

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

INSTRUCTION COMMITTEE MEETING
Tuesday, October 15, 2013

An Instruction Committee meeting was held on Tuesday, October 15, 2013. Dr. Gevinson called the meeting was called to order at 6:38 p.m. in the Board Room. Committee members present were Dr. Steve Gevinson, Dr. Jackie Moore, and Sharon Patchak-Layman. Also present were Dr. Steven T. Isoye, Superintendent; 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; Sheila Hardin, Faculty Senate Executive Committee; and Gail Kalmerton, Executive Assistant/Clerk of the Board.

Visitors: Dr. Ralph Lee, John Phelan, and Tom Cofsky, District 200 Board of Education members; John Seltzer, Athletic Director and Cindy Milojevic, Director of Activities, OPRFHS Faculty Members James Bell and Raffaella Spilotro

Visitor Comment

No visitor comments were submitted.

Approval of Minutes

Ms. Patchak-Layman moved to approve the minutes of the October 15, 2013 Instruction Committee minutes, as presented; seconded by Dr. Moore. A voice vote resulted in all ayes. Motion carried.

Sabbatical Reports

Annually those teachers who have been on sabbatical reflect on their experiences through a presentation made to the Board of Education. Teachers James Bell and Raffaella Spilotro both took sabbaticals during the 2012-13 school year. Both teachers were grateful to the Board of Education the Administration for allowing them this opportunity. Copies of the reports were included in the packet.

James Bell

The purpose of his sabbatical was to "...shape material for a similar honors option for the senior Shakespeare elective, while also bolstering the sophomore British Literature course. Through the Teacher Course Teams there would also be opportunities to influence the freshman and senior AP College English classes, as both include units on Shakespeare." He also wanted to enhance literacy development and college readiness for college preparatory students, especially for students of color. Thus, he applied and was accepted to a Masters of Letters (MLitt) program at the University of St. Andrews in Scotland. This school was recently named The London Times' most recent University Guide, the top university in Scotland and the fourth best university in the United Kingdom. He found himself humbled as he was learning from master teachers, writers, and researchers and culling material and then adapting them to the work at OPRFHS. He also attended an international interdisciplinary conference titled "Bonds, Lies, and Circumstances: discourses of Truth-telling in the Renaissance."

Mr. Bell spoke about how his work transferred to students. He provided a sample of medieval reading of Shakespeare's Lady Macbeth and a more modern version of it, which has a different meaning in some parts. His students worked to separate the old from the new text, developing skills of literacy and higher-order analytical work. First time honor students are showing a high interest in this kind of work. Too often when students struggle, they receive an extra skills classes while those students who are in the right tracks all along enrolled in other classes. Mr. Bell is talking with Mr. Cohen and others to work through

TCTs about spreading this type of work and how that would be structured. He felt this work was a real path to learning equity.

Another benefit to this sabbatical was that Mr. Bell made professional connections and a group of students will be working with actors and directors of the Globe Theatre in London next month.

Through this experience Mr. Bell, a teacher of Shakespeare for nine years, moved himself from being the center of the classroom to being a resource for his students. As a result the classes have been more powerful and students support each other in this work. He will quantify his pedagogy through repetition of sharing the material. While he does not want to do the changing of curriculum work alone, as it is very challenging, new honors courses will be looked at with a new lens and with the help of others.

Mr. Bell also reported that having this opportunity was vitally important. Having this break in his career from the teaching and gaining a different perspective was totally invigorating for him and strengthened his family as well. He felt great albeit it was a struggle to transition back to his current life. It was an irreplaceable experience. Mr. Bell invited Board of Education members to visit his classroom.

Raffaella Spilotro

Ms. Spilotro was proud to have been in the company of all of the people who were able to take sabbaticals. Initially Ms. Spilotro wanted to see the Italian pedagogy and instruction and to share the American pedagogy and instruction. Her focus was on first and second year students of Italian. Her objective in Florence Italy was to create Italian vocabulary building video lessons. Ms. Spilotro shared an introduction video as an example as to how they were structured. The six videos were titled Italian by Spilotro and each had its own set of activities for reading and writing. She is now using them in her classes at OPRFHS.

She also spent time working with the students who attend the high school that participate in the exchange trip with OPRFHS. Every day she found herself teaching English, which was great interaction with other students.

In addition she designed a travel project “Un Viaggio in Italia” for her students. The year- long project incorporates planning a one-month trip throughout Italy where students will learn about het different regions, cities, historical monuments, landscape, etc. They will learn how to book flights and trains, new vocabulary for communicating at the airport, and excursions to take while visiting various cities.

Ms. Spilotro also established a Virtual Pals Communication Project with a Level 1 English class at Gobetti-Volta, and a Level 1 Italian class at OPRFHS which paired students one-on-one. Students had specific topics that they had to discuss with their partners which would be followed by in-class discussion in the target language. She planned to build on the Virtual Pals Communication Project using the same concepts but enhancing it with the help of EPals Global Community which is an educational media company that provides students a safe platform to connect virtually and discuss the assigned topics.

Ms. Spilotro made connections with the Italian consultant and she works with its education office in Chicago unofficially. She has been asked by the American Association of Teaching of Foreign Languages to present at its November 2014 conference. She will also present her videos to the American Association of Teachers of Italian in Chicago, Wisconsin and Indiana.

Dr. Gevinson supported sabbaticals for teachers noting that this was an opportunity to train teachers as this is something the district has not done and subsequently has lost good teachers. It may be a good way to save teachers, especially when experiencing increased enrollment.

2012-13 Extracurricular Participation Report

The annual comprehensive report on student participation was presented for the 2012-13 school year. It included participation in both Athletic and Activities/Clubs. The Board of Education's goal was to expand efforts to engage students in extracurricular activities while encouraging teams and activities to welcome students from under-represented demographics. The school's extracurricular program consists of 29 sports programs with 85 team levels and 68 activity programs, including clubs and performance groups. The District also has 8 "non-official" student groups which include Amnesty International, Chinese Cultural Society, Dream Starters, Fashion Club, Fellowship of Christian Athletes, French Club, South Asian Student Alliance, and Vegetarian Club. These groups are "non-official" because their sponsors are not paid a student; they volunteer. Therefore, participation data for these groups are not reflected in this report.

Appendix A contained the relevant data collected to create several reports. The first two reports provide the number of students involved in athletics and the number involved in activities. These reports include both duplicated and non-duplicated participant numbers. They show an upward trend in the overall numbers when compared to reports for the previous two years. The total number of non-duplicate students participating in at least one extracurricular activity was 2,286. This represents 71% of the total student population of 3,223 for 2012-13. The current national average for participation in high school activity programs is 61%.

A chart was provided that showed the total non-duplicated students in at least one extracurricular activity by ethnicity and gender. There was an increase in some of the minority groups this year, including a 50% increase in the Hispanic ethnic category.

The data also showed that students who participate in an extracurricular activity on average have a higher GPA (3.30 versus 2.35) and fewer unexcused absences (38 vs. 9).

As to why the Hispanic participation increase almost doubled was uncertain but there was a concerted effort to work with coaches and sponsors and mentors on Huskie kick-off day about getting students involved. The District tries to target students who are not involved in athletics and/or activities. One such effort is the new, unofficial hip-hop club which has received much student interest. A few years ago, the school polled students as to their interests. Last year students who were not involved were surveyed and the reasons they gave for not getting involved in athletics or activities was because they had other after school obligations, i.e., work, church, home responsibilities. These students were not asked to identify their ethnicity. The District has not tried to do a discipline correlation.

In reflecting on the segregation of activities, a question was asked about how the District would role model for the students not involved. Many students do not know what they like or do not like. How can the school expose them to possibilities without making them feel as if they are trying out for a sport? The District does outreach on a variety of levels. One is in the physical education classes. Students have the opportunity to try different sports. Coaches often teach those classes. PE Division Head Clay Reagan has many ideas about connecting to students and PE teachers teach multiple sports. A suggestion was to target existing clubs where African-American students were not represented.

Experience on farm teams for baseball, tennis, swimming, etc. cannot be discounted as preparation for varsity. Inquiries from the committee members included the following:

- 1) How many athletes participated in a sport before coming to the high school?
- 2) Could zip code information be provided?
- 3) How many spots were open in the various sports?
- 4) How many in the special education community are involved in sports and extracurricular activities?

5) Are these non-duplicated numbers by race?

A suggestion was to strategize other activities other than sports and discuss that at a future time. The committee members supported bringing this forward to the Board of Education at its regular October 24, 2013 meeting.

Summer Programming 2013 Report

The whole Instruction Committee recommended that the annual summer programming report be moved to Board of Education at its regular October meeting as an informational item.

The 2013 summer school program was 28-days offered over a 6-week time period in June and July. Courses were provided to 1,162 students with 1,590 completed academic and enrichment opportunities. This is a slight increase in participation over last year's participation, but a decrease from prior years. The most popular courses were Health Education, Driver Education, Art Foundations, and Consumer Education. Credit recovery courses and sections were consolidated into one large section of students who used an online curriculum familiar to district staff. A team of four teachers and one support services staff supported 80 students who earned 168 credits. Sports camp participation was the highest number in the past three years at 2,311, but enrollment of camp is appropriate to current programming and staff levels. Seventy to 75 camps in 20 to 23 sports are offered. A suggestion was made for students to be required to take both a class and a camp in order to expose students to other activities. Special Education students who do not have IEPs would be in the top portion of the report.

This year summer school had a surplus of \$32,615. The summer musical had a \$2,347 surplus. The reasons for the surpluses included: canceling classes when enrollment falls below a reasonable level, consolidation of the credit recovery program and thus an overall reduction of staff costs, not hiring library staff, and raising tuition by \$5.00. OPRFHS increased its assistance to students. Each counselor received six vouchers (each voucher is worth one-half tuition for a one-credit course. The cost of all credit recovery courses was reduced to one-half of the regular rate, capping the tuition fee at \$185. The Oak Park Youth Township Services supported this program with \$1,500 of financial assistance for students through the Work/Study Volunteer Program. The trend was down from 2010 \$20,000.

The administration will consider the following for the next year.

- Advance consultation among district departments and administrators to provide the best possible experience. After the 2012 major construction effort, the District learned to consult early with Buildings and Grounds staff, construction managers, building instructional leaders, and teachers to plan for effective, safe facility use.
- The third schedule in three summers provided families with flexible options for taking courses. Ideas for time slots for courses came from a survey given in 2012. Creative thinking met the needs of the families.
- We changed how we delivered some of our courses, specifically our credit recovery courses. The change in delivery of courses, specifically the credit recovery courses, generated an ongoing conversation about electronic delivery of curriculum and how teachers can support, engage, and guide these innovations.
- More support services will need to be provided as more students with specific learning needs are received, i.e., additional counseling services, tutoring, or study table services. The District anticipates planning for additions to student support staff in the future.

Dr. Gwendolyne Walker-Qualls replaced Dale Craft as the summer school director. The administration thanked both of them, the administrators, the teachers, and the support staff who sustained a positive atmosphere for teaching and learning. Linda Hayes, the summer school secretary, managed the

registration process and the many details of the program. In addition special recognition was giving to Alisa Walton, Jonathan Silver, Jason Dennis, Randy Braverman and the entire safety and support team in managing student behavior, tardies and attendance.

While it required additional work, the District was successful getting teachers to teach summer school. Of the 46 summer school teachers, 32 were in-district, 14 were out-of-district, and all Special Education teachers were in-district teachers.

Preview of Course Proposals for 2014-2015 School Year

A preview of the course proposals for the 2014-15 school year was presented. A one-year moratorium on course additions for was in effect. The District will align its course proposal process with the sectioning timeline and division and District goals. The set of proposals to revise existing courses and delete courses will be approved by the Board of Education at its November 21, 2013 meeting. Discussion ensued.

While it will depend on students who sign up for the one-author class and who were receiving honors credit, Mr. Prale will talk with Mr. Cohen about surveying students on which author they would like to study.

A question was raised as to whether information listed for the metal working and jewelry class “fine motor skills to be successful and proficient” was new. It was explained that the phraseology was to more accurately describe the work that would be involved versus another activity that might be associated with it.

The dates for registration have been moved up in order to align with the new semester ending dates.

Placement for 9th grade courses is made by the Division Head based on parental input and test scores. There was a concern about the class title “Biology with Support.” The District noted that it hoped this class would be a College Prep class.

A future discussion will occur about how classes can fit in with other dual credit programs.

Whether or not it is possible for Clothing Construction and Design and Advanced Clothing Construction and Design to be coordinated with the Art Department will be discussed with Ms. Roodhouse.

The members supported this coming to the full Board of Education at its October 24 meeting. It was explained that the questions coming from the committee would be provided to the Board of Education as questions from the community. The proposals will be sent to many groups and this is part of the feedback flow. One member commented that this was about the processes of committees and process issues with which need to be dealt.

Faculty/Staff Report and Employee Profile Information for 2013-14

The Employee Profile document for 2013-14 is based on October 1, 2013 data. The FTE for faculty includes all certified teachers, supervisors, coordinators, counselors, and the percentage of the time the Division Heads are engaged in the classroom instruction portion of their responsibilities.

For Non-Certified employees the information includes individuals who are in the Buildings and Grounds, the Classified Personnel Association, Food Service, the Non-affiliated Group and the Safety and Support Team.

The profile documents provide demographic data, which includes gender, race, age, District residency, and years of service information for all employee groups. Comments/questions and responses from the committee ensued.

With regard to the dramatic drop in the English FTE and the rise in reading support FTE, the FTE for English was determined by enrollments. In addition, reading literacy support FTE was increased. More information will be provided at the next meeting.

PE FTE increased by 1 this year because in previous years, enrollment was thought to be high.

It was noted that the decrease in FTE for the theatre director was because of a decrease in enrollment in speech and how we report how Mr. Hallissey teaches his part-time assignment.

Special Education FTE changes are a reflection of how teachers used to receive endorsements, BD, LD, ED, but now they only have the designation LBS I and LBS II. The FTE is reflective of how the District is scheduling teachers.

Science is down FTE due to fewer enrollments in electives.

With the addition of extended geometry and extend algebra, more math FTE was required.

Requests for the following were made:

- 1) Class size reports that would include the number of sections and the number of students.
- 2) Administrative count for certified staff by DLT, BLT, SIDs, etc.
- 3) What does "other experience" mean?

A concern was raised about staff demographics getting farther away from the student demographics.

Additional Information

The Discipline Report will be presented in November.

Adjournment

Dr. Moore moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:20 p.m.; seconded by Dr. Gevinson. A voice vote resulted in all ayes. Motion carried.

By Gail Kalmerton
Clerk of the Board