

OAK PARK AND RIVER FOREST HIGH SCHOOL
201 N. Scoville
Oak Park, IL 60302

Strategic Plan Operations Committee (SPOC)
March 16, 2015

A Strategic Plan Operations Committee meeting was held on March 16, 2015. Mr. Weissglass called the meeting to order at 4:06 p.m. in the Board Room. Committee members present were Dr. Steven Gevinson, Dr. Ralph Lee, and Jeff Weissglass. Also present were Dr. Steven T. Isoye, Superintendent; Philip M. Prale, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum & Instruction; Sheila Hardin, Faculty Senate Executive Committee Chair; and Gail Kalmerton, Executive Assistant/Clerk of the Board.

Visitors included Tod Altenburg, Chief School Business Officer; and David Ruhland, Director of Human Resources; Jason Dennis, OPRFHS Faculty member; Ronald Johnson, Director of Purchasing and Transportation; and Nancy Heezen, OPRFHS staff member.

Public Comments

None

Minutes

Mr. Weissglass moved to approve the Strategic Plan Operations Committee minutes of February 17, 2015, as presented; seconded by Dr. Gevinson. A voice vote resulted in motion carried.

Pilot Furniture

Mr. Johnson reported that 12 rooms have been identified for new furniture for next year which will allow for transformational learning. This furniture was piloted in the 2014-15 school year with positive feedback. The tables will be trapezoidal shaped, movable, with flip tops and separate chairs. This furniture can be moved into different configurations and used cross divisionally. Generally, the District spends approximately \$5,000 per year replacing furniture for two classrooms; this will cost approximately \$48,000 to \$50,000 and just accelerates the schedule.

Transformational Leadership Proposal

Mr. Dennis presented the Committee with a proposal for transformational leadership that was included in the packet. The proposal calls for freshmen study halls to become student led advisories. A new leadership course will be developed to train and support approximately 150 upper class students who will be mentors in the advisories. The mentors will spend 2 days a week in the leadership course and 3 days a week serving as mentors in the freshmen study halls (advisories). The curriculum will focus on social and emotional learning (SEL), executive functioning (EF), positive identity development, and developing leadership capacity. The curriculum will be implemented both by the student mentors and the advisory supervisors (study hall teachers who volunteered and were selected for the experience).

The purpose will be to create a sense of belonging for every student and a relationship with at least one caring adult for every student. The purpose will also be to provide a space for every student to be safe, heard, valued, and respected, to provide an opportunity for 150 upper class students to develop,

lead, and mentor, a space for students to engage in difficult conversations, a dedicated space for implementing and reinforcing, SEL and EF skills, positive identity development, leadership and mentoring skills, and peer tutoring. It will also transform the culture of the school into one of shared responsibility, care, and respect. Upper classman would interact with freshmen one or two times per week facilitating around an activity having to do with SEL, executive functioning skills, etc. Upper classmen would develop themselves in a leadership class and then coordinate an activity with either the teacher in the room or by themselves. A study hall with 16 students would be divided into four groups. This is about building strengths. The teachers running the study halls will be asked to do more than just run them and Ms. Hardin said that she would be willing to approve a “rider” for a supervisory which would not be an article. Next year 2 teachers and the following year it would be 30 teachers. Discussion has occurred about putting mentors in double period math and reading classes and adding a zero period or 9th period for members of band, etc., if they don’t have time in their schedules. This plan is more robust than that of other schools. Colleges may like to see a leadership component on the transcript. Teachers would monitor the work and they will need to be supported.

Committee members expressed positive comments about this proposal, noting that it was robust with one member suggesting that going for 2 teachers in the first year to 30 teachers in the second year may be too big a jump and having an interim number was suggested. Another suggestion was to use an existing leadership course rather than developing one from scratch and changing the term “advisory” to something that would reflect the students taking a shared ownership. The Committee asked for dollar amounts to be included in an incremental resource form.

The impetus for this program was The Posse Foundation which started this type of program by going to certain universities and telling them that their graduation rates were low and that they had a social responsibility to that and then asking them to provide financial support for its program. It lobbied institutions to create 10 scholarships per year. The Foundation brings students in early, houses, supports, mentors, and tutors them. As its program grew, its alumni have shared their experiences. So, what will this type of program look like in high school and in the community? In looking at the rubric this program connects to each of the action steps under every goal of the Strategic Plan. While this is now being driven by the Assistant Principal for Instruction, ongoing that position would not have the capacity to do this. Education Week makes a strong case for a hybrid.

It was the consensus of the committee to discuss this at the March Board Meeting and revisit it at the committee’s April meeting.

Adjournment

At 5:00 p.m., Dr. Gevinson moved to adjourn the meeting; seconded by Dr. Lee. A voice vote resulted in motion carried.

Submitted by Gail Kalmerton
Clerk of the Board