

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

**INSTRUCTION COMMITTEE MEETING**  
**September 16, 2014**

An Instruction Committee meeting was held on September 16, 2014. Dr. Gevinson called the meeting was called to order at 7:08 p.m. in the Second Floor Library. 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; Joe Herbst of Speaker of Faculty Senate; and Gail Kalmerton, Executive Assistant/Clerk of the Board.

Visitors: Tom Cofsky, Dr. Ralph Lee, Board of Education members; Clay Reagan, Physical Education Division Head.

**Minutes**

Dr. Gevinson moved to approve the Instruction Committee minutes of August 19, 2014; seconded by Dr. Moore. A voice vote resulted in all ayes.

**Update on Physical Education and Driver Education Division**

As Division Head for Physical Education and Driver Education, Mr. Reagan provided the following information.

Physical Education

Last year the entire staff was recertified as instructors for CRP and AED training. The department's goal was to certify all freshman in these areas and present them with AED card. As such, students received 2 weeks of training, including the breathing portion, rather than just four days of training. A mannequin is used as well as a protective device for the breathing training. The longer-term goal is for every student to leave OPRFHS with CPR and AED certification. A student opting out of the breathing instruction would not receive certification. One committee member felt that because the teaching of the breathing curriculum was mandatory, so should the student's learning of it. Similar to students having to learn to swim at OPRFHS. The member felt sad that one could opt out of saving a person's life.

Freshman students now receive fitness testing at the beginning of the school year. As such students can evaluate their own fitness and, in turn, that assessment can be used to evaluate the program. The plan is to implement this in the junior and senior classes as well.

Mr. Reagan reported that freshmen and sophomores receive 12 weeks on fitness and life skills (swimming, step-back class, dance, and introduction to fitness) instruction. Some emphasis is placed on sports activity. The curriculum for juniors and seniors does not contain much of a sports aspect to it, rather the goal is to teach fitness skills that go along with a sport. However, much work still needs to be done in this area.

Mr. Reagan stated that the goal in swimming classes is to teach students how to save their own lives in the water. They learn how to kick and paddle to the side of the pool. Teaching students to be proficient in swimming in a 9-week unit, is difficult.

Mr. Reagan was pleased with the number of non-athletic and athletic students who voluntarily enrolled in the advanced strength training program for in-season athletes. Mr. Reagan sent the following list of questions to the coaches this year to evaluate the effectiveness of this program.

- 1) If athletes participate in the strength training class, were they maintaining their strength?
- 2) Where the students staying in better shape?
- 3) Did the program allow less time to be spent in the weight room before and after school?
- 4) Had the program helped to reduce injuries? They felt it had helped. Her cheerleaders were confident to attempt new things.

The responses to all of the questions were positive. Students were able to maintain their strength and shape with this class and did not have to spend their time before or after school to do so. The trainer saw a great reduction in the number of students coming in with knee pain who were participating in the program versus the students with the same pain who were not participating in this program. Lower back pain continues to be a problem, so the teaching focal point is form. Coaches are excellent at teaching their sport, but less excellent at training. As such, this class focuses on proper technique and training.

One question asked was how did the 4 days of weight-lifting match up with having more fitness-based opportunities with the eleventh and twelfth graders that mirrored what the ninth and tenth graders were getting. Removing athletes from regular gym class, changes the dynamics of the gym classes. Mr. Reagan felt the change was for the better as non-athletic students were then willing to compete and get involved, i.e., flag football. However, the converse is also true, athletes do not get to participate with non-athletes. One member felt athletes preferred not to play at a lower level. The goals of the advanced strength-training program was to provide a more comprehensive class focus on proper technique and training. All athletes are working together in a controlled environment on proper techniques and an effect way to train. This complicates athletics, co-curricular and physical education, which is an academic class. A set of words are used when talking about athletics and co-curricular and it is prefaced by privilege. When talking about what are after school activities and now bringing them into the school day, it complicates what is privilege. The school day is not a privilege but a responsibility, a requirement, and the school have an egalitarian look for the school day as to what is provided for students. When the District provides training and activities that are after-school and athletic-related, the question of privilege comes into play for one member, based not only what is provided for students in the regular six-hour day, but what is happening outside of the school day. The administration acknowledging this point, also said that the mitigating circumstances are that both athletes and non-athletes are enrolled in the class and varsity athletes benefit on time management and prepping them off season. It is about a balance and an awareness of PE staff to keep it open to all students, but the course speaks to a need to keep students healthy, reduce injuries, and to provide more opportunities during the school day outside of the school day. The amount of facilities also is a concern. No student has been denied enrollment in this

class whether an athlete or not. Mr. Reagan provided the number of students in each sport who had chosen study hall and those who were eligible for study hall.

Additional questions for consideration were:

- 1) What percentage of athletes take advantage of this class?
- 2) Can those numbers be broken down by sport?
- 3) Who has chosen study hall?
- 4) Who is eligible for time?
- 5) How did the cardio program coordinated with an academic class, learning readiness, work? Since Mr. Reagan joined OPRFHS that was not something that had been accomplished.

### Driver Ed

Instructors are aware of who is meeting their weekly driving assignments. Because some students are not able to complete the assignments due to various reasons, a Wednesday after-school driving program was commenced to provide targeted students extra instruction. It is an 8-week course taught by 3 teachers, after school, with 3 students per car or 9 students per day. In just 4 or 5 sessions, students have raised their grade to a C or better. Because the demand for this program is more than the school can meet at this time, alternatives may have to be considered.

The Division's mission and vision statements are as follows:

#### Mission

OPRFHS's Physical Education Department is committed to developing the physical, social and emotional well-being of all students through the implementation of a variety of wellness activities, swimming, adventure education, dance and sport activity with the purpose of providing students with the skills and knowledge necessary to form healthy, lifelong choices.

#### Vision

In a successful state, OPRFHS student would participate in a comprehensive physical education program that provides them with the skills and knowledge to create a healthy lifestyle and meet their needs physically, socially and emotionally. This program would empower students to develop their own fitness and nutrition plans; plus equip them with the tools to make educated decisions regarding their overall wellbeing.

When asked what were the division's goals based on the District's goals, Mr. Reagan noted that the Division was in the process of creating its goals. The first goal is to be all encompassing, i.e., meeting the needs of every student and providing a safe environment and this can be challenging when some students are not physically fit or athletic.

### **Student Achievement Indicators Report**

Ms. Hill presented summarized data from a number of student achievement indicators for current students and recent graduates similar to previous years. The summary is organized with two views of achievement: attainment and growth. Attainment data include those measures that provide information about the student's performance at a single point in time without reference

to prior performance. Any test score in isolation is a measure of attainment (e.g. ACT, AP, and PSAE). Growth data provide a measure of change in a student's proficiency over time using baseline and endpoint data along a common or continuous scale. For purposes of measuring student growth, this report matches EXPLORE and ACT scores for 675 graduates of the Class of 2013. Visual representations are included in the appendix.

DLT has been talking about these measures as a scorecard. The State of Illinois has report cards for public schools. DLT is looking to post-secondary readiness, measures of academic success, and the question, "What does race have to do with student outcomes?"

Ms. Hill summarized the report.

- 1) Some of the measures of attainment are points in time as to how students academically fared. Graduation is a very important component of post-secondary readiness and of the 802 seniors, 95% received a diploma. Of the 26 who came back for a fifth year, the majority were identified as mostly special education. It was unknown as to the pathway of the eleven who had withdrawn.
- 2) OPRFHS continues to fair better on the ACT than students from across the state and in the nation, showing steady increases in the composite. When students graduate, they compete with a larger pool of their counterparts for college admissions and careers. DLT has discussed what kinds of benchmarks are appropriate and at a future time will discuss with the Board how those benchmarks compare across the nation and about achievement across racial groups as well. In general, performance of students on the ACT shows steady increases in the composite. In the class of 2014, the number of students with IEPs and achieved college readiness benchmark in all four areas is the highest it has been and on par with the state. However, when controlling for all of the other factors, i.e., Free and Reduced Lunch and Special Education status, race is still the most consistent predictor of disparities in outcomes. Eight hundred and eighty two students took the Advanced Placement test, taking 1727 exams. That is the highest number of students taking these tests thus far, and about 85% earn qualifying scores; the number of students across the state earning qualifying score is only 57%. ACT will no longer be required. Several groups had reading achievement were higher than state and 54% did meet or exceed and 49% of reduced lunch.
- 3) GPA data gives the broad view of students' experience, and a better predictor of post-secondary success shows an upward trend both in weighted and un-weighted grades.
- 4) Looking at match scores with EXPLORE and ACT scores of graduates from the class of 2014, the charts are the same format as last year and what she found intriguing was where students entered in terms of the EXPLORE scores. ACT and EXPLORE are aligned in both skills and scoring. ACT has said that EXPLORE scores are better at predicting success than any other predictor at the high school. However, when what is known about students is based on EXPLORE score, how does one assess interventions and the ways that experiences are scaffolded? Those figures in the red in Fig. 18 and 19, have a better chance of achieving a competitive GPA score and that makes them more competitive for college admissions. She started looking at transcripts from students represented in those figures and there is no single story; they are quite varied. Dr. Gevinson observed that in Fig. 18 all were red, in Fig. 19 were yellow, and in Fig. 20 were green.

Other information provided included:

- 1) The Free and Reduced Lunch cutoff is a national figure based on income. OPRFHS does have ACT data where students report family incomes. ACT finds race is the stronger predictor than family income. A suggestion was to compare district numbers to national and state numbers.
- 2) With regard to comparing ACT scores to peer districts, Ms. Hill noted that a colleague in another school district tried to do a scattergram based on a formula he derived. Since that person's retirement last year, no comparative data has been compiled.

Discussion ensued about what kinds of additional data the Committee would like to explore. Dr. Gevinson asked if there were a way to dig into the discrepancies by race from the EXPLORE tests to the ACT, because real differences by race existed as to who met standards and who did not. He suggested getting interns/volunteers to do this work, including interviewing of the students. Ms. Hill stated that about 10 years ago a Learning Community Performance Gap report was produced which showed which students were succeeding and which were not. She believed what the report provided still existed and that a review of that report would be worthwhile and a beginning point for understanding the kinds of questions to ask. That report included work by well-respected sociologists via racial identified surveys and conducting interviews. Some Instruction Committee members felt this type of student survey should be commenced again. Dr. Gevinson felt that specific factors needed to be identified, not just the broader one of race. He questioned whether the Board of Education should make an investment in that research.

Dr. Moore felt that looking at EXPLORE and ACT scores made sense because of their connection, but she also wanted to look at GPAs, both weighted and non-weighted. The institutional question has to be asked as to what the research is saying about students' need to be successful; who is teaching what classes and are there issues of classroom management. What courses/experiences of the students who were off track and then who moved on track? What was their quality of teaching? How many students are getting kicked out of class and how much instruction time is occurring at every level? What impact is that having on their grade, as well as their learning? Grades give a wider range of information. Have the school explored what those classes were? Who are the teachers? Additional information could be obtained about differences of income and when the student entered the school system. Discussion must include student experiences.

Dr. Gevinson observed that, in looking at the students nearly on track, the number of Black students on track is similar to white students, but when they got to the ACT, a large number of white students have higher scores. Both of these students started at the same point and yet the end was based on race. He did not believe it was because of their track. Dr. Moore suggested it might be how students are steered to take what courses. For those students at the middle levels, do they have the best-equipped teachers to handle classrooms that have a majority of African-American males in it? It is an issue of style and management? No matter to which teacher a student is assigned, the experience should be the same. That question needs to be addressed. Dr. Gevinson noted that the students to whom he was speaking about (83 students) were probably all middle-track or college-prep students. Ms. Hill stated that the students off track are all middle track or college prep students. She agreed that the student experience-based questions needed exploration. Dr. Moore was concerned that the issue of only one Black student in honors and AP

classes continues. Those students tend to drop out of those classes because there had been no endeavor to change that. First, it is daunting for students to be in high school, without having then to deal with issues of aloneness, etc. The administration has control over that factor. She believes the other aspects of classroom management have to do more with the college prep level than at the transitional level, with regard to the amount instruction time. She hears from students and parents that students feel that some teachers are not able to keep things moving or some students disrupt classes which affects learning and GPA.

Ms. Patchak-Layman noted that if there were no weighted GPAs and students were taking the best classes for themselves and getting academic enrichment, the overall GPA would be a much tighter cluster. It would give students, not in Honors classes, credit for what they achieved in their regular classes. Weighting and non-weighting is an institutional activity in which the Board of Education and the administration are in charge. It skews the students' experiences in the school. It reflects on how a student questions his/her value of being a good student. Dr. Moore felt there was something distinct about honors and AP classes and that is why, in terms of teaching, she goes back to what is occurring in those classes. Something is missing from engaging students enough to get the work done. The rigor of the curriculum is determined by the teacher in college prep classes. Dr. Gevinson remember that OPRFHS used to have an unweighted system, but people got upset about a student who had taken many non-honors classes became valedictorian. He suggested revisiting that. Mr. Prale noted that OPRFHS has weighted grade point average, not a weighted grade system, which flattens and compresses. If the institutional system in place were removed, valedictorians would have GPAs of 6.8, etc.

Ms. Patchak-Layman asked if it were possible to take the graphs with the grade distribution and disaggregate them, i.e., the average ACT cutoff, bands, etc. She felt the information would be more valuable as one looks to the PSAE scores at where students were meeting, exceeding, or were below. It helps to see where in-between areas. Ms. Patchak-Layman suggested looking at the transcripts, based on a student's EXPLORE scores, to see what the teacher and counselor recommendations had been. She knew anecdotally it to be true that some of the students who were on track were so because their parents knew their student(s)' ability was greater than what their EXPLORE scores showed and, thus, overrode the recommendations. The administration explained that parents have always had the option of overriding teacher recommendations and last year made teacher recommendations optional. Data will be provided at a later time.

The Committee supported moving this report to the Board of Education, noting the Committee's concerns. Dr. Gevinson asked if the Board of Education could encourage the administration to look at having a Project Scholar Program which targeted minority students. The last class to have Project Scholar was 2014. Introducing targeted programs was one option, but it was harder to get a systematic change that is woven into all classes. What is the consistency across counselors in recommending classes students should take next year? Some counselors push their students and others tell their students not to even try honors classes until their junior year. Some parents do not know that they can request an override. Students hear inconsistent messages. Ms. Patchak-Layman saw Project Scholar as a program that proved its worth for all students and she desired to see it as an all-school activity, as it met many of the requirements in terms of building relationships, thinking about advisories, etc.

## **Course Proposals**

The Committee reviewed seven proposals for courses for the 2015-16 school year and recommended that they be forwarded to the Board of Education as an information item. These are presented to the Board first and, subsequently, to parent and student groups, as well as other administrators. The Board of Education will consider these a second time in October. These changes will be included in the Academic Catalog, which is published online, provided to parents in PDF, and counselors receive hard copies.

Information that was highlighted:

### Visual Arts Department

REVISE 668 Advanced Studio Art A. 6681 is first semester 2-Dimensional; 6682 is second semester 3-Dimensional. Rewording the course description separates the 2D and 3-D components by semester to provide focused instruction to students in their area of interest and to provide specificity for college application requirements.

### Theatre/Broadcasting Department

REVISE 109/2 Introduction to Broadcasting. This revision updates language in the current Academic Catalog to open the course to freshmen who have historically enrolled in this course.

### Business Education

REVISE 646/2, 9867, 9858, 9854/9856, 9859 Inter-related Co-op. Expand the course description to emphasize that this course is a capstone experience for all current programs of study supporting career readiness for students (work experience). Presently no one can teach this class and it will probably be a 1.4 FTE. A student may have a place that they bring forward, but the high school will also see these opportunities. Students will travel to and from their job site on their own. A question that was raised about “portal to portal” within the Code of Conduct and with regard transportation, as this is class-related. The answer will be explored.

### Add Company Dance Class

This is for students seeking an experience that would be an auditioned-based class, one section each semester. It is open to all students, but they would have to audition. This class will level the playing field allowing flexibility and a challenge for those who want to go further in performance. It is expected that it would have approximately 25 students per section. The reason that it is in PE is that the introduction movement is part of the PE core; it starts and continues in that area. It was unknown if outside training was a requirement.

### REVISED Advanced Dance Class I and Advanced Dance II.

It was suggested that the name “social dance” be revised, as it may not be appealing to students of this age.

### Science

REVISED 519 Investigative Research in Biomedical Innovation A (IRBI). Change name of course to investigational Research, Design and Innovation A (IRDI). The new name more accurately describes the comprehensive and varied scope of the course because student projects are not restricted to the biomedical field.

World Language

REVISE 488 AP Spanish Literature. Change the name of the course to Spanish Language, Literature, and Films A. This course continues the study of the Spanish language through current events, literature, and film. The course presents contemporary Spanish and Latin American cinema and literature starting in the 20<sup>th</sup> century to present. Students will learn how current events, lawmaking, cinema, and literature are valuable tools for learning about contemporary Spanish and Latin American history, politics, culture, and society.

**Adjournment**

At 8:50 p.m., Dr. Gevinson moved to adjourn the meeting; seconded by Dr. Moore. A voice vote resulted in all ayes. Motion carried.

Submitted by  
Gail Kalmerton, Clerk of the Board