

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

INSTRUCTION COMMITTEE MEETING
March 16, 2015

An Instruction Committee meeting was held on March 16, 2015. Dr. Gevinson called the meeting was called to order at 6:15 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; Michael Carioscio, Chief Information Officer; Amy Hill, Director of Assessment and Research; Philip M. Prale, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction; Nathaniel L. Rouse, Principal; and Gail Kalmerton, Executive Assistant/Clerk of the Board.

Visitors Dr. Ralph Lee, Board of Education member; Dan Cohen, English Division Head, Dove Heider-Hunter, Bernie Heidkamp, and John Hoerster, teachers.

Minutes

Dr. Gevinson moved to approve the Instruction Committee minutes of February 17, 2015; seconded by **Dr. Moore**. A voice vote resulted in motion carried.

Visitor Comment

None.

Update from English Division

The English Division provided an update on its activities for the Instruction Committee members. They were:

1. Faculty have been working on mission and vision statements to align and guide teaching and learning in English courses.
2. Summer reading has been transformed allowing for student input in reading selections.
3. A review of student writing at the sophomore year has teacher examining the level and quality of student work.
4. Specific teacher collaboration projects have promoted enriched classroom opportunities for teachers and students.

Dan Cohen remarked that English teachers are involved in everything within the District. After having been in the District for five years, Mr. Cohen described the English Division activities as building a skyscraper with many floors in various stages of development. Stronger foundations are needed. Both Mr. Rouse and Ms. Holland provided them with time to create the vision and mission statements.

Ms. Heider-Hunter reported that a major task was to determine how to create one sentence that represented the purpose and direction of one division. The process started with people in groups making additions to a Google doc. Much information and many ideas were put forward. Then smaller teams met to look at where things overlapped and where there was unity. All of that was

compiled and boiled down into one statement. Coming up with one statement was challenging. However, it will guide the teachers with vertical and horizontal alignment for next year. This was not a pretend process. The division with pleased with being able to come to consensus given its many personalities.

The mission of the English Division of OPRFHS is to provide a nurturing, challenging, digital learning experience to ensure that all students develop into critical, creative and empathetic readers, writers, speakers and thinkers.

Mr. Heidkamp spoke about how nicely the summer reading program had evolved. Reading is a life-long skill that is not just academic but part of a well-lived life, a way to reach out to community. Originally the idea was to have one book per grade level. However, teachers and students responded to a survey that they wanted more choices in terms of experience, authors, reading levels, etc. and African-Americans wanted even more choices, because it seemed that the diverse books already chosen may not have connected with them. Last year 16 choices were made available and this year 20 choices will be available. Engagement has gone from 70% to 81%. He thanked Ms. Jacqui Charette-BassiriRad, for assisting with that work as well as the technology and library staff both at OPRFHS and the public libraries. This summer's reading list will go live tomorrow.

Mr. Hoerster has taught World Studies for 3 years along with Matt Maloney and noted that the program has grown. He was excited to talk about the benefit of integrated the English/History studies for students. Many schools around the state and country do not have this course of study and it was new to him, but it has been a tremendous experience for him. Two main things come from social-emotional learning and the educational standpoint. Parents of freshmen are nervous about the size and the idea that there is a class where students spend 2 periods with 2 teaches. It is an opportunity for them to get to know each other. From the educational standpoint, it is important to have background knowledge of the subject matter which enriches ones experience in reading. When one has an historical basis, the experience is richer as well. The level of students spans the gamut in this class. Students in the Read 180 program have moved up to World Studies and other tracks are involved as well. The feedback is exceptional. The only other courses that spans ability levels and experiences is the American Studies class for juniors.

Mr. Cohen stated that the Division this semester aspires to be living its mission and seeking a vision. Ms. Heider-Hunter's team wanted to have writing assessments of the students and have collected that data and shared the results with the teachers. That research will now expand to key reading, writing and thinking skills. Data is being collected on how students learn and how the projects fit in with the research. OPRFHS wants students to read and write well and to be critical thinkers. Divisions will meet to develop a common language in the building. Grammar is what was identified as a need for ninth graders. Across the four years a student is at the high school, both speaking and writing is being scaffolded into the curriculums. The Spoken Word Program is for all levels and values one type of speaking.

Mr. Cohen added that data is being collected from an English class that offers both regular and honors tracks, and students may choose which track they want. It seems that it has been positive both as a first time honors course from the qualitative and quantitative data.

When asked how the Board of Education could support the Division further, the response was by supporting teacher learning, i.e., professional development with both time and money such as opportunities for tech support, as it takes it a long time to use technology instructionally. Other schools look to OPRFHS as a model in terms of American Studies.

Update on the Reading Program

This agenda item was tabled until a future date to be determined.

Classroom Technology Implementation Plan

Mr. Carioscio reviewed the PowerPoint presentation in the packet having to do with the Classroom technology Implementation Plan noting that the full presentation would be coming to the Board of Education at its April meeting. He asked the Committee if the right topics were being presented. The topics included: CTIP classroom impact, CTIP Organizational readiness, PARCC and CTIP, Platform/Device evaluation, CTIP Budget impact, and Professional Development.

Of note was that while there was an early use of IPAD, there is now a greater preponderance of Chromebooks being used. A rubric was created and teachers were asked to evaluate the program and the devices. That then gave a methodology for making a recommendation on devices. One slide showed just how many more school districts were using Chromebooks versus the IPAD. Again, the preponderance of use was Chromebooks.

Faculty and students will need to be supported with professional development. This year students were shown how to login to the network and this will be repeated next year. In April, the technology budget will include the purchase of more devices in order to be able to send devices home with students, as this is the next phase of in the integration plan. The CTIP budget will be affected by the selected device. APPLE claims that the IPAD will last two times longer than the Chromebook, but the Chromebook is still cheaper. While cost is a factor, it is not the entire story. Over 1500 students have had contact with the Chromebook because of the PARCC test. OPRFHS was well prepared for the PARCC test, noting that it was the right decision to go with Chromebooks. Early adopters of carts number 25 teachers. The number of faculty who have built their websites points to a level of comfort with technology. Others have said they want to do that but continue to need ongoing technology support. Opportunities for PD need to be found. Acknowledging the issue of finding time to provide PD, one member asked if the District could require the staff to be proficient in something outside of school; a skill they should take on themselves rather than the District providing everything for them. To take teachers out of the classroom during the day affects the students.

Mr. Carioscio added that he was interviewing for the new teacher leader position for the TLC.

New Business

A question was asked as to whether there was a way to look at the issue of class enrollment, particularly Mandarin Chinese, before the final decision is made to see if there are circumstances that need to be thrown into the mix. It was reported that 14 students have tried to enroll, but the

cutoff was 15; the committee wanted to understand the cutoff. Dr. Isoye will propose this agenda item for regular Board of Education meeting to Mr. Phelan.

Adjournment

At 7:11 p.m., Dr. Gevinson moved to adjourn the meeting; seconded by Dr. Moore. A voice vote resulted in motion carried.

Submitted by Gail Kalmerton
Clerk of the Board