

**Official Minutes of the
Oak Park Board of Education District 97,
970 Madison Street, Cook County, Oak Park, Illinois
November 10, 2009**

President Traczyk called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

Present: Barber, Gates, Spatz, Clouser, Harton, Reddy, and Traczyk
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, Curriculum Coordinator Carol
Theesfeld, Brian Guastella and Kelly Marthaler of McGladrey and
Pullen, and Board Secretary Sheryl Marinier

ROLL CALL

1.1.0 Approval of Minutes of October 27, 2009

APPROVAL OF
MINUTES OF
OCTOBER 27, 2009

Barber moved, seconded by Gates, that the Board of Education, approve the minutes from the October 27 meeting with revisions. Roll call vote.

Ayes: Barber, Gates, Reddy, Spatz, Clouser, and Traczyk
Nays: None
Abstains: Harton
Motion passed.

Public Comment

None

**Special Report
FY09 AUDIT**

SPECIAL REPORT

Therese O'Neill came to the table with Brian Guastella and Kelly Marthaler from McGladrey and Pullen. Guastella reported that the formal audit report would be submitted prior to the extension deadline of November 15. The report was reviewed and highlights shared. Guastella reported that there were no material weaknesses, no citations specific to internal controls and a reduction in the single-audit citations from Fiscal Year 2008 of 12 to Fiscal Year 2009 of 5 – all of which were associated with reporting compliance issues. A corrective action plan has been adopted to address these findings, which is outlined in the response portion of the audit. Guastella reported that as long as there are findings, the district will not qualify as a low-risk district, therefore 50 percent of the major federal expenditures will need to be tested during the next audit.

O'Neill reported that a motion will be presented to the board for approval prior to the end of the current fiscal year to transfer funds from Capital Improvements to Life Safety. This transfer will move an expenditure to the appropriate general ledger account.

O'Neill and her staff were commended for the reduction in citations which were the result of their hard work and dedication.

4.1.1 Approval of Consent Agenda

President Traczyk read the items on the consent agenda. Clouser moved, seconded by Harton, that the following items be approved on the consent agenda.

- 4.1.1 Bill Lists and Related Reports
- 4.2.1 Personnel Action as presented

Roll call vote.

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

Nays: None

Motion passed.

4.1.2 Approve Estimate of Property Tax Levy

Gates moved, seconded by Reddy, that the Board of Education approve the Estimated 2009 Levy as presented at the October 27, 2009 meeting and as delineated on the attached Certificate of Levy. Roll call vote.

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

Nays: None

Motion passed.

4.1.3 Acceptance of Fiscal Year 2009 Audit

Barber moved, seconded by Reddy, that the Board of Education accept the Fiscal Year 2009 audit as prepared by its auditing firm, McGladrey & Pullen. Roll call vote.

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

Nays: None

Motion passed.

4.2.2 Approve Memo of Understanding - SEIU

Clouser moved, seconded by Gates, that the Board of Education approve the SEIU Memorandum of Understanding to reclassify the "General Maintenance" position to "Maintenance Specialist". Roll call vote.

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

Nays: None

Motion passed.

4.5.1 Approve Adoption of Special Education Policies

Barber moved, seconded by Gates, that the Board of Education adopt special education policies Education of Children with Disabilities, and Misconduct by Students with Disabilities.

Concern was expressed regarding behavioral intervention. It was suggested and agreed upon that the policy should read "External consultants may be utilized when the district is not able to supply necessary expertise in behavioral interventions or as requested by the IEP team." The documents will be modified prior to their public posting to reflect the policy numbers assigned by Neola.

4.5.1 Approve Adoption of Special Education Policies – (Continued)

Roll call vote.

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

Nays: None

Motion passed.

Academic/Instruction

SUMMER SCHOOL REPORT

ACADEMIC /
INSTRUCTION

Dr. Anderson and Carol Theesfeld reported on the 2009 Summer school program. Summer school consisted of four individual programs - School Daze / Music Camp had 328 participants; Early Start was offered to students in Kindergarten through fourth and had 296 participants; Middle School Academy / OPRF Summer Program had 171 participants and was offered to students in grades five to eight; and Extended Year Summer school had 106 students and was offered to students with IEPs. Anderson reported that the total cost of the summer offerings was \$260,008.

The goal of the program was to guide the ongoing monitoring of student achievement throughout the year using both classroom and testing data to assess progress, and to oversee and lead the implementation of research-based initiatives that result in a decrease in suspensions and expulsions. Following the summer programs, students experienced a 40 point growth in their reading skills while their math skills were maintained. Surveyed parents and students reported that they would be willing to pay toward the summer school experience, and that the fifth graders appreciated the exposure to the middle schools. They also expressed a preference for having summer school in June or July instead of August. Teachers said that they found that sharing student information between teachers (during the regular year and summer school) was extremely helpful. They suggested extending that service from summer school to the new school year.

Future actions will include the creation of a summer school review committee, which will begin meeting in late November. This committee will review the current program to determine if it is an appropriate use of district funds and if they provide students with the skills they need to be successful in the coming years. The committee will also analyze the length of the individual programs and associated fees. The possibility of not making certain programs a requirement will also be considered. After an extensive discussion regarding the summer school programs, the board agreed that a review of the programs is necessary. The board requested an FYI update in the December 1 board packet.

Suggestions shared during the discussion included:

- Consider using a different curriculum during the summer
- Ask special education teachers for recommendations for students who might benefit from the summer program
- Consider making a resource teacher available during the program
- Increase tuition to offset the expense
- Extend the length of the programs
- Review the use of the word “mandatory” and its consequences
- Look at models and find one that fits the needs of Oak Park
- Review the process for recommending students, as some children are included in summer school because they did not do homework, but actually understand the curriculum

It was also suggested that the committee consider teaching the skills needed to learn as opposed to focusing on the curriculum. It was noted that a procedure had previously been implemented instructing teachers to share students skill set and learning styles with other teachers as a child

SUMMER SCHOOL REPORT – (Continued)

progressed. Concern was expressed that this procedure appears not to be functioning well. It was also suggested that the district include summer school in their RtI discussions, and consider hiring high school students as assistants.

There was interest expressed in seeing statistics on whether the students who participate in summer school are the same students who eventually drop out of high school. There was also a request for definition of what the district is measuring in this regard. Specific questions included:

- What are the district's goals?
- Should the summer programs be offered immediately after school ends, or just prior to the new year beginning?
- Why do parents not send their children to summer school?
- How does the percentage of non-participation compare to previous years?
- Can we create a checklist that passes from teacher to teacher to meet the bridging opportunities? Interest was expressed in seeing how test scores compare from the end of the year to the end of the summer school program.
- At what point would a student not have full access to electives in middle school?

Dr. Collins acknowledged that research should be conducted based upon revamping the summer school program. She explained that this will be an extensive project and cannot be completed for the 2010 summer program. Although some modifications can be made for 2010, the district will review the program and make recommendations for 2011. Collins reported that administration will report its plan for the 2010 summer school program to the board in January.

District Activity

CALENDAR ADOPTION DISCUSSION 2010-2011

DISTRICT ACTIVITY

Carlson reported that the suggested 2010-2011 calendar coincides with the winter and spring breaks at OPRF High School, as well as the January Institute Day, and Veteran's Day Observance on November 5, allowing for collaborative planning. Additionally, a coinciding board declared holiday is scheduled on the Friday prior to Easter.

The committee was asked to consider scheduling a non-attendance day on the Jewish holiday of Yom Kippur. Yom Kippur falls on a weekend in both the 2010-2011 and 2011-2012 school years. Carlson reported that school attendance on that day was lower by 158 students from the average attendance for the month of September 2009. The committee will revisit this issue when planning the 2012-2013 school calendar. The calendar will be brought to the board for adoption on December 1.

Board of Education Priorities

BOARD MEETING STRUCTURE

BOARD OF
EDUCATION
PRIORITIES

Members Spatz and Barber lead a discussion on the Board Meeting Management Protocol document. They reminded the board that past practice was to hold very long meetings, which often included executive sessions before and after each open session meeting. After a lengthy discussion, it was determined that the document does not need to include past practice. Chris Jasculca was asked to review the document along with member Reddy. They will share their recommendations with the board on December 1.

INQUIRY NETWORK FOR FACTUAL OUTREACH

Member Spatz explained that the Legislative Advocacy Committee (LAC) was formed in 2005 and is currently inactive. Members Spatz and Gates reviewed the charge for the LAC and are recommending that the committee be renamed Inquiry Network for Factual Outreach (INFO) and the charge rewritten.

They recommended that the purpose of the committee should be to engage the board and all District 97 stakeholders, including its legislators, in a transparent analysis and open discussion of the impact of existing and proposed local, country, state, and federal legislation, policies, and practices to develop a shared understanding that will enable the district to achieve its mission.

After a brief discussion, board comments included an interest in maintaining the LAC. Confusion as to how the INFO committee would be different than a communication committee was also expressed.

It was agreed to wait with a decision on the INFO committee until the board investigates and considers a communications committee.

BOARD GOALS DISCUSSION

The Board reviewed their 2009-2010 goals. President Traczyk commented on each. All comments are listed below:

1. Finances:

- a. **Establish a comprehensive referendum plan** - discussion took place about a referendum and the need to focus on it at this time. It was suggested that this goal should be reworded to reflect the need for a comprehensive plan or a five-year forecast.
- b. **Actively participate in TIF carve-out settlement and act to maximize benefit to the District in the long term** – it was agreed that this could be a great study session for the board. It was reported that David Pope is willing to talk to a couple board members regarding crossing guards and the TIF. It was reported that this goal is behind schedule.

2. Board Governance:

- a. **Complete Superintendent evaluation according to schedule** – on time.
- b. **Ensure Board agendas reflect realistic time requirements** – effort is being made.
- c. **Monitor that discussion is kept to time set** – effort is being made.
- d. **Continue use of Board Study Sessions for major topics** – The board identified a topic for discussion during this meeting. A study session to determine the need for three committees, LAC, INFO and communications was suggested.
- e. **Review Board meeting structure; implement agreed upon changes** – on track
- f. **Review committee structure and supporting charges** – slightly behind
- g. **Investigate need and charge for a standing Communications Committee** – on track. It was suggested that the document supplied during the March 24 board meeting be resurrected. Dr. Collins will get feedback on the document from the administration and update the board.
- h. **Improve production of board agendas and meeting packets** – on track.
- i. **Investigate and implement staff recognition program** on track.

Superintendent's Report

- A COG meeting was held on Tuesday, November 3.
- Dr. Collins spoke to Tom Barwin today. He informed her that the district will be receiving a written communication regarding the TIF sometime next week, and the Village will schedule a meeting with D97 after the document has been received.
- West 40 Superintendents held a Legislative Breakfast Monday morning. Six legislators were in attendance: Chris Radogno, Don Harmon, Jim Durkin, Bob Biggins, Skip Saviano, and Mike McAuliffe. They participated in a lengthy discussion about the future of the ROE. They also discussed school funding, a possible state tax increase and early childhood programs.
- The redacted comments from the climate survey have been received from Hodges and Loizzi. Staff will have them available for board members shortly after the Thanksgiving break.
- Gerald Sebesta, Jr., the former Cicero Township Treasurer, submitted a FOIA request on November 9, 2009 seeking the district's PMA Financial Network statements for the months of January through October of this year. In total, 181 pages of information were requested.
- A state of the district meeting is tentatively being scheduled for Thursday, January 28 from 7 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. with the board's approval. The board members will check their availability on that date.
- Cabinet has brainstormed possible items to take off the plates of the principals.
- Cabinet reviewed the agenda schedule for the remainder of the school year and are recommending that the board consider holding the January 26 meeting at Beye School (student performance/academic behavior), and the May 25 meeting (staff recognition) at Julian Middle School. Sheryl has already confirmed availability at Beye and is waiting to hear back from Julian.
- Dr. Collins requested that the board hold executive sessions in the front conference room. This move would allow presenters to set up prior to the open session of each meeting.
- Sheryl will begin training on BoardBook next Tuesday, November 17 from 10:30 a.m. to noon.
- Additional research has been conducted regarding the boardroom microphones. One option being considered is a portable unit that could travel with the board when they hold meetings at the schools. Administration should be able to bring information to the board in the near future.
- November 15 has been identified as School Board Member Day for 2009. Dr. Collins took a moment to recognize the board members and thank them for their dedicated leadership in public education and continuing service to the children of this community.
- Dr. Anderson and Kelly Baird met with Kimberly Werner regarding the middle school science curriculum. Dr. Anderson will be preparing a district message regarding the curriculum and ensure that the teachers are using the take home materials.

Superintendent's Report – (Continued)

- Dr. Collins shared a letter from the Park District addressing their levy options. The school board members requested that copies of the letter be forwarded to them.
- Dr. Collins reported that the cabinet members discussed possible items that might be removed from the principal's plates. She added that she considers school improve evaluations and the two Administrative Leadership meetings each month mandatory and non-negotiable.

Board Concerns

BOARD CONCERNS

It was suggested that the board review the special education policies regarding serious misconduct in the future.

Member Gates reminded the board that he is in need of clarity and direction regarding the IASB resolutions that he shared at a previous meeting.

An interest in Dr. Collins' view on where she sees the board in relationship to the good to great scale was expressed. It was suggested that she share information on where the district is now, how the district is moving forward, and additional informational pieces during the January State of the District address.

A board member requested that copies of the message sent out to parents regarding the middle school science program be supplied to the board members.

With the addition of the January 28 State of the District address, it was suggested that the board consider rescheduling one of the January meetings.

Interest in more discussion regarding the Park District levy was expressed. It was suggested that board members consider making a public comment regarding the Park District's decision. It was also suggested that the board consider identifying a target date for the referendum plan so other village boards are aware of the district's goal.

Concern was expressed regarding the minority recruitment efforts within the district. It was suggested that the district consider highlighting ways to draw candidates. Concern was also expressed regarding the minority recruitment flyer, suggesting that it does not highlight reasons for minorities to want to work in the district. It was suggested that the district consider a dialog with the NSBE, chemists and engineers, as graduates in these fields might consider looking for opportunities in the teaching field.

President Traczyk reported that the climate survey with redacted comments has been delayed. The documents were returned from legal with only suggested redactions. Dr. Collins will contact legal and request an estimate on the cost to complete the redactions. She will report the findings to the board.

It was reported that FORC met recently. The committee drafted a formal response to the board to be included with the December 1 meeting materials. The committee is suggesting that the board move the FORC annual report to the first meeting in September on an annual basis.

Board Response to Public Comment

None

Announcements

ANNOUNCEMENTS

It was suggested that board members and administrators attending the joint conference on November 20-22 coordinate lunch plans.

It was reported that FAC met last week.

The next regularly scheduled meeting of the board will be on Tuesday, December 1, 2009 beginning at 7:30 p.m. at the administration building, located at 970 Madison Street.

There being no further business to conduct, President Traczyk declared the meeting adjourned at 11:05 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

Board President

Board Secretary