

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

**An Instruction Committee of the Whole Board
May 15, 2008**

An Instruction Committee meeting of the Whole Board was held on Thursday, May 15, 2008 in the Board Room. Dr. Lee opened the meeting at 7:40 a.m. Committee members present were Jacques A. Conway, Dr. Ralph H. Lee, Sharon Patchak Layman, and John P. Rigas. Also present were: Dr. Attila J. Weninger, Superintendent; Jason Edgecombe, Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources; Phil Prale, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction; Amy Hill, Director of Instruction; Don Vogel, Interim Principal; and Gail Kalmerton, Executive Assistance/Clerk of the Board.

Visitors included: Kay Foran, O.P.R.F.H.S. Director of Community Relations and Communications; Mary Ann DeBruin, Library Services Department Head; James Paul Hunter, Faculty Senate Chair; Barbara Nelson, PTO Chair; Bridget Kennedy of the *Oak Leaves* and Terry Dean of the *Wednesday Journal*.

Acceptance of Instruction Committee Minutes of April 17, 2008

It was the consensus of the Instruction Committee members to accept the minutes of the April Instruction Committee meeting, as amended as follows:

Page 6, Para 3, Line 4: Add the words “honors classes and then at the end of the nine weeks” after the word “in.”

Dr. Lee asked for a list of acronyms frequently used in the Instruction Committee reports. Dr. Weninger stated that he would provide a list and administrators offered to explain the acronyms to any interested board member.

2008 School Library Per Grant Report

Ms. DeBruin reported that last October, the Board of Education approved a School District Library Program Grant which requires the Board of Education to agree to the Library’s progress toward meeting the Illinois school standards for school library media centers in *Linking for Learning: The Illinois School Library Media Program Guidelines* (2nd Edition, 2005). As such, Ms. DeBruin provided the following report:

“BACKGROUND

Oak Park and River Forest High School District 200 received a School District Library Program Grant in the amount of \$2,240.78. The grant, referred to as the School Library Per Capita Grant, is based on the student housing count on September 30, 2007 at a maximum of \$.75 per student. (3098 students x \$.7233) Funds must be spent anytime during the 2007-08 school year and obligated by June 30, 2008. Funds may be spent on library materials, print and non-print; electronic resources; library staff development; library services (programs and public relations for

students, faculty, and/or administration); and professional services contracts. As noted at the October 27, 2008 Board meeting, in order to apply for the grant the Board agreed to review the library's progress toward meeting the Illinois school standards for school library media centers in *Linking for Learning: The Illinois School Library Media Program Guidelines* (2nd Edition, 2005).

“SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The funds were budgeted for library collection development. Each of the three librarians is a bibliographer in curricular areas and they purchased both reference and circulating books to develop subject areas of the collection. This school year the following activities have been implemented:

- The librarians promote collaborative planning by working with teachers to define assignments and to develop information seeking strategies for students. The librarians are active in support of collaborative learning throughout the curriculum in all subject areas and with all types of learners.
- Students and teachers use a variety of media to further their reading, viewing, listening, and communicating skills. The librarians conduct book talks, discuss website selection, promote the use of subscription databases, and compare search engine capabilities. In addition, the librarians encourage students to pursue pleasure reading. Our “Popular Paperback Books” is a highly circulated collection.
- The library media program integrates technology throughout the curriculum. As a technology-based library, teachers may now schedule classes online; students, teachers and staff may access databases on or off campus; and, through the library webpage students, teachers and staff can access Assignment Guides, *Research Basics*, and other library documents.
- The library is open before and after school, and throughout the day for classes, study hall students, and students with passes. The Huskie Hub of the library is the computer drop-in center for independent students. Students have 24-7 access to the library webpage and the subscription databases.
- To better organize resources—both on and off campus, the library program maximizes Destiny, Follett’s Library Management System. Our subscription databases are listed on the library webpage and paper copy handouts. Our resources and technologies are selected to meet the learning needs of all students, from those with special needs to AP classes. Our selected resources reflect diversity—racial, ethnic, and gender identity.
- The librarians have made it evident this year that the library program is about improved service and strategic planning. The library clearly communicates to the entire learning community through the library webpage and other promotional materials and venues.
- The librarians and the library staff are available before, after, and during the school day to ensure access and to provide assistance. The library resources are shared with teachers and students not only within the library, but they are also made available for classroom use. The librarians along with the IT staff efficiently manage and insure 24-7 access to the catalog and databases both on and off campus.”

Ms. Patchak-Layman asked the following questions:

1. Does the District track of the numbers of students using different mediums in the library, e.g., via the Internet where the librarians help with the instruction of it, etc.?
2. Has the number of students using the library outside of classroom activity increased?
3. Has number of teachers using the library increased?
4. Is it the goal to increase the student usage of the library?

Ms. DeBruin responded that general numbers on library usage are kept, e.g., which classes, how many students during the day, before and after school, etc., but not in terms of using technology. Technology is hard to identify because it is so integrated. The library is a fabulous resource and getting students there is a goal. Ms. DeBruin will provide information on usage in terms of last year versus this year.

Ms. Patchak-Layman suggested that this could be used as a template for all of the programs.

Preliminary April 2008 Testing Results

Mr. Prale prepared the following report on the Preliminary April 2008 Testing Results

“BACKGROUND

- In the 2006-2007 school year, the District changed its internal testing schedule to begin in the eighth grade to collect standardized test information using the EPAS system developed by the ACT Corporation. Each test incorporates a series of subtests in math, English, reading, and science. Each subtest produces a subscore and each test produces a composite score. This report includes information on math and reading subscores. These tests provide one way to assess program effectiveness, measure student growth, and prepare students for mandatory state testing in eleventh grade.
- For the class of 2009, current juniors, available test results include EXPLORE taken in ninth grade and an I-PSAE (instructional Prairie State Achievement Exam) taken in tenth grade. The PSAE results for the class of 2009, current juniors will not be available for several more weeks.
- For the class of 2010, current sophomores, available test results include EXPLORE in eighth grade, PLAN in ninth grade and an I-PSAE in the tenth grade.
- For the class of 2011, current freshmen, available test results include EXPLORE in eighth grade and PLAN in ninth grade.

“SUMMARY OF PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

- Using I-PSAE tests for the classes of 2009 and 2010, a comparison was made of the math subscores for students enrolled in the Algebra 211 and Algebra Block 212 courses. These courses introduced new teaching methods and more minutes as a way to introduce more students to the regular level ninth grade Algebra curriculum and to accelerate the learning of those students towards college readiness. A slight increase in math subscores for the class of 2010 was noted, although the increase was not statistically significant.
- Matched PLAN and I-PSAE math subscores of students in the class of 2010 who were enrolled in Algebra 211 and Algebra Block 212 showed some growth. The rate of growth was not statistically significant.

- Comparing the PLAN math subscores of students enrolled in the Algebra 211 and 212 classes last year (class of 2010) and this year (class of 2011) showed little change. The number of students in the Algebra 212 course increased from 73 last year to 110 this year, allowing that the Algebra Block/Agile Mind course enrolls more students who might otherwise be taking Foundations of Algebra.
- Matched EXPLORE and PLAN reading scores of students in the class of 2011 enrolled in regular level English classes with additional support through College Prep Scholar and Learning Support Reading show greater growth than students not enrolled in the programs. Students in College Prep Scholar showed more growth than those in Learning Support Reading.

“RECOMMENDATION

Continue to review assessment data to determine program additions, deletions, or revisions.

In his oral remarks, Mr. Prale stated that eighth graders were now taking the EXPLORE test and the scores were being used as part of the course selection process for incoming ninth graders. Freshmen take the PLAN Test and sophomores take the Instructional ACT. The District is also internally grading all three tests in order to get the results much faster. Results of this system are preliminarily slightly positive, but not statistically significant. Students in the math and reading programs are improving slightly.

The EXPLORE test includes English, math, reading and science reasoning subtests. It is written and issued by the ACT organization. The difference between the EXPLORE, PLAN and ACT tests is the length of the test and the difficulty in some of the later questions. The EXPLORE Test is normed for 8th and 9th grades. The PLAN Test is normed for 10th grade. The ACT is normed for the 11th grade.

Mr. Prale stated that the scales of the tests were scored along the following scale:
 EXPLORE 25 PLAN 32 ACT 36

He continued that the lower scores for each test would be similar but the higher end of the scale scores would show more variety based on the difficulty of the test. It is hoped that an incoming freshman student entering with a score of 15 or 16 as a composite score or on a subtest could meet college readiness benchmarks as defined by ACT by the time they reach the end of 11th grade. For students with scores of 14 and below, the District would like to provide academic support to accelerate their learning. Dr. Lee asked if there were a correlation between the reading scores on these three tests with what is commonly referred to as grade-level scores, e.g., 5th grade, 7th grade, etc.? The response was no, there is not because of the vocabulary or comprehension score. The closest one could get using EXPLORE would be to get to the national percentile score, perhaps using the 50th percentile as a benchmark. ACT does not convert its scores into grade-equivalent reading levels. Mr. Prale continued that scores do not tell as much about students as they do about programs.

Ms. Patchak-Layman asked for further clarification about the scores being more important to the program. The scores are indicators of where students are placed in courses. One is placing students based on the score they have, which is different from looking at the program and taking a composite. Middle schools are looking at the

effectiveness of their programs. The high school is analyzing the PLAN data and the student programs in order to evaluate these programs. In addition, other data is gathered via parent input, performance in class, and homework, etc.

Dr. Lee felt this discussion was a good beginning for him and he asked for suggestions on how to move forward in getting information. The high school has been collecting standardized test data for about three years.

The question was asked how long the District would allow patterns to exist before making changes in a program, for example, the algebra block program. Using this year's data as a baseline, changes could be made. If one saw steady improvement, the District would continue with the program. Algebra can be a more problematic measure because students take it before geometry, and then with the geometry course placed before advanced algebra, many students end up taking the Instructional ACT, before they may have had advanced algebra. Ms. Patchak-Layman asked why algebra was not the starting point for that program. Mr. Prale replied that the District is working with middle schools on offering algebra in the eighth grade. Ms. Patchak-Layman suggested an expansion of the summer geometry program.

Mr. Hunter made the following comments:

- 1) He thanked and congratulated Mr. Prale and Ms. Hill on the school's present position because three years ago there was considerable conversation about how the school would approach the responsibility of testing. The District has put together a good program of testing for both parents and faculty. To have this discussion today is very different from that point three years ago.
- 2) He also complimented Ms. Hill for taking on the responsibility for working with the faculty to make them understand the importance of the testing, as well as listening to them and to the parents to make the testing better.
- 3) As a teacher and parent, he appreciated the fact that he can administer tests to the sophomores and give them their test scores the second day. He is able to counsel these students and applaud the ones who did well. Those kinds of discussions have not occurred in the past.

Mr. Rigas asked what percentage of students has not had algebra by the time they reached high school. Mr. Prale stated that it was approximately 300 students of the incoming class or 40 percent. It is estimated that the regular Algebra program will deliver about half of those students to college readiness. However, the District is falling behind by only having approximately 70 percent of the students meeting or exceeding math standards by their junior year. Mr. Rigas was frustrated in that there is not a big push on the achievement gap earlier than high school. Mr. Prale reported that a problem exists with the testing standards, as elementary school students can meet and exceed without mastering the basic algebra course. Mr. Rigas cared about what they knew, not about meeting or exceeding. He does not see the same pressure on the feeder schools as there is on the high school. Ms. Patchak-Layman believed that that feeder schools were feeling pressure and they were working on it. She stated that if one looked at the goals and

indicators established for the next year and the previous years of the feeder schools, one would see what is being measured and their work. It is often said these tests are a snapshot and one does not know what is being reported. What is the longitudinal activity or has it been static? From the State's numbers, it looks like there has been an increase in both Districts during the last six to eight years and that the gap is being reduced.

Dr. Weninger suggested approaching CADCA, a curriculum group, and suggesting that eighth graders take the EXPLORE test rather than ISAT test; it would put pressure on the middle schools. Mr. Prale suggested there might be a way then to work backwards from that, based on the scores, to determine which the sixth graders would be likely to get these scores.

Ms. Patchak-Layman asked what kind of diagnostic work was conducted at the high school. She felt that doing this work would help determine students' learning styles etc. Mr. Prale stated that when the RTI model comes forward, he would talk with the Division Heads about implementing something in the fall.

Dr. Lee read an article in the *Chicago Tribune* on the benefits of introducing physics in high school before biology, per tradition. Forty years ago, he was an evangelist to teach physics in the lower grades. He asked the status of the discussions at O.P.R.F.H.S. on this subject, as he was open to that discussion and for the high school to be a leader in that direction. Ms. Patchak-Layman found this interesting and added that there were other ways of presenting materials rather than the "tried-and-true" methods that would produce more interest in other areas of science.

Staff Development Schedule

Mr. Prale provided the following written report:

“BACKGROUND

For the past three years, the school calendar has included an alternative schedule that allowed faculty and staff to participate in staff development and professional learning team opportunities. On the days using the modified schedule, students begin the first period of the school day at 9:30 AM. In the 2005-2006 school year, five days used the schedule; in the 2006-2007 and current 2007-2008 school years, eight days used this schedule. For next year, administrators and faculty have discussed the possibility of using a modified weekly schedule that would allow faculty, staff, and administration to address district goals more frequently and directly and to create a more sustained professional development program.

“SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

- For the 2008-2009 school year, the administration would like to conduct professional development opportunities from 8:00 AM – 8:50 AM most Mondays. On those days, a modified class schedule would be in place, with first period starting at 9 a.m. Many other districts in our immediate suburban metro area use an alternative schedule to create professional development opportunities for faculty and staff.
- The available time for faculty and staff would be apportioned to separate professional development areas including conversations concerning race and achievement and

continuing work by teacher led learning teams. Some time could be committed to larger meetings of faculty and staff to update essential or critical information as necessary.

- Regarding faculty and staff conversations concerning race and achievement, a series of seminars is being developed, the goal of which is to increase our understanding of how the racial context of the high school may affect to school performance patterns. The seminars will begin once the program is adequately developed.
- Regarding the teacher led learning teams, the teams will continue to focus on curriculum review, development, and change and the effort to carry out specific initiatives on behalf of district goals. Some teams will build on work from this year; others may create new teams with new areas of focus. In the coming school year, learning teams may be organized within and across divisions.
- Regarding larger meetings of faculty of staff, we often have a need to update information about student needs, share information about changes in school policy or school law, provide testing and assessment preparation and feedback, or highlight current school, community or student issues. There is currently no formal time set aside to do so under existing calendar configurations/schedules.

“RECOMMENDATION

- Review and provide comment and questions.”

Mr. Prale reported that there has been criticism over the fact that the District does not sustain staff development or organize it during the school year. The administration talked about this and created the above plan. Discussion ensued regarding the impact on families, the loss of instructional time, and the limitations that will be placed on science classes.

It had not yet been decided whether the South Café would be open to students who arrive before the start of the late arrival day. Dr. Weninger has spoken with Cindy Milojevic and John Stelzer about the possibility of having the 150 student mentors use this time to mentor freshman students.

Mr. Prale reiterated that three additional instructional days would be lost; presently, only 12 hours, or approximately 2 instructional days are lost. There will be no other late arrival days, but there will be 2 Institute Days and 2 days of testing.

Mr. Prale responded to Ms. Patchak-Layman’s question regarding outcomes and measurements that the learning team matrix, referencing the information forwarded to the Board of Education that listed the goals, outcomes, and measures for each of the learning teams. A summary report and the results of surveys of the Institute Days will be presented to the Board of Education in June. The faculty also is asking for increased learning team accountability. Comparisons will be made from the June reports.

Ms. Patchak-Layman asked if any of the teams use students as the basis of its discussions, i.e., look at different students to analyze how they are doing and thus

determine how to improve instruction. Mr. Prale responded that the some divisions look at student work as part of the work of the learning team.

Textbook Approval

Ms. Hill presented the following written report. Referencing the number of books brought forward, she stated that some of them have been in use as provisional books, which is an effective way to get a sense of the book.

“BACKGROUND

The *English Division* recommends use of The Blind Side: Evolution of a Game for the course 175/2: LIT: Sports and Literature. The Director of Assessment and Research provisionally approved the book in 2007 for use through the Spring 2008 semester. The proposed textbook is a true story of a minority athlete.

“The *Special Education Division* recommends use of Refugee Boy, Skellig, and The Whale Rider, for the course 1237: English Literature. Refugee Boy is a Junior Library Guild selection, Skellig is a Michael L. Printz Honor Book, and The Whale Rider is the inspiration for a major motion picture of the same name that has won numerous film festival awards. Each of the books offers exposure to issues of importance to young people at an acceptable reading level.

“The *Special Education Division* recommends use of Invisible Allies: Microbes That Shape Our Lives, Flush, Clan Apis, and Double Helix for the course 5097: Essentials of Biology. Invisible Allies emphasizes the impact of microbes on everyday living with fascinating anecdotes and illustrations. Flush has received numerous book awards, including ALA Best Book for Young Adults, Green Earth Book Award, and NAPPA Gold Award. In addition to environmental issues, the book deals with a variety of family issues at a high interest, accessible reading level. Using comic book technique, Clan Apis covers anatomy, behavior, and ecology in an engaging manner. Chosen as an ALA Best Book for Young Adults, Double Helix is an exploration of genetic ethics which teaches DNA, genetic engineering, and heredity.

“The *World Languages Division* recommends use of the following books in the following courses: French: First Year workbook in 409: French 1-2. The workbook provides reading and writing activities to supplement the curriculum and suitable first-year French language and culture. French: Two Years workbook in 413: French 3-4 and 415: French 3-4A. The workbook provides reading and writing activities to supplement the curriculum and suitable second-year French language and culture. French: Three Years workbook in 419: French 5-6 and 421: French 5-6A. The workbook provides reading and writing activities to supplement the curriculum and suitable third-year French language and culture. L'enfant Noir in 427: AP French 9-10. The Director of Assessment and Research provisionally approved the book in 2007 for use through the Spring 2008 semester. It provides reading to accompany the AP French curriculum. Eres Tu, Maria? video workbook in 461: Spanish 1-2 and 463: Spanish 1-2A. The Director of Assessment and Research provisionally approved the book in 2007 for use through the Spring 2008 semester. It provides reading and activities to accompany the video series *Eres Tu, Maria?* En Busca de la Verdad video workbook in 467: Spanish 3-4 and 469: Spanish 3-4A. It provides reading and activities to accompany the video series *En Busca de La Verdad*. Encuentro Inesperado! in 477: Spanish 5-6. The text provides reading to accompany the third-year Spanish curriculum. La Casa Embrujada in 479: Spanish 5-6A. The Director of Assessment and Research provisionally approved the book in 2007 for use through the Spring 2008 semester. It provides reading to accompany the third-year Spanish curriculum.

Cajas de Carton: Relatos de la Vida peregrine de un Nino Campesino in 485: Spanish 7-8A and 489: Advanced Spanish Literature and Composition 1-2A. The Director of Assessment and Research provisionally approved the book in 2007 for use through the Spring 2008 semester. The text provides reading to accompany the fourth-year Spanish curriculum.

La Catrina: El Ultimo Secreto video workbook in 483: Spanish 7-8 and 485: Spanish 7-8A. It provides reading and activities to accompany the video series *La Catrina: El Ultimo Secreto*.

A Toda Vela! Textbook and workbook in 487: AP Spanish 9-10. The text provides a complete AP Spanish program, including updated vocabulary, clear grammar explanations, and high interest literary and cultural selections.

Graded German Reader for 431: German 1-2 and 435: German 3-4. The Director of Assessment and Research provisionally approved the book in 2007 for use through the Spring 2008 semester. It provides reading to accompany the first- and second-year German curriculum.

Grundlage Deutsch 2: Fundamentals of German for 435: German 3-4. The Director of Assessment and Research provisionally approved the book in 2007 for use through the Spring 2008 semester. It contains reading and writing activities to enhance the third-year German curriculum.

Emil und die Detektive, Der Kleine Prinz, and Grundlage Deutsch 3: Fundamentals of German for 441: German 5-6A and 445: German 7-8A. The Director of Assessment and Research provisionally approved these books in 2007 for use through the Spring 2008 semester. They provide reading to accompany the third- and fourth-year German curriculum.

A Song of War for 407: Latin Poetry 5-6A/7-8A. The text offers a complete Latin poetry program, covering the readings of Vergil's *Aeneid* and provides students with critical essays, explanatory notes, and discussion questions.

Everyday Listening in 50 Days 1 workbook for 495: Japanese 5-6A. The Director of Assessment and Research provisionally approved the book in 2007 for use through the Spring 2008 semester. It provides reading and writing activities to enhance the curriculum.

Crescendo for 458: AP Italian 9-10. The Director of Assessment and Research provisionally approved the book in 2007 for use through the Spring 2008 semester. It provides a complete AP Italian program, including updated vocabulary, clear grammar explanations, and high interest literary and cultural selections.

“The *Special Education Division* recommends use of Tears of a Tiger, Stargirl, and American Literature: Pacemaker for the course 1337: American Literature. The winner of the Coretta Scott King Genesis Award, Tears of a Tiger was written specifically for young adults who must deal not only with problems of teachers and homework, but also with fear, frustration, and death as they struggle to find themselves in today's large urban high schools. Stargirl is the story of a girl who refuses to conform in a high school setting. The novel addresses what it means to be an individual and issues of diversity. Literature Circle Questions and activities and projects promote active reading. The second edition of Pacemaker American Literature offers short stories, poetry, memoirs, drama, and other types of literature that represent the experiences of people from many different cultures and backgrounds. Among other features, each selection includes “Before You Read,” “Keys to Literature,” and “Words to Know” pages.

“The *Fine and Applied Arts Division* recommends use of The Annotated Mona Lisa, The Art of Writing About Art, and Gardner's Art Through the Ages for the course 681: AP Art History. The Annotated Mona Lisa uses graphic devices to achieve a visual and textual approach to the subject of art history. The Director of

“Assessment and Research provisionally approved The Art of Writing About Art in 2007 for use through the Spring 2008 semester. The textbook teaches the principles of effective writing and combines composition and critical inquiry into the discipline of art. It also provides students with

the requisite vocabulary for verbalizing the art experience. Gardner's Art Through the Ages is the most widely read introduction to the history of art in the English language. The Director of Assessment and Research provisionally approved the book in 2007 for use through the Spring 2008 semester. This classic global survey of art and architecture tells the story of art through the ages by organizing the vast array of artistic monuments according to the civilizations that produced them in roughly chronological order. This Twelfth Edition reflects the latest art historical research while maintaining attention to style, chronology, iconography, and technique with greater attention to function and context.

“The *Fine and Applied Arts Division* recommends use of Music in Theory and Practice, 7th Edition, Volume I for the course 807: AP Music Theory. The Director of Assessment and Research provisionally approved the book in 2007 for use through the Fall 2007 semester. The textbook combines clear explanations with examples drawn from a wide range of music styles and periods to illustrate key concepts. The text has been updated to make it more clear and contemporary.

“The *Fine and Applied Arts Division* recommends use of Parenting: Rewards & Responsibilities for the course 715/2: Parenting. The Director of Assessment and Research provisionally approved the book in 2007 for use through the Spring 2008 semester. Special features entitled Parenting Pointers, The Developing Brain, Health and Safety, Child and Family Services Careers, and Modeling Character appear throughout the text.

“The *History Division* recommends use of Ethnic Chicago: A Multicultural Portrait for the course 375/2: The History of Chicago. The Fourth Edition details the various peoples and ethnic institutions of Chicago. It contains critically acclaimed studies of the experiences of the Irish, Jewish, Greek, Polish, German, Ukrainian, Japanese, and French-Indian groups as well as newly researched chapters on African American migration, Chatham, Latino Chicago, the Chinese in Chicago, Asian Indians, Koreans, and Swedes in Chicago.

“SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The Director of Assessment and Research reviewed the textbooks and recommended their adoption by the Board of Education. The Instruction Committee of the Board of Education approved the textbooks at its meeting on May 15, 2008. Attached is the Textbook Adoption Form for each of the proposed texts.

“RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Board of Education approve as part of the consent items the adoption the above-named textbooks for the corresponding courses.

Regarding English 3 and 4 books, Ms. Patchak-Layman asked what the targeted reading level was generally of the students in that class. Ms Hill responded that there is a range of reading levels. The use of supplementary texts is like going to the library and choosing a book. Ms. Patchak-Layman asked if everyone in the class read Skellig, which has a reading level of 2.7. Ms. Hill believed the plan was for all students to read this book, as it is a highly awarded book for the very purpose of engaging students who would otherwise struggle with material. Ms. Patchak-Layman felt families would express concern about this class' expectation of reading level. Special Education students should be reading the same level of textbooks as regular education students, with accommodations. Special Education students should be reading Shakespeare, as that was

being read in the general curriculum. The goal is to have students included in the curriculum. The accommodations should be based on the students in the class. Mr. Prale stated that the teachers want to have books for different opportunities. This program has been successful and the District wants the outcomes that parallel programs.

Dr. Weninger agreed that the goal was to move students to a higher level of expectations. If one did a readability statistical analysis on John Steinbeck's "Pearl" or "Old Man in the Sea," one would know that not all students could read the book, but it is also known that the imagery and the concepts go beyond the readability level of the actual words. He trusted teachers to do the same thing, e.g., take good literature and entice students to read it.

Ms. Patchak-Layman asked how this matched the grade level. Is this a different set of literature than what the other sophomore and freshman-level class students read? Are these textbooks selected because of the ACT test, etc.? One must have some instruction and knowledge before one can take a test. Ms. Patchak-Layman would find it difficult to know that other tests were used. Dr. Lee stated that it could be a mistake to discuss textbooks outside of the concept of the teacher using it. Any textbook can be appropriate in the hands of one teacher and inappropriate in the hands of another teacher.

It was the consensus of the Instruction Committee members to recommend that the Board of Education approve these textbooks at the next regular Board of Education meeting under the Consent Agenda.

Grants and Grant Writer

Dr. Weninger reviewed the following written report with the Committee members.

“BACKGROUND

We have worked diligently this year to remain within the budgetary guidelines of the 5-year plan, and at the same time begin new initiatives in a variety of areas. Part of this work is the development of new and creative ideas to bring on new programs that may be funded, in whole or in part, by additional and new revenue sources.

“SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Recently and thanks to the efforts of one parent and one community member, we became aware of two grants, which may support some of the proposed freshman programs, as well as existing programs targeted at underachieving students. One grant is through ATT and could provide \$50K - \$100K per year, and the other grant is through the federal government by way of Cook County, entitled the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) and could provide much more than the ATT grant.

“In reviewing the details of each grant, we believe that the following programs would qualify for these grants and their funding: parts or all of our freshmen initiatives, summer program as outlined in the original set of proposals in October (summer academics, activities, and work components), college and career center, the Pupil Support Services (PSS) Team Model

(including 2 new contractual social workers and ombudsman/liaison position), and Triton College partnership.

“Our timeline is short, however. The ATT grant is due on May 19, with awards announced in early September 2008 and may, upon renewal approval, extend for 4 years. The WIA grant is due on June 6 and is a 2-year grant (October 1, 2008 – September 30, 2010).

“In order to comply with the deadlines, we have engaged the assistance of Connie Coleman, a former OPRF parent and neighbor. She is now recently retired from a 36-year career with the U.S. Department of Labor as Director of Youth Services for Region 5 (a 10 state region). She was also responsible for administering the WIA grant, so she knows a great deal about it. Connie identified several programs from the initiatives proposed in October that would fit neatly under the WIA grant and believes, as we do, that the ATT grant would also be a match.

“As we move towards the close of the school year and plan for transitions into the next one, it is our challenge to find extra hands to research, coordinate, write, and submit one let alone 2 grants. As a result, we have offered to and discussed with Connie the possibility to research, prepare, and submit the grants’ proposals pending Board feedback. Compensation would be provided by the grants themselves as part of the administrative costs, i.e., if the grant proposals were successful, then remuneration would be provided by the grants. Projected administrative costs would be written into the grants as such, as well.

“RECOMMENDATION

No action required; however, we do seek Board feedback.”

Mr. Rigas encouraged the District to pursue this. He felt that there were other opportunities to explore as well. If this model works, the District should continue to do this on a permanent basis. He also suggested contacting MSAN and the Gates Foundation. Dr. Weninger noted that he was going to speak with the executive director of MSAN about avenues to pursue. Mr. Prale noted that the District did derive some benefits from MSAN Researchers’ Practitioner’s Council and continued articulation with area schools. The membership is \$12,500 per year.

Ms. Coleman would be the coordinator of grant writing. This position would seek grants, work with the school to develop proposals, and get them approved. The next step would be monitoring, reporting, and the administration of the grant. Ms. Patchak-Layman asked why, if creating a new position, would it not be posted for people who are grant writers. She also was unsure about the ethics of only paying someone if they were successful, i.e., if you get the grants, you will get this job. Dr. Weninger stated that this would first be commenced as a pilot with the understanding that administrative costs would be built in. The maximum allowable for administrative costs is ten percent, but the District would not maximize that.

Dr. Lee noted his support of this endeavor.

Additional Instructional Matters for Committee Information/Deliberation

Mr. Rigas asked if the athletic study halls were being terminated next year. The response was no, but the District is looking to eliminate study halls in the cafeterias.

Mr. Rigas reported that the District continues to have athletic contests scheduled on national testing days. He noted that other schools also have the same conflict. ACT and SAT only give so many opportunities for this testing and it affects both teams. Dr. Weninger noted that he would look into that problem.

Adjournment

The Instruction Committee adjourned at 9:36 a.m.