

Official Minutes of the  
Oak Park Board of Education District 97  
260 Madison Street, Oak Park  
November 14, 2023 Regular Meeting

This meeting was held in-person and virtually using Livestream. Board members met in person along with Administration.

President Kearney called the meeting to order at 6:04 p.m.

Present: Kearney, Moore, Ross Dribin, Kim, Hurd Johnson, Spurlock (left at 6:40pm)

Absent: Burns

Also Present: Superintendent Dr. Ushma Shah, Assistant Superintendents Dr. Luis De Leon & Patrick Robinson, Assistant Superintendent of Finance & Operations Dr. Sheila Johnson, Chief Learning Innovation Officer Dr. Eboney Lofton, Chief Technology Officer Michael Arensdorff, Senior Director of Communications Amanda Siegfried, Senior Director of Data Analytics Anna Colaner, Interim Senior Director Human Resources Dr. Christine Zelaya, Director of Finance Torrance Giles, Financial Consultant Robert Grossi and Lonya Boose Board Secretary.

ROLL CALL

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Spurlock moved, seconded by Kim that the Board move into executive session for the purpose of Appointment, Employment, Compensation, Discipline, Performance, or Dismissal of Specific Employees, Collective Negotiating and Litigation.5 ILCS 120/2(C)(1)(2)(11) at 6:06 p.m.

EXECUTIVE  
SESSION

**OPEN SESSION**

President Kearney motioned that the Board move into Open Session at 6:36 p.m. All present members of the Board were in agreement. The Board convened in Open Session at 7:02 p.m.

OPEN  
SESSION

**5. PUBLIC COMMENT**

Debbie Tomalis & Stephanie Suerth

It's American Education Week, a week dedicated to honor the team of people who work in our nation's public schools, and of course, November is a time to be grateful for all that we have in our lives. Stephanie and I would like to take this opportunity to express our gratitude for the people in D97 that make this district what it is through the work they do every day from sun up to sun down to provide for our students and our community.

Teaching is often a thankless job, and we see you. We acknowledge your work, and we honor you.

Thank you to the Student Support Specialists who help students stay on track with their schoolwork.

PUBLIC  
COMMENT

Thank you to the Social Workers who keep encouraging students and help teach them skills to handle their big emotions.

Thank you to the Speech Language Pathologists who teach students how to use their voices and how to work together.

Thank you to the Design teachers who prepare our students for future careers in new technology.

Thank you to the Art teachers for instilling creativity in our students and providing works of art throughout our buildings.

Thank you to the Music teachers Vocal, Instrumental, and General for inspiring students to showcase their talents and grow their abilities in performance spaces.

Thank you to the PE and Health teachers for creating spaces for students to nourish their love of movement and sports as well as learn to be healthy humans.

Thank you to the Librarians who foster a love of reading and who fight to protect our students' freedom to read.

Thank you to the Nurses who nurture and help our students who are sick and not feeling well.

Thank you, Special Education Teachers, Co-Teachers, Case Managers, Resource Teachers who have such enthusiasm and patience with the kids and who protect a students' freedom to learn.

Thank you, World Language & Immersion teachers who pour your heart and soul into daily lessons and open access, to the world for a future as globally minded citizens.

Thank you, Student Success Coaches for believing in students' dreams and guiding them into their futures.

Thank you to our UDL coordinators for being more than just a teacher or mentor, for helping all stakeholders work together to encourage student success.

Thank you to our Teacher Mentor for guiding our new educators into success in D97.

Thank you to our Occupational Therapists for evaluating and helping our students to live independently and experience school with their peers.

Thank you to our Psychologists for working face-to-face with children and families in individual and group settings to help solve conflicts and problems.

Thank you to our Multi-Needs Special Education Teachers for preparing our students to become participating members of their communities.

Thank you to our Reading and Math Interventionists for providing high- quality instructional interventions that meet the needs of all students and working to ensure high levels of understanding with students.

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Nick Bridge

Good evening, I am Nick Bridge, a longtime Oak Park resident. I happen to be a member of the Oak Park Climate Action Network and currently serve on the Village commission. I am here to talk to you about the policy you will be considering later this evening. I just want to say we are very pleased to see you taking this matter seriously. District 97 is one of the larger land owners in town with 10-schools and as you are probably aware, the Village plan identified your schools take up two-thirds of the carbon footprint. I like the policy statement; I think it's an important first step in endorsing the idea of a sustainability task force. I can also suggest some people with expertise in this field. I like the idea of a staff member being designated to lead this work; I think its extremely important. Thirdly, I think cooperation with other governmental agencies is also very important. In particular, the Village has experience and would be a helpful resource. I also think if we can shorten the time for implementation to get this going as soon as possible, that would be great. Thank you so much for listening.

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Amy Rosenthal

It's so great to see all of you, I want to first than you for your service. It's something I really appreciate. I am an Oak Park resident; I am a mom of two kids and I am also a member of the Oak Park Climate Action Network which is a voluntary group of residents who are working to eliminate our community's contributions to the global climate crisis through equitable policies and practices. My kids will be in their mid-30's in 2050 that's a date at which Oak Park has committed to become climate neutral. Committed to that path, we are actually on track to have two-to-three degrees of warming by that time. The sustainability and climate environmental justice policy that you guys are putting forward is crucial and its urgent. I want to first congratulate and share my appreciation for the draft plan to be presented tonight. I call for the task force to create a comprehensive plan that the district can review annually and fully evaluate every 5-years. As we move to 2050, we should be ambitious in achieving emissions reductions for a more livable climate and climate justice for all kids. I also want to encourage District 97 to have kids join this effort. We should live in a more resilient world with a more viable climate

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Macey Majkuzak

Hi, my name is Macey, I am a new Oak Park resident. I also work for a software company in which I am an environmental steward. I have experience performing carbon footprints on large 500-million-dollar revenue systems. I think this is a wonderful first step towards progress, so thank you. I am a building Commissioner in Oak Park where we are one of the first municipalities in Illinois to pass an electrification ordinance so I am here today as a mom of district 97 student in first grade and a three-year old. I am also here to express my gratitude for this policy you are going to review tonight. The future of my children and all children in our township is in your hands and we have an opportunity to inflect change and take action that will make our local environment more livable for future generations. We also have an opportunity to teach and set examples for all students today so I appreciate that you are

considering this and sharing that we are addressing problems we are facing now that have long implementations for the future. Thank You.

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## **6. #D97Joy Culture and Celebration Update**

#D97 JOY

### **Board of Education Appreciation**

November 15, 2023 is School Board Members Day. In honor of celebrating the work that each of our Board members do on behalf of the community we #ThankABoardMember for their ongoing service to students.

### **Education Support Professionals Day – November 15, 2023**

Happy Education Support Professionals Day! Thank you, District 97 teacher assistants, media assistants, administrative assistants, custodial and maintenance staff, food service staff, health and student services staff, technology staff and transportation services staff for all the care and expertise you give our students and staff! We appreciate each of you!

## **7. SUPERINTENDENT UPDATE**

The Superintendent’s Update included information on 1. Migrant Family Outreach, A Welcoming Place for All; 2. Portrait of an Oak Park 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Graduate and 3. Illinois Report Card SY23 Overview and Students Outcomes: Standards-based Learning: Proficiency versus Growth.

\*Additional details and full presentations can be viewed by looking at the live stream of the board meeting on the District 97 YouTube channel.

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## **8. ACTION ITEMS**

ACTION ITEMS

### **8.1 Consent Agenda**

Kim moved, seconded by Ross Dribin that the Board of Education of Oak Park Elementary School District 97 moves to approve the Consent Agenda as presented.

- 8.1.1 Approval of Minutes from the October 10, 2023 Board Meeting
- 8.1.2 Approval of Minutes from the October 24, 2023 Committee of the Whole Meeting
- 8.1.3 Bill List
- 8.1.4 Personnel
- 8.1.5 Approval : Press Plus Issue 111 and 112 Policy Updates
- 8.1.6 Approval : SY24 Authorization to Pay Bills and Hire
- 8.1.7 Approval : Brooks Middle School music Program Out-of-State Field Trip
- 8.1.8 Approval OPTA Memorandum of Agreement | Robotics (10.10.23)

Ayes: Kim, Kearney, Ross Dribin, Moore, Hurd Johnson

Nays: None

Absent: Burns, Spurlock

Motion passed.

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## **8.2 Action**

### **8.2.1 Approval of Settlement Agreement with Tenured Teacher**

Moore moved, seconded by Kim that the Board of Education of Oak Park Elementary School District 97 moves to approve the settlement agreement with tenured teacher.

Ayes: Kim, Kearney, Ross Dribin, Moore, Hurd Johnson

Nays: None

Absent: Burns, Spurlock

Motion passed.

## **8.3 DISCUSSION and ACTION | Contracts and Agreements Over \$25,000**

### **8.3.1 Authorization for Additional Funds Request | Community Mental Health Board of Oak Park Township (10.10.23)**

\*This discussion was tabled for further information to be brought forward as consideration is made regarding the request for authorization of additional funds.

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## **9. DISCUSSION**

DISCUSSION

### **9.1 Revised OPTA Memoranda of Agreement | Wrestling (action 12.12.23)**

On November 16, 2021 a proposal for the establishment of a cooperative middle school wrestling team was presented to the Board of Education. On January 25, 2022, a detailed funding plan was shared with the board. Said funding proposal was approved during the February 8, 2022 Board meeting for the 2022-2023 school year. In May of 2023, the Oak Park Teachers' Association (OPTA) presented a Memorandum of Agreement that aligns the wrestling team provisions with the collective bargaining agreement. This alignment provides for two coaching stipends for the position of Middle School Wrestling Coach - one for Brooks Middle School and one for Julian Middle School for two teams per Article XVI, H Supplemental Pay, 1. Sports of the Collective Bargaining Agreement between the Board of Education and the Oak Park Teachers' Association.

The administration reviewed the Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) and collaborated with OPTA on the final version of the document. On November 6, 2023, the MoA was amended to allow for the continuation of a cooperative team model for SY24 only for the following reasons:

The amended MoA is aligned with the CBA section on Sports allowing for there to be two separate teams with two separate head coaches.

The amended MoA reflects the two-year agreement with IESA so this would allow for the cooperative team model to continue for this school year only.

\*The administration is requesting that the Board of Education approve this Memorandum of Agreement under the Consent Agenda at its December 12th board meeting.

## 9.2 Draft SY25 School Calendar (action 12.12.23)

### Background

The purpose of this memo is to provide an overview of the draft 2024-25 school year calendar for District 97. The draft has gone through administrative review but should be shared with union leadership before submitting to the board of education for approval.

Additionally, in recent years we have identified a need to review and revamp the calendar development process to ensure clarity, transparency, and consistency in our practices. Below is an overview of the current process, as well as some recommendations for next steps.

### Developing the Calendar

The annual calendar development process in District 97 has historically been led by the human resources department, with input from the district's calendar committee. Draft calendars are typically developed two years in advance, approved by the District 97 Board of Education, and submitted to the state once finalized.

The annual development of school calendars in District 97 is guided by a number of factors, including:

- State law/requirements;
- Board policies and agreements
- Alignment with Oak Park and River Forest High School District 200 (specifically, winter and spring breaks).

Other variables that impact the calendar each year include:

- Election Days (schools are open to voters, presenting a student safety concern);
- Holidays;
- Trimester start/end dates (ensuring equal distribution of instructional days).

This calendar meets all contractual requirements for the number of student attendance days (178), holidays, institute days, and family conferences. Winter and spring breaks are aligned with the District 200 draft 2024-25 calendar.

Administration is asking the board to approve this draft at the December 12, 2023 meeting.

## 9.3 2023 Tentative Tax Levy Presentation (action 12.12.23)

Details of the Tentative Tax Levy was presented by Dr. Sheila Johnson and Rob Grossi, Financial Consultant for the District. This information is expected to be acted on at the December 12, 2023 board meeting.

\*Full details of this presentation can be view by looking at the livestream of the board meeting on the District 97 YouTube channel.

#### 9.4 Draft Sustainability Policy First Read

Board President Kearney brought forward for a Draft Sustainability Policy for review and Policy First Read. This is the first of its kind for implementation by the Board of Education and District 97. President Kearney along with Gary Cuneen from Seven Generations Ahead discussed the details of this draft policy and its implementation efforts along with the establishment of a task force and timeline. Seven Generations Ahead is a local agency working here in Oak Park to support sustainability efforts by connecting local agencies in partnership. This policy is being presented for board review and feedback with anticipated action at the next meeting of the board.

\*Full details of this policy and the presentation can be viewed by looking at the livestream of this meeting on the District 97 YouTube channel, or looking at the board packet materials.

### 10. BOARD ASSIGNMENTS

BOARD  
ASSIGNMENTS

- FAC is scheduled to have its first meeting of the year on December 5, 2023
- IGOV is scheduled to meet on November 18, 2023
- ED-Red had its kick-off meeting. The content at this meeting focused on (AI) Artificial Intelligence and its implications on Education

### 11. CONCLUDING ITEMS

CONCLUDING  
ITEMS

#### 11.1 Board Remarks

- Board members are planning to attend the IASB Joint Annual Conference at the end of the week.
- Board member Kim told members of the board; she needs someone to attend the Collaboration for Early Childhood meeting in her place as she is unavailable to attend. District 97 is the IGA host this year.

### 13. ADJOURNMENT

ADJOURNMENT

All Five present members of the Board were in agreement that the meeting be adjourned. There being no further business to conduct, President Kearney declared the meeting adjourned by voice vote at 9:58 p.m.

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Board President

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Board Secretary