

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

**An Instruction Committee of the Whole Board
August 15, 2007**

An Instruction Committee meeting of the Whole Board was held on Thursday, August 15, 2007, in the Board Room. The meeting opened at 8:18 a.m. Committee members present were John C. Allen, Valerie J. Fisher, Dr. Ralph H. Lee, Dr. Dietra D. Millard, and Sharon Patchak Layman. Also present were: Dr. Attila J. Weninger, Superintendent; Jason Edgecombe, Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources; Don Vogel, Interim Principal, Cheryl Witham, Chief Financial Officer; Phil Prale, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction; Jack Lanenga, Assistant Superintendent for Operations; Amy Hill, Director of Instruction; 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; James Paul Hunter, Faculty Senate Chair; Terry Burke, Wyanetta Johnson, Burcy Hines, and Geralynne Rode, community members; and Terry Dean of the *Wednesday Journal* and Bridget Kennedy of the Oak Leaves.

Approval of Instruction Committee Minutes

The approval of the June 21, 2007, Instruction Committee Minutes was delayed until the September meeting.

Instruction Committee Calendar

Dr. Millard announced that she was working with Mr. Prale to create an Instruction Committee calendar so that Board of Education members would have advance notice when specific reports would be presented.

Report on Minority Student Achievement Network National Conference

Ms. Hill had submitted the following written report:

“The Minority Student Achievement Network held its 9th Annual Conference, “Opening Doors and Raising the Roof: Building Equitable Classrooms,” in Eugene, Oregon from Sunday, June 24 to Wednesday, June 27. Representatives from all 25-member districts enjoyed a well-organized and thought-provoking event, hosted by the Eugene School District. Dr. Attila J. Weninger, Jacques Conway, Amy Hill, Devon Alexander, Tiffany Allison, Michael Byars, Ryan Mulvaney, and Sarah Rosas attended on behalf of Oak Park and River Forest High School.

“The conference began on Sunday, June 24 with a pre-conference on best practices. Susan Castillo, Oregon Superintendent of Public Instruction, opened the session. The first keynote speaker, Dr. Pedro Noguera, described specific ways schools can level the educational playing field. Dr. Robert Marzano focused on standards-based formative assessment and systematic ways to ensure effective instruction in all classrooms. The day concluded with a presentation by students from the Eugene School District. That evening, the MSAN Governing Board and member districts’ School Board representatives met over dinner.

“Dr. George Russell, Superintendent of the Eugene School District, welcomed participants to the conference on Monday, June 25. Art Rainwater, Superintendent of Madison Metropolitan School District, and Dr. Gloria Ladsen-Billings, Interim MSAN Director, made opening remarks. Over that day and the next, keynote speakers and concurrent sessions offered opportunities to think and learn about effective strategies to improve the performance of public schools with regard to minority student achievement. Dr. Beverly Tatum delivered a stirring address on the historical and sociological context of student achievement gaps. Dr. Renee Rodriguez spoke about the obligation of every educator to effectively teach all students. Jamie Almanzan and Dr. Carolyn Ash addressed the common concerns of African American and Latino students and the need for “courageous conversations” to bring to light and counteract individual and institutional racial discrimination that contributes to unequal educational opportunities.

“Concurrent sessions focused on promising initiatives from MSAN member districts and the philosophical foundations of effective gap-closing strategies. OPRF participants attended concurrent sessions on successful academic support programs for students of color, race and school achievement, mathematics instruction, Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS), culturally relevant pedagogy, expanding access to rigorous coursework, and data-informed decision making, among others. In one concurrent session, OPRF History teacher Monica Swope presented the results of a joint effort (with Evanston Township High School) to improve the teaching of US History. On Wednesday, June 27, the MSAN Research Practitioner’s Council met and discussed a number of on-going projects, including progress in the new partnership with the Wisconsin Center for Educational Research.

“Upcoming MSAN events include the annual Student Conference in Arlington, Virginia, October 18-20; RPC and Governing Board meetings on October 24-25; and a mini-conference on adolescent literacy on November 8-9. The 10th Annual MSAN Conference will be held in June, 2008, hosted by the Madison Metropolitan School District.”

O.P.R.F.H.S. will participate in the mini-conference on adolescent literacy in November. The District 200 team felt the national conference was valuable. Much time was spent debriefing and on honest conversations about race. Devon Alexander is working on a series of seminars for O.P.R.F.H.S. teachers to address the dynamics of race in the community and how that affects the classroom. Discussion ensued about how a conversation about race would occur in the school. Ms. Hill explained that one way would be to invite experts on diversity training in the school to address everyone. The

discussion might entail areas both inside and outside the school. Last year, O.P.R.F.H.S. hosted events that aired some teacher concerns about school climate. The all-school institute day had a focus on race and the dynamics of race; the support staff also participated.

Dr. Lee asked if documentation existed showing what MSAN knows for certain, i.e., a list of things it discovered over the years of its existence. He could not find anything detailing with certainty regarding the achievement gap. Mr. Prale stated that three years ago, the Research Practitioner's Team put together a series of statements with citations. Each citation referenced to a specific research finding. A subgroup within the MSAN structure was charged with taking that document back to their schools for discussion. O.P.R.F.H.S. had that discussion in December 2005. Dr. George Bailey worked with the division heads to prepare them for those discussions. Ms. Hill stated that the Research Practitioner's Council would begin collaboration with the Wisconsin Educational Research Center in Madison in an effort to get the kind of research to which Dr. Lee referred. Ms. Patchak-Layman asked if there were a list of activities implemented at the high school because of those statements. Mr. Prale responded that work to remedy gaps in school performance had begun before O.P.R.F.H.S. joined MSAN, so it was hard to know if there were a causal relationship between MSAN and specific program effectiveness. O.P.R.F.H.S. has the Mac Scholar Program, the 8 to 9 Program, both of which were partly a result of its involvement in MSAN, because MSAN energized some teachers to participate in the programs. Ms. Patchak-Layman was concerned about just doing more research and not having action plans that travel with it. Ms. Hill stated that other examples of programs related to MSAN were Agile Mind and Algebra Block. O.P.R.F.H.S. collaborated with Evanston Township High School to develop a relationship regarding these programs.

Ms. Patchak-Layman understood that O.P.R.F.H.S. and E.T.H.S. were the only districts that were not K-12 within MSAN, making them unique. She asked what kinds of things come out of O.P.R.F.H.S.'s participation in MSAN. Dr. Weninger responded that there was a connection to the Center for Educational Research. MSAN recently came underneath that organization, as it is the largest educational research center in the country. It is not only a partnership but also the address of MSAN, i.e., the University of Wisconsin-Madison, and its new director lives in Madison. The Center's resources will be readily available to MSAN. Dr. Weninger continued that while the MSAN pre-conference sessions were powerful, the most powerful portion of the conference was the conversation about race within O.P.R.F.H.S. Discussion ensued about taking the eight O.P.R.F.H.S. members who had attended the conference and attempting to replicate something similar on Institute Day. Monica Swope had participated in a similar conversation and she was at MSAN as a presenter on one of the topics.

While districts are limited to eight people as part of the team, a District could send up to four more with additional registration fees. District 97 actually had more than eight persons at the summer conference.

Preliminary 2007 PSAE Results and Preliminary AYP Status

Ms. Hill had presented the following written report on PSAE Results and AYP Status:

“On July 25 the Illinois State Board of Education released preliminary results for the 2007 Prairie State Achievement Examination given last April to all public high school juniors. Schools were allowed to make any necessary corrections to their student data files and were asked to do so by Wednesday, August 8 in order to insure the accuracy of calculations of Adequate Yearly Progress. We had few corrections and were easily able to complete them in advance of the deadline.

“In order to achieve Adequate Yearly Progress in 2007, Illinois public high schools were required to test at least 95% of all students, as well as 95% of students in each subgroup numbering 45 or more. OPRF successfully tested almost 99% of the junior class and made AYP in the area of participation. In order to make AYP in the area of student performance, we were required to have 55% or more of students in all subgroups meet or exceed standards in reading and mathematics.

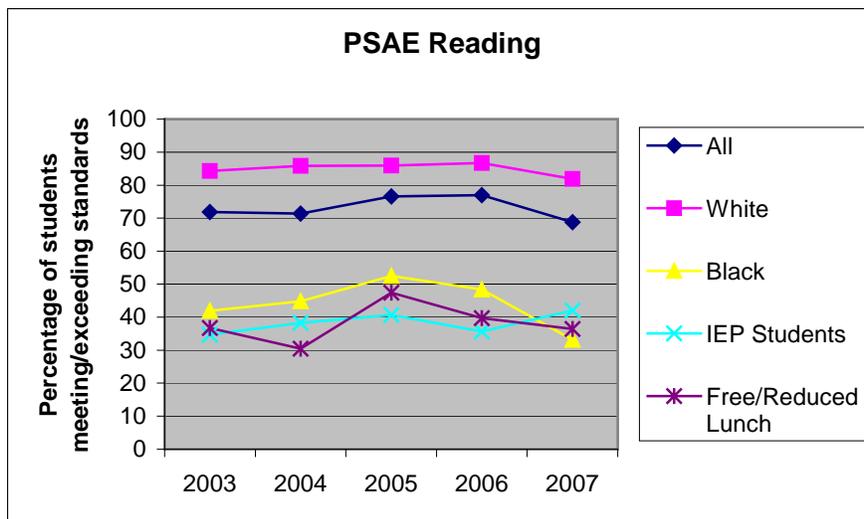
“Internal analysis, corroborated by the preliminary AYP status report released by ISBE, indicates that we did not make AYP in 2007. The proportion of OPRF juniors meeting or exceeding standards, on the whole, was well above 55%, and results for Special Education students allowed us to make AYP in reading for that group through Safe Harbor. However, we did not make AYP in mathematics for Special Education students, and we did not achieve AYP in reading or math for our African American or Low Income students.

“The specific ways in which AYP is determined contributed to the school and district *meeting* AYP standards in 2006 and *not meeting* AYP standards in the current results. This experience has emerged in other area districts. Brief contacts with other districts have shown a similar pattern of results; of eleven districts that have shared preliminary information only two have indicated that the district made AYP. In the situation for District 200, our initial review of available data shows patterns in results that may be related to how AYP is calculated. While ACT and Workkeys (PSAE, Day Two) scores are scaled and normed to establish a baseline school or district effectiveness, subgroup performance results may be subject to statistical fluctuations that appear in the subgroups’ percentages of students who meet/exceed standards. One reason for shifting percentages may be that the factors affecting a subgroup’s performance may not mirror factors affecting the larger group that establishes the baseline standard. In addition, since school subgroups are frequently significantly smaller, the performance of a relatively small number of students may determine whether or not that group meets AYP standards. For example, a subgroup of 100 students can show a drop of three percentage points if three more students do not meet or exceed standards. A small shift in the number of students meeting standards combined with the increasing percentage needed to meet AYP shows up in these preliminary results.

“However, the inherent problems in how AYP is and has been calculated are not essential to drawing significance from the 2007 preliminary AYP results. More important is how the AYP results obligate the administration, faculty, and staff to implement systemic changes for improving the performance of students, faculty, administration, and staff and to assess and report on the effectiveness of those attempts. Systemic changes that have been implemented include incorporating Agile Mind into the Algebra I courses, creating a behavior specialist position for the ED program, providing CRISS training across the curriculum, organizing a collaborative teaching model for transition level freshman students, and training in PBIS intervention strategies for administrators and teacher leaders. Also, district administrators are expanding a pilot, started in the Math Division last spring, to evaluate core curricular programs and assess how course results align with standardized test results. During the school year, the administration will be reporting on these programs to the board and the school community.”

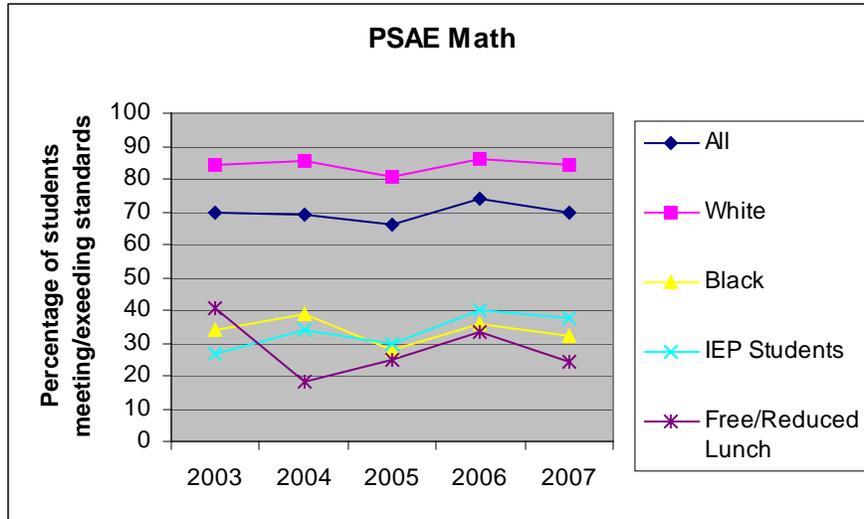
PSAE Reading Performance, 2003-2007

	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
All	71.9	71.4	76.6	77	68.8
White	84.3	85.8	85.9	86.7	81.9
Black	41.9	44.8	52.5	48.4	33.1
IEP Students	34.7	38.2	40.7	35.6	42
Free/Reduced Lunch	36.7	30.4	47.4	39.7	36.4



PSAE Math Performance, 2003-2007

	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
All	69.7	69	65.8	74.1	70
White	84.4	85.2	80.4	86.3	84.4
Black	34.1	38.5	27.8	35.8	32
IEP Students	26.5	34.2	29.7	40	37.7
Free/Reduced Lunch	40.8	17.9	24.6	33.3	24.2



O.P.R.F.H.S. will not make AYP. O.P.R.F.H.S. continues to see the same patterns it has been seeing for a number of years in the African-American, Special Education, and the economically disadvantaged subgroups.

Ms. Hill noted that the overall numbers were deeply disappointing. Serious effort has been given to mathematics and reading and it was discouraging to see this gap increase on this measure.

Discussion ensued.

Dr. Lee asked if Safe Harbor were an exception to the rule. Ms. Hill responded that it was the state's acknowledgement that if there were an underperforming subgroup and the bar were raised seven percent rather than 10, the school could make AYP by using the Safe Harbor rule. It is an acknowledgement that a higher number may be too much to expect in a given school in certain areas. State law dictates these numbers. By 2014, all schools must have 100% of their students meeting or exceeding standards.

Dr. Lee then asked if O.P.R.F.H.S. had the ability to disaggregate the data to determine where the problem lies. What percentage of the black students accounts for missing the bar? Dr. Weninger noted that the 100% standard is the federal guideline; states determine the specific percentages of students who must meet and exceed each year leading up to 2014. Schools and districts must meet AYP not only for the total group of juniors, but also for each subgroup (a subgroup exists if there are at least 45 students in it). O.P.R.F.H.S. knows what percentage of the African-American students in last year's class did and did not meet AYP. Thirty-three percent of the African-American students who took the test met or exceeded standards in reading, meaning 67 percent did not meet or exceed standards. When Ms. Hill receives the data electronically, she will mine it further in an effort to better prepare to serve these students.

Ms. Hill noted that one of the problems with the data is the fact that it is a comparison of one cohort of students to another cohort of students from one year to the next.

Dr. Lee agreed that testing in the junior year tells the situation from the previous years. He asked what the District knew about the incoming students' reading abilities. He was informed that Oak Park and River Forest eighth grade students take the EXPLORE test, a pre-ACT tests that aligns with ACT and provides a predictor as to whether they will meet or exceed standards. O.P.R.F.H.S. administers a reading abilities test to freshmen at the beginning of their freshman year. If a student falls at or below the 40th percentile, that student is assigned courses designed to aid in reading, which accounts for about one-third of the schedule. Dr. Lee asked if thought had been given to these students spending 50 to 60 percent of their time on this. Ms. Hill responded that it had not during her tenure as an administrator. Ms. Hill noted that the counter argument to that would be the education of the whole child, i.e., the value of the arts, etc. Many schools failing to make AYP are restructuring these students' days.

Mr. Allen asked for the graduation rate of white students. Ms. Hill will provide that answer to him. Mr. Allen continued that O.P.R.F.H.S. was still graduating 84 or 85% of the students—they are learning something. Ms. Hill noted that the law does not allow for using growth models for assigning AYP status to a school. Dr. Weninger noted that there was no intent on the federal government's part to use growth models, just the standardized test. Texas schools are teaching strictly to the test. He continued that the testing system is a cohort model and schools are judged on that basis. It does not take into account a student's personal growth. It is a false comparison. He also stated that the effect of the initiatives is not yet reflected. It begs the question, if O.P.R.F.H.S. were to devote a preponderance of its time to reading and math would the scores increase. Test scores may increase because of the increased attention to drilling essential skills. However, one must then ask, what is the value of a comprehensive high school education? Scores for all subgroups moved downward, not just for African American students. Dr. Weninger wanted to look beyond 2003 to see if there were a direction or trend in each of the subgroups. He was looking for more than just class-to-class. This discussion is a longitudinal-based analysis of the data.

Dr. Weninger stated that the Prairie State Achievement Exam is comprised of several different tests, not all written by same testing company. The first day is comprised of the ACT. It is a general knowledge test designed for college admissions; areas tested include English, math reading, writing, and science. The second day's testing is not written with the same protocols in mind and the score from the Day 2 testing is combined with the ACT test scores to create the PSAE score and corresponding performance level. Two different performance tests are somehow statistically combined to produce a number. Many students blow off the second day. The state determines the testing schedule, i.e., day, time, testing order, etc. For Dr. Weninger, part of the issue is how to motivate these students on both days.

Ms. Patchak-Layman noted that she was very upset with the scores and what was going on at the high school. She compared the recent scores of this cohort to their eighth grade

scores. She stated that for almost every measure, the high school dropped the ball from the ISAT testing. While 68 percent of the students at the high school met or exceeded standards for all students in reading, 77 percent met or exceeded the standards in their eighth grade year. Ninety-two percent of the white students coming from the Oak Park elementary school met or exceeded the standards, yet only 82 percent met or exceeded at the high school. For African-American students, 50 percent met or exceeded in eighth grade, now only 43 percent. For the economically disadvantaged, 52 percent met or exceeded in eighth grade, and now only 36 percent. In Math, 33 percent of the African American students in eighth grade met or exceeded the standards, and it dropped to 32 percent. There are measures to look at, i.e., standardized testing. There are some similarities from the eighth grade testing to the second grade testing. Parents from Oak Park are expecting their students to achieve. The elementary schools are trending up, more and more students are meeting or exceeding the standards, and the high school's numbers are longitudinally flat. Her concern was that the elementary students were more prepared, yet when they get to the high school, something happens. They seem to diverge from the trajectory of meeting or exceeding. That is of great concern to her and the members of the community. This is a call to action. She is very disappointed that the high school is continuing to try this and continue with it. One cannot have this discrepancy and find them totally changed when they come to the high school. This is a cry and an alarm. When the trend for the last eight years is flat, that is not a lot of movement and the students are coming in at a higher level than they had been.

Dr. Millard noted that while not knowing the standards of the eighth grade, she knew the high school raises the bar very high. It is the superintendent's charge and the primary goal of the district to eliminate the achievement gap. Dr. Millard understood the statistics, but the high school must also look at the students as individuals.

Ms. Patchak-Layman stated that her statements matched anecdotal information she hears from students. Dr. Millard cautioned her about anecdotal information and was worried more about the individual students than the individual numbers. Ms. Patchak-Layman concurred but noted that these can be looked in group fashion. Every school in the state of Illinois, including Whitney Young, which has similar demographics, should be O.P.R.F.H.S.'s model. She asserted that Whitney Young had about the same number of low-income students and everyone met or exceeded the standards. There are examples in the Chicago area of students taking the same test. The same cohorts are meeting and exceeding standards and those are the examples that should be in front of us. Dr. Millard indicated that they were self-selected at Whitney Young and Ms. Patchak-Layman noted that they were self-selected at Oak Park. Ms. Patchak-Layman stated that was a community issue.

Dr. Lee wanted to pursue the comparing of the same cohorts. Would it be possible to figure out what the standards were three years earlier to compare apples with apples and then make some adjustment so that a valid comparison of those cohorts could be made. Ms. Hill noted that it was possible. Dr. Lee felt once that question was answered, a comparison could be made, on nationwide basis, as to whether it was normal for eleventh graders to focus their attention elsewhere as compared to eighth graders. He remembered

eleventh graders directing their attention in different directions from the attention of the eighth graders and to the academic detriment of the eleventh graders.

Ms. Hill felt the best strategy for measuring student growth over time was to use a consistent set of measures. The ACT test is given to juniors on the first day of PSAE testing. O.P.R.F.H.S. plans to continue to use the EXPLORE Test for incoming eighth graders, the PLAN Test for freshmen, and the pre-ACT for sophomores. Each of these tests shares a common set of learning objectives, which would allow us to measure students' growth on those objectives over time.

Dr. Lee asked if it were possible to give a similar test that would measure the same educational goals, i.e., inferences from the EXPLORE, PLAN and ACT tests, in the eighth grade and the eleventh grade to see the differences. The District could then work on a system that would do a detailed analysis on every goal to determine who is and who is not making it.

Dr. Weninger stated that ACT has had the EPAS system for a number of years. The EXPLORE and PLAN tests while not the same as the ACT, have been able to statistically predict how one would do on the ACT. They can predict with accuracy if a student has a score of 13 in Explore reading what the score would be on the PLAN Test and the ACT Test if nothing more happened other than just growing older. The school can look at that data, predict what the student might do in the junior year, and then focus its efforts on those students. The school could look to individual teachers and tell them this is what the student needs to do.

Dr. Weninger agreed with Ms. Patchak-Layman about these scores being a call to action. He too was disappointed with the results. While not trying to explain away the scores, the administration was trying to understand what they are and what they meant. One of the things to consider is that the national mobility rate in high schools is 14%. He wanted to compare the PSAE performance of students who graduated from Districts 90 and 97 with the performance of transfer students. An influx of hundreds of transfer students would impact overall performance a great deal. He refused to push any panic button. The District needed to identify the students, determine their motivation, and their needs. PSAE performance is not the sum total of this school. The District is concerned; it is a call to action to go about systemically changing and addressing the problem. A system is needed quickly, but it cannot be rushed. The District has already implemented many things and it is a much larger conversation.

To Ms. Patchak-Layman, a systematic change is status quo. The need to intensify and move off the page that says the school has disparity between groups of students in the school is not a systematic change. When one sees a flat line for six or seven years, there is not time to say, "we do not have the time." Much bigger initiatives are needed. Changes are needed to shake things up so that students have a chance to move forward and get off a flat line. Dr. Millard concurred in general, but there are differences of opinion as to how to do that.

Ms. Fisher asked if there was a comparison of apples to apples with specificity as to the students' scores in the eighth grade compared to their scores in high school. She had understood that eighth grade students took different tests and the line was drawn at different places for meeting/exceeding. Ms. Hill noted that a fair amount of discussion occurred last year about the cut scores changing (cut scores determine the level). A cut score of 154 or 155 determines who does or does not meet the standards. They fluctuate yearly. Last year, the state changed the math cut score, and a greater proportion of students met or exceeded standards. Marc Pickus at District 97 can provide her with more information on that. Ms. Fisher asked if there were a way to accurately compare eighth grade performance per junior performance to get a legitimate performance comparison. Ms. Hill responded that there was currently no way to make the comparison based solely upon the data from ISAT and PSAT. Dr. Weninger stated that there would be some degree of reliability if everyone bought into using the EXPLORE and the PLAN Tests, as a measurement of the growth, and differentiating between those who attended Oak Park and River Forest elementary schools and those who had not. Ms. Fisher asked if this would take several years to track. Because District 200 administered the EXPLORE Test last year, it could see one year for incoming freshmen. Ms. Fisher felt that would be useful.

Dr. Lee asked if these test scores converted into older fashioned lingo as he was accustomed to talking about someone who reads at the sixth grade or ninth grade level. Dr. Weninger stated that they would be happy to put together a workshop for him, i.e., an example of the ACT and other assessment groups can predict what score one would have on the ACT to meet standards if the cut score was such and such. Dr. Lee asked if a ninth grade student reading at a fourth-grade level was mandated by law to be out of the high school in four years, even if the student never got above the eighth-grade level. Where would the most productive forum be to enter that discussion? He suggested telling the parents of a student reading at the fourth grade level that their child would not graduate in four years and then putting that child in a special program where in the first year the focus would be on reading and math. While it may take longer to receive all of the necessary graduation credits, there would be a guarantee that the child would leave with the skills needed to survive in the world. Dr. Weninger stated that the only requirement is that students cannot drop out of high school until they are 17 years old. The school sets graduation requirements. Ms. Patchak-Layman stated that this would suggest that every student have an IEP, documenting his/her status when entering the high school, the goals, and the kinds of accommodations and support necessary to move to whatever bar is set, chronologically to content or related bar. Dr. Lee assumed that the amount of resources necessary to do something like that would depend on just how specific one would get with each student. To have a highly detailed curriculum for every student would, quite possibly, exceed the resources available. The job would then be how far would the present resources go in doing that. There are degrees of specificity and not everything would have to be absolutely specific. Right now, students are lumped into huge categories. What resources would be needed to lump them into smaller groups?

Ms. Patchak-Layman felt it was important to have a better understanding of students coming in to the high school, looking at their needs and instead of assigning them to

existing courses, and developing courses to suit the needs of incoming students. The syllabus of the course or content should more closely match the incoming student. When looking at the students, look at their learning styles, how they receive information, their environment. If there were many students with dyslexia, the school would match a program that would play to their strengths, allow for their intellectual curiosity, and work on the skills needing support.

Dr. Millard asked Dr. Weninger and Ms. Hill to address these issues at a future meeting. Dr. Weninger, assuming that the Board of Education would discuss and ratify the District goals at its regular August meeting, said that the DLT would provide the Board of Education with a plan, both in the short term and in the long-term, not only achievement gap, in October. He disagreed that the term “systematic” meant “status quo.” The plan will consist of looking at everything and moving forward. It will involve both DLT and BLT members.

Dr. Lee wanted the District to consider things for the years going forward. While some things require two to three years preparation, it is appropriate to philosophically talk about it in the first place, i.e., the argument for educating the whole child. Some parts of the child are more important at one time than at other times. Reading and math are more important part for the ninth grader than any other single item. Thinking about educating the whole child when the child cannot read is a mistake.

Ms. Patchak-Layman felt there was a need for a community part. Just having plans coming from administration, without community input, to see how far they would go and in what direction, would make any plan incomplete. She asked how community input could be sought. In the short term, if the priority is to move this forward and this is a catalyst for it and should be, the community needs to be part of this conversation. Dr. Millard asked if she were suggesting open forums or something further. Ms. Patchak-Layman suggested a town hall meeting to discuss this specifically. It should be a community-wide discussion and effort to move this school forward. This is a discussion about the importance of this high school and it needs to be a much broader plan with discussion with the community. Dr. Millard asked if Ms. Patchak-Layman could tell her what the community would say. Ms. Patchak-Layman noted that the community wants to talk about the school. Some groups are already meeting to talk about the achievement gap. She recently had two emails from two community members about the achievement gap. Ms. Patchak-Layman asked for public, community input and communication around this issue. This must be a requirement. Dr. Millard suggested that Dr. Weninger give the Board of Education his input first.

Ms. Fisher noted that when she was chair of the Parent Human Relations Advisory Council (PHRAC), it was the first group that heard about the MAC Scholars program. It is an example of a groups talking about the achievement gap. It was similar to Citizens’ Council, but it was less formal, and not appointed by the Board of Education. She did not want to see the desire to be encompassing slow down what was being done in the building. She hoped that Dr. Weninger would continue with internal conversations, as sometimes when things are broadened, it takes longer.

Reflecting on District 200's Strategic Planning, Ms. Fisher noted that there were 21 people in the audience and everyone a presenter. Ms. Patchak-Layman replied that the Board of Education members are the trustees of the community and they must find out what the community desires, take its pulse and bring that forward. When asked if Ms. Patchak-Layman were talking about a strategic planning process for educational and instructional aspects of the school or dealing with academic achievement, Ms. Patchak-Layman stated that the school could still have conversations to talk about this with the public.

Dr. Lee asked if there were an ongoing strategic planning process put into place by previous boards. He suggested that O.P.R.F.H.S. start an ongoing strategic planning process that determines the means for community input on an ongoing basis, in such a way that would not be so burdensome that all of the time was used for the process, allowing nothing else to be accomplished. He wanted to see the Board of Education engaged in a routine, ongoing planning process, structured in a way that it could make a distinction between long- and short-range planning and to make the community understand that the community's role would be very limited, i.e., two minutes at the podium, but more meaningful in the long-term.

Ms. Patchak-Layman stated that it was a parallel process and that the short-term feeds into the long-term. The process has been completed at District 97. Many people understand the process. The vanguard is the hiring of the firm.

Ms. Fisher stated that it made sense to discuss whether the Board of Education felt it should embark on a strategic planning process, what it would look like, and the value it would have. However, she felt the discussion would be too soon at this point.

Dr. Weninger stated that the Board of Education had employed him to do these things. He wanted to hold off on the discussion about a strategic plan process until after the report in October. The administration will put together a short- and a long-term plan to address the achievement issue. He asked Board members to wait until after the report before deciding to add something else. Dr. Lee concurred with Dr. Weninger's suggestion. The Board of Education owed it to him and the rest of the administration to hear what they have in mind. He has seen the strategic planning process be so big that it immobilized an organization from doing anything. He believed that long-range strategic planning is important and the Board of Education should wait until October, November or December before moving in that direction.

Ms. Patchak-Layman asked if there would an opportunity for the community to be involved before October. Dr. Weninger stated that there was little time to do a plan and the other necessary things germane to running the school. Part of the plan will involve moving forward with community involvement; i.e., quarterly schoolhouse meetings to get input/feedback, etc. However, having community involvement before October, he could not do. Dr. Lee noted that there were other scheduled opportunities, i.e., public comment at Board of Education meetings.

Ms. Fisher added, on the ongoing strategic planning, that the high school does that in terms of finances.

Thus, it was the consensus to wait until October for the District's plan, and the possible discussion of a long-range strategic planning process would take place at a regular Board of Education meeting.

Preliminary ACT Score Report

Ms. Hill did note that when the ACT was first given to all juniors as part of the PSAE, a drop in ACT scores was anticipated because prior to 2001, not all juniors had taken the test. However, the drop was not as dramatic as anticipated. Since that time, the composite scores have been increasing. In 2003, 683 O.P.R.F.H.S. students took the test and the composite score was 22.9 versus the state's score of 20.2. In 2007, 769 O.P.R.F.H.S. students took the test and their composite was 23.8, compared to the state average composite of 20.5. Thus, there is a slow upwards trend on ACT scores. A complete report will be given in September.

Adjournment

The committee adjourned at 10:07 a.m.