

LAKE FOREST COMMUNITY HIGH SCHOOL EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Tuesday, May 2, 2017, 7:30 am

MINUTES

Committee Members Present: Lise Eliot (Chair), Sally Davis, Diana Kreiling, Sharon Scott, Gail Gamrath, Judith Arnstein, Jeff Giannelli, Michael Simeck, Chala Holland, and Alan Wahlert.

Others: Reese Marcusson (Board President), Jim Sullivan (Assistant Principal), Kathy O'Hara (Student and Community Service Coordinator), Frank Lesniak (Dean), Bob Cummings (guest)

The meeting was called to order at 7:34 am and roll call taken for committee members.

- I. The minutes of the February 14, 2017 meeting were reviewed and approved without amendment on a motion by Judith Arnstein, seconded by Gail Gamrath.
- II. The first item for discussion was an overview of several "Career Connections" initiatives, presented by Jim Sullivan and Kathy O'Hara. The aim of these efforts is to provide every student with knowledge about careers and different types of work, and to help them establish a career goal before they graduate. The four-year career readiness plan includes three strands: 1) self-awareness, whereby students use assessments such as Myers-Briggs to identify areas of strength and interests; 2) career exploration, which involves exposing students to the real day-to-day activities in different workplaces through classroom, shadowing and internship opportunities; and 3) educational goal-setting, where students will combine their interests and experiences to identify specific job goals and the educational pathway they will need to achieve them. It was noted that all of these strands will eventually be tracked as part of the Personal Learning Profile that ECRA is setting up.

The first such initiative to be developed was the Open Doors program, which has been running for 12 years under Ms. O'Hara's leadership. This program places students in a variety of job shadowing and service experiences during two non-attendance days in November. Last fall, 198 students participated in Open Doors, which represented 13 of the 16 identified career clusters. Students receive an orientation in business etiquette before their shadowing experiences. Ms. O'Hara expressed that 198 participants is a good benchmark, but we would like to do better. The hurdle is always identifying enough mentors across the full spectrum of careers. She and Mr. Sullivan are already reaching out to APT, the LFHS Foundation, the Chamber of Commerce and the Rotary Club, and have joined the CLC Workforce Committee, but more contacts are needed to enhance the number and range of mentoring partnerships.

Mr. Sullivan then outlined the four levels of career exposure/opportunities that LFHS is building. The first level is classroom exposure, such as having professionals present in class or designing classroom activities with real-word application, such as "Today we will be chemical engineers" in Chemistry classes. To better assess how we are doing at this level, Mr. Sullivan has undertaken a mapping effort, to identify all of the places in which our curriculum exposes students to each of the

16 clusters. This information will be added to the Guide to Courses, where the plan is to create a set of “menu icons” for students and parents to quickly see how every course relates to one or more career clusters.

The second level of career exposure is shadowing/mentoring opportunities, such as the Open Doors and Business Incubator programs. The third level will be a Career Fair, the first of which is scheduled for April 17, 2018. And the fourth level of exposure is a formal internship program, which is being offered for the first time this summer. Open to rising juniors and seniors, the internships involve a minimum of 20 hours of exposure. Nine such internships are available over the coming summer, and 13 students have thus far applied for the positions.

In discussing these various initiatives, committee members praised the effort and expressed the opinion that such exposure and career planning should be “required” of every graduating student. The good news is that all stakeholders (teachers, counselors, administrators and parents) are on-board with this goal, so it is just a matter of finding the right mentors in some clusters, and of overcoming competing commitments to make time for career connections. We are clearly in a building phase now, but are taking a strong, holistic approach (involving not just courses, but also clubs, shadowing, internships and a career fair) that will allow us to catch-up quickly in this important initiative. Mr. Sullivan added that this initiative will be helpful for identifying students qualifying for the IBSE’s new “Distinguished scholar” designation that is based on both academic and career/college-readiness benchmarks.

- III. The second presentation was by Chala Holland and Frank Lesniak on the status of the Multi-tiered System of Supports (MTSS) at LFHS. Dr. Holland introduced the topic, stating that this initiative relates to a national concern about how special education is implemented. Generally speaking, there has been an over-identification of students requiring special education. It is recommended far too early and for far too many of our students (18%). The goal for MTSS is to “meet students where they are” and provide the support that most students need to achieve solid educational and behavioral growth, without having to slot so many in the special education pool.

MTSS specifies three levels of support for student learning: Tier 1, which includes peer tutoring and department resources centers where students can get help during free periods and study halls; Tier 2, where the support is more targeted to help individuals in specific domains such as math, reading, and executive functions; and Tier 3, for students who need even more academic catch-up, through enrollment in smaller classes that focus on fundamental skill development. According to this new system, students won’t be recommended for a Tier 3 course unless they have exhausted teacher support at levels 1 and 2.

Discussion focused on: 1) the good news that student support has become de-stigmatized through these many efforts (“Getting support is not a bad thing”); 2) how the resource centers have become more welcoming and facilitators are able to set up students with one-on-one help; 3) the value of the peer tutoring program, which has grown dramatically and included 170 peer tutors this

year; 4) Thursday morning Personal Learning Time (PLT), which is also well-utilized but needs to recruit more of the reluctant students; 5) utilization of Learning Facilitator consultants to help teachers who are struggling to reach individual students or to support small groups of students; 6) the general issue of how to promote greater utilization of all these resources by students who are not performing as well (e.g., those in the C/D grade range).

Lastly, we heard briefly about some plans for 2017-18, including a program for Navigating Educational Transitions (NET) such as hospital stays, enhancements for English-language Learners (ELL), and plans for before- and after-school tutoring, especially focused on Executive Functions.

There was not enough time for Dr. Holland to show a video about Peer Tutoring that was produced to advertise the program to students, but committee members and others can view it here:

<http://lfhsnewmedia.com/video/play/d03vv9sNfXyH>

IV. Adjournment was at 9:01 am.

Submitted by Lise Eliot, 25-July-2017.