

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

**Culture, Climate, and Behavior Committee (CCB)**  
**March 3, 2020**

A Culture, Climate, and Behavior Committee (CCB) meeting was held on March 3, 2020. Chair Gina Harris called the meeting to order at 6:40 p.m. in the Board Room. Committee members present were Dr. Levar Ammons, Talib Becktemba Goss, Wendy Daniels, Linda Frances, Karin Grimes, Laura Hardwicke, Gina G. Harris, Greg Johnson, Frances Kraft, Jason Lee, Ralph Martire, Melanie McQueen, Dr. Jackie Moore, Dr. Pruitt-Adams, Kyla Pereles, Roxana Sanders, and Susan Stephens,

**Visitors**

John Duffy and Sgt. Barry Bethesda.

**Public Comment**

John Duffy spoke about the student rally/march on the anniversary of the death of Trevon Martin. The student speakers were educated and passionate about what they wanted. They said that the School Resource Officer (SRO) works in the building serving the community but, in fact, the SRO is disruptive and harmful to many students of color. He felt that the research showed that this needed the committee's attention. The SRO has not been evaluated and it is a major expenditure. Mr. Duffy has urged the committee to use the racial impact assessment protocol. At the February 27 Board meeting, research was presented about the effectiveness of having a SRO. He suggested that the Committee members review that material.

Sgt. Barry Bethesda was appreciative of the input and interaction at the job fair as it set a positive influence for the students. He and some of his friends are firefighters and they would be willing to create a positive impact on the students as well by participating. Mr. Johnson will reach out to him.

**Code of Conduct and CCB Responsibility**

Mr. Johnson stated that revisions were being made to the Student Code of Conduct. It will be brought to the Culture, Climate and Behavior Committee in April for review and then to the Board of Education in May for approval. CCB was formerly called the Parent-teacher Advisory Committee (PTAC) and it is responsible for reviewing the Code of Conduct.

**Strategic Plan**

The OPRF strategic plan aligns with CCB's mission in several areas:

- Priority 1: Racial Equity
  - Develop and implement district-wide procedures to pursue racial equity
- Priority 2: Transformative Education
  - Address race based disparities in honors credit, student tardies
  - Improve overall student engagement and sense of belonging
- Priority 3: Transformative Leadership
  - Increase representation of faculty and staff of color
  - Improve quality and accountability of employee evaluation
- Priority 4: Operations, Facilities, and Finances
  - Make fiscally responsible, student-centered decisions that allocate resources to ensure
- Priority 1: Racial Equity

Dr. Pruitt-Adams noted that the Board of Education had approved a racial equity policy that included 12 components that included, but were not limited to, the racial incident protocol, the racial assessment tool, infrastructure in terms of supporting the policy on finances and human resources, etc. What is challenging is that each of the components requires an individual plan. A committee of teachers, administrators, and community members are working on them and the hope is to bring it to the May meeting. Next year's priority will be the racial incident protocol and a racial assessment tool. The tool, when implemented, will be used to look at any procedures using the four key questions from the racial equity lens. Also due this spring is the culture and climate survey and a racial equity audit (which will take approximately 1.5 years to complete). The budget does not include money for an audit this year, so it is scheduled for next year.

Dr. Pruitt-Adams did not know if this was yet having an impact on students. The greatest impact will be seen when the student Code of Conduct is rewritten which will allow for qualitative and quantitative data. Ms. Harris asked the CCB members to think about what this looks like from the community's standpoint.

The Racial Incident Protocol and Assessment Protocol are both part of the first six components. OPRFHS has researched the tools that other schools use to make decisions about programs, curriculums, hiring, etc., including Seattle, Portland, and Boston Public Schools. A question talks about looking at the program/process/policy and seeing what impact that will have on the most marginalized population. It is not just student focused, it is stakeholder focused as well. Questions: Who sits at the table when decisions are made? Will the decision have a negative or positive impact on the people that need to be served? What are the next steps? The hope is that once this process is internalized, everything will automatically be looked through an equity lens.

When students have an issue, they seek out Dr. Ammons, as the investigator. Restorative Justice Practices may be used to remedy the situation. Ms. Sanders and Mr. Johnson are available to adults in the building as they too may have an issue. The hope, too, is that students will be trained in Restorative Justice Practices.

The first Strategic Plan has now been realigned with the high school and that has brought life to it. It is being built into everyday jobs. Teachers are writing the curriculum. The Code of Conduct is being written collaboratively. These are the ways to make system changes. Note: a system change takes 3 to 5 years to change.

Discussion ensued. Will the end game be articulated? What does race and social success look like in a way that the community can understand? In response, Dr. Pruitt-Adams noted that the administration appreciated CCB's feedback, as its feedback is influencing what is being accomplished. What does success look like to the community? What does the impact look like?

Mr. Martire reported that the Board of Education had agreed to set measurables and timeframes with the administration on evidence-based research. Benchmarks and reporting periods will be completed by the end of the summer. If there were any input that CCB wanted to provide, it would be appreciated. Dr. Pruitt-Adams noted that the markers of success are both qualitative and quantitative. CCB recommended that a students' advisory committee be implemented. The students on this Committee are part of that and this group meets monthly. The students create the agendas and lead the meetings. Its agenda items have included hiring, detracking, cellphone policy, and advisory periods. This has been a success. Is this moving the needle forward for a larger number of students? Students deserve and the community wants a sense of where the District is and how it is progressing. The administration is working on what social emotional growth looks like. Dr. Pruitt-Adams noted that with the help of Linda Francis, Francis Kraft, the E-team, and representatives from District 90, 97, and 200, a \$250,000 grant was awarded to District 200 to support social emotional learning. A press release is coming out.

## **Priority 2: Transformative Education (Holistic Community Education, Supportive Learning)**

Mr. Johnson spoke about the implementation of the data dashboard. The next logical step is to decide on the outcomes and what data is necessary in order to tell a story. Some things, such as graduation rates, earning AP credits, etc., are more important than other things. The District's new Coordinator of Analytics along with Lincoln Chandler will determine the end growth and then use the data to backtrack.

One student asked to consider whether the populations of cohorts were changing, whether minorities or economically challenged students were going up.

Mr. Chandler stated that a large step forward occurred when putting together the data. The graphing charts told what happened, but not how it happened, which can be very complex. Earlier, CCB recommended looking at tardies and the reasons found for the tardies were many. The school needs to understand the reasons and then change the system.

Ms. Kamm stated that structural changes would affect student outcomes for students of color especially. Where does it get to the adult practice instructional piece? Mr. Johnson stated that would happen under PD. The evidence folder contains exactly what types of PD are occurring.

## **Priority 3: Transformative Leadership**

Ms. Sanders stated that the main goal is to increase the diversity of the workforce. The Board of Education regularly receives a demographic report. During the summer that report shows that 52% of the new hires were minorities and 40% of them were teachers of color. No teaching vacancies exist throughout the year. In other categories, 75% of all new hires since August have been minorities. Ms. Sanders spoke of the newly implemented Employee Recognition Program where a teacher, an employee, and a volunteer of the month are honored. Nominations can be made by anyone through a link on the website. New teachers have a mentoring program. They are interviewed about what is going well, where can improvements be made, etc. A mentoring program is then structured to help them improve.

An electronic evaluation system was implemented. This will be used first for teachers and then other employee groups.

Employees are also being trained in the UMOJA work, which is a restorative process. The work is being done sporadically, however. The administration would like to have the restorative process work being done with adults as well.

Recently Riveredge Hospital supported a day of improving mental health with music, dance, and art. The administration has offered small group sessions around harm and mental well-being. Adults too suffer from mental health issues, and the administration recognizes that people are still grieving and healing from various incidents that took place. A Peace Room is being created. Ms. Harris noted that she would appreciate seeing feedback that it is more a cultural shift rather than a program. What metrics are in place to determine a cultural shift? Dr. Pruitt-Adams noted that the District is transitioning.

Ms. Daniels was disappointed in having to acknowledge that there were no African-American science teachers. Her daughter has had some difficulty, but sometimes it was because of race and the low expectation of African-American students in the sciences. Ms. Sanders understood but stated that there was a shortage of African-American science teachers. However, two Asian science teachers were hired, so it is a step in increasing minorities.

Ms. Kraft observed that when looking at how one changes the system, she would like to see teachers held accountable for participation. Can teachers opt out of that training? Looking at Danielson and Domain 2, how would that be related to teacher performance.

Ms. Francis asked for the clues to be used to know whether a system was working.

Mr. Becktemba Goss encouraged the hiring of minority teachers. Students of color are more likely to enroll in a class with a minority teacher, as they would feel connected. Many students do not feel comfortable in a predominately-white class. While he has heard that the District can only hire if a job is open, it was hard for him to believe that there was not a single, educated, black candidate.

#### **Priority 4 Operations, Facilities, and Finances**

Mr. Carioscio stated that the District would undertake \$54 million in construction projects in 3 or 4 years. There is more work than money. This summer the work would entail breaking down the south cafeteria, moving and renovation special education rooms, redoing the main entrance, redoing the student commons, installing a new fire alarm system, and renovating classrooms.

Mr. Martire asked that the Committee hear the challenges and negatives, rather than just the things going right. Dr. Pruitt-Adams noted that those things were listed in the evidence folder.

#### **Share Outs**

##### Data Sharing:

This group discussed data being transferred from the middle school and high school and vice versa. As data is shared, it should be relative, informative, and framed in such a way that people understand the “why” behind the data. It is too easy to manipulate the data to tell a story. It is important to frame the data to see what they are looking at and share it so that confidentiality exists. Discussion occurred about various groups having different access levels, including students and seeking their input, insight as to the root causes, and what steps can be taken to break the cycle.

Note: Continue to make the dashboards that are user friendly and put the information in the layperson language. Also, streamline and clarify the process of sharing data between elementary and high schools to improve ultimately the teaching practices and class offerings.

##### Supportive Learning Environment

This group discussed the inclusion of students, i.e. making special needs students feel included with general education students. A suggestion was made to add general education students into the Special Olympics and increase that activity. Also discussed was Restorative Justice Practices. If the District gets this right by not only giving teachers more resources and helping them to implement it, an incident may not reach the level of the dean.

Discussion ensued about making sure all lenses, especially the lens of equity, were incorporated into the evaluations of all teachers and adjusting the focus of tenured teachers. Are teachers receiving enough support? Can students be part of the evaluation, as a way to support them more with additional training? Students know best as to how teachers are doing in the classroom and how effective they are; thus, students should be part of the process because they are in the classroom every day.

##### Priority Transformative Teaching and Learning

Discussion ensued around what ultimately becomes accountability and consistency but the components that are needed and how complex it is. The work that has been happening to curriculum affects differentiation, assessment methods, and cultural responsiveness. A challenge has been the amount of time teachers are able to work on these as part of PD and having PD that consistently allows them to build something over time. Structures need to be in place to be supportive of that. Building robust student support goes along with the curriculum work. Advances are being made but there are some challenges to overcome.

Discussion ensued as to how the community can be brought into this complex journey: the reading and learning on how one conveys a system's complexity and how one helps people understand that. The only way to do that is through narrative. The story of why the District is doing what it is doing needs to be told, as it is based on what is being seen, what is being done, and what is then that impact. What narrative can the committee members consistently share with the community? The school does not want to battle the community over what should be done. How can this committee help with that? The narrative is important whether it is the data or what is happening to students and narrative should be for all students and not just some students. As the District moves to be more inclusive and racially diverse, more students need to be included. Previously, the school had only one student voice.

### Facilities

Discussion ensued about the future of this building as it is an investment and it is a work in progress.

Questions: How will information be communicated to families about the impact on learning, i.e. summer school and South Cafeteria? February 24 has been scheduled for a community meeting on this topic.

What is the financial impact for the community? It is important to communicate this because families are intending to move out of the area once their children are finished with school or they determine their taxes are too expensive. One member's tax bill increased 50% since moving here. The community needs to have the opportunity to talk about this. Dr. Pruitt-Adams noted that the monies for Project 1 will come from the fund balance. A foundation has been commenced to raise private funds. The administration is presenting a plan in May to the Board of Education to raise money for Project 2. IGOV made a presentation at its meeting, which showed that District 200 has consistently reduced the negative impact on the taxpayers. The Board of Education members are being consistent in abating money.

### Finance

For the prior two years, the increase in budgets was based on CPI. Now the District is looking at zero-based budgeting. Employees have to justify their needs. Yes, people have moved because of high taxes. While one member was happy that zero-based budgeting was being done now, why had it not been done previously. Note: OPRFHS is one of the only districts in Illinois that does not have debt. It is important to let the community know that the school is being intentional in how it is spending money and budgeting.

### Racial Equity

An equity audit will be set up by June. A cohort of teachers are working on that. While this is the fourth year of working on this, there are no measures in place to see if something is working. No baseline. Ms. McQueen said this should be more urgent, the number one priority, as the District does not know what is or is not working. While the audit is over everything, the issues continue. The issues are known. Why cannot the administration focus on them and then look at the discipline disparities. She wanted development, adoption and implementation of a definition of a positive school climate. She felt not talking with the people to whom the students are talking was a big missing piece, i.e., SST, librarians, custodians, social workers. They are the ones who are in earshot of what is going on. Ask, "When you saw this happen, how could we have handled that better. Do you think we are creating an environment that makes you feel like you were trapped?" She also suggested a clause that says if someone lies, there will be consequences. These people can tell the administration what it wants to have in a raw conversation. Is the District trying to build a better culture or trying to trap them?

Dr. Pruitt-Adams recapped what she heard had from the small groups:

1. Accountability, accountability, and accountability,
2. communication and transparency internally and expectations
3. Communication and transparency so that people can tell the narrative.

4. Student voice is important.
5. Spreading the word about what is working well and what can be improved upon and determining a baseline.

### **Plus/Negative**

What worked?

- 1) Having an opportunity to listen and hear the raw conversations about missing pieces, the collective voice and commitment.
- 2) This is the largest CCB Committee and it has consistently had a quorum which shows the commitment of this group. It is a pleasure to see that the Strategic Plan is branching out into the building.
- 3) Appreciated the smaller group to dig into a specific topic. Appreciated having the students in the room to hear their voices.
- 4) Such a difference in experience in what was being done with the Accountability Plan. So much more satisfying.
- 5) Appreciate the smaller group to hear more in detail to have better understanding.
- 6) The work does not end in this room. The members need to be in the community and showing up for the students and feel this work has to get into the crevices of the structure of the hierarchy at the school. It still has to get down deeper. People must hear that this Committee is serious.

No negatives.

### **Adjournment**

At 8:05 p.m., Mr. Martire moved to adjourn the meeting; seconded by Dr. Pruitt-Adams. A voice vote resulted in motion carried.

Submitted by: Gail Kalmerton  
Clerk of the Board