

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

INSTRUCTION COMMITTEE MEETING
June 16, 2015

An Instruction Committee meeting was held on June 16, 2015. Dr. Gevinson called the meeting was called to order at 4:37 p.m. in the Board Room. Committee members present were Fred Arkin, Dr. Steve Gevinson, and Dr. Jackie Moore. Also present were Dr. Steven T. Isoye, Superintendent; 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; Patrick Pearson, Faculty Senate Executive Representative; and Gail Kalmerton, Executive Assistant/Clerk of the Board.

Visitors: Sara Spivy and Jennifer Cassell, Board of Education members; Tod Altenburg, Chief School Business Official; Chala Holland, Assistant Principal for Instruction; Don Clark, Testing Consultant.

Minutes

Dr. Gevinson moved to approve the minutes of the May 18, 2015 Instruction Committee, as presented; seconded by Dr. Moore. A voice vote resulted in motion carried.

Report on Professional Development Activities for 2014-15/2015-16

The Instruction Committee voted unanimously to recommend that the report be moved to the full Board of Education for information at its regular June meeting.

Ms. Hill and Dr. Holland provided a written summary of 2014-15 Professional Development Activities, i.e., what was presented on Institute/Staff Development days, the work of the Divisional Collaboration Meetings for each Division, additional PD experiences by Division, Collaborative Professional Development Committees/Teams, Executive Functioning (EF) Implementation Team, program-specific PD (Math and Reading Programs), and division-specific PD. The appendix included summaries of participant feedback on Institute Days and Staff Development Days. Discussion ensued.

The Rush NeuroBehavioral Center has conducted EF workshops at the high school 4 to 5 times per year and has allowed OPRFHS staff to participate. The program focuses on what occurs in the classroom, the brain, and the changing of practices, beliefs, and mindsets. Teachers who have participated think differently about what and how that affects students. Learning, based on the influx of all technology and the timing of lesson plans, can and should be broken down into 15 minute segments, as all students do not learn the same. As a result of this training, the report

indicated that some teachers use color codes for each content area, i.e., blue folders for freshman English classes, etc. Part of the work has been about providing support to make this successful. Teachers are investing in different supplies, i.e., post-its, different tabs, binders, dividers, etc. In more classes, students know what to do when they walk into class and they know what is expected during class time.

Over 70 faculty and staff have participated in EF workshops and the work is planned to continue. This work has allowed the District to go deeper with the application and understanding of executive functions as to what habits will help students manage and prioritize their work in order to be successful adults. In order to support students, OPRFHS included a student planner in its Student Planner with significant feedback from Rush staff.

Regarding EF support, faculty and staff may submit student referrals. Feedback from faculty and staff as to what they would like to see in the future for the entire building is being written up in a report. The next question is about how students can be supported outside of the school. Social emotional learning is not separate from EF, After the Board of Education agreed to pilot an EF specialist, a meeting was held to inform parents about how to access support and the notes from that meeting were made accessible. EF specialist works from 7 to 3:30 p.m. and EF tutors are available through cross content. More communication will occur about when tutors are available (7:00 to 5:00 p.m.). Next year, parents, mentors, community members, anyone who wants to know more about the brain, etc., will be able to participate in one of two sessions on executive functioning.

Reports were given on the specific programs commenced to accelerate math and reading, as well as division-specific PD. Information about each division was given. Each division's mission/goals will be finalized and made accessible to the community so that one might see the division's direct connection to the Board of Education goals and the Strategic Plan. The administration worked to make sure there was clarity across the divisions in order to get the necessary buy-in as to where each division was headed, i.e., what is connected, what should be changed, etc. The District overall feels confident about this work. An observation was made by one committee member that the division reports were uneven and a suggestion was to use a more uniform format for reflections. However, the administration wanted the division heads to name things as they experienced them and to have a voice in the report. It is content specific. Each division is in a different place. This point has been pivotal in moving the work.

A plan is being developed on how to integrate technology PD in a seamless way rather than standalone PD, whether through the use of devices or specific educational technology tools, i.e., Google docs or specific applications.

Dr. Holland was congratulated on her new appointment as Principal of Lake Forest High School, noting that she would be missed.

A suggestion was also made to attach names to the faculty's accomplishments, as a way to showcase what the staff's work.

More professional development time is always needed, as teaching is an art. When people collaborate and share their wealth in various ways, great things happen. That type of space is needed, as it transfers over to culture and climate, new ways for thinking, acting, etc.

The professional development model is systematic because it was created based on core areas of focus which were and were not reflected in areas of growth while providing a collective experience. As such every division is in a different place or shows up differently as part of the focus. Part of the model is to meet district-wide needs and also to provide a menu of options for people to connect and engage. People have been positive about seeing their voices reflected in the past. Significant time was spent soliciting feedback from faculty, staff, parents, and volunteers in the tutoring center in developing this plan. Its creation required a community-wide conversation. That feedback included respect and appreciation for the model, while there are still some who challenge it and want unstructured time.

Institute Day Approvals for 2015-16

The Instruction Committee voted unanimously to recommend that the report be moved to the full Board of Education for approval at its regular June meeting.

Report and Recommendations from Testing Coordinator

The Instruction Committee voted unanimously to recommend that the report and recommendation from the Testing Coordinator be moved to the full Board of Education for approval at its regular June meeting. The recommendation concluded that the District had the capacity with its present personnel to accomplish testing functions except for the coordination of accommodations for students receiving special education services. Thus, the recommendation included hiring someone to manage the tracking, filing, recording, and management of the work connected to testing with accommodations. This work will require someone's full attention, as the paperwork for requesting testing accommodations can be 15 to 20 pages long and someone needs to be the one-source contact for both teachers and parents. While the person would not have to be certified, he/she would need to be organized and able to comply with deadlines.

Mr. Clark noted that ACT, College Board, and SAT testing will occur on Saturdays. OPRFHS is subcontracted by ACT and the College Board to serve as a site for Saturday testing. Employees of OPRFHS work on those Saturdays as employees of the ACT and the College Board. He questioned whether the District could direct an individual to work for another company on those designated Saturdays in the future. Note: OPRFHS is a large Saturday testing site for SAT and ACT throughout the year.

Adjournment

At 5:32 p.m., on June 16, 2015, Dr. Gevinson moved to adjourn the Instruction Committee meeting; seconded by Dr. Moore. A voice vote resulted in motion carried.

Submitted by
Gail Kalmerton
Clerk of the Board