

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

Committee of the Whole Meeting
April 14, 2020

A Committee of the Whole Committee meeting was held virtually on April 14, 2020. President Moore called the meeting to order at 6:40 p.m. in the Board Room. Committee members present were Matt Baron, Tom Cofsky, Gina Harris, Craig Iseli, Ralph Martire, Dr. Jackie Moore, and Sara Dixon Spivy. Also present were Dr. Pruitt-Adams, Superintendent; and Gail Kalmerton, Executive Assistant/Clerk of the Board of Education and FOIA Officer.

Also present were: Greg Johnson, Associate Superintendent; Michael Carioscio, Chief Operations Officer; Karin Sullivan, Executive Director of Communications; Christopher Thieme, Senior Director of Technology; Dr. LeVar Ammons, Executive Director of Racial Equity and Student Success; Dr. Gwendolyn Walker Qualls, Senior Director of Pupil Support Services; and Cyndi Sidor, Chief Finance Officer.

Visitors

OPRFHS faculty and staff Laurie Fiorenza, Lynda Parker, Janel Bishop, Fred Preuss and Micheline Piekarski.

Public Comments

None

[Approval of Minutes of March 10, 2020](#)

Dr. Moore moved to approve the minutes of the March 10, 2020 meeting, as presented; seconded by Mr. Baron. A voice vote resulted in motion carried.

Intervention Report

Mr. Johnson noted that the Student Intervention Program Evaluation was the second of a three-part progression at OPRFHS. In October, Ms. Parker provided highlighted things about the work with UMOJA that has shifted how the District approaches behavioral interventions for the students. The first part was rethinking the behavior of students. The third part will be the revision of the Student Code of Conduct (SCC). The work of Restorative Justice Practices (RJP) focuses on the education of students to reshape behavior. The administration started with a review of the essentials it wanted answers to. Then data was pulled as to the facts, what it said, and how could it move forward. The administration tried to address practice in terms of being aligned with Senate Bill 100. Each year the process has grown. SCC still lends to discipline infractions. The administration has sought to work through that with the current SCC but also be restorative in practices and change the thinking as to what is appropriate discipline consequences. The District sought legal advice to see if its practices were aligned with Senate Bill 100, which is to be less punitive and be restorative. The result was that the District was not in alignment. Thus, universal mind shifts were necessary. The administration worked with UMOJA to become more fluid in RJP. There were means of improving and increasing what was being done that students were being considered as a whole student versus what happened and what the SCC allowed.

Senate Bill 100 has a 3-prong question that needs examination before a student can be excluded from a learning environment. The student's history must be reviewed and the District must determine what other appropriate consequences could be considered.

How has the focus of the Culture of Warmth (COW) and restorative practices affected the discipline data? Has that made a difference? Each slide represented an explanation.

Ms. Bishop reported that the Level 1 was significant as the number of Failure to Serve numbers fell from 839 to 277. Changes were made to the HERO tardy system by changing the threshold for punitive consequence. Students only receive consequences if they are late 10 times and each quarter they are given a fresh start. Thus, the rate of detentions has lessened. In the fall of 2018, there were very few interventions, but this year there were 3%. The deans were trying interventions and recording it. The District is exploring replacing the HERO system.

The highest level of infraction. Only 216 students (or 6.23%) received a disciplinary infraction. That means that 93.7% of the students have never had a behavior infraction! This is a number to celebrate, as the majority of students who go through their high school experience do not have a discipline infraction.

Recidivism - Only 172 students had one infraction and two, three, and four were next to that. Most students do not repeat their infractions. This speaks to the efforts to replace punitive responses, using RJP, and documenting it. The District is working to better document the facts.

The number of days of In School Suspension (ISS) and Out of School Suspension (OSS) remain flat, but the categories and severity have dropped. No 7-day OSS were meted out and the number of 5-day OSS remained the same. The ISS was restructured. It has been renamed as the In School Reflection Room (ISR). Students now have time to do their work and reflect as to why they are there, their ownership, and prevention for the future. ISR also follows up with these students as to how they are re-integrating with their classes. The students connect with individuals and appreciate knowing that someone cares. Even now, the adults are reaching out to students to check on how they are doing at home and encouraging them to be involved. The interactions were not recorded last year. The deans also connect with the teachers, use mediation, and hold dean conferences, etc. It is important to understand the value of the RJ conversation, as it is a place where the victim can explain the harm that was inflicted.

Racial. This slide compared white students to black students. Level 2 and 3 infractions could lead to either an ISS or an OSS. Sometimes judgments can be made toward behaviors relative to schooling in America. Blacks are categorized as aggressive and tend to garner harsher consequences. More education is necessary to correct this issue. For example with cyber bullying, the District has a prevention wellness coordinator to help rather than identifying Black students behavior as an act of defiance and receive a gross misconduct infraction. While an act of defiance is outrageous, sometimes the consequence is a result of unconscious bias.

A Gross Misconduct infraction is not easily described. White students who were involved in gross misconduct typically had things related to social media, drugs, vaping, etc. Black students who were involved in gross misconduct was because of verbal abuse with staff, being disrespectful, and hall wandering. This speaks to how people feel about things. The institution needs to look at how a black student may react versus how a white student reacts to social media.

How does this data inform? While the ISS and OSS numbers were flat, the response has shifted. Only seven percent of the students in the system act out. The District needs to look at supporting the learning environment, change its tardy detention policy (it already dropped 24%), and curb behavior or tardiness. Students from last year have said this year feels different. Every adult made an effort to form a relationship with students. The staff is helping students increase their knowledge. Students have been taught to fight. The District is reshaping behavior. Social media may affect some, but positive conversations are being had with students to change a conflict. Using RJP is not only to be reactive on the discipline side. It starts when students enter the community. The goal is to make them want to have a positive impact on their community.

What is next? The District advocates for children and tries to teach them. People are in place to help with substance abuse, making students understand the ills of using illegal substances, etc. What about trauma and conflict resolution? The administration is considering these questions. The Prevention and Wellness Coordinator educates students on substance abuse and more work needs to be done on aggressive behaviors, etc.

Next Steps? The goal is to know the students better and to use the data to inform data. The staff need to have a true understanding of the reason for the infraction.

RJP allows skill building, but it takes time to make a difference. Everyone is onboard with RJP until it is his or her own child that is involved. The District seeks to reshape that behavior. The District is trying to help students reshape their choices. All have to be willing to work on that rather than being drawn into the past behavior. Collaboratively, the SCC is being reshaped into a behavioral plan with the idea is to change behavior in the building. The deans spend significant amounts of time as a group collaborating on a decision of whether to issue an ISS or OSS, considering SB 100, before a student is removed from class.

Vaping is the number one reason for infractions and smoking is number two. Once a student starts to vapes in school, he/she is past the point of wanting to do it. The student is at the point of having to do it. ISS has an educational component. It is about spreading the word, even to those who are not vaping, to their peers. Battery is aggression and it better speaks to the District's need to do more on conflict resolution. Hopefully, conflict resolution can be added to the advisories' curriculum and students can work with the social workers. Not one expulsion case has been presented to the Board of Education this year. There is a process within support services to make sure the student is being embraced. Everyone who receives a consequence receives a support plan beyond just serving the consequence. It includes the discussion of reshaping the behavior with a social worker for a predetermined number of sessions.

Questions: How are tardies and failures-to-serve detentions being looked at? In the previous couple of years, there was talk about students being late from second period to eighth period. How has the COW and RJP affected this category? Data does not exist on which infractions occurred in the classroom. How does that relate to students losing instructional time? Ms. Parker said a shift has occurred in the SCC as well as in the interacting behavior of students. How it is being recorded, etc.? The District is trying to improve the HERO system, which was causing an issue within the classroom. Once that is done, there should be a better resolution. Data does not contain a notation that says this or that happened in the classroom. However, the District can look at what is happening. The Board wanted additional data as to where the infraction occurred.

How will adults change to get to an understanding? Originally, it started with COW and the desire to build and deepen relationships with students, letting them know that responses to discipline issues will look different. Ms. Bishop had a student who called her teacher a "b". The mind shift conversation with the student and the teacher did not result in a typical ISS. However, on a broader scale, Ms. Parker believes that the District needs trauma-informed training so that people can begin to understand that students are not blank slates. Staff has to understand that things should not be taken personally, as most times the student is not attacking an employee. All people have respect meters and the District wants that addressed. The staff needs to become listeners.

Dr. Moore stated that there are issues of bias and inter bias and that needs to be brought into the conversation. The predominance of those factions are being meted out to black students. She agreed that trauma-informed practices training was necessary, but how does the District intentionally look at what is happening in terms of black and brown students who are being wrongly perceived and what are the reactions they are getting from the person who does something to give pain and whether their perception was right. People respond differently and it is difficult to know what they feel.

Presentation of Northern Illinois Independent Purchasing Cooperative Beverage and Equipment RFP

It was the consensus of the majority of the Committee of the Whole members to recommend to the Board of Education that it approve the Northern Illinois Independent Purchasing Cooperative Beverage and Equipment RFP at its regular April Board of Education meeting. By joining forces with other districts, the prices are better and OPRFHS will enjoy a five percent savings.

Note the Food service Department has served over 46,000 meals during the COVID-19 virus.

Presentation of Food Service Intergovernmental Agreement with District 97 for 2020-2021

It was the consensus of the majority of the Committee of the Whole members to recommend to the Board of Education that it approve the Food Service Intergovernmental Agreement with District 97 for the 2020-21 school year at its regular April Board of Education meeting. This is a continuation of a relationship since 2007. No prices were raised. Dr. Moore thanked the Food Service employees for the work they were doing during the pandemic.

Presentation of Driver Ed Behind the Wheel Student Fee Increase

It was the consensus of the majority of the Committee of the Whole members to recommend to the Board of Education that it approve the Driver Ed Behind the Wheel Student Fee Increase at its regular April Board of Education meeting.

Presentation of Renewal of Application for Modification of Driver Education Fee Waiver

It was the consensus of the majority of the Committee of the Whole members to recommend to the Board of Education that it approve the Modification of the Driver Education Fee Waiver at its regular April Board of Education meeting. This is a renewal only.

Presentation of 2020 Project 1 Environmental Abatement Contract with EHC Industries, Inc.

This item was pulled at this time.

Presentation of Board Budget for 2020-21

It was the consensus of the majority of the Committee of the Whole members to recommend to the Board of Education that it approve its budget for the 2020-21 school year as presented at its regular April Board of Education meeting.

The stipend for videotaping is currently put into one's regular salary and it is being moved out of the Board budget. The amount for Protec is unknown for next year because usage is unknown at this point. Note: the SAFE Club is now an officially sponsored group and the cost of food has been removed from the Board budget.

Future Agenda Items

1. COVID 19 Financial Impact on the District at the April 23 regular meeting.
2. Remote and eLearning
3. Embedding SED into general education to enhance and reduce or identify cases.
4. Also, connect the request that was part of the presentation that talked about the need for more for data analysis as that is the connection that PSS Teams.
5. A request was made to obtain data as to how many of these needs are being met by faculty, others in the building or are external

Adjournment

At 8:12 p.m., Dr. Moore moved to adjourn the meeting; seconded by Mr. Cofsky. A voice vote resulted in all ayes. Motion carried.

Submitted by:
Gail Kalmerton, Clerk of the Board