

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

INSTRUCTION COMMITTEE MEETING
September 15, 2015

An Instruction Committee meeting was held on September 15, 2015. Dr. Moore called the meeting was called to order at 4:36 p.m. in the Board Room. Committee members present were Fred Arkin and Dr. Jackie Moore. Also present were Dr. Steven T. Isoye, Superintendent; Philip M. Prale, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction; Nathaniel L. Rouse, Principal; Sheila Hardin, Faculty Senate Executive Committee Chair; and Gail Kalmerton, Executive Assistant/Clerk of the Board.

Visitors: Regina Topf, Student Activities Director; Christina Smith and Melinda Novotny, Faculty members; Brendan Lee and Jay Lind, Faculty members; and Jahmari Moore, Lydia Wooley, Nick Drane and Grace Fox, students.

Minutes

Dr. Arkin moved to approve the minutes of the August 18, 2015 Instruction Committee, as presented; seconded by Mr. Moore. A voice vote resulted in the motion carried.

Student Travel Experiences

The Instruction Committee unanimously moved to forward the Summer 2015 Student Travel Experiences Report to the Board of Education at its September 24, 2015 meeting as an informational item. The Committee learned from students about the programs that were supported by the high school during the summer as they were life changing experiences. They were:

Global Leadership Summit: Chaperone Lindy Novotny and students Nick Drane and Grace Fox spoke about the experiences of the 29 junior and senior students who traveled for 11 days to the Netherlands, France, and Switzerland for the Global Leadership Summit. They took part in a 3-day workshop in Davos, Switzerland where they heard a keynote address from Sir Ken Robinson. Fifteen-hundred students from around the world attended the conference, where they worked in small groups using a Design-Thinking Process to create projects related to improving education through creativity. Prior to their departure, they had met monthly for a year and took 2 preparatory trips, one to the Ill State Univ. and one to UIC in Champaign. Two OPRF students, out of the 1,500 who participated, were among the 24 award winners for video projects they had created for the conference. Nick Drane focused on making computer coding as commonly taught as keyboarding, noting that in the next five years, a million coding jobs will go unfilled due to lack of skill. OPRF junior Annabelle Huber made her video on acceptance and open-mindedness.

Jason Dennis, John Hoerster, and Lindy Novotny who piloted Leadership and Launch have done team building experiences and shared what they learned in Europe. These students were thrust out of their comfort zones and were taught valuable skills. They hoped that they were able to impart those skills to freshmen. The videos will be made available on the website.

Ireland: Chaperone Brendan Lee and students Jahmari Moore and Lydia Wooley spoke about their trip to Ireland where they visited Galway City, cycled around the Aran Island of Inishmore, hiked the Burren in County Clare, and studied at the James Joyce Summer School in Dublin. They stayed in hostels while in Ireland. The classes at the University of Dublin were led by professors who had devoted their lives to

learning about Joyce. While the only high schools students in this class, they felt that the teachers valued their opinions. They spoke about how organized this trip was and what an impression it had had on them.

Tanzania: Chaperone Christina and student Emma Thompson spoke about the 2-week trip to Tanzania where 14 students participated in service projects such as building fuel efficient stoves in people's homes. They first week they were paired with students from Roots and Shoots, a Jane Goodall organization and the second week, they went on a safari and saw cheetahs, lions, elephants, hippos, and zebras in the wild. While these students thought about doing a post trip service project, they also talked about starting a Roots and Shoots Club to do service for community and the environment and connect with other chapters of this organization.

Costa Rica: Chaperone Christina Smith and Kyle Farley were present to discuss the events of the Tropical Ecology summer field course offered through the OPRFHS Science Division. In this 10-day excursion, students participate in humanitarian and environmental conservation projects. The students were able to observe the elusive Quetzal bird.

The Committee thanked the students and their sponsors for sharing their experiences, acknowledging that travel experiences are very educational.

Preview of Academic Catalog Changes 2016-2017

The Instruction Committee unanimously recommended sending the Course Changes proposed for the 2016-17 Academic Catalog to the Board of Education for its review at its September meeting as an information item. Mr. Prale reviewed the proposals and the committee members shared their thoughts.

1. Additional information was desired on 1) the purpose of freshman study hall, 2) staffing of the courses; and 3) if the Acting courses would limit the extent and effect of the new freshman advisory effort, LAUNCH.
2. Additional information was desired on how service learning and prospective connections to community and business entities would be developed and addressed if the Business Community Service Internship course was deleted.
3. What are the specifics of the growth in interest and enrollment for PLTW courses as the sequence was being extended. It was later established that enrollment in PLTW courses was 152 in the 2013-14 school year and this year it is 183, a 20% increase in the past 2 years.

Adjournment

At 5:42 p.m., on September 15, 2015, Mr. Arkin moved to adjourn the Instruction Committee meeting; seconded by Dr. Moore. A voice vote resulted in motion carried.

Submitted by
Gail Kalmerton
Clerk of the Board