

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

Committee of the Whole Meeting
September 18, 2018

A Committee of the Whole Committee meeting was held on September 18, 2018. Dr. Moore called the meeting to order at 6:35 p.m. in the Board Room. Committee members present were Fred Arkin, Matt Baron, Jennifer Cassell, Thomas F. Cofsky, Craig Iseli, Dr. Jackie Moore, and Sara Dixon Spivy, as well as Dr. Joylynn Pruitt Adams, Superintendent; and Gail Kalmerton, Executive Assistant/Clerk of the Board of Education and FOIA Officer.

Also present were: Michael Carioscio, Chief Operations Officer, Karin Sullivan, Director of Communications; Greg Johnson, Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction; Nathaniel L. Rouse, Principal; Chris Thieme, Senior Director of Technology, Roxana Sanders, Senior Director of Human Resources; Dr. Gwendolyn Walker Qualls, Director of Pupil Support Services; and Cyndi Sidor, Interim Chief School Business Officer.

Visitors: OPRFHS Faculty and Staff Susan Johnson, Jonathan Weintraub, Christina McKittrick, Michelle Bayer; and John Costopoulos; Gabe Udofia, Eva Fuller, Emanuel Flores, Aleah Price, Christina McKittrick; Khalida Himes and James Webster, Chloe Leach, Lillian Katz, Kisha Williamson, and Jon McCoy, Trinity Anderson, Geneva Domantay; Dr. Carl Spight, Mike Poirier, and Angela Holman, community members; Michael Romain of the *Wednesday Journal*; and Steve Schering of the *Oak Leaves*.

Public Comments

None

Minutes

Dr. Moore moved to approve the minutes of the August 14, 2018 Committee of the Whole meeting; seconded by Ms. Dixon Spivy. A voice vote resulted in motion carried.

[Summer Travel Experiences](#)

OPRFHS provided four trips for students this, both domestic and abroad. Three of the trips were Summer Field Courses where students attended class throughout the second semester of the 2017-2018 school year and then put what they learned into practice while completing field study experiences on their trip. The Summer Field Courses were the UK Ecology Summer Field Ecology Course, Florida Marine Biology Field Course, and the Costa Rica Tropical Ecology Field Course. In addition to those trips, there was an Exchange trip with a school in Japan in which students from Japan came to OPRFHS during the school year, and OPRFHS students went to their school in June.

Student representatives reported on how much they enjoyed these trips and highlighted their experiences.

Twelve diverse students participated in the UK Summer Field Ecology Course. Thirty students traveled to Japan staying with exchange families, attending the local school, speaking Japanese, and learning about the culture. Most of the time was spent in northern Japan, but the last four days they stayed in Tokyo. One student realized that “listening is the greatest skill to have.” Another student was grateful to the

Alumni Association for providing some funding for the trip. On the Costa Rica Ecology Field Course trip, students learned about the reproductive system and the life cycle of sea turtle. No cell phones were allowed. Not only did the students become great friends, but they also became more open-minded about other cultures. The trip was motivational and it reinforced the need to limit plastic use. The Biology Marine Field Course trip has been running for over 20 years. This year 15 students traveled to Florida to study marine biology and ecology. Much time was spent drawing and reflecting. One of the students stated that the trip solidified for her the desire to major in marine biology in college.

All of the students expressed their appreciation to the Board of Education to allow them this opportunity as well as their appreciation of their chaperones.

[Fall 2018 Pupil Support Services \(PSS\) Report](#)

The administration prepares a Pupil Support Services Report (Formerly Student Discipline) for review each semester. Although the report has changed significantly over the years, the report has been expanded to encompass the work of the Pupil Support Services (PSS) teams in support of prevention and intervention related to student behavior. Those teams consist of deans of students, counselors, and social workers and are led by Assistant Principal of Student Services Lynda Parker.

The report was a snapshot of the type of behavioral infractions that have occurred, the students involved, and the support given. The report also focuses on the areas where the administration would like to do further exploration to address some of the patterns and questions regarding data, in particular when compared to previous semesters.

The questions for further exploration from this report are as follows:

- The increase of infractions for Level 2 & 3 for 2nd Semester.
- The disparities between racial demographics and the number of infractions.
- The recidivism rates for students who have multiple behavioral infractions.
- Further investigation of the types of restorative justice related supports by our PSS Teams.

It should also be noted that our Culture, Climate, and Behavior Committee (CCB) will have a subgroup that will do a deeper exploration of our Tardy Data, in particular, Period 1 vs. Periods 2-8 based upon their recommendations from the Spring of 2018. Please see the CCB's recommendations below.

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The key questions for the analysis of consequences and supports assigned to students as a result of infractions are:

1. What infractions occurred?
2. Which students were involved?
3. How did OPRF respond and engage with PSS?
4. Which students accrued tardies?

What was discovered was that 82% of Spring 2018 infractions were related to tardies and missed detentions: Only 18% of infractions were related to behavior. In the fall 2017 semester, only 16% of the infractions were related to behavior.

A chart showed that Black students had the highest number of nonattendance/detention infractions, followed by White, Hispanic, Multiracial and Asian. The same proportions held for gender. Male students incurred 60% of all infractions. The gender difference was highest for white students (67% male) and lowest for multiracial students (50% male). And male students incurred 69% of all nonattendance/detention infractions.

Twenty-seven percent of OPRF students recorded an infraction. The number of students having at least one non-attendance/detention infraction was 279 (about 8% of the student body). Eleventh graders had the most infractions overall while ninth graders had the most behavioral infractions. Eleventh graders can go out for lunch and, thus, have more tardies. Point of emphasis on how can we reduce disparities and racial demographics in terms. The administration desires to reduce by another 10% the disparity among the races.

One slide showed examples of Restorative Justice related supports and how they were used for prevention, prevention/intervention, and intervention. PSS Interventions/supports is a feature that is tracked via the Guidance Tab in Skyward to identify prevention and intervention efforts. This information is housed outside of the current Skyward discipline referral system.

In the spring of 2018, responses to 2,787 infractions were tracked. Students could be issued one verbal warning, 2) restricted lunch, 3) detention, 4) removal of pass privileges, 5) after-school detention, 6) Saturday detention, 7) In-School Suspension, 8) Out of School Suspension, or 9) PSS Interventions/Notes. Again, Number 9 is tracked via the guidance tab in Skyward.

Another slide showed that conferences with deans and other staff were the most common alternative to detention and suspensions. The no-entry column reflects the PSS interventions put in place, i.e., mediation, counseling with a parent, meetings with a social worker, etc.

A subsequent slide showed the average number of interventions increased as the level of severity of infractions increased. The report shows that students are being given the support they need.

Which students accrued tardies? Students of color received a disproportionately higher tardy count as compared to the rest of the student body. OPRFHS is also in conversations with Dr. Fenning and Miranda Johnson of Loyola University about data and questions to ask. OPRFHS is entering into contracts with UMOJA which provides training on Restorative Justice Practices.

The 2018-19 Culture, Climate and Behavior Committee Recommendations are as follows:

- I. Research the causes of student tardiness.
Action Step 1: Administer an annual culture and climate survey to all students, parents, and staff no later than the fall semester of 2018, per last year's approved CCB recommendation, and incorporate questions into the survey inquiring about the reasons for student tardiness or direct questions to focus groups or both.
2. Address racial disparities in OPRF student tardy data, which shows that African American students are overrepresented in the "late to class" and "five or more" tardy categories.

Action Step 1: Extend review of tardy data collected for periods 2-8, particularly for students with elevated numbers of tardies, and begin a review of excused absences data to identify any racial disparities. Action Step 2: Administration and staff review of tardy data to surface potential drivers for the racial discrepancies observed for periods 2-8 (e.g., staff unconscious bias, inconsistent enforcement or understanding of the policy, navigation from class to class) and develop, and present to the Board of Education, a holistic proposal with specific strategies to ensure equitable enforcement of the current policy, or propose a better policy.

Questions/Comments/Requests:

- 1) The Special Education statistics broken down by race was requested
- 2) The data on what the District is doing for students at MENTA and how it relates to recidivism was desired.
- 3) Are the high-frequency students the same as those with the higher-level offenses? Response: This will be further explored and reported in future reports, so that the administration can provide those students with more support.
- 4) While the data is appreciated, how is the District improving?
- 5) Are the infractions made by special education students consistent with their handicapping condition? Response: These infractions fare outside of their handicapping condition.
- 6) What is the information that relates to Page 4, the change from Fall 2017?
- 7) Are the PSS Teams being effective? What types of interventions are being utilized? How are many interactions by type of infraction or level is given? Are the occurrences lower now than in previous years? What is the purpose of this information? How is the racial equity lens reflected in the graphs? Is what the District is doing for the students working? Was there movement with black and brown students regarding the number of infractions? Are the interventions that are tied to infractions/consequences working?
- 8) While one member questioned how the term “Restorative Justice Related Reports” was being used, as they did not appear to be Restorative Justice Practices, the administration had received Restorative Justice training from UMOJA. At that training, definitions of Restorative Justice Practices were crafted.
- 9) What is the student’s role in Restorative Justice?

The report will be updated with further information relative to these questions for the September 27 meeting and an executive summary.

[Curriculum and Instruction Reorganization](#)

Mr. Johnson provided an overview of the work that has been done to redesign the Curriculum and Instruction Department to provide the structure needed to help guide continued growth.

The primary goal of this redesign was to enhance collaboration and joint decision making, allowing to more effectively vet school improvement initiatives. To accomplish this goal, three new standing committees have been established.

1. The Teaching and Learning Leadership Team meets twice a month and is made up of our

Principal, Senior Director of Pupil Support Services, Assistant Principal for Student Services, Assistant Principal for Student Learning, and our Coordinator of Assessment and Research. This group is tasked with setting teaching and learning goals and initiatives for the year, determining how to measure progress toward their completion, and identifying correlating action steps.

2. The Evaluation Committee meets on the third Thursday of each month and consists of existing Administrators' Collaboration Team (ACT), which includes all current evaluators of certified staff. The primary purpose of this group is to help ensure consistency and increase interrater reliability in our observation and evaluation practices. In these meetings discussion occurs on the methods used to collect data during teacher observations, the process used to implement student growth, and how the data is used that is collected in these processes to determine teacher ratings, all in accordance with the Professional Growth guidelines set by the District's joint committee.
3. The Teaching and Learning Advisory Committee meets on the fourth Thursday of each month, is a team combined of teachers and administrators who will work together to provide guidance on our future initiatives as well as on common processes such as professional development, curriculum development, and course revisions and proposals.

Next month the Board of Education will receive reports on the curriculum evaluation and design process, course proposals, summer school program evaluation, etc.

One member asked for more information on the evaluation committee process. The administration responded that guidebooks for conducting evaluations do exist. As part of the Administrative Academy, a training on evaluations was provided and discussed was interrater reliability. Some administrators will conduct observations to help lead this work.

Note that while the curriculum realignment process is not yet complete, the advancement of the racial equity goals is the focus of the TTL work. The curriculum review process is tied to the impact on students that directly correlates to equity work. The District will challenge itself going forward with the development of a racial equity plan using the Oregon Equity Lens. A racial equity policy and metrics will be developed.

The information that is being gleaned from the observations of freshman teachers for curriculum and instructional purposes will be used to either improve collaboration or student engagement. The results of the observations done by the administration will be shared with the teachers' division heads to inform their evaluations of the teacher through the Danielson Rubric. The observations are not macro learning, they are discrete.

[Data Sharing Agreement](#)

It was the consensus of the majority of Committee members to recommend to the Board of Education that it approve the Data Sharing Agreement per attorney's review at its regular September meeting.

Housing Forward is part of the Homeless Coalition, and its main goal is to make homelessness rare, brief, and one time. The Oak Park Homelessness Coalition consists of 30-plus organizations working to end

homelessness in Oak Park. They are funded through the Community Mental Health Board of Oak Park. Oak Park and River Forest High School District. 200 is a member of the Oak Park Homelessness Coalition. Housing Forward serves as a component of the coalition. The mission of Housing Forward is to transition people from housing crisis to housing stability by providing comprehensive “housing = services” solution for transitioning individuals and families out of homelessness. The core of services provided includes outreach, shelter, employment, housing, and emergency services. There are 12 shelter locations associated with the Oak Park Housing Forward.

The Data Sharing Agreement and Parent Consent Form authorizes the District to share the following categories of student information with Housing Forward: (a) student name; (b) grade; (c) school; (d) parent name; and (e) parent contact information. Parents may withdraw their consent at any time. Involvement in the program is on a voluntary basis and not mandatory for the school district or family. Housing Forward and its agents will not share any information that identifies me or my child with any other person, organization, agency or school without my further permission, or use my child’s information for commercial or any other unauthorized purposes. The intent of the data share agreement is to proactively identify and enroll homeless families identified by District 200 and connect them to Housing Forward for assessment for diversion services and, if needed, development of a housing plan, financial counseling, stability services, for which they may be eligible.

The overarching goal is to:

1. To connect homeless families to Stability Services offered by Housing Forward (primary)
2. To connect families to Housing Forward who the District learns may be experiencing a housing hardship within eight weeks so the family can be screened for Homeless Prevention Services (secondary).

[Policies for First Reading](#)

[Policy 4:60, Purchases and Contracts](#)

It was the consensus of the Committee of the Whole members to recommend to the Board of Education that it approve Policy 4:60, Purchases and Contracts, for first reading at its regular Board meeting.

[Racial Equity Policy Recommendations](#)

It was the consensus of the Committee of the Whole members to direct the administration to draft a racial equity policy, per its request to formalize and systemically boost its commitment to racial equity. A framework for a policy was presented in the packet.

Mr. Rouse noted that the Strategic Plan’s Racial Equity Action Team would like to identify three proven strategies and programs that reduce inequities of opportunity and enable students of color and low socioeconomic status to gain greater access to and success in college prep, honors, and AP courses. While more input is needed from stakeholders about the metrics to be used suggestions included a reduction of 10% of the infractions in general, increased access to honors by students of color by 10%, etc. Some of this work has already started through the Strategic Plan. Data is being explored to see what it is not equal and inconsistent with regard to infractions. Faculty and staff write referrals, not the deans, and discussions are occurring about of a culture of writing referrals. The administration will convene a diverse team of stakeholders to develop the policy, similar to the process that was used to develop the

gender equity procedures, and then develop appropriate professional development. Members of the community, staff, and administration can be trained to do equity audits.

While one member expressed frustration with the fact that the District has not already had sustainable results, this member did support the proposed framework for a policy, which should be tied to metrics to drive action. Why were only three actions identified? Research says that increasing minority staff is a proven strategy, and the District is working toward that end. When working with the team on this policy, it was acknowledged that the most prominent and obtainable strategies were already being done.

Mr. Arkin had stated that this was the reason he was on the Board of Education. It was long overdue, and it is a time for action. The District has two important metrics: 1) is achievement predictable by race and 2) are disciplinary issues predictable by race? The goal is that by 2021, achievement or opportunity has been eliminated. He thanked Mr. Rouse, Dr. Pruitt-Adams and all of the administration. And, honors in AP, he did not want to lose sight of the purpose of College Prep as students should be prepared to go to college. Higher expectations and higher rigor is needed in the classes.

Ms. Spivy felt that a strategy would be to include the question to students in the Culture, Climate and Behavior suggested survey as to whether they were comfortable and if they felt like they belong.

Mr. Iseli too was appreciative of this effort as many Board of Education members ran for this reason. However, he noted that this was a “huge topic” and the District will not come up with every answer in policy or procedures at one time, but it should take smaller bites by doing something one piece at a time.

Dr. Moore thanked Mr. Rouse for delineating a racial equity policy and suggested that the team include experts in this field, just as the Gender Equity Committee had, to give input on best practices and craft clear procedures that are then agreed upon by internal staff, community members, etc. Mr. Rouse concurred, noting that the Racial Equity Committee was considering adding other stakeholders as well.

Mr. Rouse added that the formation of this policy was being considered before the release of the documentary--it is not a response to it. Dr. Moore hoped that the documentary could help inform this work.

[Talent Management Framework](#)

The Committee reviewed the draft of the District 200 Talent Management Framework. This document was developed over the last several months with input from some constituent groups and has been expanded from the initial focus on just the hiring protocol to include the comprehensive talent management framework. The document is still in draft form and will be a living document which will be updated as we implement it and gather feedback from the faculty and staff involved in the hiring process.

OPRF’s talent management framework is aligned with the district's vision to become an ever-improving model of equity and excellence that will enable all students to achieve their full potential. The administration believes that the success of our students is talent-driven, and it is our responsibility to ensure quality talent in our classrooms and throughout our school. We are committed to recruiting, onboarding, supporting, evaluating, recognizing and retaining diverse and highly talented teachers,

administrators, and support staff who strives for equity and excellence for all students. Accordingly, the talent management framework consists of the following components: Recruitment and Selection, Onboarding, Compensation and Benefits, Retention.

Mr. Arkin read the following statement he made when he was elected to the Board of Education. “I believe that the makeup of the school staff and faculty could better reflect the diversity of our community as a whole. While roughly 45% of our students are identified as non-white, only 18% of teachers are so identified.

“If we don't have minority candidates in the recruiting pools they can never get hired. We need to develop proactive programs for recruiting minority candidates. Our current processes are not working, as candidates are not being attracted to hiring pools in sufficient numbers.

“I like Steve Gevinson’s idea of a committee including a significant number of faculty members to help in identifying effective ways to recruit minorities. Faculty members know who are out there and where to find the best candidates. In the private sector, many companies give bonuses to employees who refer a candidate, and that candidate gets hired.

“When the best machinists are in need of a tool, and none is readily available they create their own. Annually we have a pool of well over 200 minority graduates, why not vet them, and encourage a select few to seek teaching as a profession?”

“We have four years to get to know their character and abilities. You can’t beat that for qualifying them. It would be wonderful if they choose to come back to OPRF, we could start supplying our own pipeline. I have always been impressed by the number of OPRF graduates who do come home to teach, we had several again this year, but traditionally not many have been minorities.

“Why not begin with our own minority grads and direct them to the appropriate college programs. This kind of initiative could garner community and outside support for funding and scholarship programming.”

He continued that while we need the best talent/teachers, the District must use financial constraints. He asked that this process have administrative guidelines and controls that fit the financial model and budget, but where different people fit into the right places. He felt that the district could have a “grow-our-own” program, seeking out students in college who want to become teachers. While the Alumni Association would have that database, anyone in the building who has a relationship with students could provide names. It is just a matter of asking. Concordia University is putting together a program to assist with this endeavor.

Ms. Dixon Spivy noted that three years ago there was an ad hoc committee that struggled because of a variety of things. She continued that the interviewing process noted was a big departure from how faculty was screened. Feedback is being garnered from Faculty Senate, and community members and the interviewing process will tighten up further.

Ms. Cassell suggested using a tool to look at some of the current practices and a comprehensive and implicit bias training of the hiring committee members. Does Applitracks have barriers? Do the first round interview questions have barriers? Her experience of sitting in on a hiring committee was training via email which did not allow her to effectively participate or address any unconscious bias on the part of interviewers or the hiring managers. Research shows that is a barrier in higher and secondary education. She does not favor quotas, but tracking the type of applicant is needed. One school took a drastic step and had a procedure that if a black teacher is not hired, an explanation needs to be given as to why.

Dr. Pruitt-Adams reported that in the spring an FTE report would be presented to the Board and it will include a comparison of past and current FTE to see the demographic growth. The District can ask specific racial equity questions on Applitrack, and part of that software speaks to levels of racial consciousness. Ms. Sanders is considering a tool for implicit bias training.

Mr. Cofsky appreciated greatly the parts of the document that spoke to onboarding and retaining, employee recognition, etc. He feels the document was powerful. All of the Committee members were grateful for this document.

[Reorganization of Department of Human Resources](#)

It was the consensus of the Committee to recommend to the Board of Education that it approve the Administrative Assistant – Human Resources position during the Special Board meeting on September 18, 2018 and reclassify two HR Administrative Assistant positions to Benefits and Compensation Coordinator and HR Systems Specialist as presented on the personnel report for the September 18 Special Board Meeting.

Ms. Sanders was thankful for the processes that had been put into place in the Human Resources Department. She agreed with the main work, but the current structure does not reflect the work they do. The goal of the reorganization is to create a more strategically focused Department of Human Resources that is accountable, adds value, is aligned, and delivers effective and consistent services to all stakeholders. In order to accomplish this goal, the focus should be on three key imperatives: creating an effective HR structure, revising HR processes and policies, and expanding and integrating technology to streamline services and increase transparency through access to information and resources.

Some position titles in the Department of Human Resources do not accurately reflect job responsibilities of HR staff members. Currently, two HR Administrative Assistant positions do not perform any administrative support, but rather focus on delivering specialized professional HR functions, such as benefits, compensation, recruitment and hiring, legal compliance, state reports, HR analytics, and employee relations. Reclassifying their positions as Benefits and Compensation Coordinator and HR Systems Specialist will align titles with responsibilities and facilitate directing employee inquiries to the right HR team members. Also, a temporary receptionist position in the HR Department in the absence of a true administrative assistant has evolved from greeting and directing visitors and answering calls to performing various administrative support functions that are essential to providing effective customer service.

The basis for the increase in grade is that Grade 13 is an administrative assistant and these positions have skills that go beyond those of an administrative assistant. This grade level would make them exempt employees. These positions are in alignment with the Korn Ferry model.

Why has the District had temporary employees for over a year? Dr. Pruitt-Adams responded that the District had two temporary employees for a year. She was charged to bring efficiencies to departments that had temporary staff and while working through personnel logistics, having the temps brought stability to both the HR and Business Office departments. Mr. Cofsky felt this needed to be considered from a policy level.

Future Agenda Items

None.

Adjournment

At 8:35 p.m., Dr. Moore moved to adjourn, seconded by Ms. Cassell. A voice vote resulted in motion carried.

Submitted by Gail Kalmerton
Clerk of the Board