

**Official Minutes of the  
Oak Park Board of Education District 97  
260 Madison Street, Oak Park, Cook County, Illinois  
July 22, 2020 Meeting – Special Meeting**

This meeting was held virtually using Zoom during the time of the Coronavirus pandemic. Everyone participated via electronic means.

Vice President Kim called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Present: Broy, Kim, Spurlock, Breymaier, Liebl, Moore, and Kearney  
Absent: None  
Also Present: Superintendent Dr. Carol Kelley, Associate Superintendent of Education Felicia Starks Turner, Director of Communications Amanda Siegfried, Chief Academic and Accountability Officer Ebony Lofton, Senior Director of Buildings and Grounds Jeanne Keane, Senior Director of Technology Michael Arensdorff, Consultant Rob Grossi, and Board Secretary Sheryl Marinier.

Partners in attendance: Ed Redd, Faith Harris, Haj M. Herbert, Lisa DeVivo, Stacey Grieff, Maureen McCormick, Jan Arnold, Jocelyne Adkins, Anna Kinnaman

SPECIAL  
REPORTS

**SPECIAL REPORTS**

**Fall 2020 REOPENING: INSTRUCTIONAL DELIVERY OPTIONS/REMOTE LEARNING**

Dr. Kelley reported that the district has been working on a hybrid learning model to support the students on and off site. She explained that the team is having serious conversations on a daily basis to determine the safest way for the students to return to school, and a survey was sent out last week asking parents to identify their preference to the remote or hybrid model. The board called for this special meeting to discuss the details of the learning plan to help parents decide what might be best for their family.

Dr. Kelley explained that the main focus of the plan is to support learning in a healthy and safe environment for students and staff that is a consistent, high-quality learning experience, and is equitable for all students. The administration is making these plans with the equity policy at the forefront of their work. She reported that three plans have been considered;

- Plan A – Fully return to onsite learning (this option is not feasible at this time)
- Plan B - Hybrid Learning Plan (Limited density in school buildings to no greater than 50 percent in person instruction combined with remote learning)
- Plan C – Fully remote learning

She explained that the district’s plans are dependent on the state of COVID-19 and the State of Illinois’ reopening plan. She noted the importance of flexibility on a day to day basis. Dr. Kelley reported that Region 10 of Illinois (the Oak Park area), is not trending in the right direction. The director of public health has been helpful with keeping the district informed on the status of COVID-19 in the village, noting that residence of Oak Park are being asked to self-isolate for 14 days after traveling to 14 states that are currently identified as “hot spots”. Because of the current status of COVID-19, many of Dr. Kelley’s colleagues are considering a remote start.

Ebony Lofton shared details on the Hybrid Learning Plan, reporting that the plan would require students to be onsite for two days a week and work remotely for the other three days. Instruction would focus on

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(Continued)

core curriculum (math, reading) during the onsite days, and specials (art, music, physical education, etc.) on the remote days.

Lofton explained that in planning, the team ran into many challenges. Student and staff safety was a concern, as well as creating plans for outdoor breaks, staggering bus schedules and student movement. She reported that the student experience in the Hybrid Learning Plan would be something different than they have ever experienced before. Students would be required to wear face masks all day, and would need to stay in the classroom except for bathroom breaks. There would be no lunch served in the cafeteria, and because of that, additional lunchtime supervision would be needed.

The team expressed concern that the students' schedules would need to be staggered to accommodate safe arrival/dismissal. Because of this, the instructional time within a day would need to be reduced. The buildings would only be open to students and staff, and students attending in person for four days a week (students with specific IEPs) may be required to take duplicate classes. She expressed the need to assure that the students and staff not only are safe, but also feel safe.

Lofton shared a draft hybrid schedule that included the time allocated by subject area for both onsite and remote learning. She reported that the remote learning will include online lessons while collaborating with teachers to ensure growth.

Lofton introduced staff members Arnetta Thompson, Anna Kinnaman, Laura Reeves, Faith Harris and Michele Suedbeck who shared their experiences with the summer learning programs. They shared the successes of the programs, and explained some of the training that was supplied to staff prior to the programs. Lofton explained that the fall onsite plan would follow the same format as the successful summer programs.

Plan C – The remote only plan was discussed, noting that this plan ensures the health and safety of the students and staff, and is the most conservative approach. Principals Christine Zelaya (Holmes Elementary) and April Capuder (Brooks Middle School), explained that the team reviewed the lessons learned from the first attempt at remote learning, and explained that the fall program would be more robust, with more synchronous (face time with teachers) learning. The plans would provide high learning experiences for all.

OPTA representative Adrienne Court explained that the teachers' union developed 200 questions and expressed serious concern about in person learning, suggesting that "social distancing" education would include no close contact and no sharing. Students would be confined to the same classroom all day, and instructional time would be lost each day due to the time needed to bring students in and out of the building safely. She expressed concern about how teachers would be able to keep the students away from each other and wearing masks all day, suggesting that it negates everything that we know about student learning. Court suggested that with adequate training, a remote learning environment can mimic a classroom.

Dr. Kelley introduced representatives from the Oak Park Park District, Hephzibah, Discovery (Lincoln and Beye programs), Right at School (Beye), Magical Mind Studio, Oak Park Township, Mindful Middle Schoolers, and Y.E.M.B.A. who told the board about their current childcare programs and what they would be able to offer in the fall. Each program expressed support for the families, and offered to expand their programs when possible to meet the need.

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(Continued)

Jim Hackett, the Security and School Safety Manager responded to the question, “Can we test everyone?” by sharing the following. Hackett reported that the CDC is not recommending that everyone be tested. They are however; supporting the wearing of masks and hand washing. Hackett expressed concern about the cost of daily testing and the time it would take to initiate the test and follow up afterwards. He explained that “pool” testing is still in the early stages and has a way to go before the district could consider it. He met with the Chief Operations Officer of RUSH Hospital recently regarding the cost of testing. He told the board that if they are serious about requiring testing, they would need to approve a formal mandate. Hackett expressed concern about mandating student testing, and offered to continue discussions with the RUSH Chief Operations Officer.

Regarding interest in daily temperature screenings, Hackett suggested that the schools ask for people to self-certify by submitting an electronic form. He shared that he is in contact with the Oak Park Public Health Department who is recommending that 72 hours elapse without fever (not using fever reducing medications) and symptoms disappear before returning to school. After a student has been quarantined, they should check in with the nurse or administration before returning to class. If someone suspects that they might have COVID-19 or have been exposed, they should isolate at home for 14 days.

Financial consultant Rob Grossi reported that if the board considered not abating the bond levy this year, the district could use the money for childcare expenses. He explained that the \$1,416,000 would be enough to pay for about 736 student’s childcare needs for the first trimester.

Grossi also told the board that he spoke to the district’s liability insurance carrier about what they would cover regarding COVID-19 and any lawsuits that might be filed due to onsite learning. He reported that the coop would not be responsible in defending the district in a COVID-19 case of any kind. Grossi reported that COVID-19 could also affect workers comp, property loss and liability. He explained that school districts have immunity within the school code, but it is not complete immunity. He recommended that the district follow the state guidelines. This would align the district with a defense if something did happen. Grossi recommended adding funds in the budget to cover any unforeseen legal issues that might arise due to the pandemic.

Dr. Kelley explained that the intent for this meeting was to help families have a better understanding of the two learning options before they would complete the survey, however; after looking at the data, moves that the state will need to make in the upcoming days, and the surge of cases of COVID-19, Dr. Kelley recommended making a decision that supports the students, staff and communities as a whole. She recommended focusing efforts on a remote learning option to start the school year and focus on the hybrid plan for the second trimester. Dr. Kelley expressed the need for the board to support that decision as soon as possible so planning can move forward.

Dr. Kelley reminded the board that it will not take action on the plan, as it is approved by the superintendent. She noted that the attorney does recommend that the board adopt a resolution in support of the plan.

Member Liebl (board liaison on the pandemic learning team), noted that the most important thing is to concentrate on the best leaning opportunity for the students. She expressed support for the full remote learning plan, noting major concerns with the hybrid model and social distancing requirements. She suggested that the best option is to offer a high quality remote option. She recommended that the school communities stay intact, and reported that she has two children who participated in summer learning and both had an exceptional experience.

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(Continued)

Member Spurlock (board liaison on the pandemic learning team), noted that she started the process supporting the hybrid plan, but after talking to teachers and administrators she feels that the students would not get the “school” experience if they were in actual attendance. She talked to a middle schooler about being in a class of 12-24 students, who expressed concern because she would not be getting the experience that she expected. Spurlock supported the planning process, noting that she participated in an hour long call recently where the focus was on safety during bathroom breaks. Spurlock expressed interest in knowing if the money that was going to be spent on PPE could be used for supplies for remote learning. She expressed interest in understanding the extent of parent involvement that will be necessary for remote learning.

Member Breymaier acknowledged that he is a strong opponent of the hybrid model. He considered what option would be the most equitable, with the best education possible, and agrees that the remote plan is the best option. He noted that logistically, the hybrid plan is mindboggling, and shared that he is learning to trust the staff for their expertise.

Member Moore expressed the need to process the recommendation and follow up with questions before sharing her opinion.

President Broy Acknowledged Hephzibah and the Park District for their summer programs. She expressed interest in knowing how much time the parents will need to educate their children in the remote plan. She asked how this remote learning plan intersects with ISBE regarding the amount of time students should spend learning. Lofton responded by explaining that ISBE is recommending five hours a day. She noted that the district plans on supporting that recommendation with five hours of teacher directed learning.

Vice President Kim expressed interest in knowing how the students with IEPs will be supported in the remote learning plan. She expressed interest in knowing what was learned about attendance, remote learning and equity from the spring remote learning session. Kim also asked for information regarding the steps that are in place to assure that student’s do not fall behind, and noted that some students were required to print worksheets and did not have access to a printer. In response, Dr. Kelley explained that some students might need to be brought onsite. Lofton assured the board that administration will be prepared in advance to make sure that students do not need to print or buy materials. She assured the board that the fall experience will be much different than what families experienced in the spring. Teachers have been offered training on how to master an online classroom, so parents will not need to act as teachers.

President Broy asked Dr. Kelley to clarify a statement made about if/when the district might change to the hybrid model. Dr. Kelley explained that the district will be looking at the student/family experience. Administration will have conversations with Hanover Research to evaluate the remote learning model. As we approach the end of the trimester, administrators will consider what the district should do moving into the second trimester. Administrators will consider the status of a COVID-19 vaccine. The state asked us to create three different models so we can adapt as necessary. We will evaluate what we have done, how it worked, and if we can make it better.

President Broy suggested talking to experts in the field, suggesting that the plan needs a foundation. She expressed interest in a discussion about cohorts, and making sure that parents are ready for the remote plan. She suggested sharing grouping assignments so students know what group they are in. She encouraged administration to consider what work can be done ahead of time to ensure that parents are ready for the remote plan. Dr. Kelley reported that administration has a months to come together to ensure

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that the families have the support they need, noting that a meeting is scheduled for next week that will help address that. Another team will collaborate to address family needs. Within the next four to five weeks, the district can garner this energy to ensure that each and every one of our students has what they need to be successful. The board liaisons (members Liebl and Spurlock) will meet with the teachers' union to address a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to solidify the commitments for the remote learning plan and determine if any students will be onsite.

Member Kearney recommended explaining the recommendation switch in more detail, via a write up or town hall, suggesting that the community might be caught off guard. Dr. Kelley explained that she looked at the trends in data. She noted that it is important for a community like Oak Park to be proactive in their planning. She suggested that the district could continue to look at data and trends in the data, and wait until there is more guidance, or be more proactive. She noted that daily other districts are being proactive in their planning. Dr. Kelley acknowledged the need for the community to know what the plan is. She noted that the community is entering a resurgence, and the district could easily move from one plan to another. She told the board that the remote plan is the wisest option for the district, and that it is important for families to understand the hybrid model too, because the district will eventually move into that plan. She felt the need to make a decision so that teachers and families have time to prepare. She noted that the village is posting statistics weekly, and the governor has a mediation plan ready to go because of the uptick in COVID-19 cases.

Member Moore suggested a town hall meeting to update parents on the plan, and asked if the district is collaborating with the high school to schedule learning times. Dr. Kelley reported that she meets daily with the superintendent of the high school, but they have not discussed the need to coordinate schedules. She offered to bring up this topic during her meeting.

Member Moore also expressed concern about parents needing to print worksheets or purchase workbooks. Lofton assured the board that students will receive kits, including supplies, so there will be no need for printing or purchasing supplies.

Member Kearney noted the importance of identifying childcare, and asked if the survey will be sent out in the near future. Dr. Kelley assured him that Carrie Kamm is working with Hanover Research on the survey. She was hoping to combine the needs assessment with the survey; however, the needs assessment will not be going out until the first week in August.

Member Kearney expressed interest in hearing about a plan for in-person small group meetings to complement remote learning. Gina Herrmann reported that she spoke to the OPTA leadership and some teachers who have volunteered to do this.

President Broy suggested documenting the expectations for remote learning to ensure equity. She suggested a list for parents so they know what to expect on a daily basis. Lofton explained that this program will be more robust with both synchronous and asynchronous experiences. She will share that information with parents so they can see what the district is committed to and will guarantee.

Vice President Kim supported the anti-racism curriculum, expressing the need for it to be done well in the remote setting.

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(Continued)

Dr. Kelley acknowledged everyone who participated this evening and noted the next steps as follow;

- Answer the few questions from member Spurlock
- Schedule a town hall to explain rationale for the recommendation
- Complete the requested project plan and make it public

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

Due to the nature of a virtual board meeting, the public was asked to email their comment to the Board. All comments that were received prior to 5:30 p.m. were read aloud. The Board made it clear that any comments that were received after that time would be included in the minutes, but not read aloud.

PUBLIC  
COMMENT

Member Kearney read the following statements.

**Matt Downs**

The district must reconsider the current hybrid plan in favor of starting out the year with full remote learning as many other districts are doing. Many have acknowledged, including Dr. Kelly that it is highly likely that we will move to full remote at some point.

If we start fully remote both families and staff will be able to plan around a stable weekly schedule. The district should continue to work with local entities to help families with childcare as Forest Park has done.

The current hybrid plan is completely unstable both for families and staff. The list of unanswered questions is too long to list. How are families and staff able to plan concretely when there is the possibility of quarantine periods of two weeks or more when a student and/or staff member tests positive? Will families be able to increase childcare needs at a moment's notice?

It is often argued that face to face instruction is best for students. I completely agree. However, it laughable to suggest that what students will experience while in the school building will be anything like they would experience in a normal year.

Dr. Kelly has started multiple times that the district has a robust remote learning plan. To my knowledge, feedback for the summer program has been very positive from both parents and staff.

We should build off of that success while ensuring the safest situation for both the families and staff of D97 by going fully remote to begin the 2020/2021 school year.

**Susan Raphael**

I am concerned with the middle school plan to track students via their math level. As a district one of your highest priorities has been to use an equity lens, however the tracking of students contradicts these values. The Board and District spent a significant amount of energy to revamp the gifted program and focus on equity, however, during these challenging times, thus from what I understand, the district is planning to create middle school classrooms based on math level- thus students would be grouped all day based on these levels. This goes against district values of creating balanced classrooms

The current middle school plans compound the problems with tracking and becomes an even greater problem under block learning. This will increase inequality and contradict the previous work of the district. At the very least, the district should provide information on how the composition of classroom

cohorts compare when grouped by math level and when not grouped by math level. We must do better and come up with a solution that does involve tracking by math level.

On another note, I am curious what happens if the district decides to switch to all remote learning. Does the hybrid student remain with their teacher or are they reassigned to the remote academy? Will classroom teachers receive the same amount of training in remote learning as members of the remote academy? I am also wondering if remote academy students are part of their home school or can return to their home school if the district turns to all remote. This way they can reunite with friends from their home school rather than students from throughout the district.

### **Johanna Clark**

Once the district has allowed for all the sibling groupings and special accommodations that understandably have to take priority in scheduling, it would be useful if families can then have grouping requests considered to allow them to share childcare on the remote days, especially with the younger students.

I noted Jung Kim raised a similar question during the July 9th special board meeting which was not answered. I was disheartened to hear Rob Breymaier caution that allowing parents to make such requests is tantamount to undoing years of equity work in the district. I am unaware of others' requests, but in our situation we have three rising Holmes Kindergarteners in neighboring houses with all parents working. If they attend school on the same days the burden on our families eases tremendously. There are undoubtedly many in a similar circumstance across the district. I think asking if the school has flexibility to support this request is very different from requesting a specific teacher and to dismiss it as such fails to recognize the unprecedented and challenging circumstance families are finding themselves in.

In my capacity as both a Holmes parent and a Brooks educator, I feel very strongly that how we support our families negotiate this complex hybrid model is the opportunity to show how creative we can be and how we can support each other as a community.

### **Christine Diedrich**

How will the teachers teach both remote and hybrid students at the same time, on the same days, if their students elected different options? Or, will there be teachers assigned to all hybrid students and other teachers assigned to 5-day-week virtual students?

### **Ruth Brown**

Please consider accepting requests for families to be either on A or B schedules, and accommodating those requests to the extent consistent with paramount goals such as sibling groupings, accommodations for students with special needs, and equity balancing of classrooms.

Permitting such requests would better enable the creative solutions that families need to cope with the challenge of at-home instruction. Undoubtedly, there will be children assigned to either A or B schedules whose families would benefit significantly from the opposite assignment. For example, caregivers may have to work on certain days of the week or have childcare available only on certain days of the week. In my family's case, being on the same A or B schedule with neighbors would allow three sets of families to cooperate on childcare for kindergarteners, lessening the burden on working parents and ensuring that the kids do not need to be placed in childcare environments that would put them (and by extension, the school community) at increased risk of Covid-19 exposure.

Such requests could be accommodated consistent with the District's critical equity objectives. First, requests for an A or B schedule are neutral and thus very different from requests for a specific *teacher*, which can create classroom equity imbalances or inequitable access to certain teachers. Second, schools

could, and should, ensure that all families are equally informed, by, for example, sending an email with a procedure to request a schedule change after initial classroom assignments are made. Schools could then accept the requests and accommodate only those schedule changes that could be made consistent with other paramount mandates such as equity balancing of classrooms.

Although such a process would involve a little effort and flexibility by the schools, that work would pay important dividends by improving home-school arrangements for children and assisting caregivers scrambling to pull together workable childcare plans for the fall.

Thank you for your consideration of my perspective, and, again, for all of your hard work.

### **Julian PTO Board**

Attached in this email is a list of approximately 90 questions posed by Julian parents and guardians regarding the format for next school year. A few main questions the PTO has are as follows:

- Julian families need more details of what next year's school options will look like before they can make the best decision for their families. What will a school day look like for a hybrid student? What will a school day look like for a remote student? Please walk through a student's day. Additionally, families need to know when this information will be released in order to help them plan.
- How specifically are teachers being supported in order to prepare for the 2020-2021 school year?
- How will remote learning be different than last year?
- Since students will be in the same classroom for most of the day, it appears that students will be tracked via their math curriculum. The PTO is very concerned with this potential tracking approach.

The 90 questions can be found attached to the end of these minutes.

### **Liyang Zhang**

Our family is writing to express concern about the decision to stick with a hybrid model for the upcoming school year. The C.D.C. states that even a return to in-person classes with students spaced apart and prevented from sharing materials is categorized as leading to "more risk." Why are we putting our students and teachers in more risk than they have to?

Is the district still "data-driven" and if so, why has the plan not been altered with the latest data available? It would seem prudent at this point to plan for a full remote learning model so that our teachers and students can be best prepared for the upcoming school year. At the moment, we are left with a plan with minimal detail and hundreds of unanswered questions, important questions. Do we realistically think there will not be COVID-19 cases early in the school year that would not eventually force us to change course anyway? At best, schools will be filled with underlying fear and uncertainty. Many other local school districts have changed course, and it is time for District 97 to do so as well.

### **Jean Walsh-Kallay**

As a teacher in District 97 since 1997, I have loved teaching the really amazing, bright, curious, engaged and caring children in our town. Each day this summer, I have awakened thinking about how we can best teach our children in the fall so they can have the most optimal academic, behavioral and social emotional learning and still reduce their Covid-19 exposure as much as possible. Of course, the Covid-19 data keeps changing and we learn more about how this virus negatively impacts different age groups in the short-term and in the long-term. One thing has remained constant for teachers and that is their desire to educate and care for our students. Remote teaching and learning was done in crisis mode in the spring, and I am so thankful for the teachers, students, families, and administrators who worked together to help



the children learn and feel safe and even feel that all important "love of learning." And here we are...almost fall and no good solutions because there's nothing good about this virus. Any path we take is going to have advantages and disadvantages for students, families, and the teachers who love them. I served on the Learning Models Committee this summer as we looked to create a non-crisis learning plan in different scenarios. The product of the work for learning remotely is vastly different and improved from the spring when we created the plan as we moved along each day. The fall remote learning plan is more rigorous, more engaging, and more organized. It has been built to reduce and simplify technology platforms used, to reduce technology glitches, to include more synchronous learning, to be closely aligned to learning standards, to include richer resources, to address the social emotional health of our children that is so vital in this time of Covid-19 and the long overdue focus on institutional racism and inequity in our society. And this new remote learning plan helps keep our really important Oak Park children, families, teachers, and community much safer which is what each of us wants more than anything right now. It's what we all have in common. Thanks for listening and be well.

### **Kim Stephenske**

I realize this is not an easy task and many open ended questions and concerns remain. I like many parents and families have questions that I feel have not been addressed or considered so below are my comments, questions and concerns.

What are the district/school plans for childcare on the 3 days of remote learning? I have 2 children in the elementary school this fall and 1 child to start at the Middle school this fall. We are one of many families per the survey results who would be OK with full return to school assuming local/state health guidelines are in place. Seeing that the hybrid model is being expected what is the district doing to cover families for the new expected costs of childcare when children are not at school? Many families are struggling with schedules and trying to balance returning to work and children with remote learning. Many parents are not able to work from home and have 2 working parents. When parents ARE working from home they are supposed to be "WORKING" not homeschooling their children. Many families have had to take pay cuts or have lost jobs. How are we expected to pay upwards of \$1000-\$2000/month for someone to help our children with remote learning and childcare while they are not in school? We pay an exorbitant amount in property taxes in Oak Park, the majority of which go to public education. How can we be expected to pay more for remote learning with childcare or will the district be providing this service? How will one person in the childcare facility be able to help 10+ kids with remote learning at the same time from different grade levels/teachers? Isn't this creating more exposure to our children and therefore counterproductive to limiting exposures to other groups? There is no substitute for in-person learning, especially at the elementary school level or with a child with special learning needs. Other districts are finding a way to give families the choice between 5 days of in-person learning or 5 days of remote learning. Why is Oak Park struggling to do the same and provide this option? Look at your survey results and you can see parents are OK with full time return and for those who are not can stay at home and do remote learning. Then you can get lower numbers in school and the teachers that do not feel comfortable in school can be in charge of the children doing remote learning? We feel that our children will not be getting the education they deserve/need and will therefore fall behind exponentially.

Will the district be issuing electronic devices to all students K-8 for remote learning?? Not all families are able to have multiple children on multiple devices at the same time.

### **Middle School Teachers Librarians – Jen Nelson and Jamie Winchell**

We want to express our strong favor for robust remote learning for at least the first trimester of the 2020-21 school year. We believe that the safety of our teachers and students necessitates this. As someone said at the D200 Board meeting: there's so much that can go wrong with in-person instruction and there's so much that can go right with remote instruction.

With time to plan, a luxury we didn't have last spring, remote learning this fall will be vastly different. We would love to pour our creative hearts into remote collaborative efforts with teachers of all departments, plan online One Book One School experiences, improve our virtual book clubs and lunch periods, and do all the small and big things teacher librarians do.

Our professional organization, the American Association of School Librarians, recently stated: "School librarians fulfill five important roles: instructional partner, teacher, leader, information specialist, and program administrator, all of which highlight the profession's skill at building relationships and creating an inclusive school culture." We can't do these jobs for District 97 if we are sick or dead.

Please do the right thing and invest in robust remote learning for at least the first trimester this school year.

### **Katie Trathen**

As both a staff member and a parent in our district, I am writing to ask that you strongly reconsider the current hybrid plan and move to a full remote learning plan for the start of the school year. While I would prefer nothing more than for my child to start Kindergarten in a typical way, I know that this is not possible at this time. Just today the Governor of Illinois announced an increase in Covid-19 cases in Illinois, and seeing that Covid-19 is much more prevalent now than it was in March when we first closed, it is clear that opening schools is not safe for individuals students and teachers, nor for public health. Furthermore, the idea of going back in-person seems to be based on the idea that children are less likely to get the virus or die from it, but I fear this is faulty science. Children have been highly protected so far with schools closed, and if schools reopen there will certainly be children in our district who contract Covid-19 and spread it to their families due to exposure in our schools. This can all be avoided if we start with a full remote plan.

As you know, there are literally hundreds of difficult questions posed by District 97 staff and the teachers' union, which are mostly regarding the face-to-face component of the hybrid plan. Given that we are likely to go full remote at some point anyhow, I believe our district staff's time will be best spent over the next few weeks developing the robust remote learning plan that we've promised the community.

### **Misty Taylor**

At the July 9th board meeting, I made a public comment in support of District 97's decision to pursue a hybrid model for reopening schools this fall.

In the 2 weeks since the decision was announced, however, our understanding of Covid-19 has continued to evolve and new information may require District 97 to reconsider their options.

1. The much cited South Korea CDC study that definitively demonstrates kids are significant vectors for the virus, and mounting evidence that schools contribute to outbreaks.
2. The Yale study that indicates young people are disproportionately responsible for silent Covid-19 transmission, and the lead researcher states "reopening schools would be adding fuel to the fire."
3. The WHO acknowledged there is evidence that Covid-19 can be spread by airborne particles.
4. The AAP walked back their support for reopening schools, acknowledging the complexity of factors and stakeholders involved in decision-making.
5. CDC Director Dr. Redfield issued a stark warning about the anticipated 2nd wave of Covid-19 to coincide with seasonal influenza this fall.

With all of the unknowns about the virus and a ground that continues to shift underfoot each day- Our community cannot ask or agree to subject our teachers, staff, and students to a public health experiment where the stakes are life and death.

It may be time for District 97 to pursue a fully remote model and dedicate all of its time and resources towards making the best out of a very difficult situation. You'd have our family's support in doing so.

We appreciate the district's continued efforts in consultation with the appropriate public health officials to make the right decisions that prioritize the health & safety of our students, staff, families and community.

The following messages were not read aloud.

**Michelle Johnson**

Your work is of the most important, and I appreciate everything you do.

We have just graduated out of District 97, however we are still paying attention to plans and announcements, as what District 97 does has an effect on the entire community. I am writing to ask you to please consider a completely remote learning plan for this fall. It seems there are many parents willing to send their children part-time and even full-time back to the school buildings, however I am very concerned about the physical and mental health of the teachers, who are being forced to choose between their jobs and their lives. We were fortunate to have a number of outstanding teachers in our eleven years in District 97. I have them in mind when I think about the possible return to the school buildings.

I know many families are finding this time to be extremely difficult. Helping their students with e-learning and going back to work/ childcare are going to be a huge challenge for many. If we start focusing now on how to make it work, and plan for a completely remote fall, we can keep everyone safe.

I believe everyone will be sent home in a matter of weeks, if not sooner, should the buildings be open. This virus spreads fast, and the minute someone in the building gets sick it will be difficult to contain the spread. Planning now for fully remote fall instruction will prevent some of the challenges that closing back down and shifting to e-learning presents.

Please consider a completely remote fall school plan.

**Hooi Lim**

Here are some of the questions we have for the special board meeting later today concerning the all remote learning.

1. Will the all remote learning option provide students with live instructions/teaching from each teacher, including a Q&A session? Will students get the same experience from in-person learning (hybrid option) vs all remote learning? Or how will they differ?
2. Will students with remote learning be doing live zoom sessions with the in-class students simultaneously? With hopefully a Q&A session?
3. Will assignments be graded and feedback be provided in a timely manner throughout the semester? This did not really happen in the spring session and it is a concern.
4. For the hybrid learning option, will the teachers instead of the students be travelling to different classes? How do you handle kids with different Math level classes? And how about orchestra/band classes?
5. How will lunch time be handled?

6. If the hybrid option is chosen, will families have the option to opt out of it to transition into remote learning during the trimester if at any point, the families deem that it is not safe for their kids to be in school?

7. Is the Student-Specific Survey just a preliminary survey for the District to get a sense of what decision families are leaning towards, or is the option chosen in this survey final with no option to change later especially if we learn more details about each of the options later?

**John Dagnon**

If schools don't open fully & primary responsibility for educating my kids falls on me, how much of my property taxes will I be refunded?

**Zerrin Bulut**

If a student starts in the hybrid model- and the family decides to keep that student home, is this easily done? Are there restrictions, or limitations of any kind to this kind of move?

What will the hours be of both hybrid and fully remote learning? Is remote learning asynchronous or synchronous?

**Steven Brown**

I totally understand the concerns about equity in the hybrid learning model, the idea that students would be grouped by math scores, etc. That seems like a real concern and I don't have an easy solution to offer on that front. BUT what I don't understand is how 100 percent remote learning is going to make things any better. At-risk students and those who need extra help are going to struggle even more trying to do remote learning than they would in school. Does the district disagree? Additionally, I heard someone from the district during the meeting addressing this, saying "there is a possibility of bringing some of these students into the building." Well, isn't this just repeating the same problem that was identified with the hybrid model? That we'd be treating these students differently and separating them from their peers? If that's the solution to students who struggle with remote learning, wouldn't the hybrid model be better for them since they'd at least be present with a larger group of peers?

**Amy Maglio**

I would like to request for students in the cohort who are not in school on two days (for example, Cohort A who are at school Monday/ Tuesday and home on Thursday/Friday) to zoom in to their classes on the days when Cohort B will be in class, and vice versa for Cohort B? This will build a greater sense of camaraderie / community among those who cannot be physically together (I know it's not an ideal way to do this, but under these circumstances, it is an option that should be considered) and, it, will give the cohort at home a synchronous learning environment, to solidify concepts in core classes.

The current plan, of two full days devoted to specials, seems like too much time for students' three or four classes (one of which is physical education) with the potential for students not to be fully engaged during this time. I am concerned that these days will devolve into a repeat of the spring experience where assignments consisted of busy work and were completed very quickly. Not to minimize the importance of these classes but under these circumstances, I think emphasis should be more on core classes, Learning will not happen in the same way or pace as normal during this period so allowing more time for students to really grasp concepts and engage meaningfully with teachers in the core subjects should be prioritized.

Why not have Wednesday devoted to specials and devote four days Mon/Tues/Thurs/ Fri to core curriculum? Teachers can teach a different lesson each of those four days rather than repeating the same two lessons Mon/Tues and Thurs/Fri without any additional risk or burden on educators or students.

**ADJOURNMENT**

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to conduct, Vice President Kim declared the meeting adjourned at 8:36 p.m.

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Board President

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Board Secretary

attachment