

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

Culture, Climate and Behavior Committee
April 19, 2018

A Culture, Climate and Behavior Committee (CCB) meeting was held on April 19, 2018. Chair Cassell called the meeting to order at 6:43 p.m. in the Board Room. Committee members present were: Jennifer Cassell, Dr. Jackie Moore, Ralph Martire (departed at 7:15 p.m.), Dr. Pruitt-Adams, Sara Dixon Spivy, Aliyah Young, Melanie McQueen, Wendy Daniels, David Walksler, Lee Williams, and Lee Wade. Also present was Gail Kalmerton, Executive Assistant/Clerk of the Board.

Visitors: Lincoln Chandler, educational consultant; John Duffy, Karin Grimes, community members; and Holly Scott, student.

Visitor Comments

John Duffy referenced the document he distributed to the members that expounded upon his comments. On behalf of Committee for Equity and Excellence in Education (CEEE), he thanked the Board leaders, Sara Spivy, Jennifer Cassell, and Dr. Jackie Moore, as well as the dedicated teachers, citizens, parents, administrators and students who participated in this committee's work.

He gave special recognition to how this committee had taken up the community and the Board of Education's goal of addressing the recruitment, hiring, support, and retention of teachers of color.

CEEE was pleased with the limited, but significant commitment to sponsor formal adoption of a range of restorative justice practices (RJ). This is an opportunity to sponsor positive difference in our school culture. The RJ recommendation calls on the Board to "retain a restorative justice professional." CEEE believes this is part of a resource allocation that is essential for the success of this recommendation. In bringing forth the racial equity coach position to the Board of Education, he noted that community organizations and advocates for racial equity were left out of the vetting of both the need and potential impact on racial equity goals such as expenditure and position might present. He felt that the same pushback could surround any new expenditures for restorative justice. CEEE felt this could be rectified by adopting formal racial equity lens protocols for any new District expenditures on programs, hiring, and capital improvements in a central statutory responsibility of the Board of Education. OPRFHS's 2003 Learning Community Performance Gap Report made similar recommendations. Decisions around current and new programs and special staffing must also involve a rigorous evaluative regime tied to both quantitative and qualitative data.

Budget considerations are critical, but they cannot exclusively drive hiring, projects involving CCB, or the upcoming decisions on capital expenditures around facilities development. All of these decisions, as the District overview of the Facilities Committee states, also need to be evaluated through a racial equity lens. To ensure that such a protocol is indeed followed for all major decision making, the Administration and full Board of Education need to adopt a formal racial equity lens policy. We strongly encourage the Culture Climate and Behavior committee to urge the Board to commit to the adoption and use of a racial equity lens and to provide training on how to utilize the lens with fidelity. Local resources are available to assist the OPRFHS community in this regard.

CEEE offered qualified support for formally extending the life of this committee. It argued that the scope of the key components of eliminating racial inequities in discipline metrics and improving school climate, culture and behavior must include one additional fundamental premise and consideration for analysis and

action—the essential role of curriculum and instruction in influencing school culture, climate, and behavior.

In last year’s first draft of recommendations to the Board, the CCB included the importance of addressing curriculum and instruction. At the January 2018 meeting, CEEE noted that there is overwhelming research evidence that climate, culture, and behavior are intimately related to issues of curriculum and instruction. This assertion is so universal in education that it is an essential component of the State of Illinois teacher performance standards. See Illinois Teacher Performance Standard Four on Learning Environment found at <https://www.isbe.net/Documents/edTPA-IPTS-crosswalk.pdf#search=teaching%20standards>. We urge you to include the role of curriculum and instruction in realizing the goals of racial equity that guide this committee’s work and its mission of improving CCB for our students and teachers.

CEEE looked forward to the District’s response to the issues it had raised in supporting the draft recommendations of the CCB Committee.

Minutes

Ms. Daniels moved to approve the minutes of the April 5, 2018, Culture, Climate, and Behavior Committee meeting minutes; seconded by Mr. Wade. A voice vote resulted in motion carried.

Draft CCB Recommendations

Ms. Cassell reviewed the agenda. The committee decided to vote on each of the recommendations separately.

General Recommendations

Recommendation 1: Ensure that OPRF’s culture and climate is safe and welcoming for all students and that student discipline rates are not predictable by race.

Mr. Martire moved to approve Recommendation 1, Action Step 1, as amended; seconded by Mr. Walksler.

Additional bullet point: “Quarterly Report to the Board of Education” The additional language will serve as an accountability piece with a prescribed schedule, similar to reports provided to the Board of Education on IMAGINE and the Strategic Plan.. District 90 has the same reporting schedule for its Equity Committee.

Dr. Pruitt-Adams will complete the Owners and Timings sections which were marked TBD. She is responsible for the time frame and assignment of responsibilities of the Strategic Plan, IMAGINE, the hiring protocol, re-organizational charts, etc. The implementation of these recommendations would be in addition to the administrators’ day-to-day jobs. She must be realistic about who and when the recommendations can be accomplished. Some of the CCB recommendations are outside of the Strategic Plan, and they need to align with it. Mr. Martire stated that the Board of Education could prioritize the CCB’s recommendations. At District 90, its board determines the priorities and the board president meets with the superintendent as to what and when things can be accomplished, generally they occur over a three-to-five year timeline.

Mr. Williams moved to approve Action Step 2, as amended below; seconded by Ms. McQueen. A voice vote resulted in all ayes. Motion carried.

“District Administration will share a status report to CCB quarterly on all ongoing CCB recommendations, followed by a report of information to the Board of Education.”

This action step had more definition of accountability and can be an informational item on the Board of Education's agenda. Dr. Pruitt-Adams asked that the CCB members be involved in creating the Board of Education report. It was explained that the Board of Education members do not vote on the CCB recommendations.

Recommendation 2: Have a dress code that supports students' self-expression and treats all students equitably.

Mr. Martire moved to approve Recommendation 2; Action 1 with the following amendment; seconded by Mr. Williams.

Second line: Add “, and families;” after the word “students.” A voice vote resulted in all ayes. Motion carried.

A voice vote resulted in all ayes.

This goal is for the 2018-19 school year, and the dress code will be included in the Student Handbook. Faculty and staff will be trained on this before school starts next year.

One member felt it was vague and wondered how the dress code would be enforced. Will individual teachers address students dress or will they be dealt with when they first enter school? The administration will address this process at the onset of school. While the spirit of the dress code was understood, the statement about the halter top did not match number one, the statement that clothes must have a front, back and be under the arms. Substitute teachers will also have an orientation on the dress code, as well. Volunteers would be made aware of the dress code, but they would not be responsible for implementing it. If an adult is dressing inappropriately and this is subjective, it would be up to his/her supervisor to address. If students challenge adult dress, student advocates can assist: there will be a process.

Faculty and Staff Voice and Innovation Recommendations

Recommendation 1: Implement school-wide restorative practices.

Mr. Williams moved to approve Action Step 1: Retain a restorative justice professional to complete an inventory and evaluation of restorative practices currently happening in educational spaces, per last year's approved CCB recommendation; seconded by Ms. Daniels.

Dr. Moore felt the action talked about the inventory of current practices, but not restorative practices and their implementation. Ms. Cassell had included a timeframe for Action Step 2. Dr. Moore felt like building a working definition would be a separate action item. The action steps are in chronological order. Ms. Dixon Spivy wondered if three to five initiatives were premature.

Some work had been inventorying what Restorative Justice practices are occurring in the building, but a new person in the building may want to gather their data.

A suggestion was to use Action Step to go beyond and use the words “audit/evaluation” rather than just “inventory” of Restorative Justice practices. Dr. Moore did not want to lose any more time on implementing Restorative Justice in the building and wanted to add “urgency.” She did not want to wait for the chronology. Dr. Moore suggested strengthening the recommendation coming to the Board and the administration. While she understood the intent, she wanted more clarity for the community in this document. Branding would be a process as it would include the educational piece and how Restorative Justice would be implemented.

Action Step 2: Concurrently with Action Step 1, assemble a volunteer cohort of interested staff to work with the aforementioned restorative justice professional to develop specific restorative justice initiatives (e.g., student-teacher mediation, peace circles) for implementation during the 2018-19 school year.

Discussion had ensued about training for everyone in the building Restorative Justice, not just Safety and Security Staff—anyone who has contact with students.

Mr. Rouse asked that the committee consider resources as there is no Culture, Climate and Behavior Committee budget. Dr. Moore stated that if the Board of Education approves the recommendations, it will be incumbent on it to find the resources. The Committee's purview does not include resources. This is a priority of the school and the taxpayers who are participate on this committee. These recommendations are being done through the lens of equity. The interest of the school is high and to the taxpayers is here, looking at this through the lens of equity.

Ms. Daniels moved to approve the revised Action 2 as noted above: seconded by Ms. McQueen. A voice vote resulted in all ayes.

Recommendation 2: Recruit and retain diverse staff and offer additional support to make employees feel welcome and included.

Mr. Wade moved to approve Action Steps 1 and 2, as revised, below; seconded by Mr. Williams.

Action Step 1: Conduct an inventory of OPRF's recruitment and staff orientation policies and procedures to support staff inclusion and review best practices from MSAN, peer districts, or other sources regarding racially conscious hiring protocols, with the goal of increasing and retaining staff of color.

Action Step 2: Request entrance and exit interviews/surveys with all OPRF staff.

A voice vote resulted in all ayes. Motion carried.

Dr. Pruitt-Adams noted that this work is being implemented, but the recommendation does not include the action of it. If the goal is to recruit and retain, the word evaluate should be added. Entrance surveys should be conducted (why does one want to work at OPRFHS), in addition to exit interviews. This information may provide feedback on how to expand the District's reach of candidates.

The next meeting is May 3.

Adjournment

At 8:08 p.m., Ms. Daniels moved to adjourn; seconded by Ms. McQueen. A voice vote resulted in motion carried.

Submitted by Gail Kalmerton
Clerk of the Board