

**Official Minutes of the  
Oak Park Board of Education District 97  
260 Madison Street, Oak Park  
June 8, 2021 Meeting**

This meeting was held in-person and virtually using Zoom during the time of the Coronavirus pandemic. One or more of the board members met in-person and everyone else were virtual.

President Kim called the meeting to order at 6:04 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Present: Kim (joined remote), Kearney, Spurlock, Hurd Johnson, Ross Dribin, Moore, Duffy (joined remotely, onsite at 6:50 pm)

Absent:

Also Present: Interim Superintendent Dr. Patricia Wernet, Senior Director of Technology Michael Arensdorff, Senior Director of Human Resources Gina Herrmann, Chief Academic and Accountability Office Ebony Lofton, Associate Superintendent of Education Felicia Starks Turner, Senior Director of Equity Carrie Kamm, Senior Director of Buildings & Grounds Jeanne Keane, Security and School Safety Manager Jim Hackett, Rob Grossi, Interim Superintendent Dr. Griff Powell, and Board Secretary Lonya Boose.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Spurlock moved, seconded by Kearney that the Board move into executive session for the purpose of Appointment, Employment, Compensation, Discipline, Performance, or Dismissal of Specific Employees 5 ILCS 120/2(C)(1) at 6:05 p.m.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

**OPEN SESSION**

Kim motioned that the board move into Open Session at 7:03 p.m. All members of the Board were in agreement. The Board convened in Open Session at 7:04 p.m.

OPEN SESSION

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

PUBLIC COMMENT

To whom it may concern:

This is a letter of support for Patrick McAndrews, 5th grade teacher at Beye School. He did not have his contract renewed due to “lower 5th grade census”. However, his job has been posted as an opening. I am writing this letter of support for Patrick, as I know from direct experience that he is an excellent teacher. He is also very trustworthy, honorable, and committed to teaching children. He is a former Golden Apple winner.

He is devoted to teaching and wants to finish his teaching years at Beye. As a long time, Oak Park Taxpayer, I am concerned at the decision to terminate Patrick McAndrews contract during this stressful Covid year. This is draining the knowledge base and experience at Beye school. It appears that this termination is retaliatory and discriminatory. This occurs the year before he regains tenure.

I think teachers should be cherished and respected, I am not sure how the Beye principal and HR director could justify this termination. Please consider the children who love him in making your Board consideration.

Sincerely,

Ellen Barton

**SPECIAL REPORTS**  
**Back to School Update**

SPECIAL REPORTS

Dr. Wernet explains:

It is hard to believe it is the last week of school and we are heading into the summer months. We hope our students and staff have an excellent summer. The administration will be watching very closely to new guidelines that impact schools and when we receive those guidelines, we will begin additional planning for the new school year to ensure compliance with those guidelines.

Recently, Governor Pritzker issued guidelines for Illinois Reopening effective June 11, 2021. I would like to highlight the comment about the anticipated option about masks still mandated indoors however lifting the requirement for individuals to mask outdoors in most situations. It is important to note that additional health mitigations can be placed on schools as deemed necessary including requiring face masks. We will wait for specific guidance issued by the Illinois State Board of Education, Illinois Department of Public Health and the Oak Park Health Department before we can speak on absolutes. According to the Illinois Department of Public Health, local health authorities will determine which options are allowable in our community.

I also reached out to Oak Park Health Department asking if they anticipated changes with the Illinois Department of Public Health, or any observations with the CDC.

Dr. Chapple stated that she does anticipate changes. There are studies being conducted by the CDC right now to test out different guidelines. She does not know which way they will land since the studies are ongoing, but she does expect that guidance will follow the results of those studies. We will continue to keep you updated.

The Board, Administration, and Teachers have been working together to ensure the implementations of our remote learning program for students that qualify under the two criteria: ineligible for a COVID-19 vaccine; (students up to the age of 12) and quarantining under current guidance for IDPH and our local health department. Oak Park health department will determine options allowable for quarantine students. The district will work with the Oak Park Department of Public Health regarding quarantine options.

As part of our Back to School Report, we would like to discuss the utilization of a plan for emergency days.

Michael Arensdorff, Senior Director of Technology further explains:

We have shared in the past two Board updates, our Remote Learning/eLearning plans that were essentially created when our schools closed for on-site learning back in March, 2020. After discussion, preparation and feedback our Remote Learning plan gave way to our eLearning plan that was implemented in Fall of 2020. With continued guidance and follow-up with West 40 Regional Office of Education approval, the District will continue to work through plans for the upcoming year.

We will continue working jointly with our Unions as we seek approval for this plan. At the July Board Meeting, we plan to hold a public hearing on our eLearning plans. We will also be providing additional information as we progress in this process to both Staff and Parents.

### **Discussion on Superintendent Search**

Members of the Board and Dr. Wernet had discussions last Thursday, June 3, 2021 on the Superintendent search. Dr. Wernet provided the following timeline as an example of options and direction the Board can take as they begin search for a permanent Superintendent of District 97. Board Member Kearney shared, the Board's commitment to stakeholder engagement in this process. He also spoke to the type of candidate the Board is hoping to seek, one who is diverse in their professional background.

Next steps include a special meeting of the Board to further discuss the timeline, and questions that will be used to seek out a Search Firm. This will also include, discussions with District 200 on the process they used to obtain their new Superintendent. Once this information is gathered, both Dr. Wernet and Lonya Boose, Secretary to the Board of Education, will contact Search Firms who will then present customized packages to the Board outlining what their firm will do to assist in the process of hiring a new Superintendent.

Upon completion of those presentations, the Board will seek to vote and approve the hire of one firm to complete its candidate screening process.

- **Time Frame**
  - **July 15 through August 15** – Choose and approve letter of understanding with a search firm. As soon as letter of understanding is executed, position will be posted on the Illinois Job Bank and IASA site, search firm website and district website (national or just local).
  - **August 15 through August 30** – Set a planning meeting with search firm to lock in dates for planning, discussing additional advertising of the position, launch online survey, and schedule dates for processes
  - **Month of September** – Search firm conducts focus groups with internal and external community
  - **September/October Board meeting** - Search firm presents Leadership Profile
  - **October 15/30<sup>th</sup>** – Application process closes
  - **October 15/30** – Search firm conducts interviews with selected candidates
  - **November** – Search firm presents slate of candidates to Board (typically six)
  - **November/December** – Board conducts interviews: first and second rounds (usually an hour)
  - Board needs to decide if they want a confidential stakeholder's group to interview candidate and/or conduct a site visit
  - **December/January** – Board negotiates contract and approves new superintendent
  
- **Process (The process takes approximately 14-18 weeks)**
  - Search firm will determine the time frame with the Board
  - Individual interviews conducted with each member of the Board to determine desired qualifications/characteristics for the position

- Focus groups with: teacher representatives, administrators, other interested staff, parents, business, civic/community leaders, students and others the Board may designate
  - Announcements of the vacancy will be drafted for Board approval and will be posted as directed by the Board in thoughtfully selected national regional publications
  - A link should be provided for the district website
  - Nominations, online applications, and candidate credentials will be received, reviewed, and vetted. Communication and preliminary reference checks should occur for the most qualified applicants
  - Individuals will be screened using the leadership profile characteristics
  - Candidates will undergo further background and detailed reference checks by search team
  - After vetting all applicants, a slate of candidates will be recommended for initial interviews by the Board
  - The number in this slate usually includes four to six highly qualified candidates
  - When the slate is presented, the consultants should support and assist the Board in the final stages
    - Preparing the Board for candidate interviews
    - Discussing Board visits in the community of the preferred candidate(s)
  - **Covid many change community and district visits**
    - Suggest community activities appropriate to introduce finalists
    - Some search firms will provide one year of mentoring for new superintendent
  - November through December – Board conducts interviews: first and second rounds
  - Board needs to decide if they want a confidential stakeholder’s group to interview candidate and/or conduct a site visit
- **What firms and organizations provide services for a Superintendent search?**
    - Illinois Association of School Boards
    - School Exec Connect
    - Ray & Associates
    - BWP & Associate Patty Wernet is an associate of this firm. She receives no compensation from this firm unless she is conducting a search
    - Hazard, Young & Attea (ECRA)
    - A search firm will network and recruit. Many candidates, especially if they are seated superintendents, will not apply unless it is a confidential search.

**ACTION ITEMS**

ACTION ITEMS

**Minutes**

**4.1.1 APPROVAL OF MINUTES FOR THE May 25, 2021 BOARD MEETING**

Spurlock moved, seconded by Duffy that the Board of Education, District 97, approve the minutes from the May 25, 2021 board meeting as presented.

Ayes: Kim, Kearney, Spurlock, Duffy, Ross Dribin, Hurd Johnson, Moore  
Nays: None  
Absent: None  
Motion passed.

**APPROVAL OF THE CONSENT AGENDA**

Duffy moved, seconded by Moore that the Board of Education, District 97, accept the consent agenda as presented and also accept the revised personnel report as presented.

- 4.2.1 Bill List
- 4.2.2 Revised Personnel

Ayes: Kim, Kearney, Spurlock, Duffy, Ross Dribin, Hurd Johnson, Moore  
Nays: None  
Absent: None  
Motion passed.

**General**

**4.3.1 Mops and Services Bid (5/25/21)**

Kearney moved, seconded by Spurlock that the Board of Education of Oak Park District 97 approve the mops and towel services bid as presented to the Board on May 25, 2021 in the amount of \$50,286.10.

Ayes: Kim, Kearney, Spurlock, Duffy, Ross Dribin, Hurd Johnson  
Nays: None  
Abstain: Moore  
Absent: None  
Motion passed.

**4.3.2 Approval of Settlement for 2008-2010 Tax Rate Objections (5/25/21)**

Spurlock moved, seconded by Duffy that the Board of Education of Oak Park District 97 approve the settlement of 2008-2010 tax rate objections pending against the Board at an amount not to exceed eight mills (\$48,700) and to authorize the Superintendent, or his designee, to sign such documents as necessary to settle these matters.

Ayes: Kim, Kearney, Spurlock, Duffy, Ross Dribin, Hurd Johnson, Moore  
Nays: None  
Absent: None  
Motion passed.

**4.4.1 Amended w/ Discussion and Possible Action: Additional Staffing Needs including Remote Staffing and Permanent Substitutes (5/25/21)**

Duffy moved, seconded by Spurlock that the Board of Education of Oak Park District 97 approve the Amended Staffing Proposal for SY22 due to the COVID-19 Pandemic as presented.

Ayes: Kim, Kearney, Spurlock, Duffy, Ross Dribin, Hurd Johnson, Moore  
Nays: None  
Absent: None  
Motion passed.

**Recommendation 1: Permanent Substitutes**

There has been a substitute teacher shortage for the past 5 years. In order to be proactive and to avoid a disconnect in learning for our students, we are recommending the District hire 26 permanent substitutes at the rate of \$150 per day. The permanent substitutes will be used to assist with students who are quarantined and to cover for educators who are absent. Permanent substitutes will be assigned to a specific building but can be used at other buildings as the need exists. The daily substitutes will work on student attendance days only (178). The allocation of the daily substitutes is listed below.

School	Student Population	Daily Substitutes
Beye	387	2
Hatch	358	2
Holmes	502	2
Irving	477	2
Lincoln	665	3
Longfellow	687	3
Mann	469	2
Whittier	475	2
Brooks	911	4
Julian	967	4

*Financial Impact: \$694,200*

Note: The financial impact of permanent substitutes in 2019-2020 was \$851,760. Due to the severity of the COVID-19 pandemic throughout the 2019-2020 school year, we compensated permanent substitutes at \$180 per day. The number of COVID-19 cases has now drastically decreased and the vaccination is becoming increasingly available; therefore, we have lowered the compensation to \$150 per day.

**Recommendation 2: Addition of 2.0 FTE Social Worker**

COVID-19 has resulted in serious mental health issues throughout society. In order to appropriately assist our students as they return to school in the 2021-2022 school year, we are recommending the addition of two (2) full-time social workers. The social workers will report to buildings based on student needs.

*Financial Impact: Approximately \$180,000*

**Recommendation 3: 1.0 FTE Remote Multineeds Elementary Special Education Teacher and 1.0 FTE Remote Middle School Special Education Teacher**

This is a one-year position contingent on results of MOU. We have identified students who will have medical exemptions from school for the 2021-2022 school year due to COVID-19. Some of these are higher needs students. We want to ensure their growth throughout the school year and meet the requirements as outlined in their IEPs. We are recommending the addition of two special education teachers who are designated to only teach our remote students who have IEPs.

*Financial Impact: \$140,000*

**Recommendation 4: Four (4) Contingent Teaching Positions**

We are requesting the budget for four (4) teaching positions. These positions would be used in the event we have an increase in our projected enrollment or an increase in students qualifying for special education.

## Financial Implications of Recommendations

In considering this request from a financial perspective, the following points need to be factored into the Board’s decision: (1) The most significant expense request of permanent substitutes will be contained within next year’s budget regardless of whether the substitutes are hired as permanent or on an “as needed” basis. Based on the shortage in the labor market and the fact the 2021-22 school year will be critically important to the students, the recommendation for permanent substitutes seems prudent. (2) Each of the above expense requests are deemed as eligible expenses to be paid for within the \$3,018,000 ESSER 3 fund grant the District will receive (3) Decisions on the above requests should be considered one-time decisions that will be evaluated next year based on the residual effects of COVID, student enrollment and changes to the labor market.

Discussion:

Contingent teaching positions, we would have these if needed. The Superintendent would approve if necessary.

Board Member, is this for homebound students? How does the ratio of students to teacher relate to on-site?

Dr. Ebony Lofton, these recommendations are based on the number of services offered, and also based on those who intend to request formally, homebound instruction. We want make sure they have the best possible educational experience.

### ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS

ADMINISTRATIVE  
ITEMS

#### **5.1 Compensation for Lunchroom, Playground and Sub Custodial Personnel (expected action 7/13/21)**

District 97 employs temporary, at-will staff as custodial substitutes, playground supervisors, and lunchroom workers. This group of employees are not affiliated with any union/labor group and do not receive fringe benefits. The administration is recommending yearly increases in pay for each group to align with Illinois’ path to a \$15 minimum wage by 2025.

	2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025
Lunchroom Worker I	\$11.50	\$12.00	\$13.00	\$14.00	\$15.00
Playground Supervisor	\$11.50	\$12.00	\$13.00	\$14.00	\$15.00
Substitute Custodian	\$13.00	\$13.50	\$14.00	\$14.50	\$15.00

If there is a need to increase any of these wages (alignment with the prevailing wage, supply/demand) during this timeframe, the administration will bring a proposal to the BOE with a rationale.

Discussion:

Board Member, how could we accelerate this process, \$15 is a more livable wage. I would like to know the financial impact of doing this now rather than pending future increase.

Senior Director of Human Resources, I don’t have that number now but I can look into providing the Board with information on the financial impact of making this change sooner.

**5.2 SELF Renewal (expected action 7/13/21)**

School District 97 participates in the SELF Workers’ Compensation Insurance Cooperative. Founded in 1986, the SELF Insurance Cooperative is self-funded, self-governed and comprised of 83 member school districts in the Chicagoland area. Rates for individual school districts within the SELF Cooperative are determined based on a combination of the overall pool performance and individual district performance. The estimated total due to SELF will be \$251,142 for the July 1, 2021 – June 30, 2022 plan year. The Large Deductible Contribution amount (at the \$25,000 deductible level) is \$219,439, to which is added an \$18,306 replenishment contribution from prior years claims expense activity. However, the district will have a credit (dividend) applied of \$63,364 and a \$76,791 debit due to a payroll audit, from the 7/1/19 – 6/30/20 policy period, for an invoice total of \$251,142. Please note the annual premium cost chart below:

2015-2016	\$332,261
2016-2017	\$208,978
2017-2018	\$243,982
2018-2019	\$205,614
2019-2020	\$126,310
2020-2021	\$193,032
2021-2022	\$251,142

Administration noted a 30% increase in the premium from 2020-2021 and significant fluctuations in the premium history above and discussed with SELF when the original quotation was provided. The fluctuations are mainly a result of SELF estimating payroll amounts which differed from actual payrolls reported from the District’s annual audit. This is reflected in the \$76,791 payroll audit debit noted above. Administration was able to obtain a reduction in the 2021-2022 premium of \$23,033 from SELF’s original quotation after these discussions and working with them on more accurate estimated payroll amounts for 2021-2022. We feel the 2021-2022 premium amount is reasonable and does accurately reflect District 97’s estimated payroll next school year. It is our goal going forward that we will have smaller incremental increases/decreases in premium amounts and will continue to monitor what SELF is estimating for our payrolls. The SELF pool continues to have excellent experience as a cooperative. Attached is the Executive Summary from SELF, along with the quotation, which includes highlights of the rates, cost factors, and plan design from the 2021-2022 renewal presentation. It is our hope that District 97 continues to proactively promote safe working conditions, maintaining a safe work environment, reporting claims promptly, and actively managing claims so the District continues to see favorable rates and experience ratings. The administration recommends approval of the 2021-2022 SELF Workers’ Compensation Insurance Fund renewal rates as presented.

**CLIC Renewal (expected action 7/13/21)**

Oak Park District 97 has been a member of the Collective Liability Insurance Cooperative (CLIC) since July 1,1991. This property and liability insurance cooperative was established during the 1983-1984 school year with only eight school districts as founding members. Today, the pool now has 187-member school districts. Coverages through CLIC includes general liability, auto liability and physical damage, property, boiler & machinery insurance, school board legal liability insurance, student accident, cyber liability/identity theft, crisis protection, and pollution liability insurance. The 2020-2021 annual premium was \$258,941 and the proposed 2021-2022 premium is \$330,246, an increase of 27.5%. Attached to this memo is a cost sheet listing the variable and fixed costs that make up the annual program cost. Please note the annual premium cost chart below:

2015-2016	\$256,188
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2016-2017	\$232,974
2017-2018	\$211,450
2018-2019	\$203,169
2019-2020	\$217,873
2020-2021	\$258,941
2021-2022	\$330,246

Attached is a memo from Gallagher, the co-op’s administrator, explaining the large increase is mainly due to the cyber liability premium. Cyber-attacks and ransomware demands are at an all-time high and there have been hundreds of attacks on school districts across the country this past year. CLIC’S cyber carrier rescinded their original renewal terms after the Colonial Pipeline ransomware attack in May 2021 and all 187 members of CLIC saw a substantial increase in cyber premiums due to this. The cooperative uses the average loss ratios for the previous five years in the calculation of the 2021-2022 individual renewal rates—see attached. While 2018/19 and 2019/20 were very good years, the district had a large loss ratio in 2017/18 of 552.8%, following the freezing and bursting of pipes in January of 2018 at Lincoln School. In addition, the 2014/15 year, which had a very favorable experience for the District, rolled off the five year schedule. On the other hand, our school board legal liability loss ratio has been as good as it can be, with a loss ratio of zero—See Documents Attached to Board Packet.

Discussion:

Do you foresee this being an ongoing increasing expenditure for D97? Will this keep ramping up? The projection is that the insurance would eventually go away, but with the collective of districts, they are hoping to stay with this coverage.

With ransomware, insurance companies are strategizing on making sure they protect covered individuals, but it’s becoming increasingly hard to protect business and pay ransom threats. It’s an effort there to provide, but we are not sure what will happen. We need to have these coverages in place, where our deductible and premium would help financially through any potential cyber-attack.

**Mann PTO Donation (expected action 7/13/21)**

The Mann PTO would like to donate the money to upgrade the existing auditorium audio equipment which is 7 years old. The PTO worked with an audio engineer from the community and they looked at the current system with Mann music teacher Mrs. Hauser, in addition to talking with Tom Kanwisher, who is the Director of Bands / Coordinator for Instrumental Music at Julian about their sound system before discussing at length with the professionals at Shure to come up with what upgrades the auditorium would benefit from. The PTO and the audio engineer then worked with the folks at Full Compass to come up with the proposed equipment purchases. Senior Director of Technology Michael Arensdorff has also reviewed the specifications. The audio upgrade will enhance the capabilities of the system when utilizing the auditorium for performances, music classes and for presentations to the school community. The donation is valued at \$8562.06.

Administration will be seeking a motion that the Board of Education of Oak Park District 97 accepts the donation in the amount of \$8562.06 at its July 13, 2021 meeting.

**BOARD ASSIGNMENTS**

CLAIM Committee Update, the Data Sharing Bill did pass, we are currently waiting on signature from the Governor. We plan to send “thank you” cards to both Senator Harmon and Representative Lilly for their work on this bill. We are proud of the work this committee had done.

**CONCLUDING ITEMS**

CONCLUDING  
ITEMS

**BOARD REMARKS**

Do we want a timeline on the Superintendent search, if we could gather the information needed, we would potentially vote at our next Board Meeting in July on a Search Firm? Yes, let’s proceed, with the hope that we can gather, discuss and present, for Vote at our next meeting.

**AGENDA MAINTENANCE**

The draft agenda for the July 13, 2021 meeting was reviewed.

Board Member, In looking at the draft agenda for the July Board Meeting, we need to schedule a FORC meeting before the budget is presented. We will reach out to Lou Anne to schedule a FORC Meeting.

Board Member, Also, should we add a Policy first read to the July Agenda for the Title IX changes received in the weekly update? Yes.

**ADJOURNMENT**

ADJOURNMENT

Kearney moved, seconded by Ross Dribin that the meeting be adjourned. There being no further business to conduct, President Kim declared the meeting adjourned at 7:53 p.m.

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Board President

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Board Secretary