

OAK PARK AND RIVER FOREST HIGH SCHOOL

201 NORTH SCOVILLE AVENUE • OAK PARK, IL 60302-2296

TO: Board of Education
FROM: Attila J. Weninger
DATE: October 22, 2007
RE: A Plan to Raise Student Achievement

BACKGROUND

You will recall that at the August Board Instruction Committee meeting a discussion took place concerning student achievement as shown on the spring 2007 PSAE. As a result of that discussion, I proposed and agreed to develop a plan to raise student achievement. In the intervening weeks, several labels were given to this work, e.g., The Plan, The October Plan, The Minority Student Achievement Plan, The Roadmap, A Framework, and others. Fortunately, none of these accurately describe the efforts. Since the August time period I and others in the high school have worked to develop ideas and a plan to raise student achievement at OPRF. While I have been the primary author of it, it takes into consideration some, though not all, of the feedback and ideas from a variety of constituents with whom I have met and discussed student achievement: Board members, community members, parents, faculty, and administrators. There has also been a fair amount of reading that occurred. The research centered on approaches to overall student achievement, not just student achievement for minority students. Additionally, I have read with interest and detail the various reports issued by groups within the school in the past, and took the opportunity to meet with representatives from one group who authored the 2003 report entitled *The Learning Performance Gap*. It has been an exciting process to date, and one which I view as a beginning to what I expect will be an approved set of initiatives, an approved plan, to raise student achievement, in particular for minority students.

Before embarking on an explanation of the attached documents, please suffer me a few moments of personal and professional perspectives regarding the future of this work. As a community member and former parent said to me recently, "Please don't tell us we have a problem. Tell us we have a challenge." She is correct. The challenge is how do we – community, parents, high school, and students – together – raise student achievement. There is no need to revisit the past nor to complain about it. Our time here is too short and too valuable to do so. That is not to say, however, that we should not nor have not learned from it. Indeed, we have. Instead, here we have focused on what we need to do – now and in the immediate future.

A Plan

This plan is but one way to move us forward. No doubt, there are others, yet this is the one we are proposing. It is one that seeks to identify areas of need and addresses those in practical ways. In the following weeks, elements of others will emerge as a result of debate, discussion, and research. Let them come forward, and let us then develop the plan to implement. There is no silver bullet or magic trick to overcome the obstacles we face within this challenge. There is no master plan applicable to underachieving minority, special education, and "in the middle" students in an urban-suburban, comprehensive, competitive high school such as OPRF.

A Culture of High Expectations and High Achievement

This plan seeks to establish a culture of high expectations and high achievement within the community, among parents, within the school, and certainly among students, individually and collectively. It does so not through words but through actions, programs, and activities. It also attempts to identify the elements of the context here at OPRF HS for that to occur. In our opinion, it should be a college/post-secondary education culture for all students, and we must develop the context within which that culture can grow and flourish. To some degree it is a forceful set of plans that challenges everyone. As a community member wrote in 2006, we know the issues; we have researched some of the solutions; we are proposing a plan; and we need active support from the community, parents, high school, and students to raise student achievement. As one staff member wrote me, "It's not easy being a teenager today. It's not easy being a teacher either. But I think we can make progress. **I will do what I can to help.**"

The Gap

I have come to despise those words. They make me think and feel as if we have a disease or incurable condition. They are often spoken with disdain and anger. And all of that does not help us move forward. In fact, I might argue that the continued tone of the discussions around and about the minority student learning and achievement gap may cause an "expected gap" among us all, including students. Yet, we are undeniably faced with this objective challenge: minority students who enter OPRF HS academically achieve at a lesser rate than their Caucasian counterparts, and that gap grows through their high school years. We didn't start this achievement gap; however, because we know that it exists as students enter OPRF and continues, then we have an obligation to address it. And we will.

Themes and Messages

Embedded within this plan are several themes and messages not so explicitly stated. They are messages of

- hope that we can overcome the challenge of raising student achievement especially among minority students;
- belief in our ability to find and implement the strategies that work;
- belief in our students' abilities and capacities to achieve;
- high expectations that we develop a rigorous curriculum in each course;
- high expectations of all of our students all the time which will equal high results;
- high expectations of each other to do what we can;
- communicating that hope, those beliefs, and those expectations clearly; and
- recognition and promise that we will develop meaningful, positive relationships between us and between us and our students.

There is an additional message: we must change the tenor and pitch of our conversations about student achievement, within the school and within the community. The discussion, work, debate, and dialogue must be void of finger pointing, accusations, blame, and expecting someone else to fix whatever is wrong. Instead, if we hold ourselves accountable – community, parents, school, and students – then we must be positive, encouraging, hopeful, believing, and expecting each of us to achieve, "to do what I can." I hasten to add that such a positive-rich environment is not one that overlooks or denies the issues and the challenge. It's just a more motivating way of going about business.

Attachments

Attached, please find the following:

- this cover memo;
- a diagram for the attached plan;
- an at-a-glance table of the proposed activities, programs, initiatives, strategies, etc., which are part of the plan ; and
- the proposed plan itself.

The diagram shows the premise upon which the plan was developed. Student achievement is at the center of our work, and in order to have and to raise student achievement, four groups of people must be actively involved. Each group has distinct responsibilities and accountabilities. Some are obvious, and some are noted throughout the document. Notice that each group is connected by a dotted line, which indicates that no group works alone and that we are all connected in many ways. The challenge then is to identify how we can best work together towards the same end and reach it.

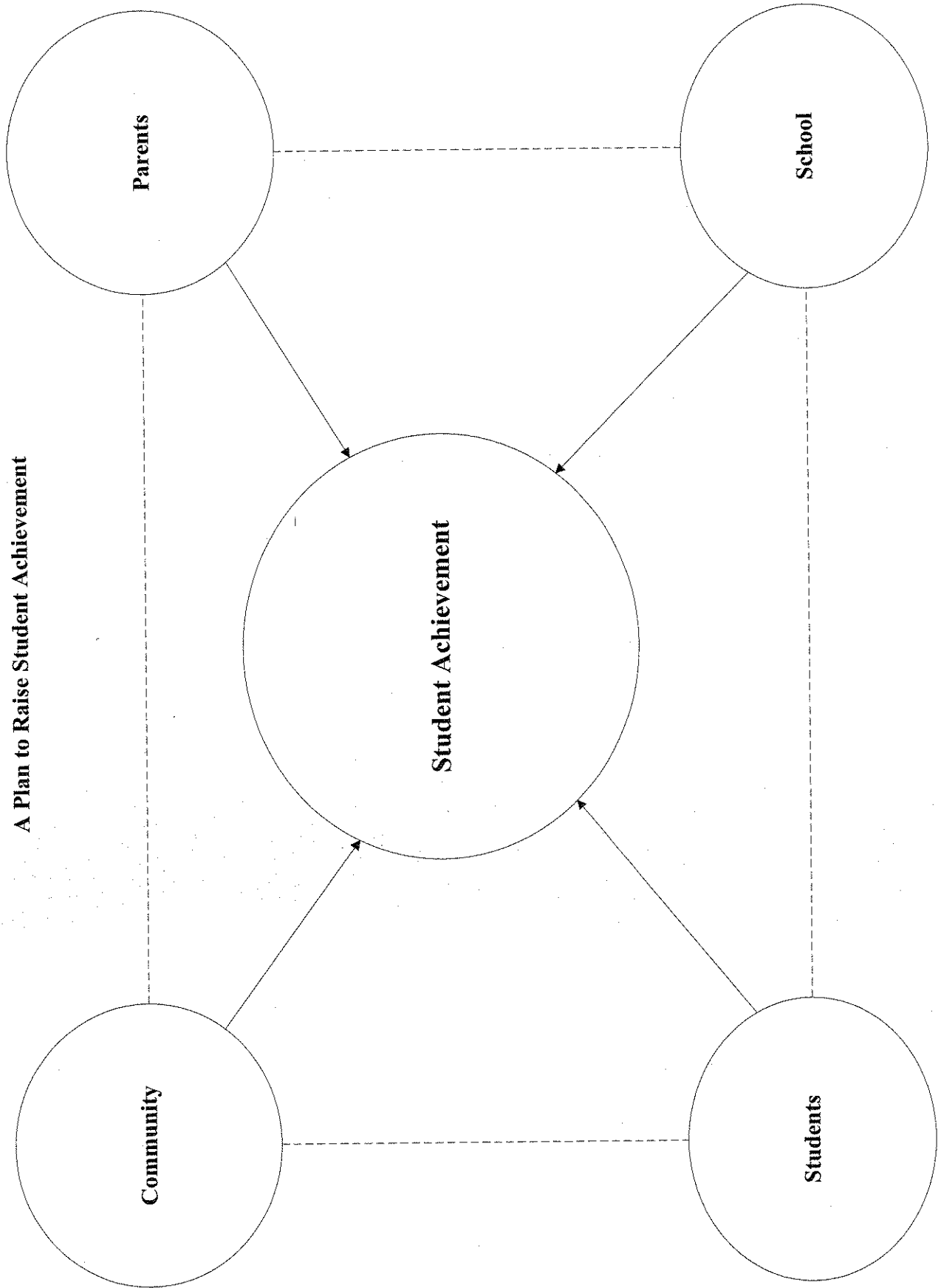
The at-a-glance table is simply a tool for you to see where the various components of the plan fall and that there are several which repeat themselves among 2 or more groups.

Finally, the plan itself is divided into these 4 groups, with sections for each proposed activity, program, initiative, strategy, etc. There are several caveats about the attached, which you will find below, so please do consider these carefully as you read through the document.

1. This is still a draft, tentative, work-in-progress, subject to discussion, debate, dialogue, ideas, change, addition, and/or deletion.
2. It is a plan and not intended to be the comprehensive plan.
3. It is a plan which has two basic premises a. raising student achievement cannot be done by the school alone. Raising student achievement necessarily involves community, parents, school, and students; and b. we can raise student achievement among minority students, majority students, all students.
4. It is not in priority, chronological, or monetary order, yet.
5. It is not complete, yet; additionally, it may not be complete even when it is done, i.e., it may require changes/additions/deletions/adjustments/review even as parts of it are being fully developed and implemented. The plan must be responsive to data, information, new ideas, new research, new findings, etc., as they are uncovered.
6. In the coming days and few weeks, it will be modified as a result of feedback and input from community members, Board of Education members, faculty/staff, District/Building Leadership Teams, Instructional Council, African American Faculty and Staff Advisory Council, students, etc.
7. It is my expectation that between now and the regular December Board meeting, modifications to the plan will be made, that it will be discussed at the November and December Board Instructional Committee and regular Board meetings, and that in December the Board will charge me to implement it. Then, administrative staff will work to develop priorities, create timelines, identify costs, and assign responsibilities for implementation.

*Oak Park and River Forest High School
District 200*

A Plan to Raise Student Achievement



Oak Park and River Forest High School District 200

**Raising Student Achievement Plan
Summary and List by Area At-a-glance**

Community	Parent	School	Student
Academic Booster Club (ABC)	Co-curricular Program	Advisory System	Adult Relationships
African-American Leadership Round Table	Communications Advisory Committee	Assessment	Community Service
College Visits	Expectations	Associate Schools Articulation	Course Load
Community Service	Homework	Career Center	Demonstrate Success
Freshman Mentoring Program	Life Skills for Teens/Survival Skills for Parents	Co-curricular Program	Expectations and Habits of Achievement
Intramural Program	Parent/Alumni Groups	College & Career Center	Goals and Goal Setting
Media	Parent Events	College/University Partnership	Personal Plan for Achievement and Personal Educational Contract
Oak Park Park District Teen Center	Parent/Student Outreach	Communications Advisory Committee	School Commitment
Parent Events	Personal Plan for Achievement and Personal Educational Contract	Community Service	Senior Year Internship Experience
Scholarships	Post-Secondary Education	Curriculum	Student Academic Learning Teams
Senior Year Internship	School-to-Parent Communication	Discipline System Review	Student Involvement Feedback
Summer Program	Support (Before/After School) Program(s)	Freshman Mentoring Program	Study Center
Technology	Transfer Student/Parent Program	Freshman Transition to High School Program	
		Homework	
		Initiatives Review and Evaluation	
		Institutional Excellence	
		Instruction	
		Mini-IL Student Achievement Network Establishment	
		Parent Program	
		Parent/Student Outreach	
		Professional Development	
		Pupil Support Services Teams	
		School Day Time	
		Senior Year Internship Experience	
		Student Leadership/Participation/Input	
		Student Recognition	
		Study Center	
		Student Involvement Feedback	
		Summer Program	
		Transfer Student/Parent Program	
		Triton College Partnership	

*Oak Park and River Forest High School
District 200*

A Plan to Raise Student Achievement

I. The Community

A. Freshmen Mentoring Program

Student success in high school is all about and dependent upon relationships, whether they are in the school or outside the school. A freshmen mentoring program for every freshmen and transfer student that utilizes the community's human resources on a volunteer basis can make a significant impact on the positive and productive beginning of a high school career. Individuals, agencies, service clubs, business organizations, businesses, and churches can assist in the development and staffing of it. Meetings with students would be planned and unplanned, regular and spontaneous, daily/evening and weekend with the approval and consent of parents. The type of mentoring could be both academic (e.g., tutoring) and personal (personal coaching), depending on the need. An application process for mentors, as well as training, education, and coaching of mentors would be required. A community volunteer(s) would be asked to coordinate the program, and OPRF would assist. Begin with the Class of 2012. (See also School I.)

B. Summer Program

There is a "time gap" for underachieving students. That time is the 8-10 weeks during the summer when students are un-engaged intellectually, physically, emotionally, etc. This is a top priority for raising student achievement as it is time we can capture to make significant gains. It also requires a significant contribution from the community if it is to work. The goal is to occupy students' summer time and to engage them with a combination of academic/skill improvement, recreational/stimulating activities, and productive work. Here is a partial framework.

- Summers between grades 9 and 10, 10 and 11, 11 and 12
- 8 – 10 weeks; 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.
- Academics, activities: 3 hours
 - academics: skill improvement and/or academic credit activities: e.g., working with PING, seek to expand program to high school students who have not been exposed to music but who may have interest and talent in instrumental and/or vocal areas; developing/offering structured activities that are fun, provide opportunities to develop relationships with adults and peers, etc.
 - hospitals, Park Districts, Township Offices, Villages, Oak Park Development Corporation, Developers, etc.
- Lunch: 1 hour
- Employment: 4 hours
 - students would learn necessary life skills of time management, working with others, teamwork, communication, etc.
 - community businesses, Villages, Park Districts, Township Offices, agencies, hospitals, Oak Park Development Corporation, etc., would develop summer employment opportunities for students

- volunteer job coaches for students
- with cooperation of local banks, students would establish personal accounts, and learn money management skills perhaps through periodic workshops during the activities time; in addition, money earned would be deposited into the accounts, and students would be required to keep at least half of the money earned in an interest bearing account until age 18 or to be designated for college costs only
- Begin with Class of 2011 (current freshmen) with criteria for participation TBD.

C. Community Service

(See also School X. and Student E.)

D. Senior Year Internship

There is growing research that indicates senior year in high school may be better served with some type of active, real-world, out of school experience. Internships would be structured utilizing models already developed and including identification of knowledge and information to be learned, skills to be developed, and culminating in a demonstration of what was learned through project completion, paper, etc. Other elements include academic credit; rigorous standards, expectations, internship mentors, etc. Identification and establishment of internships would be done jointly by the community, school, and student. (See also School CC. and Student E.)

E. Intramural Program

We know that students who are engaged in positive and productive programs in the school and/or the community are more successful academically. To that end and with the Oak Park Township, review the current intramural program. Develop a mission statement and specific goals for the program, and review program offerings, student participation, and revise and expand, as needed. (See also School J.)

F. Oak Park District Teen Center

In cooperation with the Oak Park District in the development of its Teen Center, identify and implement ways in which our high school students can find positive connections to the community and school.

G. African American Leadership Round Table

Create an African American Leadership Round Table whose purpose would be to discuss with, to advise, and to assist the Superintendent on matters regarding student achievement and school-parent communication. The Round Table would be selected and appointed by the Superintendent and meet quarterly.

H. Media (Wednesday Journal, Oak Leaves, Oak Park Press, Trapeze)

Beyond athletics and activities that are highly publicized in the local media, we believe the media has a responsibility to publish newsworthy items about students and parents who achieve in other ways, e.g., academics, activities, work, community service, etc. With the community's and school's help, we ask the media to regularly and routinely highlight the day-to-day personal successes of students and parents, especially but not

solely of those who have overcome obstacles and might not otherwise receive recognition. We also know that recognition and highlighting such positive role models can powerfully impact other students and parents.

I. Technology

Some students who underachieve may also be unable to access technology beyond that which is available at school, yet we know that the world into which all students will matriculate requires some skill, aptitude, and competency in it. In addition, an increasing amount of teaching, learning, and work in school is computer-related and that accessibility of and proficiency with a computer can accelerate learning. We are proposing that each entering freshman student have a laptop and necessary school-related/learning-related software. We are asking the community to work with the high school in finding the means and logistics by which to provide this critical technology. For its part, the school will provide training for students on its use in the freshman year. In addition, the high school will work with the community to provide parents with technology workshops, as well.

J. Scholarships

The high school currently coordinates in-school, individual, and community funded scholarships. If we believe that post-secondary education is a goal which is within reach of all students and that this goal will motivate students to achieve, then we must also expand scholarship opportunities for minority and special education students. One way to accomplish this is to develop a local **Dollars for Scholars** chapter, and to develop scholarships funded by community businesses, individuals, groups, etc. For example, the African-American Leadership Round Table would be one group that would be expected to provide leadership to that end. These scholarships and their recipients would then be significantly highlighted in the media, again as role models of achievement.

K. College Visits

Some parents and underachieving students cannot afford and do not know how to successfully navigate the college search process. One way in which to motivate students is to show them and have them experience first hand a college campus. There are already high schools within the Chicago area which provide such an experience for students. We are proposing that the community provide the means by which each year every freshman and sophomore visit a college campus twice. They would do so by providing the cost of transportation and volunteer chaperones. The high school, in turn, would organize and coordinate this effort with local colleges/universities. We would also utilize OPRF alumni at those colleges/universities. Within a 2 hour drive of OPRF, there are no fewer than 20 four year college/universities and 6 community colleges. This then becomes a very doable and achievable goal which would be a powerful incentive to students.

L. Parent Events

One of the givens of successful high school students is parent/guardian knowledge of and involvement with school. For whatever reason(s), some parents/guardians of underachieving students are not only not actively involved with the school, but do not attend even the most basic of school and parent/guardian events. One way in which the community can assist parents is to provide childcare at the high school for younger siblings during parent-school events such as Open House, Parent-Teacher Conferences, Class Visitation Days, required meetings, etc. (See also Parents D.)

M. Academic Booster Club (ABC)

We are proposing the creation of an Academic Booster Club whose purpose would be to assist parents/guardians and student in the student's efforts to achieve academically. Members of ABC would staff, in part, a required after school Study Center for students. In addition, ABC would serve as a parent/guardian network and support for parents of underachieving students. (See also School V. and Student I.)

II. The Parents

A. Expectations

First and foremost, parents/guardians must set expectations and standards of their own for and with students. These expectations must mirror the school's expectations of developing a culture of achievement among adults and students. Parents must reinforce the school's, teacher's, coach's/sponsor's, and mentor's expectations by holding their student responsible and accountable for behavior, grades, and achievement. While it may seem too obvious to state, sometimes parents/guardians simply need "permission," i.e., knowing that others believe in, practice, and expect the same accountability.

B. Parent/Student Outreach

There are a significant number of parents/guardians of underachieving students who, for whatever reason(s) do not "come to school" whether it is for formal parent evenings, co-curricular events in which their students perform, or by invitation. As a result, information about school and student progress, or lack thereof, is not consistent, timely, and accurate, or not at all. We know that student achievement and success is heavily dependent on timely, consistent, and accurate school-parent communication and relationship.

We are proposing that OPRF begins a systematic, regular, and meaningful parent/guardian outreach by faculty and administrators. This would take place during the summers prior to freshman and sophomore years, and each quarter during the freshman and sophomore years. This outreach would take the form of at home (or at another locale other than school) visits in pairs of OPRF professional staff and with groups of 10-15 parents. Teams of OPRF staff and parents would remain the same to develop relationships and familiarity. Outreach would take place after school or on weekends for one hour with planned topics for each visitation. This outreach effort could involve both parents and students. We are well aware of the contractual, logistical, etc., issues with which we may have to contend; however, it does not mitigate the need to make this proposal in the very best interest of acquiring, developing, and sustaining school and parent communication.

C. Homework

Homework, when used effectively, is a critical tool for the reinforcement of topics, concepts, information, and skills exposed to and learned at school. Too often parents/guardians rely on the self-reporting of students re: homework, and too often student achievement suffers. The high school must communicate to parents/guardians regularly and effectively, utilizing a variety of means, about checking on and helping with student homework. We are proposing that for students who earn grades of less than C during any given quarter, parents/guardians must check and sign homework for the teacher to view the next school day. (See also School FF.)

D. Parent Events

The school expects parents/guardians to actively participate in their student's life at school if the student is to feel a network of support and caring around him/her. As a result, we are proposing that OPRF set as an expectation that parents come to all formal school events for parents, e.g., Open House, Parent-Teacher Conferences, College Information

Night, etc. There may be a need to provide parent education workshops in order to punctuate the need for such attendance and participation. These workshops might center on some of the following topics:

- success v. survival; learning v. passivity/entertainment; achievement v. passing;
- post-secondary educational opportunities and planning;
- Top Ten Parents To Do List;
- navigating high school while fostering positive attitudes about school to students; and
- why homework and what can you do as a parent/guardian with it.

When parents/guardians do not regularly or frequently attend school functions, students can easily arrive at the conclusion that they and the school just don't care. We have to provide students with active role modeling that we do care, and we as a school must do everything we can to bring parents into the fabric of school and their student's school life.

E. Co-curricular Program

We know that students who are regularly and actively involved in some type of co-curricular athletic/activity are also successful academically. The reasons are many and include positive adult role models, structured and productive activities, positive peer pressure, development of life skills such as teamwork and motivation, earned self-esteem, fun, pride in oneself and in one's school, etc. Parents/guardians must recognize and reinforce with students the value of co-curricular involvement.

As a school, we must reach out to parents/guardians and expect of them what we expect of students: lead students to commit to and to complete at least one co-curricular activity throughout the entire school year. Then, parents/guardians must agree to attend at least/no less than 75% of athletics/activity events for their student during that season/year. Some will scoff at the notion of quantifying parent participation. For many parents, it might even seem an insult. This notwithstanding, for the student whose parent rarely or never shows such interest either at home or at school, it would be powerful.

F. School-to-Parent Communication

In addition to checking on and helping with homework, we must expect of parents/guardians that they avail themselves of the opportunity to be knowledgeable of student progress. Using technology for just that purpose, we expect parents/guardians to check Skyward weekly and respond to teachers' communications in a timely way.

G. Life Skills for Teens/Survival Skills for Parents

Parents/guardians of underachieving students may not be aware of nor be able to help their students become appropriate self-advocates. As part of the proposed parent outreach workshops noted above and utilizing the parent-to-parent model, parents/guardians may benefit from information on living with teenagers, e.g., hearing, listening, advising, counseling, encouraging, motivating, being patient, when to step in, and dealing with negative student peers.

H. Post-Secondary Education

In addition to the efforts of the community and school, parents/guardians play the most critical role in developing the desire in their students for post-secondary education. This alone is often the great motivator for student achievement in high school.

Parents/guardians must make a commitment to their students for a college or post-secondary education path. The commitment may take various forms, not all of which are financial. It may mean a commitment of supporting the student in his/her desire to go to college, of attending college information nights, of talking openly and seriously about post-high school plans and of the student's dreams, and of supporting the efforts of counselors and the school in exposing students to college information early in high school.

I. Parent/Alumni Groups

There are 6 Board approved parent/alumni groups: OPRF Alumni Association, APPLE, Boosters, Citizens' Council, Concert Tour Association (CTO), and Parent Teacher Organization (PTO). In its own way, each group actively seeks to support students, parents, and the school. In addition, we propose identifying for each group those activities in which it can participate/be engaged that would directly support the plan to raise student achievement. OPRF administrators would engage the leadership of each group to make those identifications. Finally, these parent and alumni groups can be of invaluable assistance in developing with the community the freshman mentoring program and with it a mentor-to-mentor training program.

J. Transfer Student/Parent Program

Transferring into a new school and community is often a daunting, difficult, frightening event in the life of a high school student. Even with the best of supports, such a transition can easily "make or break" a student's chances of success early on in the process. This year, we began a transfer student program, which must be expanded. In the case of parents/guardians, the program should develop school-to-parent and parent-to-parent sessions utilizing small groups and panels as a way of communication, welcome, acceptance, information, and support. The Program should have quarterly, well-planned meetings with specific topics of interest and need to parents/guardians, as well as an initial/introductory meeting during the summer and prior to school beginning. Again, we would enlist the assistance of our parent and alumni groups for just such a purpose. (See also School AA.)

K. Support (Before/After School) Program(s)

We as a school must expect that parents will support our efforts to raise their and our student's achievement. In some instances due to underachievement, lack of motivation/caring, skill deficiencies, etc., students will need extra help and support. In order to support both the student and the school, parents must support the proposed before and after school Study Center, assignment of behavioral consequences for misconducts, co-curricular programs, etc. The support occurs in conversations with and expectations of the student in the home.

L. Communications Advisory Committee

We propose to review, upgrade, enhance, and expand school-to-parent and parent-to-school communications. We propose to create and establish a Communications Advisory Committee that will serve as an advisory group to the Communications and Community Relations Coordinator, and as appropriate and needed, participate in improving school-to-parent communication, parent-to-school participation, and overall marketing of the school to the community at large. The Committee will be selected and appointed by the Superintendent and Communications and Community Relations Coordinator, and it will be comprised of parents/guardians, representatives from Board approved parent groups/alumni association, parents/guardians of students in Title I program(s), Special Education parents/guardians, parents/guardians who are economically disadvantaged, faculty, administrators, and others.

The Committee's goal in its first year will be to review, critique, and make recommendations for improvement about current school-to-parent and teacher-to-parent communications, and parent-to-school involvement/participation, particularly of minority and underachieving students. (See also School U.)

N. Personal Plan for Achievement and Personal Educational Contract

Parents play the most important and critical role in school achievement, whether academic, athletic, or activity. It is in and from the home that expectations and standards are reflected in the student. If students underachieve, whether the causes are rooted in the family or its relationships or elsewhere, parents/guardians still must take the leadership role with their students. This does not lessen the burden and responsibility of the community, or the school, or the student himself/herself. It simply reinforces the fundamental axiom that "it" begins in the home.

When students underachieve, we expect parents to participate in the development, implementation, and reinforcement of Personal Plans for Achievement and Personal Educational Contracts. (See also Student A.)

III. The High School

A. Define Institutional Excellence

We cannot simply say that we wish to raise student achievement, whether it is for all students or for targeted groups such as minority or special education students. If we are to raise student achievement, then we must first identify what student achievement is and what it looks like at OPRF. We are proposing that we define institutional excellence among our students (i.e., student achievement) both qualitatively and quantitatively. That we define it using agreed upon benchmarks, e.g., PSAE, EPAS (EXPLORE, PLAN, IACT, ACT), college admission, graduation rate, GPA (weighted and unweighted), credits earned, co-curricular participation, etc. We would then apply to those benchmarks, in turn, goals or targets for student achievement over a 3 – 5 year time period, and at the end of those time markers, assess our progress towards that excellence. We propose that the Superintendent establish a school and community committee that would develop such a definition no later than June 1, 2008.

B. Curriculum

As elements of this plan to raise student achievement moves forward, it will invariably collide with other program and initiatives currently underway. In order to minimize such conflict, we are proposing a moratorium on course proposals that would normally be submitted in the fall 2008 for implementation in fall 2009. There will most likely be initiatives and programs touching many if not all divisions as a result of the plan, which in our opinion should take precedence.

Our current curriculum can best be described, in my opinion, as an elective rich curriculum or curriculum rich elective program. Part of the work we envision for division heads and faculty during the next 18 months will be a review of that curriculum. We must be certain that in all divisions it addresses high achieving students', median achieving students', and current under achieving students' needs beyond high school because eventually and within 4 years that is where they will all matriculate.

It appears that high achieving students who come to school "school ready," i.e., possessing the school skills, knowledge, concepts, motivation, desire, goals, etc., achieve quite well within the current curricular structure. But what of the other two groups of students who may not be able to handle, as learners, this type of program? Additionally, it behooves us as an educational institution to be able to clearly identify for and expect from all students that body of knowledge and skills to be mastered.

As a result, we propose that the curriculum review result in all, but not limited to, the following:

- rigorous standards, curricula, and assessments (major unit exams, major projects, and final semester exams) for each course for all students;
- that where there are multiple sections/teachers of the same course, they identify and explicitly state for each course what students should know and be able to do as a result of successful completion of a course, and assess same for accountability;
- the IL State standards are a minimum bar or expectations, and we should establish the OPRF bar for student achievement, which is higher;

- at the minimum, courses should be aligned with EPAS and the selected growth model, norm referenced assessment. This is not to say that we should “teach to the test.” Quite the contrary; however, since we are judged publicly (locally, statewide, and nationally) on norm referenced assessments, then we must incorporate what we know about them into our curriculum and instruction. That can only serve our students well, and it does no harm to the uniqueness of our courses, yet may help with increasing rigor;
- we propose that such a review be accomplished in teams of teachers teaching the same courses, and in teams of teachers within each division/department who may be the sole teacher for a course;
- that in the review we also critically examine the grade level vertical (inter) and horizontal (intra) articulation. (vertical/inter: grades 6 – 12; horizontal/intra: grades 9 – 12). Such a review of course sequencing is to ensure there is minimal duplication and increasing expectations, as well as cross-level sequencing from basic/transitional to regular/college prep, and regular/college prep to accelerated/honors/AP. This latter review is critical if we are going to challenge students to move to higher levels within our curriculum.
- that teachers teaching the same course(s) develop common assessments: final semester exams and major/unit exams;
- that the standards and expectations be widely disseminated to students and parents vis-à-vis the **Academic Catalog** for each department/division; and
- open access to honors/Advanced Placement programs and courses
 - set the expectation that every OPRF graduate will have taken at least one honors/AP course by graduation; select in area(s) of strength;
 - provide rationale beyond college credit and college cost savings, i.e., intrinsic and extrinsic value of a challenging and rigorous curricula;
 - establish an AP Leadership Team composed of the Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, the Director of Assessment and Research, Counselors, Division Heads, Honors/AP teachers, and students enrolled in honors/AP courses for the expressed purpose of identifying how to successfully open access to AP courses, successfully increase AP enrollment, maintain/increase AP scores, and provide professional development for faculty teaching AP courses; and
- honors/AP Summer Institute for students as bridge program.

C. Instruction

As part and parcel of the curriculum review, we must also identify best instructional, placement, professional, and educational practices through research that have had success increasing student achievement particularly among minority and special education students. Examples include the following:

- public and private; state and national (IL: Whitney Young, Cristo Rey, Providence-St. Mel, Lindblom Math and Science Academy; OH: Shaker Heights and Cleveland Heights; WA: Seattle; MD: Montgomery County; PA: Abington; NY: Ossining; OTHER: KIPP);

- utilize the American Youth Policy Forum study of 20 successful school programs for academically at high risk students, including low income and minority students;
- identify, incorporate, implement, expect, and assess appropriately high academic and achievement standards in each course regardless of academic ability level with particular focus on transition/basic and college preparatory/basic levels;
- with specific objectives to prepare for and to encourage student movement from transition/basic to college preparatory/regular and from college preparatory to honors/AP;
- establish an electronic student portfolio system for each student that would house for students and teachers a complete history of student work/achievement;
- explore and utilize as teaching and learning strategies the use of field work and project-based learning as avenues for skill and knowledge acquisition, character development (behavior), and career exploration; and
- work with the community in providing each student a computer/laptop (with software and Internet access) (See also Community I.), and provide intensive technology/computer training in the freshman year to all students

B. and C. Curriculum and Instruction

Two of the themes that run through this plan are 1. start early in high school to address inhibitors and accelerants to student achievement; and 2. begin some programs with the entering Class of 2012. One proposal is to develop a highly coordinated, structured, and supportive program for freshmen and sophomores that sets high curricular, instructional, and behavioral expectations. In addition, such a program would have current graduation requirements framed within the following school-within-a-school model:

- English, math, science, history, reading, and composition;
- identify and implement best instructional practices for reading and composition;
- intensive guidance support services;
- a challenging curriculum, best instructional practices, data driven; and
- identification based on EXPLORE scores, earned middle school grades, and middle school teacher recommendation.

Currently, our Collaborative Learning Model is essentially piloting this model. We propose to expand and extend it.

In addition and just as importantly, we propose that only college preparatory/regular and honors/AP courses be offered junior and senior years. This would clearly raise the bar for student achievement, demand of ourselves and our students a rigorous and challenging curriculum, and motivate underachieving students. While it would be easy to argue that such a direction would discourage underachieving students, we believe that the supports and programs proposed at the freshman and sophomore years would prepare students and that we would identify and continue some of those same supports in grades 11 and 12.

D. Professional Development

Raising student achievement is the result of hard and smart work on the part of parents, community, school, and students. The professional development of faculty and

administrators is a critical component of that framework. To that end we are proposing the following:

- CRISS and PBIS training for all faculty;
- develop an instructional coaching model to implement best practices;
- expand and strengthen the current Induction and Mentoring Program for new faculty for years 1 through 4; work with Faculty Senate to accomplish same;
- develop and implement an internal professional development program regarding race and student achievement;
 - readings and discussions among certified staff led by facilitator re: identifying and mitigating personal and systemic barriers to minority student achievement;
 - increasing all certified staff members' knowledge about race;
 - equip all staff with knowledge and experience necessary to build meaningful and instructionally effective relationships with students of different color than themselves;
 - identify, equip, and develop strategies to mitigate race as a determining factor in teaching and in relationships with students;
- continue the Professional Learning Teams model currently in use to research, implement, and evaluate curricular and instructional initiatives; and
- charge the Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Principal, and Division Heads with developing a comprehensive, sustainable professional development program for faculty specifically targeting student achievement.

E. Assessment

Consistent with the curriculum review noted above, review current course assessments and ensure alignment with standards, curriculum, norm referenced assessments, and high expectations. In addition, we propose to develop an achievement assessment growth model and system utilizing a norm referenced assessment in concert with our Associate School Districts 90 and 97. Using such a model we intend to track our students' achievement K – 12 (or whenever they enter our Associate Schools or OPRF until separation or graduation). We will also utilize this growth model system to communicate with parents re: student achievement. We must identify the assessment(s) we will use and use it/them to measure our successes and failures.

The District has already approved a contract with Mastery Manager, a data information system software program. We propose to train faculty on Mastery Manager and to utilize this system so that each teacher can acquire timely data about their students' achievement on assessments and so that they may make curricular/instructional decisions accordingly.

We must communicate with students the importance of both days of the Prairie State Achievement Exam (PSAE). We must communicate to them and their parents/guardians the explicit intent and accountability of the PSAE and information about its make-up, scoring, etc. To that end, we must also examine carefully the results of the pilot ACT Prep course during second semester of this year, and the course to be offered for 2007-2008.

We must carefully examine transfer students' achievement data upon entering grades 9, 10, 11, or 12, and make comparisons to students having matriculated from our Associate Schools. We must report out the number and percentage of transfer students among grade level cohorts, as well as comparisons re: norm referenced tests between the same set of students.

Through a review of the curriculum, establishment of standards, assessments, and expectations; instructional best practices research and implementation; professional development; development of a comprehensive assessment system; improved communication between school and parent/guardian; we seek to develop a culture of data driven research, teaching, and learning.

F. Co-curricular Program

We have already begun a review of co-curricular minority coach/sponsor and student participation/representation. We will develop strategies to increase same. Yet, at the same time, we will identify specific under-involved students; develop and implement a plan for outreach, participation, and maintenance.

Additionally, we will enhance our efforts to engage incoming freshmen from Districts 90 and 97, as well as our Associate private/parochial students to increase their participation. Transfer student previous co-curricular participation information will help identify areas where they might be immediately engaged upon entrance into OPRF. Our intramural program should be reviewed per Community E.

G. Associate School Articulation

This fall we proposed to our Associate Schools an articulation model for grades 6-11. This has already begun with efforts at the Superintendent, curriculum leadership, and Principal levels, and we are working to implement articulation in 5 areas (English/Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, History/Social Studies, and Assessment) within this first semester, as well. (The proposed model is attached.) If we are to make gains in minority student achievement, then a deep and sustained articulation system with our Associate Schools is vital. When students enter OPRF, they and we have 2 ½ academic years to prepare before the PSAE is administered in the spring of junior year. Aside from this high stakes assessment, we and they have only 4 academic years to bring students to grade level and beyond. Without a fundamentally sound footing and preparation in literacy/reading, mathematics, skills (time management, test taking, organization, etc.), writing/composition, and overall "school readiness," we will not be able to meet this challenge. Students who enter OPRF from our Associate Schools are all our students, i.e., both the high school and elementary schools. If we both recognize that, then together we can articulate an academic program that meets and overcomes the challenges of underachieving students.

H. Freshmen Transition to High School Program

We have begun a review and revision of the current student and parent transition to high school program in terms of logistics and information. Our Principal has taken charge of this, and our goal is to make the process clearer, simpler, more user friendly, and provide

“in-time” information to students and parents. Middle school principals have already endorsed some of the changes we’ve made. We are also working to be sensitive to the needs of private/parochial school students and parents, as well.

The program will culminate in a freshman day: a day-long series of activities in large and small groups that include school information, school and class expectations, spirit building, co-curricular options and opportunities, high school life, meeting classmates and upper classmen, class schedule, and developing a “class of” identity. The day will be coordinated through the Principal and Assistant Principal for Student Activities. Small groups will be developed and led by teams of 2 teachers and 2 upperclassmen each.

Most importantly, however, we will review the overall freshman transition in terms of student achievement information shared between our Associate Schools and OPRF. This will be a part of the articulation efforts, and we anticipate beginning those discussions and an exchange of information about students so that we can better place students in academic classes and identify areas of greatest need.

I. Freshmen Mentoring Program

The school plays a vital role in this initiative. While we are asking the community to play a major role in this, we know that our responsibility is great, as well. Our objective is to accomplish this together with the community and parents. (See also Community A.)

J. Review and Evaluation of Current Initiatives

Attached, please find the beginnings of a review of our curricular/instructional and co-curricular initiatives currently in place. For now, it is an identification of those initiatives and data about them. Our goal in this review is to identify those programs which are having an impact and those which are not. Where we can merge/revise programs and utilize human and financial resources more effectively, we will. Those are difficult decisions to make; however, it is our belief that there are overlapping efforts taking place and that by reviewing current programs we can identify where a greater impact can be made with changes.

Our co-curricular review has also begun with particular attention to minority student and coach/sponsor participation/representation. In addition, we will review the following for possible inclusion: seasonal mini-fairs to market opportunities to students; work with the Oak Park Township Office to review and revise/expand as necessary and feasible our intramural program; identify and develop additional non-competitive co-curricular opportunities; and work with the Oak Park Park District in the development of its Teen Center.

K. Review of Discipline System

We know that individual and overall student achievement is strongly supported by a fair, equitable, and clearly stated discipline system that embodies high standards for student conduct. Just as important is the delivery of that discipline system. At the regular June Board meeting, the administration was asked to review our current discipline system, its implementation, and make recommendations for change. To that end the Assistant

Principal for Student Health and Safety will convene a group of OPRF administrators, faculty, staff, and students to review the discipline system, and to make recommendations. Those recommendations will be made to the Joint Committee on Student Discipline. We will revise the Committee's membership and structure but adhere to the guidelines in the IL School Code and Board policy regarding the Committee, and provide a timeline for its work.

This notwithstanding, it appears that we have already seen a very positive development in student conduct this year. The number of serious infractions (i.e., those with out-of-school suspension consequences and expulsions) are fewer in number. We believe this is the direct result of the good and diligent efforts of our Pupil Support Services (PSS) Teams and model we instituted. (See also School P.)

L. Mini-IL Student Achievement Network

As a result of our membership and involvement in the national Minority Student Achievement Network (MSAN), we will reach out to local area high school MSAN members plus at least two others to identify best practices and learn from each other's challenges, successes, and failures. These include but are not limited to Evanston, Homewood Flossmoor, Hoffman Estates, Bloomington, and OPRF, and we will work to create an informal mini-IL student achievement network.

M. Parent/Student Outreach

The responsibility for initiating this outreach rests with the school. We propose to work this year so that outreach may begin with the entering freshman Class of 2012. (See also Parent B.)

N. College and Career Center

We propose to re-establish a College and Career Center but with significant changes. The Center's purpose would be to develop an overall post-secondary (college, careers, military, etc.) awareness, information, and assistance program for students and parents. The Center's staff would work closely and in tandem with Counselors as well as with individual and groups of students. The Center would identify a college path for entering freshmen, and develop a systematic, regular, comprehensive, 9-12 program for same. College/career rep visitations, information evenings, college application/enrollment processes, college visitations, etc., would be a part of the Center's responsibility.

The Center would be staffed with a certified professional whose background would include (or be eligible for/working towards) a Type 73 certificate and have successful experience in college/career counseling either at the high school or college level. We would direct the Assistant Principal for Student Services and a select group of Counselors to identify, research, and make site visits to other high schools who have such Centers.

O. Student Involvement and Feedback/Surveys/Focus Groups

(See also Student L.)

P. Pupil Support Services (PSS) Teams

This year, Counselors and Deans have worked diligently (and thus far successfully) in implementing a holistic, team approach to student issues, and in particular student social/emotional/behavioral issues. Counselors, Deans, Social Workers, and community agency personnel have and continue to develop strategies for student issues for students, parents, PSS Teams, and for OPRF staff. Each PSS Team consists of 3 Counselors, 1 Dean, and 1 Social Worker. PSS Teams have also met with community agencies to determine the level of support services they might provide OPRF, its students, and parents. PSS Teams are also developing presentations for divisions and faculty (and possibly staff at a later date) re: strategies for individual teachers.

In order to move forward even further, we are proposing that the PSS Teams identify, investigate, and research other schools that successfully utilize the following models and strategies and implement same here at OPRF:

1. an overall 4-year program for meeting with students in small, grade alike groups for the purpose of identifying grade level specific information/paths – stressing school and personal expectations, personal goals, and college/post-secondary education;
2. social and emotional groups, e.g., grief, loss, self-image, etc.; and
3. alternative to in-school and out-of-school suspension programs.

Q. Advisory System

Advisory systems have been implemented successfully in some high schools and not in others, and in recent years the attempts to (re)establish them in some high schools have met with mixed results. Issues surrounding advisory systems are contractual, clearly stated purpose, curriculum, training of staff, logistics and time, and cost, etc. OPRF's history of advisories dates back 40+ years to homeroom periods as a part of lunch. More recently, a freshman advisory was begun then dropped three years later (1984-1987) for some of the same reasons as noted above but mostly due to costs. If we were to propose an OPRF advisory system, it would have to overcome those challenges; however, we believe that the primary purposes of an advisory are 1. communication; and 2. developing meaningful relationships with adults and other students in the same small, non-classroom settings over a 4-year time period. At this time, we are proposing that a select group of faculty, administrators, and Board members appointed by the Superintendent investigate successful, public, high school advisory programs (may include a variety of structures), and report findings to the Building and District Leadership Teams for review and possible recommendation to the Board.

R. Triton College Partnership

Recent statistics regarding OPRF graduates who matriculated to Triton College are significantly encouraging. They reveal that our students utilize Triton as an initial college entry point and then successfully matriculate to the very same colleges/universities that many of their classmates did upon high school graduation. This simply reinforces what we already know: life and the people who live it do so developmentally. In addition, Triton (and other community colleges) offers programs that terminate in an Associate of Arts (AA) degree. Students need to be made aware of these, as well. In order to take

advantage of the opportunities that Triton College offers our students, we must be more fully aware of its programs and opportunities, and we must then identify those paths for students and parents early on in high school. Our College/Career Center would provide that engagement, information, and service.

S. Career Center

OPRF is part of the Des Plaines Valley Region, a relationship required for high schools and community colleges in IL. Each high school belongs to such a region. I have had the opportunity to be a part of a long time and highly successful region in DuPage County: the DuPage Area Occupational and Educational System (DAOES), which operates a career center in Addison, IL: the Technology Center of DuPage (TCD). I have already proposed to the DVR that utilizing TCD in DuPage County and the Lake County Career Center as models, we investigate the appropriateness of developing such a center for our students in partnership with Triton College.

T. College/University Partnership

Within a 2 hour drive of Oak Park and River Forest, there are over 20 4-year colleges and universities. Many of them have long-standing and successful teacher preparation programs. In addition, within a 3 hour drive, there are at least 10 major research universities (University of Chicago, Northwestern, Notre Dame, Purdue, University of IL at Chicago, University of IL at Urbana, Northern IL University, University of Wisconsin Madison, Loyola University, and DePaul University). We propose the creation and establishment of a high school-university partnership for the expressed purpose of researching, developing, and implementing curricular, instructional, and professional development strategies to raise minority student achievement.

U. Communications Advisory Committee

(See also Parent M.)

V. Study Center

(See also Student I.)

W. Student Recognition Programs

Appropriate student recognition for achievement whether it is academic, athletic, activity, or personal builds pride and motivation in people but particularly in students. We propose to review our student recognition programs and incorporate in them the recognition of high achieving students as well as those who have overcome obstacles to achieve personal goals. (See also Community H.)

X. Community Service

Community Service has been voluntary in schools for years, mostly as part of co-curricular clubs and experiences. Some schools, though not many at this juncture, have required and documented community service as a graduation requirement. Community service provides many of the same types of motivations and experiences that co-curriculars do, but they are in the community and are often driven by student selection and

choice. OPRF should identify those schools that have community service as a graduation requirement and explore the viability and feasibility for same. (See also Community C.)

Y. Student Leadership, Participation, and Input

One way to increase positive student climate and thus to improve the likelihood of improved student achievement is to authentically involve students in the development, implementation, and evaluation of school programs, life, etc. We propose to review such existing opportunities and to appropriately expand them. These include but are not limited to formative and summative course evaluations; tutoring/mentoring freshmen; experiences such as those provided in Senior Instructional Leadership Core (SILC); promoting to and training of faculty in class activities that place students in leadership roles; and placing students on committees and groups within the school and District, e.g., interview teams for faculty and administrators.

Z. School Day Time

Classroom instructional time is limited to 48 minutes per day and 177 days per academic year. This time should be the most valued of all vis-à-vis student achievement. In the normal day of a high school there are many opportunities for distractions, announcements, interruptions, and temporary absence of students from classes (e.g., field trips, meetings, etc.) We must 1. review all non-classroom based activities conducted during school days for appropriateness and relationship to student achievement; 2. reduce classroom time interruptions (school wide and individual classroom) to the maximum extent possible; and 3. assign responsibility for monitoring of classroom time to division heads and the Principal.

AA. Transfer Student/Parent Program

As noted earlier, we have begun this year a Transfer Student Program under the aegis of the Athletic Director and Assistant Principal for Student Activities. This program must be expanded to include the following:

- requirement to participate;
- identification of student academic status in reading and mathematics, as well as academic content and skill needs vis-à-vis an assessment instrument;
- tracking of academic growth and achievement as separate subgroup;
- academic transition services in first year as need is identified per above;
- expansion of student orientation of and assimilation into OPRF via counselor, athletic, activity, and student life; and
- add parent/guardian orientation component

BB. Summer Program

The school would take the primary leadership role in developing and implementing this summer program; however, it cannot be achieved without the active and deep involvement of the community, parents, and students. If this program is to be successful, then it can only happen with a true partnership among the 4 groups. (See also Community B.)

CC. Senior Year Internships

We propose that during the senior year, each OPRF graduate would be required to enroll in and to successfully complete an internship within or outside the community. (See also Community D. and Student K.)

DD. Technology

We are proposing that computers be readily accessible to and for students as described in Community I. In addition, elsewhere in the plan there are references to intensive technology training freshman year and technology workshops for parents. (See also Community I.)

EE. Parent Programs

Just as we expect parents/guardians to attend formal, announced parent events at school, so, too, should we review the purpose, function, impact, and success of our current parent events. This review will be conducted by the Principal, who will enlist the assistance and input of faculty, administrators, and parents. Included in this review will be a search of other successful school to parent outreach efforts and parent programs at other schools, especially for academically at-risk/underachieving students.

FF. Homework

There has been conflicting research within the past several years at the university level regarding the efficacy and need for homework; yet, teachers, parents, and community alike continue to stress its importance for students in acquiring knowledge and skills. In order to best develop and assign homework, we propose that a representative group of faculty from each division investigate the available research and develop a set of OPRF homework guidelines and provide professional development for the development of appropriate homework within each department/division.

GG. Special Education

You will note that very little if any reference is made to special education student achievement. The reason is twofold: 1. the Special Education Division is currently involved in several initiatives directly targeting student achievement. They include the following:

1. LD Program
 - 9th grade math;
 - Reading (Reading Lab);
 - Academic Strategies class for grades 9 and 10; and
 - Post-high school transitions.
2. ED Program
 - Behavior Specialist;
 - PBIS Program (Positive Behavior Intervention Strategies); and
 - tardies and attendance improvement.
3. TEAM Program
 - Post-high school transition curriculum and assessment tools;
 - Expose students to post-high school transition services;

- Task analysis for independent, specific site jobs; and
 - Creation of work stations to teach and enhance those skills.
4. Social Workers and Psychologists
- Developing and piloting measurable IEP goals and benchmarks that are aligned with the IL social and emotional state standards

IV. The Student

A. Personal Plan for Achievement and Personal Educational Contract

Many students who achieve academically, athletically, in activities, and personally do so because they are intrinsically/extrinsically motivated and/or who are part of familial and community culture of belief, expectations, goals, and resulting achievement. Many students who are not and who do not achieve in school do not have that profile. As a result, we must place in front of and expect those students to acquire them. We are proposing that underachieving students develop and commit to a Personal Plan for Achievement and a Personal Educational Contract.

The Plan for Achievement would be developed by the student seeking advice and counsel from his/her counselor, parent/guardian, and mentor (if applicable). The Contract would be developed among the student, parent, Counselor, and mentor (if applicable). Both the Plan and Contract would be developed as a means of early identification and prevention (entering freshmen), as well as early identification and intervention. The Plan and Contract would be written for 1. entering freshmen students who have underachieved in the 8th grade using norm referenced tests, grades earned over the year, and teacher/counselor recommendation; and 2. OPRF students who earn grades of D or less in two or more courses.

Students who are required to establish Contracts will necessarily develop Personal Plans for Achievement. Such Plans and Contracts would include but not be limited to realistic, doable, achievable, and measurable goals, targets, and objectives and incentives or consequences for reaching/not reaching them in the following areas:

- attendance and punctuality, as reported by teachers and school record;
- academic effort and success, i.e., grades;
- classroom participation, as reported by teachers;
- homework completion, as reported by teachers and reflected in grades;
- behavioral/self-discipline expectations, as reported by Counselors and Deans and as reflected in his/her misconduct record;
- co-curricular involvement and participation, as reported by coaches and sponsors; and a
- healthy lifestyle (attitude, physical, emotional, behavioral), as reported by parents, teachers, coaches, sponsors, and mentors (if applicable). (See also Parents N.)

B. Expectations and Habits of Achievement

All students at OPRF should internalize those habits of achievement that we as adults know are necessary for success in school and in life. As a school and community it is our responsibility to expect that students develop those and to hold them accountable for same. It is also our collective responsibility to set academic expectations, standards, and goals to which students strive and achieve. Achievement requires stretching oneself – intellectually, emotionally, behaviorally – and internalizing that parents/guardians, school, and community believe in their capacity to achieve. Our words and actions to and with our students must speak to these expectations and beliefs in real, meaningful, and sincere ways such that students know we care about them as people, as our students, and as our

children. As a result, we must identify what those habits of achievement are and clearly communicate them to students. Students, in turn, must commit to their development and to exhibit these habits by their actions. They include but are not limited to the following:

- self-advocacy, reflection, and self-evaluation skills;
- belief in self;
- confidence and pride in self;
- belief in parents/teachers/coaches/sponsors/mentors;
- sense of belonging at OPRF and in the community;
- perseverance, resilience, and never, ever give up;
- optimism about self, peers, adults, life, community, and future;
- self-discipline;
- failure is not an option or an acceptable fall back position;
- success is the only goal;
- work to earn and to achieve self-esteem;
- set realistic, doable, achievable goals; and
- expect much of self and meet those expectations.

C. School Commitment

Students who achieve believe that the peers, adults, and institutions around them will be there to help, guide, and support them. They must believe and have the abiding hope that we won't let them fail.

D. Goals and Goal Setting

As part of the Habits of Achievement, students must set personal, academic, and co-curricular goals and targets. While it is a parent's/guardian's and school's responsibility to help them develop these, it is clearly and definitively the student's responsibility to be responsible for their development and achievement. Furthermore, it is their responsibility to develop short and long term goals, and to monitor progress towards their achievement.

E. Community Service

Part of living within a community is the responsibility to participate and to be engaged in it and to leave it a better place for having done so. We are proposing that we expect every OPRF graduate to have provided some type of documented community service within their four years of high school. It may be credit/non-credit bearing, it may be in the form of an internship, or it may be during the school year or vacation periods (See also Community C. and School X.).

F. Faculty Staff, Mentor, Community Adult Relationships

Students should be openly expected to accept and to develop offers from faculty/staff, mentor(s), and other community adults to establish meaningful relationships.

G. Course Load

Currently, there are approximately 1,600 students (50%) at OPRF who are enrolled in a Study Hall, Late Arrival, and/or Early Dismissal. While some of these are guided and structured study halls, many are not. In addition, many students are unable to discipline themselves to study, be organized, and to use this time productively. We also know that class time, i.e., engagement of the intellect in some type of class, will result in greater learning, acquisition of skills, and thus achievement. We are proposing that as a norm, a student's normal course load be 7 classes, and that in order to take a Study Hall, he/she meet specific criteria for same. Furthermore, we propose that Study Halls be arranged, staffed, and structured for just that – places where productive study takes place. Study halls would be assigned only for specific and legitimate academic purposes/reasons. Late Arrivals and Early Dismissals would also be assigned only for specific and legitimate academic purposes/reasons.

H. Demonstrate Success

Demonstrate successful acquisition of the stated and expected knowledge and skills for each course passed.

I. Study Center

In order to assist students and help students help themselves, we propose a required Study Center if he/she earns a grade of less than C in any course. The Study would be in operation before and after school each school day, Monday through Friday, before or after school, for one hour. Student exemption and release from the Study Center would be based on weekly grade checks. Students may, however, continue to access the Study Center when grades rise to C or higher; however, access is open only to those students for whom Study Center had been required during that same semester. The Study Center will be staffed by community volunteers, student volunteers, and at least one OPRF staff who will supervise the Study Center. This is to begin with the freshman Class of 2012.

J. Student Academic Learning Teams

We propose to create and establish Student Academic Learning Teams based on the faculty and administrator Professional Learning Teams model currently in use at OPRF. A Student Academic Learning Team is a small group of students who have in common student academic interest, grade level and/or courses, and academic needs. A Team would provide peer encouragement, support, motivation, assistance, networking, and peer acceptance. Teams could meet before or after school, in evenings, and/or on weekends. Being a part of a Team would bring camaraderie, acceptance, positive identification with the Team for many students who feel isolated, alone, and unsure of themselves and others. Students initially targeted for Teams would be those students “in the middle,” i.e., students who fall into the 40% -60% tile of academic achievement, and/or transfer students who may need to develop relationships quickly that would also support their efforts to be academically successful.

K. Senior Year Internship

We are proposing that each senior, beginning with the entering freshman Class of 2012, be required to enroll in and successfully complete a Senior Year Internship. Internships would be unpaid, but receive academic credit and be a part of graduation requirements. Faculty and administrators would work with students in identifying acceptable and meaningful internships within the community and possibly outside the community. Because internships would carry academic credit and grades, rigorous standards, expectations, and experiences, work would be expected, completed, and assessed. As a beginning point, OPRF would utilize the internship mode as developed by the Critical Skills Foundation, which utilizes, in part, SCANS (Secretary's Committee on Achieving Necessary Skills). (See also Community D. and School CC.).

L. Student Involvement and Feedback/Surveys/Focus Groups

Appropriate student voice in the affairs of a high school is important as it provides timely, insightful, and general trend information by which to develop and to assess programs and initiatives. Some of the ways in which we as a high school can both improve school climate and determine student acceptance, meaning, and satisfaction is to provide opportunities for student involvement/participation and feedback.

The appropriate involvement of students in the development of programs and initiatives, participation in department, division, school, and District planning and committees sends strong messages to the student body that they are valued, respected, and considered in the development of areas which affect them directly. We propose that a small group of faculty and administrators identify those areas, codify them, and implement same.

Student feedback can only be useful if we collect, aggregate, disaggregate, analyze, make meaning of, and use the results to evaluate programs and initiatives. This can be done with every other year feedback/follow-up surveys of our graduates on a variety of topics, surveys of programs/initiatives targeted and affected students, and to conduct focus groups of students. We propose that these mechanisms become a routine part of how "business" is conducted, and that the Superintendent assign same to appropriate individuals, groups, departments, and divisions.