

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

Policy Evaluation and Goals Committee
February 17, 2015

A Policy Evaluation and Goals Committee meeting was held on February 17, 2015. Dr. Moore called the meeting was called to order at 8:55 p.m. in the Board Room. Committee members present were Dr. Jackie Moore, Thomas F. Cofsky, and Sharon Patchak-Layman. Also present were Dr. Steven T. Isoye, Superintendent; David Ruhland, Director of Human Resources; Nathaniel L. Rouse, Principal; Sheila Hardin, Faculty Senate Executive Committee Chair; and Gail Kalmerton, Executive Assistant/Clerk of the Board.

Visitors: Philip M. Prale, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum & Instruction; Alisha Walton and Michael Byars, Student Intervention Directors.

Visitor Comment

None

Approval of Minutes

Dr. Moore moved to approve the minutes of the January 21, 2015 Policy Evaluation and Goals Committee, as presented; seconded by Mr. Cofsky. A voice vote resulted in all ayes. Motion carried.

Student Discipline Retreat

Alisha Walton spoke about the changes in the Code of Conduct with regard to absences and explained the keys: F=Fail, P=Pass, and N=No credit. If a student gets an F, he/she will not get credit for the class and that will impact his/her GPA. A grade of N does not factor into the GPA. Incompletes, generally are given for medical reasons, etc., will convert to an F if the work is not completed within six weeks. If a student has NP or NF, he/she would need to retake the class if it is required for graduation. If it is an elective class, it would not have to be retaken. It was suggested that a legend be included in the report to go to the Board of Education.

The change that the Parent Teacher Advisory Committee (PTAC) made last year was an effort to decrease lost instruction. In the past when a student received 4 unexcused absences, he/she could then appeal to the SID, the counselor, and the teacher and a plan would be invented to keep the student in class. The student was only dropped from the class if he/she continued to be absent. When dropped, the student was assigned to a study hall, and often he/she did not report. PTAC recommended that a student receiving an N grade after having had 6 unexcused absences, but kept in class, rather than being dropped from the class. Subsequently, an appeal is automatically evoked at the end of the semester. The result of that change follows.

- 96 NP/NF grades were given (students who withdrew were omitted).
- 36 NP/NF grades were reversed (37.5%).
- 48 were given NF (50%) grades. Please note that in these instances keeping the NF benefitted the student because the NF grade does NOT factor into the GPA.

- 12 were given NP grades (12.5%).

A comparison of this year's data to last year's data was requested as well as an explanation to the kinds of supports given to students required to stay in classes, rather than being dropped. Beyond students having conversations with SIDs and counselors, the teachers provided support. While this support is not recorded in a formal report, it is included in the teacher feedback component. The teachers provide input as to whether the student should receive credit for the class.

With regard to what the PEG Committee can do to drive the recommendation from the discipline retreat to have a student-led retreat, the administration had reached out to the provided resources. As yet, the local resource had not responded. Dr. Moore also knew of some local groups to contact. Dr. Moore felt that the direction to go would be to link this to Annenberg's youth-led workshop initiative that has outreach in Chicago and New York as it already had guidelines in place. Dr. Isoye and Dr. Moore will meet regarding next steps. While one committee member suggested that the PEG Committee, on its own, could do the legwork, as opposed to going to another person or entity, i.e., set the dates, enlist the students, and help to formulate the conversations for students working together, another member felt it did not have the resources and/or skill sets to do that. A date for the workshop will be set at the March meeting.

Discussion ensued about the tardies, missing classes, and tutoring, which were also mentioned at the discipline retreat. Students assigned to an In-school Suspension (ISS) are in school and working, albeit not always fully. Attendance is taken and forwarded to the SIDS at the end of the day. While 2 to 12 ISS students are in one room and they are allowed access to their SIDs, their teachers, and are able to attend group sessions, etc., other ISS models are being explored. A question was raised as to what mechanism is used. Students assigned to an Out-of-School Suspension (OSS) receive tutoring and they are allowed to use their textbooks outside of the classroom and to inform their teachers of their time out of class. Those students assigned a 5-day or more OSS must meet with their SIDs before returning to school. One member suggested exploring how a Restorative Justice Program is used at other schools because of its restorative versus punitive approach.

As to what mechanism is used to determine the deeper aspects as to the reasons for the suspensions, the administration responded that conversations first with the students and the SIDs. In certain circumstances, a session with the youth therapist is scheduled. Prior to an ISS being issued, other interventions are put into play. The SIDs are specific as to why a student received a consequence; his/her action did not fall in line with the Code of Conduct. The parent also has a better understanding of the expectations and the consequences. SIDs intervene with students in different ways, depending upon their ages and the situations.

The Parent Teacher Advisory Committee (PTAC) will be composed of quartile representatives from faculty, parents, students, and the Board of Education, and will meet February 26. Its purpose is to review the Code of Conduct, i.e., the changes made, the successes of the changes, the patterns of consequences, what may be done differently, i.e., cellphones, etc. One member felt that being disrespectful to staff members might be subjective from one teacher to another and may have a different meaning. National statistics show that African-American students fall into

trouble because their body language/tone is not seen as acceptable by some teachers. Discussions had occurred about providing examples and being explicit as to what situations would fall into what categories. One member suggested that some of the people who attended the discipline retreat might be good candidates for this committee. A question was raised as to how to get from the discussion at the discipline retreat to the *Handbook* and the Code of Conduct. How will the Board of Education move those activities? Dr. Moore had spoken with Dr. Isoye and Mr. Rouse about the fact that the directives and guidelines for PTAC needed to be clearer as to whether something is actionable or something is to be studied. One recommendation at the Discipline Retreat that came forward was to implement a code of respect which would impact this list. Such a change would most likely require a major rewrite of the Handbook and if the committee felt it should be pursued, it could be framed out for next year as a document that talks about expectations, respect, and relationships.

Discussion ensued about how changes to the *Code of Conduct* have ripple effects and the timing of the start of this committee because changes always have to be made and philosophies considered. Dr. Moore reported that last year the Committee had felt that while much work was accomplished in a short amount of time, the Board of Education did not seriously consider them. This year she wanted the committee to feel its work was valued.

Ms. Patchak-Layman noted that the conversation last year was different from previous years. The conversations were about specific pages of the matrix, how that worked, and whether 3 or 4 offenses were listed. Previously, the task had been to look at the Code of Conduct and the matrix and how that affected the rest of the Handbook. Last year topics included whether one should get a detention or not for doing such and such or whether the teacher should be responsible for handling the issue, etc. This committee has only been open to the public for four years. One actionable recommendation was a result researching how to keep students engaged in the classroom, rather than assigning them to multiple study halls.

Board Goals

Dr. Isoye spoke about the format of Board of Education goal update he intended to provide.

Superintendent Evaluation

The Committee was presented with the instrument used in the evaluation of Dr. Isoye for the last two years. This instrument was developed through a collaborative process with two Board of Education members as well as Dr. Isoye, per the recommendation of the search firm, and then approved by the Policy Committee. Information was at first gathered and a decision was made to go with narrative, a checklist, and then the descriptors. Other schools had been asked for examples. The Board of Education was clear about the process. It was noted that North Carolina has a superintendent evaluation process that is standard for the state as well as a tutorial for Board of Education members.

In addition, the IASA ISAL III in which Dr. Isoye is participating, has asked Dr. Isoye to distribute surveys which is similar to a 360-evaluation to various constituents. Dr. Isoye asked the Board of Education to participate as it may assist in their thinking about the school district and its leadership.

Dr. Isoye will create a table with the Board of Education goals based on the action steps of the Strategic Plan. He will send that with the evaluation instrument.

A suggestion was made to add a column titled "Other" for those things that are occurring outside of the goals and an indicator of assessment in order to make decisions for the future.

As a result of this conversation, Mr. Ruhland will collect superintendent evaluation forms from NWPA schools and review the feedback from the Board of Education members as they experience this instrument. Board of Education members will be asked questions as to what should consider that might need to be considered in order to get more value out of this instrument.

Adjournment

Dr. Moore moved to adjourn at 10:16 p.m.; seconded by Mr. Cofsky.

Submitted by
Gail Kalmerton
Clerk of the Board of Education