

**Official Minutes of the  
Oak Park Board of Education District 97,  
970 Madison Street, Oak Park, Cook County, Illinois  
Meeting January 13, 2015**

President Spatz called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

Present: Spatz, Brisben, Sacks (6:32 p.m.), Gates, O'Connor (6:31 p.m.), Traczyk (6:32 p.m.), and Felton  
Absent: None  
Also Present: Superintendent Dr. Al Roberts, Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations Therese O'Neill, Senior Director of Policy, Planning and Communications Chris Jasculca, Senior Director of HR Steve Cummins, Senior Director of Administrative Services Felicia Starks Turner, Director of Curriculum and Instruction Helen Wei, and Board Secretary Sheryl Marinier

ROLL CALL

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

EXECUTIVE  
SESSION

Gates moved, seconded by Brisben, that the Board of Education move into Executive Session at 6:30 p.m. to discuss (Collective Negotiations 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(2), Appointment, Employment, Compensation, Discipline, Performance, or Dismissal of Specific Employees 5 ILCS 120/2/(c)(1), Purchase or Lease of Real Property 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(5)). Roll call vote.

Ayes: Gates, Brisben, Felton, and Spatz  
Nays: None  
Absent: O'Connor, Sacks and Traczyk  
Motion passed.

**OPEN SESSION**

OPEN SESSION

Gates moved, seconded by Sacks, that the Board of Education move into Open Session at 6:59 p.m. All members of the Board were in agreement. The meeting reconvened at 7:02 p.m. with all Board members in attendance.

**SPECIAL REPORTS**

SPECIAL  
REPORTS

**ADMINISTRATION BUILDING**

Therese O'Neill came to the table with Jennifer Costanzo and Colby Lewis from STR Partners. They shared the results of the two Focus Group meetings held on December 10 and 18, 2014.

Costanzo reported that each group emphasized the need to have the new administration building reflect the values of the community by considering diversity, high values on education, environmental awareness, concern for the future of our children, and valuing the resources.

Highest priority topics were identified as being fiscally responsible, identifying partnership opportunities, that the building should be aesthetically appealing but not ostentatious, environmentally friendly, energy efficient, and utilize green power.

Wishes of the group included that the building be something to be proud of, open, welcoming and easy to understand from the outside, provide a good and healthy work environment for the staff, express a celebration of students and learning, and be a community resource.

Costanzo reported that the focus groups identified the challenges as providing ample parking, the longevity of the building, aesthetic concern, and considering the design of the building for future use other than the district's administration needs.

## ADMINISTRATION BUILDING

Some innovative ideas included capitalizing on the Park District's potential installation of a turf field at Percy Julian Middle School, and utilize it for storm water management for the district's administrative building site. It was suggested that parking could be considered under the turf field. Closing the alley between the administration building and Julian Middle School was suggested, as well as creating a district campus. Additionally, it was suggested that the district should consider ways for students and staff to have inter-generational experiences.

A project schedule was shared and reviewed. Costanzo reported that the next steps would include working with the Village to obtain the survey of the land. It was reported that an STR update will be added to the weekly Cabinet meetings.

It was noted that a second meeting of the Board may be necessary in July, 2015 to accommodate the presentation of bids. The Board reviewed the goals and agreed that the new administration building should be functional and built within the constraints of the budget. Additional comments included the need for the building to be open and welcoming with an entrance that is easily located. The building should be clearly identified as a building that focuses on the needs of children. It should be energy efficient, and choices should be made that will make sense in the long-term.

The challenges presented by STR were discussed and comments included a suggestion that the Board needs to be cognizant of the purpose of the building and give consideration before renting parking spaces, etc. Interest was expressed in understanding the context of the Madison Corridor. It was suggested that the Board focus on the purpose of the building and the intention to be a solution for the next 50 years. The Board was reminded that the decisions made regarding the construction of the administration building will be considered when discussing a future referendum, therefore, the community needs to know that the district is being fiscally frugal when making decisions regarding the building.

The innovative ideas were considered and comments included noting that underground parking would be expensive; however some consideration could be given to angled parking in the alley. Closing the alley was also discussed as a possibility. It was suggested that perhaps five to ten feet could be taken from the field for parking needs. Connecting the administration building to Julian Middle school was suggested, and interest was expressed in considering ways to collaborate with Julian regarding space needs. Additionally, it was suggested that the Julian geothermal field should be taken into consideration. Although inter-generational experiences are support by the school district, it was suggested that the administration building would not be the choice location for such events.

The Board reviewed the timeline. It was noted that a Facilities Advisory Committee (FAC) review should occur between the two community meetings scheduled in February, and that representatives from FAC will report to the Board when necessary.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Rick Boultinghouse, an Oak Park Resident, requested an overall timeline for the hiring of the new superintendent, and suggested that the Board publish this timeline as soon as one can be forecasted. With so many Board seats available, Boultinghouse asked for time for the new Board to be seated before a decision is made. He suggested that the Board consider hiring an interim candidate allowing the new Board to weigh in.

PUBLIC  
COMMENT

Karen Yarbrough, an Oak Park resident, shared that she is new to the district. She encouraged the Board to share more detailed information on the superintendent hiring process including community input. Yarbrough expressed interest in a candidate forum, and asked for direction on how to gain information on the scheduling of such an event. Regarding the PARCC assessment,

**PUBLIC COMMENT** (Continued)

she questioned if the Board has had a conversation about requesting a delay in the implementation of the PARCC assessment. She noted a lot of controversy around this very new assessment, and shared that many states have pulled out of the PARCC all together.

**ACTION ITEMS**

ACTION ITEMS

**2.1.1 Approval of Minutes from the December 15, 2014 Special Board Meeting**

Traczyk moved, seconded by Felton, that the Board of Education, District 97, approve the revised minutes from the December 15, 2014 Special Board meeting.

Ayes: Traczyk, Felton, Sacks, Gates, O'Connor, Brisben, and Spatz  
Nays: None  
Absent: None  
Motion passed.

**2.1.2 Approval of Minutes from the December 16, 2014 Special Board Meeting**

Felton moved, seconded by Sacks, that the Board of Education, District 97, approve the minutes from the December 16, 2014 special Board meeting.

Ayes: Felton, Sacks, Gates, Traczyk, and Brisben  
Nays: None  
Abstained: O'Connor and Spatz  
Absent: None

Motion passed.

**2.1.2 Approval of Minutes from the December 16, 2014 Board Meeting**

Sacks moved, seconded by Gates, that the Board of Education, District 97, approve the minutes from the December 16, 2014 Board meeting.

Ayes: Sacks, Gates, O'Connor, Brisben, and Spatz  
Nays: None  
Abstained: Felton and Traczyk  
Absent: None  
Motion passed.

**2.2 Approval of the Consent Agenda**

Sacks moved, seconded by O'Connor, that the Board of Education, District 97, approve the consent agenda as presented.

2.2.1 Approval of Bill List

2.2.2 Personnel Action

2.2.3 Adoption of Policies

Policy 2:140 – Communication To and From the Board

Policy 4:45 – Insufficient Funding Checks and Debt Recovery

Policy 4:110 – Transportation

Policy 4:120 – Food Services

Policy 4:150 – Facility Management and Building Programs

Policy 5:10 – Equal Employment Opportunity and Minority Recruitment

Policy 5:185 – Family and Medical Leave

Policy 5:220 – Substitute Teachers

Policy 5:250 – Leaves of Absence

Policy 6:20 – School Year Calendar and Day

Policy 6:60 – Curriculum Content

Policy 6:110 – Programs for Students at Risk of Academic Failure and/or Dropping Out of School and Graduation Incentive Program

Policy 6:280 – Grading and Promotion

Policy 6:340 – Student Testing and Assessment Program

Policy 7:50 – School Admissions and Student Transfers to and From Non-District Schools

Policy 7:100 – Health, Eye and Dental Examinations; Immunizations; and Exclusion of Students

Policy 7:270 – Administering Medicines to Students

Ayes: Sacks, O’Connor, Gates, Spatz, Felton, Traczyk, and Brisben

Nays: None

Motion passed.

### 2.3.1 **Approval of Employee Discipline Agreement for Custodial Employee**

Gates moved, seconded by Traczyk, that the Board of Education, District 97, approve the discipline agreement with Joseph Taylor.

Ayes: Gates, Traczyk, Felton, Sacks, O’Connor, Spatz, and Brisben

Nays: None

Motion passed.

## **COMMITTEE / WORK GROUP REPORTS**

### **2014 – 2015 PRIORITIES**

#### **COMMON CORE AND IB IMPLIMENTATION**

The written IB Implementation report was shared at the table. The Board agreed to schedule the IB presentation on January 27, 2015. The Board was asked to submit any question they have regarding the report by January 20, 2015.

#### **EVALUATIONS**

Dr. Roberts shared a memo prepared by Sheryl Marinier and Ashley Turek regarding the status of the teacher evaluation process. He commended Marinier and Turek for their efforts to ensure that all teacher evaluations are completed on time. He noted that the process that the ladies have instituted is working, however, an ongoing search for an automated tracking system is underway.

He reported that there is ongoing monitoring by the administration team, and follow through and feedback with the principals. Additionally, an Administrative Academy session on Advanced Danielson is scheduled within the district on April 15, 2015.

Vice President Gates noted that he enjoyed working with Dr. Roberts on this project and expressed appreciation for the transparency and clarity.

Board member comments included appreciation for the process. The Mann and Julian teams were commended for already completing the tenure evaluations. It was suggested that the district consider creating an electronic tool to meet its needs.

#### **ORGANIZATION STRUCTURE**

Member Brisben reported on the status of the Superintendent search by sharing that the RFQ was released to four firms, however, he noted that the Board has not convened since Dr. Roberts submitted his retirement letter. After a brief discussion, the Board agreed to retain an executive search firm for this process, and conduct a national search for his replacement. Additionally, the Board was in consensus that the four firms who received the RFQ would be sufficient to meet that goal.

COMMITTEE /  
WORK GROUP  
REPORTS

## ORGANIZATION STRUCTURE (Continued)

The Board participated in a discussion to determine who would interview the firms. It was agreed that members Brisben and O'Connor would perform a preliminary interview and narrow the choices down to the best candidates. A special Board meeting would be called (within the next week or so) to interview the final candidates, and a firm could potentially be hired on January 27, 2015.

Although the Board agreed that the speed of firm engagement is important so that the Board can have the benefit of outside expert advice as quickly as possible, they also agreed that speed of the superintendent hiring process itself is not as important as selecting the right candidate for the district. The Board agreed that hiring the right candidate for the district is the most important task assigned to them. With that in mind, the goal would be to have someone in place by July 1, 2015. The possibility of filling the position with an interim, although it may become necessary by law, was not encouraged. The Board recognized the need to keep the Board candidates in the loop. With that in mind, it was recommended that the Board defer the timeline to the expertise of the search firm.

## CONTRACT IMPLEMENTATION AND MAINTENANCE

The timeline for the SEIU negotiations was discussed in executive session.

The Contract Implementation team will meet with Therese O'Neill about other items that need to be acted on during the 2014-15 school year.

The Benefits Committee will discuss the third party administrator and the 403(b) plan.

The team will verify the dates on the Board goals document to ensure that the Board meets all deadlines.

## STANDING BOARD COMMITTEES

### *Facilities Advisory Committee (FAC)*

The next meeting will be held on January 20, 2015.

### *FORC*

This committee met on January 12, 2015. They participated in a discussion about selecting the comparison district list, which could pertain to educational outcomes as well. A formal written update will be in the Board packet for the January 27, 2015 Board meeting, with anticipated approval during the February 10, 2015 Board meeting.

The committee will review the IMET investment fund and make a recommendation as to its future need.

The committee received feedback from legal regarding the Bond policy. This information will also be reviewed by the policy committee. The Cost Analysis Synopsis was shared with the committee. A detailed communication about the need for the new administration building was discussed.

The next FORC meeting will focus on ECRA, Special Education and an in depth discussion of IMET.

### *Committee for Legislative Action, Intervention, and Monitoring (CLAIM)*

This committee will meet in February.

STANDING  
BOARD  
COMMITTEES

**ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS****BUDGET AUTHORITY RESOLUTION**

O'Neill explained that the Budget Authority Resolution is the annual formal direction from the Board to begin the 2015-16 budget preparation.

**PERSONNEL/STUDENT DATA REPORT (questions/answers)**

Cummins explained that the staff demographics data within the report is self reported. Member Sacks expressed concern that in her four years on the Board, she feels that the district is still not making much progress regarding diversity.

**UPDATE ON BOND SALE (questions/answers)**

None

**TREASURER'S REPORT (questions/answers)**

None

**OTHER ITEMS**

OTHER ITEMS

**RECAP AND NEXT STEPS FROM SELF-EVALUATION**

The Board reviewed the letter from IASB representative Barbara Toney who facilitated the Board retreat on December 15, 2014. In this letter, Toney recommended next steps for the Board to consider. Her recommendations were as follows;

**Updating the Superintendent Job Description** – It was agreed that the Board should work with the search firm to update the Job Description for the superintendent and maintain it along with the evaluation process.

**Policy Review** – The Board agreed that the Policy Committee should discuss a timeline for spot checking all policies.

**Review and Develop the expectations for the Board President** – It was recommended that this item should be covered by the new Board. This would be led by the team that coordinates the next retreat.

**Have a continued awareness of board/superintendent roles, responsibilities as illustrated in the “Trust and Communication” graphic.** It was agreed that the Board protocols need to be reviewed.

**Focus Board discussions on community engagement efforts.** Currently, the Board is discussing the superintendent search, the new administration building and 5Essentials. It was agreed that these topics all involve community engagement.

**Refer to the appropriate policies when making decisions.** It was agreed that policy numbers should be added to the agenda to help identify which policy each individual agenda topics is associated with.

A tentative goal timeline was shared. Team members were asked to make sure that their items are included in the draft agendas.

**IGOV REPORT**

It was reported that IGOV will be meeting this Saturday at the Township Center. At that time, the representatives will be receiving additional information on the Eisenhower expansion project. May 2, 2015 has been identified as the tentative date for the next IGOV meeting. Additionally, the group will be discussing the IGOV structure and new members. The Board members were asked to share their thoughts on these topics with Vice President Gates.

## COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

This group will be meeting in February.

## CONCLUDING ITEMS

### BOARD CONCERNS / ANNOUNCEMENTS

Vice President Gates will be attending the Irving PTO meeting scheduled for February 5, 2015. He reported that this group has expressed interest in discussing the hiring process for the new superintendent. Chris Jasculca was asked to create a document covering the speaking point that the Board members can use when addressing this topic. A Web page dedicated to the superintendent search was also suggested.

Member Felton will be attending the Holmes PTO meeting tomorrow.

It was suggested that administration communicate with the Collaboration for Early Childhood before implementing the Kindergarten registration software, as they expressed interest in this topic.

The Board was reminded that ED-RED is hosting the 44<sup>th</sup> Annual Legislative Dinner and Workshops on January 26, 2015. They were asked to let the Board Secretary know if they wish to attend by this coming Friday.

Interest was expressed in hearing more about an external data security audit.

### SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Dr. Roberts reported that, regarding evaluations, the principals are not only looking at the job that someone is doing, but also taking into consideration the quality of the employee (knowledge, skill base, etc.)

Dr. Roberts and Therese O'Neill met with Jan Arnold from the Park District to discuss the possibility of installing Niki turf on the Julian field. He explained that Julian would be a pilot for this turf, and if successful, the Brooks field would be considered down the line. The cost of the project is \$700,000 which the Park District is willing to cover. He noted that the draft intergovernmental agreement did not address the school's needs for field use. Dr. Roberts suggested that future discussions on this topic should also include geothermal issues. He reminded the Board that the district has not been very successful with the investment of sod and seed at the Julian location, and having a usable surface could make outdoor activities more doable.

Board comments included concerns about equality. It was suggested that the Park District be asked to do a cost estimate for the Brooks field. Partnerships, such as with Girls T-Ball, were suggested to offset the cost at of the Brooks field. Concern was expressed about this Board making a decision on a capital expense that would need to be supported by the future Board. Interest was expressed in knowing the opinion of the other sports groups. Concern was expressed about the financial investment associated with this project and the cost of maintaining the field once installed. It was suggested that if the Board agrees to consider the Niki turf at both middle schools, one could be installed this year and one during the summer of 2016. It was agreed that Dr. Roberts and Therese O'Neill would meet with Jan Arnold from the Park District to convey the Boards viewpoint.

It was reported that Steve Cummins is working hard to finalize the OPTA contract before preparing the school calendars for 2015-2016 and 2016-2017. He has been directed to expedite this task.

CONCLUDING  
ITEMS

**BOARD RESPONSE TO PUBLIC COMMENT**

Regarding Karen Yarbrough’s comments, the Board shared that the PTO Council will determine who will hold the candidate forums. It was reported that Southeast Oak Park Community Organization is scheduling a forum and the Buzz Café will probably hold one as well. It was also suggested that the League of Women Voters might host a candidates forum.

Regarding PARCC, Dr. Roberts will inquire about the status of other district’s participation and report back in the next Superintendent’s Report.

**PREVIEW AGENDAS**

The Board reviewed the draft agenda for the Board meetings scheduled for Tuesday January 27, 2015 at 7 p.m., and modifications were recommended.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

**EXECUTIVE  
SESSION**

Traczyk moved, seconded by Sacks, that the Board of Education move into Executive Session at 8:31 p.m. to discuss (Collective Negotiations 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(2), Appointment, Employment, Compensation, Discipline, Performance, or Dismissal of Specific Employees 5 ILCS 120/2/(c)(1)). Roll call vote.

Ayes: Traczyk, Sacks, Gates, Brisben, Felton, O’Connor, and Spatz  
Nays: None  
Absent:  
Motion passed.

**OPEN SESSION**

Traczyk moved, seconded by Sacks, that the Board of Education move into Open Session at 10:25 p.m. All members of the Board were in agreement.

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to conduct, President Spatz declared the meeting adjourned at 10:25 p.m.

The next regularly scheduled meeting of the Board will be held on Tuesday, January 27, 2015 beginning at 7 p.m. at the district Administration building located at 970 Madison Street, Oak Park, Illinois.

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Board President

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Board Secretary