

**Official Minutes of the
Oak Park Board of Education District 97,
970 Madison Street, Cook County, Oak Park, Illinois
March 23, 2010**

President Traczyk called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Present: Gates, Spatz, Clouser, Reddy, Barber, and Traczyk
Absent: Harton
Also Present: Superintendent Constance R. Collins, Director of Human Resources Trish Carlson, Assistant Superintendent of Finance and Operations Therese O'Neill, Assistant Superintendent of Teaching and Learning Kevin Anderson, Communications Coordinator Chris Jasculca, Director of Special Education Mike Padavic, and Board Secretary Sheryl Marinier

ROLL CALL

Executive Session

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Reddy moved, seconded by Gates, that the Board of Education move into executive session at 6:06 p.m. Roll call vote.

Ayes: Reddy, Gates, Clouser, Spatz, Barber, and Traczyk
Absent: Harton
Motion passed.

Open Session

OPEN SESSION

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

Ayes: Reddy, Barber, Spatz, Gates, Clouser, and Traczyk
Absent: Harton
Motion passed.

1.1.0 Approval of Minutes of March 9, 2010

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF MARCH 9, 2010

Clouser moved, seconded by Barber, that the Board of Education approve the minutes from the March 9, 2010 meeting. Roll call vote.

Ayes: Clouser, Barber, Gates, Spatz, Reddy, and Traczyk
Absent: Harton
Motion passed.

Public Comment

PUBLIC COMMENT

Christina Blakey, Oak Park resident and parent of three children with IEPs, expressed her opinion regarding the overcrowding concerns at Lincoln School and the possibility of housing the special education classes in mobile units. She questioned the use of AARA funds, the lack of parent involvement in making this decision, and the lack of transparency in the decision making process.

Mark Daniels, Oak Park resident and parent, expressed his concern regarding the Illinois Safe Schools (ISS) training, specifically gender topics. He questioned Board policy 2240 and the ISS materials, voicing that he believes the materials to be inappropriate.

Tammy Schulz, Oak Park resident and parent, voiced her concern over the content of the PBIS film "That's a Family." She expressed her concern over the topics of adoption, and meeting a birth mother. Schulz believes that the discussions are not suitable for middle school students.

Public Comment – (Continued)

Marva M. Chubb, Romeoville resident, former Oak Park teacher, and grandparent to Oak Park students, agreed with the previous speakers. She voiced her opinion that children should be learning that all people are created the same and should be respected. Chubb also believes that teachers should not use the classroom to push their personal agendas.

Charlie Green, Oak Park resident and parent, told the Board that the video in question was offensive. He was concerned about quotes regarding inter-racial marriages and people in wheelchairs; he believed that the comments could be considered a form of bullying.

Amy Hasegawa, Oak Park resident and parent, spoke in support of the Julian bullying program and PBIS training. She expressed her concern that the ISS materials are not age appropriate, complex and confusing. She also questioned the appropriateness of a fifth grade discussion on transgender and sperm donation. She requested a written response from the Board regarding this alternative viewpoint training.

Special Reports

SPECIAL REPORTS

Diane Pingle, coach of the West 40 speech team announced that the District 97 middle school team won the annual competition again. Rachel Pospisil, a seventh grader, and Sabastian Beaghan, a sixth grader shared their winning performances.

Action Items

ACTION ITEMS

4.1.1 Approval of Bill List and Related Reports

Clouser moved, seconded by Reddy, that the Board of Education approve the Bill List and Related reports as presented. Roll call vote.

Ayes: Clouser, Reddy, Gates, Barber, Spatz, and Traczyk
Absent: Harton
Motion passed.

4.2.1 Approval of Personnel Reports

Barber moved, seconded by Reddy, that the Board of Education approve the Personnel Action report as presented. Roll call vote.

Member Clouser shared that the retention level of non-tenure staff has been in the high ninety percentile. It is unrealistic to him to assume that such a retention rate is possible. He encouraged the District to view financial stewardship as more than checks and balances.

Ayes: Barber, Reddy, Gates, Spatz, and Traczyk
Nay: Clouser
Absent: Harton
Motion passed.

4.3.1 Adoption of Middle School Language Arts Materials

Barber moved, seconded by Gates, that the Board of Education adopt the Prentice Hall middle school language arts materials for the 2010-2011 school year as presented and discussed at the March 9, 2010 Board meeting. The materials will be purchased out of the textbook allocation in the Department of Teaching and Learning, with an expected expenditure of approximately \$162,000.

Ayes: Barber, Gates, Clouser, Reddy, and Spatz
Abstain: Traczyk
Absent: Harton
Motion passed.

4.3.2 Approval of Mulch Bid

Barber moved, seconded by Reddy, that the Board of Education award a contract to McGinty Brothers in the amount of \$5810.00 for district-wide mulch work, per the attached memorandum dated March 9, 2010. Roll call vote.

Ayes: Barber, Reddy, Gates, Clouser, and Spatz

Abstain: Traczyk

Absent: Harton

Motion passed.

DISTRICT ACTIVITY

District Activity

ASBESTOS ABATEMENT – SUMMER 2010 CAPITAL PROJECTS

Therese O'Neill shared that eight bids were received. She explained that one bid was submitted with an inappropriate estimate of the job at hand. The company, NES, requested that their bid be removed from consideration. O'Neill reviewed the request with legal counsel who supported the selection of the second lowest bidder for the job.

TECH PLAN REVIEW: EMPOWERING 21ST CENTURY LEARNERS: ESSENTIAL TOOLS

Kevin Anderson, Cao Mac and Harla Hutchinson presented an elaborate update to the Board on the technology plan recommendations. They explained that the goal is to move towards digital textbooks, as well as a five-year professional development plan, focusing on collaboration tools, authentic tasks, development of technology tools, new ways to use technology, and staffing needs. They explained that the largest financial commitment would be in the first three years of the plan, beginning with the replacement of much needed outdated machines.

Survey results were shared with results supporting the teachers, and students interest in incorporating additional technology into the classroom. Teachers identified the greatest obstacles as not enough computers, lack of time in the school day, outdated equipment and network slowness. Students supported the use of laptops, cell phones, smartphones, and the ability to access the network from their personal computer, and access to the Internet anywhere in the school. The student survey results also defined the need for communication tools, virtual simulations, mobile computing devices, collaboration tools, projection devices and digital media tools.

Anderson explained that professional development would begin with sixteen workshops scheduled during the summer of 2010. Teachers identified as digital leaders and outside trainers would teach these sessions.

Board concerns and suggestions included:

- A suggestion was made to consider a student technology fee.
- A concern was expressed regarding understaffing.
- Concern was expressed as to how this plan fits into the District's current financial situation. Administration was asked to review the plan, determine what is absolutely necessary and to think outside the box for ways to subsidize the project.
- Interest in seeing the survey results divided by departments was expressed.
- It was suggested that the Teacher's Union be asked to participate in helping reduce costs.
- It was suggested that information be gathered from the community.

It was agreed that the Board will revisit this topic during their next meeting on April 13. Administration will review the proposal looking for ways to reduce costs, as well as optional funding suggestions.

Superintendent's Report

SUPERINTENDENT'S
REPORT

The District received an additional FOIA request from a parent regarding the ARRA grant submitted to the state. The District issued a response to this request today, which included the documentation the parent was seeking.

Superintendent's Report – (Continued)

Dr. Collins reported that there are two components to resolving the space issue at Lincoln. While the formal recommendation will be presented to the Board on April 13, Dr. Collins updated the Board on the work to date. The first component is the use of portables for the 2010-11 school year only. The second component is the construction of an addition at Lincoln which will include additional special education classrooms utilizing ARRA funds. Documents were distributed supporting these recommendations:

- Space planning outline for Lincoln School
- Quote for portables
- ISBE ARRA approval letter (incorrectly stated June 17, 2009 as submission date—correct date is March 2, 2010)

The Cabinet, Principal Cathy Hamilton and Dr. Collins reviewed the options, and the following goals were identified:

- Keep special education students within school area
- Make good use of one time revenue source
- State of art classrooms designed for needs of special education students
- Ease overcrowding
- Provide secured entrance for enhanced safety
- Collaborate with principal/central office

Dr. Collins updated the Board on the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), reporting that:

- The purpose of the ARRA funds is to use federal dollars to meet local needs.
- The ARRA funds are a long-term solution to an ongoing problem of overcrowding at Lincoln Elementary School.
- The ARRA funds will allow the special education students to be educated in their neighborhood schools.
- The ARRA funds will prevent the District from having to borrow money or sell Bonds.
- The Illinois State Board of Education has already approved one hundred and nine construction projects for a total of \$320 million.
- 2530 - Construction:
 - \$100,000.00 - Bathrooms at Holmes School
 - \$100,000.00 - Bathrooms at Brooks School
 - \$500,000.00 - Addition Special Education classrooms at Lincoln School
 - \$700,000.00
- 2220 – Technology: \$150,000.00 - Computers, LCD Projectors, Software and Printers; \$250,000.00 - Lexia Reading, Read 180 and AIMS
- Web Programs
- 2210 – Professional Development: \$269,250.00 - Workshops, Training and Materials
- Total: \$1,369,250.00
- All funds budgeted for the ARRA program must be expended or obligated by September 30, 2011.
- She concluded by sharing that a formal report on the Lincoln space issue will be given during the April 13 meeting.

The District held a “meet and greet” for 70-75 potential job applicants who responded to the District’s promotional flyer on March 18. Over seventy people attended. Principals and cabinet members had short meetings with each attendee identifying many to move forward with interviews within the District.

An email applauding the behavior of eighth grade students from Julian at the Chicago Board of Trade was shared with the Board.

It appears that District 97 may not qualify for the Innovation grant, however, the District will not be certain until the FAQs are presented by the U.S. Department of Education.

Superintendent's Report – (Continued)

Longfellow Principal Angela Dolezal submitted a letter to the Board supporting the need for an assistant principal at Longfellow School.

Replacement of the two coordinator positions was discussed. The majority of the Board agreed to replace the positions but asked to see the job descriptions.

Board Concerns / Announcements

BOARD CONCERNS /
ANNOUNCEMENTS

Dr. Collins was congratulated by the Board on her announcement regarding her move to Round Lake District 116.

A brief discussion took place regarding the superintendency and the Board's next steps, deciding that the Board members should forward their April and May availability to the Board Secretary. Members Barber and Clouser were asked to gather information on behalf of the Board. It was suggested that the Board discuss whether to conduct an expedited or full search during the next Board meeting. It was also suggested that the Board prepare a timeline for the superintendent hiring process.

President Traczyk and the Board Secretary will meet regarding the agenda format with plans to implement the approved agenda format by the end of April.

ED-RED will meet on April 8 and April 9.

Member Spatz will be out of town from March 25 through April 3.

Congratulations were extended to the middle schools for a successful Art Show.

A Thank you was extended to member Harton and the Board Secretary for converting the District to BoardBook.

The Policy committee reported that the bylaw regarding verbatim tapes from Board meetings is compliant with the state law. The committee asked for guidance regarding this topic. The Board discussed limiting the time Board members may possess verbatim tapes. The Board secretary commented on her conversations with the attorneys and explained that it is the recommendation of the District's legal counsel that the wording of the bylaw be revised. The secretary explained that it is legal's opinion that the wording regarding executive tapes is vague and difficult to interpret. She explained that the bylaws state that verbatim tapes cannot be copied; however, legal suggested making copies of executive tapes prior to releasing them to Board members. Chris Jasculca verified that the bylaw states that no copies of non-released tapes can be made.

Kevin Anderson explained that three math classes were in existence during the 2007-2008 school year. The District has only conducted two middle school math classes since that time.

Member Clouser was asked to elaborate on his concern regarding differentiation and how it applies to the top math students. His concern will be addressed during the next student performance report.

It was announced that CAST performed "Dreams and Nightmares" last week.

It was reported that member Reddy will take the place of President Traczyk at the next PTO Council meeting.

Response to Public Comment

A discussion took place regarding the “That’s a Family” video. President Traczyk explained that it was his understanding that the video would never be show to students, that it was strictly a professional development tool. The Board continued with a discussion on PTO funded programs. It was agreed that the two topics should not be separated, that PTOs should be encouraged to invest in materials for staff development, and that the District should be aware of what the PTOs are funding and not funding. Member Gates offered to review the policy on this topic and report to the Board.

There being no further business to conduct, President Traczyk declared the meeting adjourned at 10:51 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

The next regularly scheduled meeting of the Board will be on Tuesday April 13, 2010 beginning at 7 p.m. at the administration building located at 970 Madison Street.

Board President

Board Secretary