



Oak Park Elementary School District 97

260 Madison Oak Park Illinois 60302 ph: 708.524.3000 fax: 708.524.3019 www.op97.org

TO: Members, Board of Education
Dr. Carol Kelley, Superintendent

FROM: Michael Arensdorff, Senior Director of Technology

SUBJECT: Hybrid Learning – Audio Microphone Solution

DATE: December 15, 2020

Hybrid Learning Spaces

I have been completing some testing on the audio and video components of the hybrid planning. This has included numerous conversations and collaboration with districts around the Chicagoland area. I have leveraged the IETL organization in which I serve on the board to learn and share experiences to provide a solid recommendation for these learning experiences. On Friday, December 11, I, along with Eboney Lofton and Amanda Siegfried recorded in a Julian classroom to demonstrate the technical, physical and pieces of the instructional aspect of a hybrid classroom. As part of the testing, I shared how the support of the board through the technology plans over the last seven years have set the district up to have many of the resources to support a 21st Century classroom and learning environment. However; there is one aspect that most districts are having to solve, and that is the audio component in the classroom to extend to the students that are remote. This requires a higher quality microphone that will pick up sound throughout the room to the computer which will project to the students via Zoom (live streaming). I have tested over five different solutions and have found, via my research and from the IETL districts that have implemented similar scenarios, what I believe is the best solution for District 97. From all of them the recommended solution is a quality solution, at a cost-effective price point. There are many solutions that are hundreds of dollars and may be the best solution for other environments and districts, but for what District 97 needs, I have found a solution that is streamlined for staff that is truly plug and play and high quality to support the hybrid environment. This solution is estimated to cost \$27,050. I am working with the vendor to get the best pricing and ensure they will arrive on time. While these portable microphones will be ideal for supporting hybrid learning they will be an asset in the future for any other remote learning that may occur. For example, they would be very helpful for a guest speaker to participate and share their expertise from around the world and still hear the entire class with this tool. I will be seeking approval of this expense from the board. Without this purchase the audio quality and remote instruction will be an issue for the remote students and lead to a very different learning experience from the students who are onsite.

As an action step to ensure the delivery of equipment to support the transition to the hybrid learning plan we would be seeking approval of this prior to winter break. Since there is only one board meeting, we will be seeking approval on December 15, 2020. I shared information about this type of solution during the December 1, 2020 board meeting, but still was completing additional testing to ensure we have the most cost-effective solution. The solution with the best pricing was found on Amazon and we would be asking for the approval of the purchase not to exceed \$30,000. We believe the pricing will be at or under \$27,000, however; to ensure all

necessary spaces are covered we are seeking about a 10% rate for any shipping or addition quantity needs.