



Oak Park Elementary School District 97

970 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: District 97 Policy Review Team

RE: Review of Policy 2:125

DATE: January 12, 2016

On November 9, 2015, the policy review team presented the board with a summary of the results and proposed next steps from the first quarterly review session we performed in conjunction with our plan for monitoring policies on an annual basis. As part of this review, we identified four policies that we thought might need to be updated based on changes in the law, district operations or standard best practices. One of those policies was 2:125 (Board Member Expenses).

Our follow-up work on policy 2:125 included finding out if there any other situations or circumstances under which board members can be reimbursed for expenses (e.g., costs incurred in conjunction with a superintendent search). We contacted the general counsel for the Policy Reference Education Subscription Service (PRESS) about this, and received the following response:

The School Code, to my knowledge, does not specifically identify this type of expense. You will need to ask your board attorney. Your board could reimburse non-specified expenses on a case-by-case basis, provided your board attorney opines that the expense is permitted.

During its meeting on December 15, 2015, the board asked us to contact the board attorney per the advice of PRESS' general counsel, which we did prior to winter break. We followed up with the board attorney regarding this issue after winter break, and received a response that featured several proposed changes to the policy. These changes include:

- Adding a new fourth paragraph that reads:

Board members may also seek reimbursement for other direct, reasonable expenses incurred in conducting Board/District business, which will be considered on a case-by-case basis. When possible, Board members should seek pre-approval of expenditures under this policy.

- Changing the fifth paragraph from:

Expense reimbursement is not guaranteed and Board members should seek pre-approval of expenses, except in situations when the expense is diminutive. A Board member must return to the District any portion of an expense advance not used. Members must submit an itemized, signed voucher to support any expense advanced or to seek expense reimbursement. The voucher must show the amount of actual expense, attaching receipts if possible. A Board member submitting a bill for a group function should record participating members' names on the receipt. Money shall not be advanced or reimbursed for: (1) the expenses of any person except the Board member, or (2) anyone's personal expenses.

to:

Board members must submit an itemized, signed voucher to support any expense advanced or to seek expense reimbursement. The voucher must show the amount of actual expense, attaching receipts if possible. A Board member submitting a bill for a group function should record participating members' names on the receipt. Money shall not be advanced or reimbursed for: (1) the expenses of any person except the Board member, or (2) anyone's personal expenses. A Board member must return to the District any portion of an expense advance not used. Expense reimbursement is not guaranteed and Board members must follow the expense reimbursement process as set forth in this policy.

The team recommends making these changes to the policy, and is presenting them to the board tonight for a first reading. They will be presented to the board for a second reading and adoption during its meeting on January 26, 2016.

Attachment

- 2:125 (Board Member Expenses)