

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

**Culture, Climate and Behavior Committee**  
**January 19, 2017**

A Culture, Climate and Behavior Committee (CCB) meeting was held on January 19, 2017. Chair Dixon Spivy called the meeting to order at 7:08 p.m. in the Board Room. Committee members present were: Jennifer Cassell, Dr. Steve Gevinson, Sheila Hardin, Naomi Hildner, Lincoln Chandler, Lindsay Moore-Fields, Mary Blankemeier, Melanie McQueen, Dr. Joylynn Pruitt-Adams, Nathaniel Rouse, Sara Dixon Spivy, Andrea Riles, Jonathan Weintraub, Wendy Daniels, Lee Williams, Ralph Martire, and Gail Kalmerton Clerk of the Board.

Visitors: Dr. Carl Spight, George Bailey, Doug Springer, Community Members

**Visitor Comments**

George Bailey asked for some language that would say that the Board of Education will prioritize its work because the impression is that the pool is being prioritized over professional development, curriculum, and the achievement gap. He also suggested that the information presented on the screens in the Board Room should be projected in larger fonts to make them more audience friendly.

Dr. Spight comments focused on two agenda items 1) the presentation on restorative practices by Mr. Spicer and 2) this committee's envisionment of its own mission. The discussion of Robert Spicer was evidence of courage and passion. Whereas Fenger High School is no longer the post child for violence, OPRFHS does not have the same history. It was unclear to him what restorative practices would bring to OPRFHS. He felt the injury that should be the focus is culturally competency, exclusive and inclusive instruction. It is that injury that should be the focus of restorative practices which is occasioned by the learning environment and the adults in the room. The violence of 101 student interchange is not of issue, but there is another violence that will require massive transformation and he did not see that in Mr. Spicer's presentation. That violence was social equity and just educational goals. He asked that the CCB commit to culture, climate and behavior.

**Norms**

The Committee reviewed the committee's norms.

Ms. Dixon Spivy felt the committee needed to start deliberating about its recommendations to the Board of Education in April before the installation of the new board. Ms. Cassell is working on draft recommendations, but it is not yet ready to share.

The February 16 meeting was canceled due to the conflict with the NAAPID dinner. Mr. Spicer is scheduled to come back to the March meeting to assist. He had outlined a number of things that fell under Restorative Justice, but OPRFHS is its own community. Where are the best opportunities that align with social justice and with the Board of Education goals? Discussion ensued.

Mr. Weintraub honed in on the peace circle concept, even more than the ability of the PSS Team, to aid in the mediation of conflicts. OPRFHS is unique in that everyone is involved in the process. At the beginning of the school year, teachers speak about their expectations with regard to academics, behavioral, social-emotional routine, etc., and that lays the foundation to restore when something is broken, i.e., homework, argument, disrespectful behavior, etc.

Mr. Hildner broke it down into six categories: 1) process of healing; 2) implement steps in the building to aid that healing; 3) work more effectively relative to healing to find connections to heal peach circles; 4) determine the root causes; 4) teacher training, 5) ties with community and parents; 6) and weave the Launch Program into Restorative Justice and PBIS, which in large part is peers and peer councils.

Mr. Weintraub stated that students need to learn from their behavior. In terms of Restorative Justice, teaching a student a better way to handle any situations can be done verbally, physically, assigning homework, calling home, conversation, etc. That process is restorative because it develops relationships. The SIDS do this very well.

Dr. Gevinson remarked that the Committee of the Whole was provided a discipline report from last semester which had been compared to that same semester a year ago. He asked the faculty members present why referrals were down approximately 40%. Mr. Weintraub stated that as a whole major behavior incidents had dropped. At a foundational level, the ability of counselors, social workers, SSDs teachers and all of the staff to repair has been instrumental. Personnel is more proactive. Mediation and conferences are occurring. Dr. Gevinson reflected that while the behavior may still happen, intervention occurs before the referral is made. Ms. Hardin stated that student behavior has been very good this year. No teacher has said they were uncomfortable with writing referrals. Safety and Security and noncertified staff are excellent and teachers are now at the end of their 5-year strands of SEL, racial equity, literacy, data and the 7 stages of learning. Three of these strands directly talked about building relationships and sharing personal reflections. It has been a planned approach. It is not about ignoring the numbers. OPRFHS is a more restorative place than it was 22 years ago. She felt she was empowered as a teacher to call someone to say this blew up in my classroom and was encouraged to do so; she realized the incident had nothing to do with her, or Algebra, but it could be about something that happened outside of school. That discipline report was positive and more work is yet to be done, but many things are happening now. Work continues every day.

Mr. Chandler reflected that when the committee starts to talk about recommendations, it will be about understanding the things that help to explain what is different. Is there a way to discern through a formal evaluation to see if something can be replicated? How can the currently working interventions be expanded, i.e., Leadership and Launch, SEL, etc? Dr. Gevinson asked if the data in the Student Discipline report could be evaluated and the factors identified that caused the numbers to go down, as that would play into any recommendations. Mr. Chandler stated that the formal investigation would be recommendations for the fall and the following spring. He suspected it would be more tactical information.

Ms. Hildner added that in the past some people had not been receptive to having conversations about race but that is dissipating. People are voluntarily attending a CCAR 2.0; it is not part of professional

development. The strands have impacted how faculty and staff interact with the students. She did not believe data was available to approve this statement directly, but numbers do exist.

Ms. Blankemeier, through her leadership class, had her eyes opened about 1) lack of organization and 2) how one teacher with 20 students never found a confidence level. She learned how to come into a classroom, not to try to save a student or think that she was better than someone, but she had a purpose, such as playing games with students, creating relationships, teaching how to get assignments completed. Her 4 students needed B's on the test in order to not go to summer school. She already has a support system, so she was able to be a support for the students in Algebra. She asked if the District purpose was to focus on student punishment or was it to restore the system for the achievement gap. This Committee has learned much about data, but she did not know what should be recommended. Ms. Spivy said the recommendations would be that of the Committee. The achievement gap is a result of student behavior. While the focus of this committee is discipline, but the two are related.

Ms. McQueen considered that sometimes a good wave of students comes through and another wave may not be so good. A rise in student participation in extracurricular activities could be a correlation. One person did not feel that the majority of students knew of the rich resources offered at this school.

Mr. Martire reported that District 90, through an advisory board, did a major survey of students, faculty, parents, and administrators and had learned that the weakest point was the student's belief that they did not have an adult that they could go to who they trusted. A specific survey could provide pathways.

Of the performance-based practices at a higher institute of learning, peer-to-peer mentoring has the highest probability of becoming a permanent part of the culture. It is cost effective and student-culture effective. Society has stifled that. Any early-learning research talks about the socialization piece. Educators traditionally have students sit in a row and to not talk instead of encouraging them to be collaborative. A global mind shift is necessary.

Ms. Spivy asked if the Committee saw barriers to implementing more restorative justice practices, i.e., is something said to the community that may be promoting and/or inhibiting. Ms. McQueen stated that silent bullying and cyberbullying were things unseen. Conversations occur about working with students, but how does one work with the victim in the situation to make them feel more comfortable. She needed to put labels on how to have restorative justice. Mr. Martire stated that practices had to be identified to determine which one can be scaled and replicated through the faculty. Later a systems' change would happen. People on the ground, the administration, and the board, need to scale the system up. Ms. Hardin agreed with the definition's importance and appreciated calling attention to the victim. She felt Restorative Justice was not one-sided. Fear can keep people from reporting. She appreciated Mr. Spicer saying that Restorative Justice was not prepackaged. Ms. Daniels continued that barriers include peer pressure and a culture of not being a snitch. She had been dealing with that since the fourth or fifth grade. When a true problem develops and the children do not go to an adult, she will take it upon herself to go to the adult. She hopes her children will continue to tell her things. She felt the principles of Restorative Justice might help in that area, i.e., students will feel safe to talk about things with adults because a culture of not snitching does exist at OPRFHS and she related some examples. While she and her

children's experiences have been good, other families' experience have not. Every teacher should be respected and honored by the students, other teachers, etc. If they are not, then it is a barrier.

Dr. Pruitt-Adams stated that if the expectations of Restorative Justice for staff and students and the district as a whole cannot or are not communicated, it will not be effective. The absence of expectations would impede any program that could be integrated.

Mr. Hildner added "coordination." OPRFHS is a huge institution with so many leadership teams not communicating and coordinating with each other. How would this work on the ground? What is the protocol? If X happened, then Y would happen. That takes coordination. Question: How can communication and coordination be improved?

Ms. Cassell brought attention to the fact that the District must do what it has committed to doing and announcing to parents, student, and community. And, the District must make sure that whatever programs now in place or put in place in the future have metrics so that future boards can see evidence. The biggest/best decision was to put in place the PSS Team and the data. The other challenge is financial and some of that is an investment that will have to be made. Mr. Martire stated that the oversight piece is large, identifying whether on track and/or making an improvement. District 90's equity to achieve committee is a full standing committee with parental involvement and it is designing metrics to report back to its board and to the committee to show if progress is being made. Measures are crucial.

The Committee was asked to put any thoughts on the exit tickets.

Mr. Chandler summarized what he had heard:

- 1) Accountability, now and in the future
- 2) Safe place
- 3) Awareness of existing responses
- 4) Rigorous evaluation

Dr. Gevinson noted that cultural sensitivity work and different cultures work had been done in the school, but he felt that if there was more sophistication around that those dynamics would be an important factor.

### PBIS

Dr. Pruitt-Adams spoke about (PBIS) Positive Behavior Intervention Support. PBIS is more proactive rather than reactive. It is about putting in supports to manage behavior. In thinking about PBIS, most people think about elementary and middle schools and lose sight of high schools who implement tenants. The reason PBIS does not succeed in high schools is because of their size and culture. PBIS requires a major mind shift, i.e., how one response to student behaviors, the responsive support systems that need to be in place to reduce the current behaviors, etc. It is about looking at the management of systems. It is about knowing 1) outcomes, 2) programs, 3) data, and 4) specific behaviors of staff. PBIS may fail at high schools because of a break in one of the systems. Consistent communication is paramount. It takes knowing the reasons for the way students act, i.e., what is the reason students are late in the morning and/or in the middle of the day, etc. Why do students engage in cyberbullying? The school needs to know the reason for the behavior, build supports so that behavior adjustments can occur, and then reward

that adjustment. The intrinsic piece is important at the high school level. If done correctly, it can increase attendance, reduce discipline referrals, reduce suspensions, and increase academic achievement. It deals with all students in the same way. The framework includes the leadership team identifying issues and making modifications school wide, i.e., developing a system of support and building sustainability. High schools begin and stop PBIS. This has occurred at OPRFHS. A barrier exists with regarding communication, consistency, various outcomes, and not falling off when the first challenge is met. And, making effective decisions. Mr. Silver spoke about PBIS. He outlined the PBIS practices at OPRFHS as follows.

#### Campus Environment

- Hall signage reinforcing school norms
- Countdown clock
- History of excellence of Alumni

#### PSS Teams

- Early warning system of student data (academics, behavior, and SES), talk about tier 1 and 3 interventions for the students.
- Mediation (student to student, student to teacher, student to staff)

#### Faculty and Staff

- Teaching of classroom norms, cafeteria norms, bathroom norms, hallway norms

#### Academics (Tier II)

- Reading
- Extended Algebra

PBIS became an Oak Park version of PBIS. Part of PBIS tenants was done, but not systematically throughout the District because of its size, structure and other barriers. Some teachers continue to use it. Mr. Martire noted that whenever implementing a new something, if the initial implementation is not faithful to model, one is modifying as one is implementing and effectiveness is lost from the beginning. Faithful implementation should occur for the first year or two and then one can determine which aspects work best and which do not.

Dr. Pruitt-Adams stated that Restorative Justice and PBIS melded together. If a student is not successful and feels frustrated, behavior escalates. How can the school recognize success in the classroom? How can reduced tardies be recognized? Both start with letting students and staff know that these pieces are recognized. Ms. Hardin wanted student feedback. What are the types of things that work for them? Ms. Daniels noted that she had asked her daughter about one of the signs hanging in the hallway and the response was that she never reads the signs because she has no time to do so.

Dr. Gevinson felt that OPRFHS was not a whole PBIS school. Signage with a vengeance is a piece of PBIS, very explicit positive reinforcement. He did not know the right mix or what should be included.

Ms. McQueen remarked that at PBIS schools, signs are on the walls, the stairs, stairs, the bathrooms, etc. However, if students are not reading at grade level or the signs are not at eye level, they will not see them. In this digital age, would digital signs make a difference? When students see people in leadership roles, professors who are not doing what the students are supposed to do, they will say the sign doesn't mean

anything and it is not really something in which the school believes. That would be something to pursue. She suggested 20-second videos, a TV station talking about it more. It starts with one bold student who says what has happened is wrong. He/she stands up for what they believe in a constructive manner. Ms. McQueen did not know how often the Wall of Excellence in the Student Center was updated, but she remarked that many awesome students were not yet on the wall.

Ms. Blankemeier did not connect with the sign that stated to be a Huskie, one should wear his/her ID. The signs are not meaningful. The minute bells are so helpful. With regard to cell phones, after a week of modeling not using cell phones, the problem almost disappeared.

Ms. Hardin stated that OPRFHS is a good school for many students, but not for some. Problems exist and the District is trying to get to the underlying issues. Mr. Martire sees a systematic, consistent trend of achievement gaps at District 90 and at the national level even with great faculty. Something is not working for minority children. Faithful implementation is needed in order to see the deficiencies, differential by race, etc. He wanted to see over time that they change so significantly that items like race no longer have a statistically significant meaning on what one can expect in the institution, but on the skill sets of the student and whether he/she worked hard, and the support the school provides. Constant monitoring and scaling up of things that are working is needed.

### **Mission Statement**

Ms. Dixon Spivy updated the CCB's mission statement based on member feedback and its reference is the second goal of the Strategic Plan. The CCB is not finite and as such must maintain some breadth so that it can keep brown.

Mr. Williams asked if any consideration was given to how class played role. Economics does. He hears a lot that this is a great school for some and not for all. This is a great school by the students who come here. Whether they are white, yellow, or brown, they are already equipped to come with that experience versus students who do not have that experience. Ms. Cassell stated that it was about race, social-emotional, economics, and IEP students. The issue will be how to address all of those things.

### **Next Steps**

The next meeting is February 2, 2017.

### **Minutes**

Ms. Hardin moved to approve the minutes of December 1, 2016; seconded by Dr. Pruitt-Adams. A voice vote resulted in motion carried.

Ms. Hardin moved to approve the minutes of November 15, 2016; seconded by Dr. Pruitt Adams. A voice vote results in motion carried.

### **Adjournment**

At 8:58 p.m., on Thursday, January 19, 2017, Mr. Martire moved to adjourn; seconded by Ms. Blankemeier. A voice vote resulted in motion carried.

Submitted Gail Kalmerton  
Clerk of the Board