

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

**Culture, Climate and Behavior Committee**  
**April 21, 2016**

A Policy Evaluation and Goals Committee meeting was held on April 7, 2016. Chair Dixon Spivy called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m. in the Board Room. Committee members present were: Mary Blankemeier, Anthony Brooks, Jennifer Cassell, Lincoln Chandler, Anthony Clark, Wendy Daniels, Cathy Gustafson, Sheila Hardin, Dr. Steven Isoye, Latoya Jackson, Steven Jackson, Melanie McQueen, Ralph Martire, Lindsay Moore-Fields, Nathaniel L. Rouse, Cormac Warden, Jonathan Weintraub, Lee Williams, Val Yarrington, Kayla York, and Sara Dixon Spivy. Absent were Naomi Hildner, Latonia Jackson, Melanie McQueen.

**Visitors:** Janelle Bishop, Adelyn and Reginald Wright

**Public Comments**

None

**Minutes**

Ms. Yarrington moved to approve the April 7, 2016, Minutes of the Culture, Climate and Behavior Committee (CCB), as presented; seconded by Mr. Chandler. A voice vote resulted in all ayes. Motion carried.

**Review Feedback/Current Agenda**

The committee reviewed the agenda and the feedback received on the questions asked of it. The response themes were:

- 1) What did you learn?  
Code of conduct, system, OPRF is caring, process, data, and school process
- 2) What surprised you?  
Not much, tardies, changes, relationships, policy
- 3) What do you want to know more about?  
Process, tardiness, data law, Restorative Justice, other voices (parents/students), due process

This feedback will drive the committee's work and the direction and information still needed.

**Introductions**

The committee members reintroduced themselves. Present at this meeting were Dr. Gevinson, a member of the Board of Education, a former teacher, and has three daughters who graduated from OPRFHS, and Naomi Hildner, English teacher.

Committee members were reminded to complete the Open Meetings Act Training if they had not already done so.

### **Review of Goals for CCB and Roles of Facilitators/Chair**

The goal of CCB is to build a common understanding of what is happening at OPRFHS, which means understanding the data, the current Code of Conduct, and practices. The first set of meetings will be to determine a common set of practices, which is a prelude to looking at what is being done and can be done. The second set of meetings will be about intervention. The third set of meetings will be about responsiveness, i.e., what will be the mechanism to reduce recurring infractions, etc. As ideas develop, the goal will be to have consistent dialogue. Committee members were encouraged to use the feedback form.

The scope of CCB is advisory. It will look at best practices, the Code of Conduct, and then make recommendations to the Board of Education. Norm No. 3 was added to the list of norms from last week.

- 1) We will work together as a community that values building consensus.
- 2) We will be fully “present” at our meeting by being prepared and being attentive.
- 3) Share examples which do not include references to specific individuals or specific situations.
- 4) We will invite and welcome the contributions of every member and listen to each other.
- 5) We will operate in a collegial and open atmosphere.
- 6) We will be guided by the Oak Park and River Forest High School mission statement which enhances success for all students.

### **Overview of Current Code of Conduct Categories and Infraction Groupings/Key Terms**

The Code of Conduct matrix is on pages 59 and 60 of the *Student Handbook*. Mr. Weintraub and Ms. Bishop reviewed each section, noting which items were legal and which were discretionary and could be changed. The sections are as follows:

#### Huskie Expectation

- Appropriate attire is categorized as dressing like professionals; it is discretionary
- Violation of Cell Phone (class or hallways occurrences). Every teacher can decide their own classroom rules regarding this. A school-wide cell policy no longer exists.
- ID procedures. Safety purposes.
- Tardy Procedures (page 37): In Ms. Bishop’s 16-year tenure with OPRFHS, 16 different tardy procedures have existed. A progressive policy with four warnings has existed for the last six years. The handling of the tardies individually by taking points off, limiting participation, etc. led to inequities. The District has struggled with managing the thousands of tardies that occur and addressing that behavior. The system now scans a student ID and prints out a tardy pass with important information on it. Below are the consequences for the number of tardies. The thinking is that the consequences increase in severity.
  - 1– 4 = printed warning
  - 5–11 = 1 hour detention
  - 12 = Saturday detention
  - 13–15 = 1 hour detention
  - 16 = 1/2 day In-School Suspension

- 17-19 = 1 hour detention
- 20 = 1 day In-School Suspension
- 21+ = SID Referral. Consequences may include but are not limited to: restricted lunch, social probation, parent conference, ISS.

Discussion ensued. Mr. Weintraub liked the present tardy system because it allowed a connection between the parents and the students. Most of his mornings are dedicated to tardies, absences, etc., which while frustrating, has benefited his connections with the families. Ms. Bishop had brought the current system to OPRFHS, but now she has mixed feelings about it. Students who are tardy to school have a different situation from those students who are tardy throughout the day. She felt tardies for being late to school should be treated differently, yet the District has chosen to treat them the same. Because of the significant number of students who do not serve detentions, SIDs have a difficult time address addressing them. Consequences and reactions need to be immediate, and, therefore, that information is on the tardy slip. Detentions are to be served by the next day, either before, during, or after school. If a student serves the detention in the tutoring center, the detention is shortened by half. The District has tried to make serving detentions easier for students, but once they realize that it may take a while to determine that they had not served the detentions, they were less likely to serve them in that prescribed time. Plastco (now HERO) suggested tying detentions to extracurricular activities. However, schools doing this are not as large as OPRFHS nor is their management. OPRFHS did tie them to activities. Most students will serve their detentions around Prom, homecoming, basketball season, etc. The time spent calling the students is significant. That, however, does not solve the problem and behavior of late arrival. Students are missing their classes when they do not serve their detentions. It was unknown, but the thought was that the percentage of tardies were around lunch periods and late start Wednesdays.

Security officers are positioned on four floors, but sometimes technical difficulties can cause students to be sent to another location. Once 10 minutes have passed, the security officer has left that post, and students have to go the attendance office to get a pass. One comment was that it takes a bit of time to get a pass when tardy.

While the District has an after-12 tardies procedure that says a student can be dropped from a class, it is not enforced because the District does not want to take a student out of class. Some schools have gone away from tying attendance to academics to finding other creative ways to make on-time arrival a priority. OPRFHS holds it against the students. Ms. Blankemeier responded that students don't like to miss class. If they do like missing class, it is a different problem. Mr. Weintraub stated that the District will work with those families on ISS. Ms. Bishop has picked students up herself to get students to serve their detentions and has had teachers remind the students of their detentions. The number of absences resets every semester. SID intervention occurs throughout the process. By the time a student receives a Saturday detention, between five and ten reminders calls have been made. After seven tardies, an automated letter is generated. Students can accumulate seven tardies in a single day. Because SIDs have the ability to see if a student has been late several times, they will seek out the student.

A question was asked if there were any positive or incentivizing programs about tardiness. The response was that SIDs do tell the students congratulations when the behavior has not occurred.

Discussion ensued about appropriate attire, which is listed on page 24 of the Student Handbook. One student said that it was not enforced. Students wear short/shorts, crop tops, cleavage-showing tops, shirts with inappropriate sayings, hats, head coverings, sags which show body parts. The District is inconsistent with enforcing the dress code and the use of cell phones, which leads to student frustration and confusion.

#### Level I - Inconsiderate of Others

Many of these Level I infractions are discretionary. Many times SIDS have successful conversations with students about what they can do so that their behaviors are not repeated. A referral is the last resort measure for faculty and staff. First, they call the SID to talk with a student. Differences about failure-to-serve are not recorded as such. Failure-to-Serve detentions are the largest offense.

#### Loss of Classroom Instruction Time

About detentions, the number of students who serve versus those who fail to serve is not tracked. During lunch, the detention rooms are full. Students may serve their detentions in the tutoring center as well. The students will also get credit for serving detentions if they work with teachers. Many interventions occur before an ISS is given.

Discussion ensued about aggressive physical behavior which can be play fighting and horseplay, or it can be something such as an argument that resulted in a push. Conversations with students do occur about how that looks.

Consequences for possession of illegal or controlled substances is not discretionary. Whenever a policy is noted in the Code of Conduct, it has been either approved by the OPRFHS Board of Education or the Illinois State Board of Education.

#### Jeopardizing My Education

These infractions result in a 10-day Out-of-School Suspension (OSS). Each situation is dealt with on a case-by-case basis. If the family agrees to have their child attend MENTA, the 10-day OSS will be reduced to a 5-day OSS. Through the School Reduction Program (SRP), the family has to agree to have their student attend MENTA for five days. Teachers and MENTA are informed. A coordinator transfers information between the teacher and MENTA and MENTA makes sure that the students do their work. After the five days, the SID, counselor, social worker, liaison for MENTA and the student meet to rehearse how to re-enter the school. Subsequently, a minimum of 3 follow-ups with the social worker occur within a 2 or 3-week timeframe. MENTA starts at 9:00 or 9:30 a.m. in Oak Park. Question: What number of students accept the SRP?

The District has a sexual harassment policy, and the behaviors are described in it. Before zero tolerance, bullying and sexual harassment were similar. The majority of appeals are from parents who fight the sexual harassment charge. Note: This infraction remains only in a student's temporary file.

While procedures dictate that a student could receive one SRP per year, a student may receive a second one, depending on circumstances. The SPR's goal is to change behavior. A one-reduction opportunity has helped with recidivism. If a student continues the 10-day suspension-worthy behavior, the SRP is not working.

The social worker resides in the same office suite as does the PSS Team to which he/she is assigned. The counselor and the social worker are made aware immediately of the suspension. If the offense is substance related, the Substance Abuse Coordinator is involved in the re-entry meeting and will schedule meetings with the student after he/she returns.

### Change of Placement

Change of Placement is given for the most severe behaviors. SIDs talk about the severity of the behavior and involve the counselor, social worker, etc. The PSST makes the recommendation that the student should have a 10-day OSS with a recommendation for expulsion which then is sent to the DLT who determines if it should be brought to the Board of Education. Sometimes as the infraction moves through the process, DLT can ask for it to be reviewed again. Expulsions are held in abeyance, meaning the student will go to an alternative site. After a semester, the situation is reviewed, and a recommendation could be made for the student to return to the high school. An expulsion held in abeyance does not appear on the high school transcript.

When asked for clarity about the 555 OSS days for the first semester of this year (55 offenses, which breaks down to 11 per SID), it was noted that in some instances, one SID might have six students at the beginning of the school year.

When Mr. Rouse receives requests for changes in counselors or SIDs, he will speak with the counselors and SIDs to determine if a change is appropriate.

### **Questions from Committee/Next steps**

The Committee was thanked for the information they shared and asked to fill out the feedback form again, as to what they had learned, what had surprised them, and what did they want to know more about? Ms. Gustafson will compile the responses. Mr. Chandler stated that the goal was to look at the data in parts, reflecting on gender and race, which will drive the discussion.

Mr. Clark provided a reading recommendation: Note: if members have something to share, Ms. Kalmerton will disseminate.

### **Adjournment**

At 8:32 p.m., Mr. Martire moved to adjourn; seconded by Ms. Hardin. A voice vote resulted in motion carried.

Submitted by  
Gail Kalmerton  
Clerk of the Board