

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

INSTRUCTION COMMITTEE MEETING
February 17, 2015

An Instruction Committee meeting was held on February 17, 2015. Dr. Gevinson called the meeting was called to order at 7 p.m. in the Board Room. Committee members present were Dr. Steve Gevinson, Dr. Jackie Moore, and Sharon Patchak-Layman. Also present were Dr. Steven T. Isoye, Superintendent; Amy Hill, Director of Assessment and Research; Philip M. Prale, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction; Nathaniel L. Rouse, Principal; Karin Sullivan, Director of Community Relations and Communications; David Ruhland, Director of Human Resources; and Gail Kalmerton, Executive Assistant/Clerk of the Board.

Visitors Julie Frey, Mathematics Division Head, teachers Joyce Gajda, Christine Mondragon, and Chris Baldwin.

Minutes

Dr. Gevinson moved to approve the Instruction Committee minutes of January 13, 2015; seconded by Dr. Moore. A voice vote resulted in motion carried.

Visitor Comment

None

Update from the Mathematics Division

The Math Division faculty talked about existing core and support programs in the division and some recent work with Districts 90 and 97. In addition, they spoke about some new projects that included examining standards-based grading practices, the future of computer science, and the developments in the articulation efforts with Triton College. The heart of what the math department does is teaching and learning. Ms. Frey spoke highly of her teaching staff and the work they were doing this year: it is both challenging and rewarding.

The Math Department is articulating with Districts 90 and 97 and the University of Illinois Chicago about Common Core and mathematical practices and how they can be incorporated into the classroom. Time has been spent with the facilitators of UIC looking at complex problems for students to come up with solutions using rubrics. Groups of teachers then make decisions on what they are learning and how to decide what they need. The department will be going through its own assessments in the core Algebra course checking that the measurements are the same in District 200 and the elementary schools. Practitioners are being asked to change the way they have been doing business for the past 100 years.

Ms. Gajda described the division's work to develop a community college dual credit math course for twelfth grade students that serves OPRFHS lowest level performing seniors. These students have the opportunity to earn a college credit. OPRFHS runs the course the same as it would run at Triton so that freshman students at Triton will not have to take a remedial math course. Students need to qualify in math, reading, writing, and the COMPASS test. The national failure rate of the COMPASS test is very high. The OPRFHS math department's efforts to improve student scores includes collaborating with the English Department and counselors speaking to the students about the process and motivating them. However, even with these efforts, students' test scores are falling short, even though teachers feel that the students know the material. OPRFHS has realigned the freshman and sophomore year courses to give

support in this area as well. Triton recognizes the problem and is trying to resolve it. Articulation continues with Triton and extending this dual credit program into the junior year is being explored.

The math department efforts are helping students achieve a particular math level at a quicker rate. Advanced Algebra is now given in the junior year rather than the senior year. While the numbers are not yet available, the expectation is that there will be more growth at every level. Many students are taking 8 semesters of math currently, rather than 6 semesters that was previously required.

Ms. Mondragon described her use of standards-based grading approach in some of her classes as a way to rethink how teachers and students talk about progress and how they track the acquisition of skills and knowledge. It is a better way to see how well a student knows and understand what he/she is learning and it must be aligned to a specific learning target. The grades used in District 97 are: exceeds expectations, proficient, approaching proficient, and not proficient. It takes away the 60% as the bar for passing or failing. Outside training is required. She uses this because it gives very specific and clear feedback to students. As a result of the feedback, students can then find different ways to learn and improve their grades and master the topics. As such, the learning targets, the goals, and the teaching needs to be specific. With formative assessments, homework counts for zero but the middle schools have gone to 10% for homework. That is not enough to change a grade, however. Formative assessments, quizzes, unit tests are where the majority of the grade is based.

Mr. Baldwin teaches 3 AP course sections and an introduction to computer science course. He described the need for more opportunities for students to pursue more coding experiences as part of their coursework. By 2020, there will be shortage of 1 million people working in computer science technology. In the math department and several other departments, students will be required to do some coding. The AP Board is offering another course the following school year, AP Computer Science Principles, which is less programming based and a bigger concept computer course. Seventy-five students are enrolled in AP computer science courses and they are mostly boys. These classes lack exposure. One member asked if there were a tutorial module and the response was that there are. Everyone has access to the website www.code.org which has many resources. However, first a student must have an interest. Should this be a requirement for graduation?

When asked what the Board of Education could do to support the division, Ms. Frey stated that it was time to be in the classroom, time for reflection with other teachers, time to meet with the team, time to be with the principal, and time to determine how to better support the teachers. Nothing affects achievement better than teacher quality.

Sabbatical Leave Applications for 2015-16 School Year

The Instruction Committee unanimously recommended that the sabbatical leave application for Annamaria Carparelli, an Italian teacher, be moved to the full Board of Education for approval at its February 26, 2015, meeting. She will develop an oral history project for use in Italian classes. One member expressed a need for a format to highlight how a sabbatical supported the Board of Education goals, as that had been a discussion in the past by the Board of Education. This will be considered before presenting to the full Board of Education at the February 26, 2015 meeting.

Update on Triton College Partnership Activities

The Instruction Committee unanimously recommended that the update on Triton College Partnership Activities be moved to the full Board of Education as an informational item at its February 26, 2015 meeting. Since December 2011, District 200 has expanded its work with Triton College in the areas of dual credit offerings, participation in the School/College Alliance, the Des Plaines Valley Region Education for Employment Regional Delivery System (DVR), Triton Evening School, and the

development of a satellite Triton College counseling program. The person assigned to Triton College counseling program reaches out to OPRFHS students.

The dual credit program allows students to earn credit for Triton courses that are taught at OPRFHS and by OPRFHS faculty members who meet Triton faculty qualifications. There are no costs to the District or to the students for this program.

A graph was included that showed the enrollment dual credits from 2012 to 2014. The reasons for the changes occurred for several reasons:

- 1) Some courses are single semester, one credit courses, while others are yearlong, two-credit courses in which the college credits are issued at the end of the spring semester, creating a general pattern of semester-by-semester changes.
- 2) OPRFHS teachers of courses eligible for dual credit must meet Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) hiring guidelines. ICCB requires teachers who teach most content area courses to have a master's degree or equivalent graduate level coursework. The District requires that all teachers in a course in a given school year meet these requirements before including the course in the dual credit program. Staffing changes and changes in collective taking patterns of students may cause changes in courses offered in the Triton Dual Credit Program.
- 3) Students in these courses must meet a range of Triton entrance requirements, which have become more rigorous and inclusive in the past few years and have resulted in fewer students qualifying for dual credit or fewer students able to take all necessary entrance exams.

Growing interest among key faculty and staff has just this year made 2 new dual credit areas available to students in the regular programs.

Discussion ensued about investigating the creation of dual credit courses with other entities besides Triton as well, i.e., Dominican and Concordia Universities, etc., to help students expand their interests. OPRFHS already has a principle certification program and has helped with research on Spoken Word. Triton already has a strong articulation agreement with Dominican University and, perhaps, OPRFHS can be part of that agreement. The partnership with Triton is good and it supports students who are not going to a 4-year college. There may also be reasons to consider strengthening the relationship to Triton in light of the economic realities of a 4-year degree. Students attending Triton often leave before completing their associates or certification program to go on to a 4-year experience. OPRFHS is a partner in the sharing of data with Triton and the benefit of that agreement is being seen in the math conversation.

When asked how Triton benefited from the dual credit program, the administration was unsure. A broader range of classes can be part of dual credit. Much activity is occurring with community colleges, as the state has an interest in having community colleges taking on more roles. Ms. Patchak-Layman believed Triton is doing more in terms of the bigger picture, but she wondered about the support Triton gives to its students. Can the high school extend contact with the students who go to Triton? Are students more likely to travel to Triton or would they prefer to take an online class from Triton. Can dual credit classes be developed with UIC?

Program Evaluations

Dr. Gevinson wanted to pass the development of a scorecard to monitor the proposals or initiatives that come through Strategic Plan to the Strategic Plan Operations Committee and for the administration to put together a larger, comprehensive list of programs and initiatives, including new and ongoing ones, and to develop a score sheet to look at the goals and evaluate how well they have been met. Ms. Patchak-Layman asked what was done to evaluate programs. She suggested asking the departments to delineate each of the programs being worked on, the class structure, i.e., double period math class which is a variation of traditional program and put that on a list in order to have a baseline for each program. If the

administration undertook this, she wanted baseline data, i.e., the program, the evaluation, what needed change, what needed to stay status quo, etc.?

While there is a document titled “Institutional Excellence Domains” that asks what is being done in various domains and who is responsible for meeting the goals of the domains, it is not-program oriented. However, it could be used as a framework for understanding programs.

One member suggested exploring going beyond anecdotal stories and asking different questions such as how many students go to a different level of math or how many need additional help in order to know if something is working. Just because a program is the cultural part of the system, does not mean it is good for students or the school. As data is inputted into the new data warehousing system, the potential is there to asking more and better questions. Teachers should be part of determining what questions should be asked. This conversation will continue in DLT and ACT.

Adjournment

At 8:50 p.m., on February 17, 2015, Dr. Gevinson moved to adjourn the Instruction Committee; seconded by Dr. Moore. A voice vote resulted in motion carried.

Submitted by
Gail Kalmerton
Clerk of the Board