to take parts of speeches and use them as a part of the conversation at the high school. She reiterated her suggestion to invite Glen Singleton to the high school so that he could “give” OPRFHS the “language.”

Adjournment

The Instruction Committee adjourned at 9:51 a.m.