

**OAK PARK AND RIVER FOREST HIGH SCHOOL**  
**201 North Scoville Avenue**  
**Oak Park, IL 60302**

**INSTRUCTION COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING**  
**Tuesday, April 16, 2013**

An Instruction Committee of the Whole Board of Education meeting was held on Tuesday, April 16, 2013. Dr. Lee called the meeting to order at 6:40 p.m. in the Board Room. Committee members present were Terry Finnegan, Valerie Fisher, Dr. Ralph H. Lee, Amy McCormack, Dr. Dietra D. Millard, Sharon Patchak-Layman, and John Phelan. Also present were Dr. Steven T. Isoye, Superintendent; Michael Carioscio, Chief Information Officer; Dr. Tina Halliman, Assistant Superintendent of Student Services; Amy Hill, Director of Assessment and Research; Philip M. Prale, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction; Nathaniel L. Rouse, Principal; Karin Sullivan, Director of Community Relations and Communications; Cheryl L. Witham, Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations and Treasurer; and Gail Kalmerton, Executive Assistant/Clerk of the Board.

Visitors: Devon Alexander, Matt Kirkpatrick, Cindy Milojevic, Ron Johnson, Paul Wright, Randy Braverman, OPRFHS Faculty and Staff members, Mary Jo Haley of the League of Women Voters; Tom Cofsky, Jeff Weissglass, Dr. Steven Gevinson, community members; Cathy Yen, Danielle Bates, Daja Johnson, Sydney Dabbs, Sjharee Calhoun, and Zach Booth, students; and Terry Dean of the *Wednesday Journal*.

**Report on MSAN Student Conference**

The following students attended the annual Minority Student Achievement Network (MSAN) Student Conference in Phoenix Arizona: Daja Johnson, Zach Booth, Danielle Bates, Josh Simpson, Cierra Robinson, Carter Rayburn, and Sydney Dabbs. The title of the conference was *The Grand Challenge: Discover Your Voice – Embrace the Challenge*. The keynote speaker was Dr. David O. Stovall from University Illinois-Chicago. MSAN districts work collaboratively to conduct and publish research, analyze policies, and examine practices that affect academic performance of students of color and involving students in the MSAN-related conversations broadens its perspectives and the influence of that work. This was such an event. OPRFHS students spoke with students from Wisconsin, California, Boston, New York, etc., visited Arizona State College and Grand Canyon University, and explored different ways of interacting and overcoming typical high school issues, life problems, such as the college process, etc. The students felt it had been a great experience for them.

The PEG Committee received the students' action plan created after yearlong discussions about the various ways they felt racism had impacted them at the high school. The plan included 1) addressing positive student culture and community by developing an exciting neon lip-sync challenge which would require working on this in the 2013-14 school year; 2) holding a summit that would augment the students' critical understanding of the lived experiences of race within the high school. Dr. David O. Stovall from UIC will engage students in an after-school day workshop on April 19 (approximately 40 students, including Quest and BLU, and freshman course students); and 3) developing an institute program for students (Quest) that will build leadership capacity within the student population to address successful ways to navigate and thrive at the high school.

Senior Zach Booth expounded upon his conference experience. Students spoke about their experiences of trying to manipulate, negotiate high school, and how the color of their skin had impacted their experience. They talked about the life of a person of color, being a teenager, and a better person in society as a person of color. He also participated in a conversation about where students intended to go to college. Many of them intended to apply to colleges that supported African-Americans such as Howard and Morehouse.

That surprised him because he was applying to colleges that had same diversity and Huskie atmosphere, as does OPRFHS.

The Board of Education was appreciative of Mr. Booth forthrightness, noting that it was a service to the Board of Education and the District. Mr. Booth stated that while students at OPRFHS have endured situations of race, they hesitate to speak about it, because the history books say it occurred long ago and no longer exists. He believed that mentally and emotionally it was impactful now. He wanted students to get involved, and embrace and share their experiences in order to make a change for all at OPRFHS. Ms. Patchak-Layman noted that the Strategic Plan Steering Committee members have expressed interest in having students respond to different ideas. She suggested that this group might have an interest in providing feedback.

Mr. Rouse thanked Mr. Alexander for chaperoning this group.

### **Update on Joint Committee on Student Discipline**

Mr. Rouse gave an update on the work of the Joint Committee on Student Discipline. Members of the committee include:

Kamille Brashear – Student  
Aleta Clardy – Parent  
Jim Goodfellow – Dean of Discipline  
Alisa Walton – Student Intervention Director  
Jonathan Silver – Student Intervention Director  
Katie DePasquale - Math Teacher/Student Council Sponsor  
Tom Tarrant - Behavior Intervention Specialist  
Kris Johnson – Counselor  
Mark Collins – Fine & Applied Arts Teacher  
Matt Maloney – History Teacher  
Nathaniel Rouse- Principal  
Sharon Patchak Layman – Board Member

The work of this committee has included reviewing sections of Board Policy 5114, Student Discipline, the Code of Conduct, and other policies and procedures related to student behavior and discipline. The most pressing topics for the Committee to consider were:

- 1 to 1 Code of Conduct Pilot and concerns regarding consequence thresholds
- Increased efforts surrounding overall building climate
- Communication campaign for students and parents regarding Code of Conduct and its anticipated changes.

One concern expressed from the faculty, staff, and community is that of school climate and disciplinary consequences. The School Interventionist Directors (SIDs) had been asked to remove the range of consequences (A-C) for a given infraction, and begin the progressive discipline model with the lowest threshold for a given consequence during the first semester so that the perception that the SIDs were issuing consequences at the highest threshold would be eliminated. Although the result has been consistency amongst the consequences and a less punitive disciplinary system, the concern has been that some infractions need consequences to be effective in changing student behavior. As such, the Committee will recommend adjustments to the current 1:1 Code of Conduct the SIDs are using. Other types of positive proactive ways will be recommended to increase the overall building climate.

Mr. Rouse introduced the new Director of Campus Security, Randy Braverman. Mr. Braverman is providing training for faculty and staff as how to intervene appropriately so as not to escalate the situation. Mr. Rouse will begin to talk with students about what he has termed the “don’t touch me” rule.

A draft will be presented at the regular April Board of Education meeting for first reading and will include changes to the Code of Conduct and the Student Handbook. Committee discussions have included making the Student Handbook more user-friendly and the need to speak with faculty, staff, and students at the beginning of the year in an effort to be consistent.

Mr. Phelan, reflecting on a meeting of Citizens’ Council about disciplinary changes a part of the Board’s goals, stated that there were strong opinions from the Deans of Discipline and the teachers. Reviewing the members of the Committee, he asked if there were two sides to most of the debates or was there a consensus. Mr. Rouse affirmed that while there were two sides, everyone wants consistency from the adults. Ms. Patchak-Layman reported that the committee members had many opinions, especially as to whom the Code of Conduct is for, in particular and in general. Much explanation as to what occurs daily has been given. The committee is attempting to match what happens daily so that it is codified in writing as to how it fits together, as well as matching the discipline numbers. Mr. Tarrant is looking at behavior interventionist numbers and patterns. Questions are still open as to the format for first and second offenses. The administration clarified that teachers are always involved with their students, never wishing to send their students out of the classroom and as such, many behavior interventions take place in the classroom and that could be the end of the discussion. Ms. Patchak-Layman is attempting to codify in writing when it goes to the next level, the SID. She was unsure that the format now met the Board’s conversation about issuing the lowest sense of consequence, progressive consequences, and repeats. Mr. Phelan affirmed that the District should not start at the highest consequence and allow flexibility, depending on the situation. Mr. Rouse reported that these consequences are given after classroom interventions have already occurred and parents are aware of the situation. Mr. Phelan added that one of most successful codes of discipline of which he is aware assigns the highest consequences as a general guideline, but any mitigating circumstances could increase or decrease those, all facts and circumstances must be considered.

Ms. Patchak-Layman felt this format had less flexibility as presented, because the original Code had more options. A first offense or second offense is now pinpointed. Mr. Finnegan noted that the highest value was consistency.

### **Adjournment**

Dr. Lee adjourned the meeting at 7:15 p.m.

Terry Finnegan  
President

Amy McCormack  
Secretary