

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

INSTRUCTION COMMITTEE MEETING
March 11, 2014

An Instruction Committee meeting was held on March 11, 2014. Dr. Gevinson called the meeting was called to order at 6:30 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; and Gail Kalmerton, Executive Assistant/Clerk of the Board.

Visitors: Board of Education member Dr. Ralph Lee, Jennifer Hoffman, Assistant Principal for Student Services (departed at 8:56 p.m.); Student Intervention Directors Janel Bishop and Tia Marr (departed at 8:56 p.m.).

Visitor Comment

None

Discipline Report

Twice each school year, the Board of Education receives a summary of student discipline data by semester. The Student Intervention Directors utilize this data to determine recommendations for the Parent Teacher Advisory Committee's consideration in promoting a more positive and safe learning environment. In the fall, second semester discipline data was compared with the first semester discipline data from 2012-2013. This report contained second-semester data from last year as compared to this year's first semester data. The administration asked the Committee for its input as to what data it would like to see in the future. Discussion ensued.

Questions that were raised included: 1) What are the causes of the behavior for which consequences are being issued? 2) Can interventions be developed to change the behavior? 3) Is there a way to analyze discipline to get the reasons, especially when looking at racial disparities and special education? 4) How can the effectiveness and consequences be assessed? The tardy discipline policy in place has the effect of many students being assigned detentions. When students do not serve their detentions, discipline statistics increase? Does the policy decrease tardies? Is the failure-to-serve detention consequence effective? The answers to these questions would be helpful. Where can the school look for successful models of discipline and ways to analyze the data? MSAN? Did changing the Code of Conduct from four levels to five levels last year improve the statistics? Dr. Gevinson reflected that the District used to have a collaborative teaching model that worked with the same students in math, history, science, and English and they had the same dean. The first year results grade-wise and discipline-wise were impressive, especially reducing higher-class infractions. Other programs that could be beneficial would be programs like AVID (which engages students in the real academic program), an advisory program, etc.

Dr. Moore suggested bringing this report, the new federal guidelines on discipline, and the attorney that presented those guidelines to PTAC. Dr. Moore was concerned that the reports did not reflect context. The students' Facebook page talks about Plasco and its ineffectiveness; it delays students getting to class

by 15 minutes creating a frustration level that is so high that students decide not to go to class. The other issue she felt was classroom management. Attending mentoring sessions, JM heard that it is hard for students to learn when some students disobey the rules, often taking 15 minutes of instructional time. Why would a student repeatedly do the same thing? Dr. Moore advised students to email their teachers, the Division Head, the principal, etc., and copy the chair of the department. Students were unaware that they could take that action. She was concerned about students being dropped from class because they had not served their detentions. It seemed counter-intuitive that a student who is not coming to class is then dropped for absences. She felt a different consequence should occur in this instance, particularly if it occurred in one class. The administration noted that the SIDS do make an effort to intervene with students with the most tardies and tend not to drop them from classes. Dr. Moore felt that some of the consequences were extreme.

Committee members asked whether professional development would be beneficial instructionally for teachers who tend to give a greater number of infractions for disruptive classroom behavior. Ms. Bishop agreed that it might be helpful for teachers who struggle. Sometimes parents are unaware of the disciplinary referral as no outreach had been made to them. Dr. Gevinson noted that when he taught the most effective way of working with probationary teachers came after student evaluations were completed. The evaluations were administered by the department secretary when the teacher was not in the room. It gave a concrete objective basis of responses from students and good conversations occurred as a result of them.

This report will be forward to those who presented on the new federal guidelines and to the Board of Education as an informational item at its March 20 meeting.

Tutoring Report

Three types of tutoring are offered through the high school: tutoring for students who are located off-campus and not able to access on-campus tutoring services (discipline or medical reasons, etc.), on-campus tutoring services, and Supplemental Education Services (SES) offered as part of the No Child Left Behind Consolidated federal grant that is submitted annually to the state board of education. Each type of tutoring provides a different type of educational service, but these students all need some sort of additional support to maintain, supplement, or enrich their school experience. Tutoring services must be able to respond to a variety of situations for individual students.

Off-campus Tutoring

Illinois School Code states that “it is the responsibility of each school district to provide educational support for every student to meet Illinois Learning Standards.” To achieve that goal, OPRFHS offers Off-Campus Tutoring to students who are eligible for tutoring due to one of three conditions: 1) disciplinary reasons, 2) medical reasons, or 3) the student is awaiting a private educational placement. In each situation, school staff and classroom teachers are responsible for offering a corresponding educational experience to the student, one that is designed to enable the student to return to the classroom. Eligible students receive one hour of tutoring per week for each academic subject in their schedules. When the Tutoring Coordinator, Student Intervention Directors (SID), counselors, teachers, and tutors work together, much can be accomplished to deliver appropriate educational support to students. Of course, personal responsibility lies with the individual student to work on his/her own at home, attend all tutoring sessions, and bring all books and materials to each session.

In disciplinary situations, tutoring is made available to students when they are assigned an out-of-school suspension of five days or more by a SID. Through the conversation with the SID, the parent or guardian will request tutoring from the SID or the school's Tutoring Coordinator. Coordination of materials occurs with teachers, counselors, and tutors; tutoring takes place in the public library for these students. They receive 5 hours of tutoring per week. For a student who is only out for two days, tutoring will continue for a time in order to be supportive of the student. Students who return after an OSS are referred to on-campus tutoring or to see their teachers either before or after school. Off-campus tutoring is arranged through the Instruction and Curriculum office.

In medical situations, a student qualifies for tutoring if it is anticipated that, due to a medical condition documented by a physician, the child will be unable to attend school for a period of two or more consecutive weeks. The parent or guardian will request tutoring from the counselor. Coordination of materials occurs with teachers, counselors, and tutors; tutoring takes place in the public library for those students who are able. Tutoring is different for a student who is hospitalized. A student who is hospitalized does not receive off-campus tutoring. Tutors employed by the hospital provide educational support to the student while in the hospital. In these situations, tutoring continues as long as there is a doctor's note. Tutoring is then handled by the student's counselor.

A situation in which a student is awaiting a private educational placement is part of our process for determining and delivering services to a small number of special education students. A confidential memo from the Special Education Staffing Chair notifies teachers and relevant staff that a student is out of school pending private placement. In order to maintain a continuity of educational services, tutoring is provided until the out of school placement process is completed. This tutoring is handled through Ms. Paplaczky's office.

Supplemental Educational Services (SES)

As a result of the federal No Child Left Behind Act, some students can receive extra help through an approved tutoring program. Students who are eligible for the program attend classes supported by Title I funds or have successfully completed the paperwork for financial assistance from the district. State and federal guidelines require school districts to make tutoring available to these students. SES is funded by the District's NCLB Consolidated Grant. All SES providers are approved by the Illinois State Board of Education and must be treated the same by the district in order to support a viable SES program. Tutoring from SES providers is provided in the areas of reading or math, as those are the areas tested and reported in the school report card.

Dr. Gevinson appreciated the activism of outreach to parents with regard to the scheduling of tutoring. Mr. Prale credited Mr. Rouse with pushing for that outreach rather than just notifying the parents that tutoring was available. Dr. Gevinson asked how the District can assess its tutoring and resource needs. Should the highest quality resource centers/systems at other districts be explored? MSAN models? The administration needs to be cognizant of the cost. Dr. Holland is in charge of the tutoring center. Saturday work may be worth exploring and Dr. Holland is communicating with technology about how to track the data. Dr. Gevinson noted that there was a network of writing center people. The Instruction Committee supported moving this report to the full Board of Education at its regular March meeting.

PLTW

At the start of the FY11 school year, District 200 began an affiliation with the Project Lead the Way

(PLTW) program to promote increased student interest in engineering, science, and technology courses and careers and to support that interest with effective curriculum and coursework. The agreement with PLTW renews annually.

PLTW offers a clear direction for programs known as Science Technology Engineering and Math (STEM) programs. Our school offers the Pathway to Engineering Program, which uses the same industry-leading 3D design software used by companies such as Intel, Lockheed Martin, and Pixar. Students explore aerodynamics, astronautics, and space life sciences and apply biological and engineering concepts related to biomechanics and robotics. Students design, test, and construct circuits and devices such as smart phones and tablets and work collaboratively on a capstone independent study project. The PLTW curriculum is composed of course sequences that begin with foundation courses - Introduction to Engineering Design and Principles of Engineering - and culminate with specialization and capstone courses specific to current academic and career growth areas - Civil Engineering and Architecture or Digital Electronics. In the spring of 2012, an Illinois PLTW High School Certification visit was conducted, the results of which affirmed that our program is meeting the national and state PLTW program requirements.

This program has not grown as quickly as originally thought because the new Division Head wanted to make sure the basics were right before new levels were added. The number of special education and female students in this program has increased. It is an open, elective course and not an honors course. OPRFHS has lots of programs and choices and some students go into engineering when they leave OPRFHS, while here they want to try other things. OPRFHS also has a strong physics department. Business partnerships are weak as there are not many business in this area. Discussion ensued as to why students are not being more academically successful in this program and that perhaps more discussion was needed. Dr. Moore suggested contacting Success for All Youth (SAY), Rotary and the Harton's Math Academy model about opportunities for academic and business partnerships. She also suggested making this program do what the AP & AP Physics classes do for other students, so that it is a strong program for those students. This class is about exploration, as opposed to being an engineer. High school is an opportunity to take all classes and try things not previously tried.

Discussion ensued about the demographics of the program. It was not known why the female and special education numbers had increased. There are also no women teachers in this program.

The Instruction Committee members supported moving this report to the full Board of Education at its regular March meeting. Dr. Isoye will sign the agreement. No board action is necessary.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 9:34 p.m.