

**Official Minutes of the  
Oak Park Board of Education District 97,  
970 Madison Street, Oak Park, Cook County, Illinois  
May 10, 2011**

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

Present: Barber, Sacks, Reddy, Gates, O'Connor, Spatz (6:31 p.m.) and Traczyk  
Absent: None  
Also Present: Superintendent Al Roberts, Human Resources Director Trish Carlson, Assistant Superintendent of Teaching and Learning Kevin Anderson, Assistant Superintendent of Finance and Operations Therese O'Neill, Director of Special Education Mike Padavic, Communications Coordinator Chris Jasculca, and Board Secretary Sheryl Marinier

ROLL CALL

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Traczyk moved, seconded by Reddy, that the Board of Education move into executive session at 6:34 p.m. Roll call vote.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

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

**OPEN SESSION**

Traczyk moved, seconded by Reddy, that the Board of Education move into open session at 7:05 p.m. Roll call vote.

OPEN SESSION

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

**SPECIAL REPORTS**

**ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY PRESENTATION**

Mike Padavic and Sheri Lenzo came to the table. Lenzo reported that she is responsible for supporting the assistive technology needs for all 10 schools. The focus of this evening's presentation would be on the support provided in developing writing skills. Lenzo reported that children with learning disabilities often struggle to get their ideas on paper. She reported that the 21<sup>st</sup> Century learners are moving from paper to technology. She suggested that good keyboard instruction and keyboard skills are important to these children, as is being able to listen to the text that they are writing. She demonstrated tools available to the students that would make the writing process easier for them.

SPECIAL REPORTS

Lenzo introduced the tool Write Online. She showed examples of how students can improve when they move from pencil to word processing. She explained that the seventh grade students increased from an average of 19 words in a written document to 213 words in the last three months. She attributes use of technology for this increase.

Lenzo reported that the elementary school children will have the same tools and supports available to them. She explained how an iPod touch can be used to help an autistic child learn social skills.

#### ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY PRESENTATION – (Continued)

Padavic reported that the achievement and ability of the special needs students have increased since technology has been introduced in the classrooms. It was reported that most of the special technology equipment was purchased through the ARRA grants.

Padavic reported that the time allotted for students to have access to a computer needs to be considered. Lenzo shared that the parents are very excited about the technology in the classroom. Students using Write Online can access the tools from home as well, making the transition from classroom to homework smoother for these children. It was reported that parents could purchase products similar to these outside of the school district; however, there is a benefit to using the same tools at home and at school. Lenzo reported that some of these tools could be used by all children and could destigmatize the struggling learners. Lenzo shared that although the learning tools are not currently acceptable for use during standardized testing, eventually, standardized testing will allow students to use accommodations.

Board comments included the need to be certain that ISBE will make accommodations for technology use during testing. Board concern was expressed over the need for additional computers to support these tools. Dr. Roberts reported that the district is discussing the need with the parent groups. He shared that parents appear to be more interested in purchasing technology than other educational tools.

#### STAFFING REPORT

Carlson and Padavic came to the table. Carlson reported that the district reverification of residency is still in flux, noting that 1,200 families have not completed the process yet. Reminder letters have been sent out, and phone calls will be made following the next two registration dates. It was noted that special education is always staffed according to IEP needs; therefore, one class has already been added to Whittier. Carlson explained the process for creating the staffing report. Currently Carlson estimates that there will be three less classrooms in the lower grade levels and specials are staffed appropriately. Additionally, Padavic explained that two staff members are moving away and their positions will not be filled. The goal to finalize staffing needs is mid July to early August. The teacher/student ratio was explained for the new Board members.

Board questions and comments included a member reporting that he heard that the homeowners have verified their residency, that the outstanding ones are apartment dwellers. Interest was expressed in knowing if the district is partnering with the high school regarding reverification. Interest was also expressed regarding the new demographics study, and if the budget projections are based on this year's enrollment. It was also suggested that the district partner with the housing department. Concern was expressed over the special education needs. It was suggested that the district reach out to SEA and see if there are any needs the district has not considered.

This item will return to the Board in late June or early July for action.

#### PREFERRED FUTURE

Dr. Roberts explained that preferred future means meeting the needs of the students, celebrations of the arts and music, and partnering with parents. The district must be confident that the students are challenged, and be competitive in a technology driven world. He shared that the district needs to strengthen the instructional framework. He noted that the district needs more technology and to build on the capacity of the staff to deliver a curriculum that encourages the students to think independently. Additionally, it is important to help the students be more fluent in another language. Dr. Roberts reported that research demonstrates that learning a second language builds brain mass. He questioned how the district would move from the 20<sup>th</sup> Century to developing and understanding the discipline of project based learning. He encouraged the

Board to embrace creativity and ingenuity to move the district from the same mentality to a mentality of charge and growth. Dr. Roberts insisted that the focus must be to challenge all students.

#### PREFERRED FUTURE - (Continued)

Regarding the time dedicated to ISATs and other testing, Dr. Roberts shared that it is important to measure tests, but it is more important to measure each students' abilities on a daily basis.

Dr. Roberts shared that MAP scores are a wonderful tool for increasing the amount of effective teaching in the classrooms, as some data has mixed results regarding fidelity on implementation. He reported that the district needs to make sure there is an excellent teacher in every room. Duane Meighan, Cathy Hamilton, Nimisha Kumar, Angela Dolezal and Natalie O'Hara from Scientific Learning presented information on Fast ForWord, a computer based program that assists students in building brain mass. The research based program fits into the Response to Intervention framework and has proven to reduce the quantity of special education students who need additional support. O'Hara introduced the Fast ForWord program and explained how the brain works and how the program accelerates the learning process, and increases the student's ability to process information quickly and accurately, paying attention to recall and retention of information. Additionally, it was reported that the programs have been proven to provide differentiated intervention for student's at all academic levels.

The team shared that 100 percent of all Scientific Learning students in kindergarten through third grade will show growth in district measured assessments. The team recommended targeting students in tiers two and three in grades four and five, as well as new students to the district. They also suggested the program be administered 40 minutes per day, five times a week for 12 to 18 weeks or daily intervention for all students.

Fast ForWord allows the district to track student's performance minute by minute. It provides individual, classroom, school and district performance data. It offers computerized assessment for quick evaluation of student performance and provides a clear picture of students reading skills in terms of grade equivalence percentile scores. Additionally, the program offers software focused on Science and Math. It was reported that principals would rotate classrooms through the products.

It was shared that an early childhood piece is being developed. It was suggested that Meighan share this information with the Early Childhood Task Force.

Concern was expressed over the number of programs the district has that focus on reading, suggesting that we need data that focuses on specific children's needs. Interest in knowing how the product is going to make things better for the district and the children was expressed. It was also suggested that the district consider implementing the program on a small scale and increase as success is evident. Board members requested the presentation that was shared with administration and were instructed to forward their detailed questions regarding this product to Dr. Roberts.

#### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

PUBLIC COMMENT

Leo Hospenhal, Oak Park resident, spoke on behalf of SEA in regard to policy 2260. He noted that the draft has been revised to include disabilities among those who will receive training and he expressed his gratitude.

Noel Kuriakos, Oak Park resident, reported that the teacher evaluation results and MAP scores data that he requested has not been received yet. He is concerned that the district is taking a negative interpretation of the law regarding the sharing of data. He feels that the district could supply the data he is requesting and present it easily. He would like to know how well the

teachers are doing, and see the student results of the MAP testing. The data is important to the Board, the administration and the students. He suggested that the Board not react to the negative interpretation of the laws.

ACTION ITEMS

**ACTION ITEMS**

**2.1.1 Approval of Minutes of April 26, 2011**

Traczyk moved, seconded by Gates, that the Board of Education, District 97, approve the minutes from the April 26, 2011 meeting as presented. Roll call vote.

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

**Consent Agenda**

Reddy moved, seconded by Spatz, that the Board of Education, District 97, approve the consent agenda as presented in the Board packet. Roll call vote.

- 2.2.1 Bill Lists and Related Reports
- 2.3.1 Personnel Action as presented

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

**2.2.2 SEIU Memorandum of Understanding**

Traczyk moved, seconded by Sacks, that the Board of Education, District 97, approve the SEIU Memorandum of Understanding from the Service Employees International Union Local 73. Roll call vote.

President Barber expressed the Board's gratitude to the entire staff for accepting a pay freeze for the 2011-12 school year.

ACTION ITEMS

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

**2.2.3 OPTAA Memorandum of Understanding**

Reddy moved, seconded by Spatz, that the Board of Education, District 97, approve the OPTAA Memorandum of Understanding from the Oak Park Teacher Assistants' Association. Roll call vote.

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

**2.2.4 OPESP Memorandum of Understanding**

Gates moved, seconded by Traczyk, that the Board of Education, District 97, approve the OPESP Memorandum of Understanding from the Oak Park Educational Support Professionals Association. Roll call vote.

Ayes: Gates, Traczyk, Barber, Reddy, Spatz, Sacks, and O'Connor

Nays: None

Absent: None

Motion passed.

#### **2.4.1 Curriculum Adoption - World Language**

Traczyk moved, seconded by Reddy, that the Board of Education, District 97, approve the recommendation of the District 97 administration and the World Language Committee to purchase new French and Spanish classroom texts, materials, and eBooks at a cost of approximately \$65,000 from the teaching and learning budget for instructional materials. Roll call vote.

Ayes: Traczyk, Reddy, Barber, Spatz, Sacks, O'Connor, and Gates

Nays: None

Absent: None

Motion passed.

#### **2.4.2 Acceptance of Board Calendar**

Reddy moved, seconded by Traczyk, that the Board of Education, District 97, approve the following meeting dates for regular meetings of the Board. These meetings are scheduled to take place at the administration building on Tuesdays at 7 p.m. unless posted otherwise. Roll call vote.

Ayes: Reddy, Traczyk, Barber, Spatz, Sacks, O'Connor, and Gates

Nays: None

Absent: None

Motion passed.

#### **2.4.3 Approval of Tech Plan - Year 2**

Gates moved, seconded by Reddy, that the Board of Education, District 97, approve the Tech Plan - Year 2 as presented to the Board on April 26, 2011. Roll call vote.

Ayes: Gates, Reddy, Barber, Spatz, Sacks, O'Connor, and Traczyk

Nays: None

Absent: None

Motion passed.

#### **2.4.4 Policy Adoption**

Gates moved, seconded by Reddy, that the Board of Education, District 97, adopt the revised version of policy 2260 (Nondiscrimination and Access to Equal Educational Opportunity). Roll call vote.

It was noted that the word disability was added to this document.

Ayes: Gates, Reddy, Barber, Spatz, Sacks, O'Connor, and Traczyk

Nays: None

Absent: None

Motion passed.

### **TOPIC REPORTS**

## **PRESENTATION OF AMENDED 2010 LEVY**

### **Presentation of Amended 2010 Levy**

O'Neill explained the process for approving the 2010 amended levy. She explained that all legal requirements have been followed and the public hearing will take place on May 24. She reminded the Board that they are asking for the levy to be exactly what was identified on the ballot.

### **Review of Revised Five-year Projections**

O'Neill explained the process for reviewing the five-year projections. She explained that the Finance Oversight and Review Committee (FORC) will review the projections in detail during their next meeting. The five-year technology plan continues to be included in these projections, and the wage freeze has been added into this report. O'Neill updated the Board on assumptions that were used to calculate this report, which will return to the Board after FORC's review. Revised projections are anticipated in mid to late July along with the tentative budget.

Board comments and suggestions included a suggestion to retain and track, updating history along with the projections. The Board agreed to let FORC make a determination on the percentage rate that should be used in calculating the projections, noting that if FORC has major concerns they should be brought to the Board.

### **Renewal of Food Service Agreement with OPRFHS**

O'Neill updated the Board on the status of this agreement. She reported that an imbedded clause within this agreement stated that if the district served more than one million meals by a particular date, the district would see a fee reduction per meal for the following year. She reported that this will occur. O'Neill suggested working on a new agreement from scratch during the next school year. She reported that the food service program is a self sustaining program, offering nutritionally balanced meals to the children. Data was shared from a food service survey that was distributed to the children and made available to the parents. O'Neill is recommending that the district renew the contract for the 2011-12 school year with no salary or milk increase and work on a multi-year contract for the Board's consideration.

Dr. Roberts reminded the Board that the district is working on the healthier community grant and the district needs to encourage children to eat what is healthy and fight against obesity. A discussion took place regarding food waste.

Concern was expressed over the children who are not eating at all. It was suggested that the lunch staff monitor these children to get an idea of the number who do not eat breakfast or lunch. It was suggested that if the district is receiving a discount next year, it should drop the cost of the meals. Composting and donating food was suggested as a way to recycle the leftovers. Interest was expressed in knowing how our consumption rates compare with other district.

Interest was also expressed regarding whether the district has bid out this service. O'Neill explained that the program exists between the two school districts based on the idea that if we serve freshly prepared meals it would be more attractive. Discussion took place regarding this issue. It was noted that proximity is important, transportation is an issue and that it has been at least four years since the district considered options.

Concern was expressed regarding the lunchroom climate. It was noted that work is being done in this area. A student focus group was suggested to consider the kinds of food the children

would like to eat. It was suggested that the food committee look at how the process is handled in the middle schools. Concern was expressed that the children only have 20 minutes to eat and that is not enough time.

**Resolution to Adopt Prevailing Wage Rates** – tabled until June.

**Hephzibah Contract – Liaison Salary**

Dr. Anderson explained that the district has a grant that typically pays for this position with \$15,000 out of the district budget. Last year this position received a one percent increase. Cabinet suggested that the district freeze the salary this year because all district salaries were frozen.

**SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT**

SUPERINTENDENT’S  
REPORT

Dr. Roberts reported that the village contracted 34 crossing guards last year. The village is looking at a CPI increase to about \$17 hour. Additionally, the village is considering another supervisor to avoid the glitches when crossing guards call in sick. It was suggested that the village hire a permanent substitute for this purpose instead of a supervisor.

The village billed the district for SROs. Dr. Roberts reported that he verbally shared with Tom Barwin, the village manager, that the district will not pay the bill as there has never been an agreement to this effect. The Board was reminded that they approved the financial support of the crossing guards for one year and there will be a need to discuss this moving forward. Concern was expressed over who would be responsible for the crossing guard program in the future, noting that its function deals with public safety and not the education of children.

Dr. Roberts reported that the end of the year field trip requests are being submitted for approval, noting that he will approve them as long as they are educational. He shared that out of state trips are typically approved by the Board; however, in reviewing the policy, Dr. Roberts found that it is the guidelines that suggest Board approval, not the policy. He will approve the two trips that are pending, but he will bring these requests to the Board in the future. Dr. Roberts noted that the district has a lot of work to do with the guidelines during the summer, as they are a bit outdated.

Dr. Roberts reported that FOIA requests are substantial. The district may need to seek additional help to get them out in a timely manner.

Administration met with the demographic study firm who verbally shared some interesting information with them. Administration provided additional information for the firm to consider. Preliminary results indicate the growth in the school district has been about 500 children in the last five years, and the firm anticipates that number will continue to increase. The firm suggests that the middle schools will see the most growth, and Irving and Lincoln will likely have more students than the other schools. The firm also noted that Whittier showed a one-year dip in kindergarten registration. The firm is reviewing the student population data to ensure accuracy before finalizing the report.

Dr. Roberts is waiting on feedback from a local foundation interested in considering the IB program. The foundation is requesting that additional work be done before they consider funding. Dr. Roberts is reconsidering the people who will visit Shaker Heights, noting that he would be interested in a couple Board members who might want to drive there.

BOARD CONCERNS

**BOARD CONCERNS/ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Interest was expressed as to whether the BoardBook program could support FORC.

It was suggested that the schools figure out a way to rotate the lunch hour to cut down on the number of students in the lunch room at one time.

It was suggested that the district consider bus distance and healthy communities when reviewing the crossing guard issue.

It was suggested that the answers to questions sent by the Board via e-mail be brought back to the Board or be placed in the next Board packet for transparency. Additionally, the administration was asked to make a more conscious effort to respond to the questions asked at the Board table. It was suggested that this process be discussed during the retreat.

A brief description of the Face-It program was shared for the new Board members.

The Board was invited to visit the village Web site to see how they are offering video of their Board meetings. It was suggested that District 97 explore this possibility.

**BOARD CONCERNS/ANNOUNCEMENTS** - (Continued)

**BOARD  
CONCERNS**

A report of the last Ed-Red meeting was shared.

Member Gates reported that he visited with past Board president Ade Onayemi.

Additional comments regarding the crossing guards and SROs included; a suggestion that the district should take on the crossing guards, and that the SROs are necessary but the district should not pay for them. Regarding the crossing guards receiving a salary increase, it was noted that the district employees did not receive an increase this year and they should not either.

It was suggested that if the Board consider a second retreat, it should be in partnership with cabinet.

It was suggested that the Board consider shared services with the other governing bodies.

It was noted that the retreat scheduled for May 31 will begin with a one hour closed session followed by the open meeting.

**BOARD RESPONSE TO PUBLIC COMMENT**

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TO PUBLIC  
COMMENT**

Barber reported that Kuriakos' request for evaluation information was denied under FOIA and he has 60 days to submit an appeal to the Public Access Counselor. The MAP testing data was given to him as part of a response to a request in April, minus the data that was exempt under the law.

**ADJOURNMENT**

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to conduct, President Barber declared the meeting adjourned at 10:33 p.m.

The next regularly scheduled meeting of the Board will be held on Tuesday, May 24, 2011, beginning at 7 p.m. at the district office and will move to Lincoln School located at 1111 S. Grove Avenue, Oak Park, Illinois at 7:30 p.m.

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Board President

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Board Secretary