

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

Culture, Climate and Behavior Committee
March 2, 2017

A Culture, Climate and Behavior Committee (CCB) meeting was held on March 2, 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, Kayla York, Lincoln Chandler, Lindsay Moore-Fields, Dr. Joylynn Pruitt-Adams, Sara Dixon Spivy, Andrea Riles, Jonathan Weintraub, Wendy Daniels, Lee Williams, Qiana Carswell, and Ralph Martire.

Visitors: Burcey Hines, Fred Arkin, and Jason Dennis

Approval of Minutes

Dr. Pruitt-Adams moved to approve the minutes of February 2, 2017; seconded by Ms. Hardin. A voice vote resulted in motion carried.

The Committee reviewed the norms developed at the on start of these meetings.

Visitor Comments

None

Reflections from the Last Meeting were:

What did you learn?

- There have been initiatives that worked which were discontinued.
- Several points on accountability that are all great.
- Very comprehensive.

Surprises?

- Things that were working got discontinued. Hopefully, this will no longer happen.

More about:

- I want to know about current initiatives, whether or not they're working, and what improvements need to be made.
- How to increase student voice.
- Solutions vs. 'pointless' commentary

[Discussion about CCB Mission Statement](#)

Ms. Hardin moved to approve the mission statement as follows; seconded by Ms. Dixon Spivy.

“The Culture, Climate, and Behavior Committee provides recommendations for improvement of the high school’s culture and climate to the Board of Education with the goal of creating an environment in which student discipline rates will not be predictable by race, socioeconomic factors, or special education status, and where all students feel welcome and experience a sense of belonging.”

Discussion ensued. Several members wanted the expectation of excellence to be included in the statement. As such, Ms. Hardin amended her original motion to approve the mission statement below; seconded by Ms. Dixon Spivy.

“The Culture, Climate, and Behavior Committee provides the Board of Education recommendations to create a welcoming environment in which all students experience a sense of belonging and the expectation of excellence, and where student discipline rates are not predictable by race, socioeconomic factors, or special education status.”

A voice vote resulted in motion carried.

Continued Conversation about Recommendations to Board of Education

The Committee then returned to its conversation regarding what recommendations to be presented to the Board of Education with regard to accountability, evaluation, safe spaces, and communication/awareness.

Accountability:

At the last meeting, the committee decided that it wanted to understand individual roles in improving OPRF culture, climate, and behavior and to hold each other accountable in affecting positive change. This was further explained that this was not about individual but the evaluation of programs, i.e., was a program implemented correctly, etc.? How can the adults be held accountable to send the same message? The faculty are the people on the ground enforcing the rules and their input is needed as to which rules are valued. Again, it is important to understand what is and is not working. If 80% of the people are doing whatever and 20% are not, it feels unfair. Students who are members of this committee have said there is a lack of adult consistency and performance. However, teachers do not want to enforce some rules because they receive criticisms from both parents and staff for being too harsh/rigid. Students are wonderful most of the time but right now there are too many rules. The Board of education and the administration need to support the faculty. One member stated that it has to be communicated to parents why the rules are what they are.

Rigorous Evaluation:

Assess current (and proposed) practices, both on outcomes, and our ability to properly implement.
Student discipline

Safe Spaces:

Cultivate opportunities for engaging every member of the OPRF community in a supportive, responsive manner
Dress Code (solicit input from student groups, motivational mentorship, and adults). It is a gender and racial issue.

The question was asked if faculty, students, and staff felt comfortable bringing issues forward to the administration. Does a “whistleblower protection” exist? Dr. Pruitt-Adams felt the District was evolving. Reporting mechanisms are being put in place for all and a climate of trust is being built.

The PSS Teams have observed that students are recognizing their triggers, removing themselves from the setting, and seeking out their SIDs, etc. This is a recognition that the work that has already occurred is

important and should be continued, i.e., instituting a “safe room”, etc. The student’s self-awareness is part of the reason for the decline of discipline incidents.

While one member suggested creating a culture, climate and behavior coordinator and assigning room(s) for peace circles or places students could go for immediate assistance to talk with a member of the PSS Team, another student, etc., without fear of retribution, OPRFHS has this now. All 5 PSS Teams have reached out to their students. Many students are talking to counselors, social workers, or SIDS, as well as the office aides who are great listeners. These conversations, provide social-emotional, behavioral, and academic support to students. How does this become systematized, an inherent part of the system, in order for this practice to continue and grow? What policy can be put in place so that the Board of Education continues support of that work? What resources are needed? How can information about this resource be disseminated to the faculty, staff, and students?

Communication/Awareness:

Promote and utilize available supports, through easy access and intentional outreach.

Cultural sensitivity: Lack of racial equity is a long-standing concern for the OPRF community, and the pursuit of equity in OPRF culture, climate, and behavior is an explicit goal for this committee’s efforts.

Parts of Restorative Justice Practices are currently happening in different areas of the District. A suggestion was made to evaluate what and where those practices are occurring to get a baseline as to mindset. A question was asked if practices or programs existed that were counterproductive to Restorative Justice, i.e. a zero tolerance policy, etc. A way to determine that would be through an evaluation to determine what and why a program/policy/procedure was or was not working. Dr. Gevinson thought that Restorative Justice Practices should be a part of a system. When an infraction occurs, systematic consequences occur, as opposed to judgment calls. Presently, OPRFHS has a process of tiered interventions. To say “this is the response” would be difficult because each student is different and each response is different because the person issuing the consequences is different. The lack of consistency and implementation is the difficulty. Again, without having first the knowledge and an evaluation, the system cannot be changed. Mr. Weintraub and Mr. Chandler will meet and look at the outcomes and outputs as they relate to the Discipline Report and SID activities.

Defining the work: Recommendations Draft:

2016-2017 (Spring Semester):

- Annual review of OPRF culture and climate (e.g., surveys, focus groups)

2017-2018:

- Create and adhere to a schedule of adult volunteers to act as school-day welcoming greeters.
- Conduct inventory/audit of all initiatives to improve equity through culture and climate implemented from 2000 to present.
- Creation of a standing committee to monitor and evaluate equity issues within the school.
- Engage student voice via regular feedback to the Board from students concerning the school’s climate.
- Engage student and family voice to improve equity across all demographics through town halls, assemblies, and other regular mechanisms for feedback

Ms. Hildner supported Ms. McQueen's recommendation to have more than one parent visitation day per year; it would be a welcoming event for parents. Ms. Hardin noted that while testing cannot occur on those days, teachers are happy to have the parents of their students in their classrooms. However, parents should not be allowed to visit random classrooms. "Shopping" for teachers was an issue previously. Currently, parent visitation day is not well attended. Ms. Daniels suggested advertising it more. This year many teachers had been scheduled to attend Beyond Diversity Training on the same day scheduled for parent visitation. One member suggested having more "getting to know you" activities to build community, such as the family night that the outreach coordinator had orchestrated.

Discussion of Draft Recommendations Created from Last Meeting's Suggestions

The Committee reviewed the recommendations that Ms. Dixon Spivy created from the suggestions discussed at the last meeting. She acknowledged comments that had been sent to her in response to her request for feedback. She encouraged sending her additional feedback using tracked changes in the Word document.

One comment was a concern about the recommendation that a standing committee becoming an oversight committee, which would interfere with the faculty's ability to teach. Ms. Hildner thought the purpose of the standing committee was to ensure that working practices would be continued, rather than discontinued, due to administration changes: The purpose of the standing committee was not to micromanage teaching. Ms. Spivy felt that the purpose of the standing committee was not about how the faculty was doing, but how the process was being implemented. District 90 makes it clear that its committee is within the realm of the Board of Education; it is not about micromanaging the teachers. The committee helps with the evaluation and accountability pieces to ensure that the policies support the practices, or if the practices are not working, make a recommendation to discontinue them. District 90 has faculty teams that are responsible for evaluations which then guides the District 90 Board in making policy, going forward with resources, and working in other environments.

Exit Tickets - Committee members were asked to fill out the exit tickets.

Next Meeting - Monday, March 13, 2017 - 7:00 p.m.

Optional Final Meeting - Monday, April 10 - 7:00 p.m.

Adjournment

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