

Official Minutes of the  
Oak Park School District 97  
Board of Education  
Committee of the Whole Meeting  
260 Madison Street, Oak Park  
September 26, 2023

This meeting was held in-person and virtually using Livestream. Board members met in person along with Administration.

President Kearney called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m.

Present: Kearney, Moore, Ross Dribin, Burns, Hurd Johnson

Absent: Kim, Spurlock

Also Present: Superintendent Dr. Ushma Shah, Assistant Superintendents Dr. Luis De Leon & Patrick Robinson, Chief Learning Innovation Officer Dr. Ebony Lofton, Chief Legal and Equity Officer Luis Rodriguez, Chief Safety Officer Dr. Felicia Starks Turner, Chief Technology Officer Michael Arensdorff, Senior Director of Data Analytics Anna Colaner, and Lonya Boose Board Secretary.

ROLL CALL

### **OPEN SESSION**

President Kearney motioned that the Board move into Public Session at 6:03 p.m. All present members of the Board were in agreement. The Board convened the Committee of the Whole meeting at 6:03 p.m.

OPEN  
SESSION

### **3. PUBLIC COMMENT**

Hi, My name is Nancy Schroeder and I'm here on behalf of Mom's demand action and on behalf of my three children who are students in District 97. One of your duties is to connect with community so I really appreciate this opportunity for you to listen to us and our concerns and I appreciate being able to speak on behalf of the many parents who are concerned with the safety of their children. Thank you for including the national preparedness information in the September newsletters. We are here to ask that secure storage messaging continue to be a priority. I really want to be careful not to editorialize tonight but this information was a buried link in family resources and didn't identify what would be included. I don't think that's prioritizing. I know the district has many tools at their disposal, you have registration where we sign off on concussion guidelines, a handbook and newsletters. I see no reason that this can't be more thoroughly communicated and more prioritized.

We are asking you to share this information for a public health concern. I read in the Wednesday Journal, President Kearney I believe said that the board is concerned with appropriate wording great news, the "Be Smart" framework and tool kit is already written and been in existence for over eight years. Despite what other districts are doing, we should be a leader. I look forward to hearing more on your plans about safety tonight and appreciate your time.

PUBLIC  
COMMENT

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Laura Loveless

I don't have a lot of prepared remarks, but I do want to communicate a few things, obviously we are asking for a resolution about secure storage and the most important part to me is communication given to parents. The registration process happens every year, as parents we go through page after page to sign off that we have read the material. This is a great way to make sure eyes are on the concepts of safe storage. This is simple and straightforward, but not obvious for those who have guns, how to properly store them, securing them make it less likely for people to access. Communicating this to every parent would make a big difference in people's understanding of secure storage and what it means.

I understand there is a lot of efforts legislatively, but this communication will make a big difference. I have a seven-year-old, when I talk to parents of his friends or if he goes to a new friends house, I tell the parents FYI we have a dog in our house and no firearms what about you, it just opens up the conversation and normalizes the interaction. I implore you to help educate parents because this information is hard for parents to receive. Thank you.

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Jason Jenkins

Hello, I am a district 97 parent and resident. I am here to speak about the current literacy curriculums. I know everyone in this room is here because they want to do what's best for kids. As a child of an elementary school teacher, who taught her entire life, and prior to me moving to Oak Park. I am an avid listener of public radio. I heard a documentary by American public media called "Hard words, why aren't kids being taught to read". For approximately 30 years, we have been using curriculum in this country often referred to as balanced literacy to teach kids to read.

Balanced literacy focusses on encouragement and access to lots of books and physical space to read, and all that sounds great until the part where it teaches kids to guess at the words. These are words they can't decode using phonics or cues. The audio went on the explain units of study. Lucy Calkins became ubiquitous about school district around the country. Literacy rates have plummeted

My partner and I moved to Oak Park in 2020 in large part because of the schools and we're loving it sincerely. I have talked to parent about this, and there is a growing number of concerns. I ask that you please take this to heart, Thank You.

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#### **4. SY24 Committee of the Whole Board Meetings | Overview and Outlook**

Dr. Shah provided an overview of the Committee of the Whole meetings and future outlook. This is a new structure for District 97, as we will hold one business meeting a month, and the other meeting will be a committee of the whole for discussion similar to what will be discussed tonight.

The full presentation is available by viewing the live stream of the September 26 committee meeting, or viewing the meeting packet information online.

"COW"  
OVERVIEW  
&  
OUTLOOK

## **5. COMMUNITY AND SCHOOL SAFETY**

### **5.1 Evolving our Partnership: Oak Park’s tri-agency effort to balance community calls for school safety and racial equity.**

The Fall 2023 community update is presented by Dr. Felicia Starks Turner along with Village and District 200 partners. The presentation provides background, implementation and a look ahead into the evolving partnership IGA between the Village of Oak Park, Districts 97 and 200.

Future planning includes:

- Continued tri-agency meetings
- Ongoing review of the IGA implementation
- Guidelines/protocols for law enforcement presence in Oak Park schools
- Emergency preparedness
- Clear and Present Danger reporting protocols
- Community engagement

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### **5.2 Review of District 97 Safety Readiness Training Presentation to Schools (August 2023)**

Presenters: Dr. Felicia Starks Turner, Dr. Luis De Leon, Patrick Robinson and Michael Arensdorff

Over the course of two Institute Days, the district leadership team visited all 10-schools and provided safety training. This information was also provided to the Central Office staff. The safety presentation included:

- What we know in District 97
- Safety principals and expectations
- Standard Response Protocols
  - “I Love U Guys” Foundation

Lastly, a video from “I Love U Guys” Foundation was shown, to capture the response protocols in mock real-life scenarios. Dr. Starks also notes, signage, and broader community information is forthcoming this school year to families and staff along with additional training.

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## **6. EDUCATION DRIVES DESIGN**

### **6.1 Overview of Logic Models**

Dr. Shah and Dr. Anna Colaner presents information on Design Thinking: Unpacking key transformation concepts for logic models. This included:

- Where have we been
- Moving towards distributed leadership
- What is a logic model
- District 97 school improvement logic models and
- Power of logic models

The full presentation is available by viewing the live stream of the September 26 committee meeting, or viewing the meeting packet information online.

## **6.2 In Love with Literacy: Oak Park District 97’s Respect-the-Practitioners Approach to Early Literacy**

Assistant Superintendent Patrick Robinson, Dr. Tawanda Lawrence and Jennifer Logan present on, “In Love with Literacy: District 97’s Respect the Practitioners Approach to Early Literacy”. The presentation includes:

- District beliefs
- Where have we been
- Where are we going

### District 97:

**Value** the expertise of the practitioners closest to student experience and engage them in the national debate around literacy instruction.

**Expect** all students demonstrate competency in the foundational skills of reading and recognize that instruction and collective teacher efficacy are primary and resources are secondary.

**Recognize** that strong adult practices in core instruction which supports students in our focal cohort will result in positive outcomes for all students.

**Invest** in ongoing professional learning opportunities to expand teachers’ knowledge of evidence-based instructional practices for supporting emergent readers.

**Design** school improvement logic models which engage teacher leaders and early literacy teachers in identifying resources and professional learning opportunities to inform future curricular review decisions.

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## **7. CONCLUDING ITEMS**

CONCLUDING  
ITEMS

Board members reflected on the presentation and information received during tonight’s meeting. President Kearney was excited about the great dialog with the board and look forward to the information sharing, board input and dialog in future meetings.

**8. ADJOURNMENT**

All Five present members of the Board were in agreement that the meeting be adjourned. There being no further discussion to conduct, President Kearney declared the meeting adjourned by voice vote at 9:45p.m.

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Board President

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Board Secretary