

**Official Minutes of the
Oak Park Board of Education District 97,
970 Madison Street, Oak Park, Cook County, Illinois
Meeting - February 28, 2012**

President Barber called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Present: Barber, Gates, Felton, Sacks, Traczyk, Spatz, and O'Connor
Absent: None
Also Present: Superintendent Al Roberts, Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations Therese O'Neill, Director of Special Education Mike Padavic, Director of Policy, Planning and Communications Chris Jasculca, and Board Secretary Sheryl Marinier

EXECUTIVE SESSION

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SESSION

Traczyk moved, seconded by Felton, that the Board of Education move into executive session at 6:01 p.m. Roll call vote.

Ayes: Traczyk, Felton, Sacks, Gates, Barber, O'Connor, and Spatz
Nays: None
Absent: None
Motion passed.

OPEN SESSION

OPEN SESSION

Gates moved, seconded by Sacks, that the Board of Education move into open session at 6:57 p.m. All members of the Board were in agreement.

SPECIAL REPORTS

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REPORTS

VEX ROBOTICS TEAM

Tim Walsh, Julian teacher and robotics team advisor, introduced the Vex Robotics Team, which won the regional competition and will now travel to Omaha, Nebraska to compete in national's. The team demonstrated their robots for those in attendance. Member Gates was acknowledged for emceeding the competition, which was held at Julian. Deb Abrahamson from the Education Foundation shared that the Foundation will be funding the team's trip to the national competition. She mentioned that donations to support the trip could be made at OPEF.org.

EARLY CHILDHOOD COLLABORATION

Eric Gershenson, Carolyn Newberry Schwartz, Cherise Phillips and Jackie Moore came to the table. Gershenson asked for the Board's support of the Collaboration's strategic plan. He shared data that supported the need for early education, which included the fact that 800 Oak Park children are considered at-risk of school failure due to family income, special needs, or other factors. He also said that 40 years of research and core

Oak Park values establish a public obligation to ensure that all children have access to programs and resources they need to become successful.

EARLY CHILDHOOD COLLABORATION (Continued)

Schwartz explained the vision and the goal of the Collaboration. She explained that the plan is based on proven research. Strategies include early detection screenings, parent information and support, professional development and public preschool coordination.

Phillips explained the extensive training that was offered to her organization ensuring that its efforts would impact the children they care for in a positive way.

Accomplishments to date were shared, highlighting that the organization has made significant strides in implementing its strategic plan. Due to the state's fiscal woes and changes in grant making priorities of regional foundations that have provided funding in the past, the Collaboration is unable to garner significant operating support from outside sources. Viable funding streams identified in 2009 to support the full implementation of the Collaboration's strategic plan are no longer available.

It was noted that a very small percentage of the families who need services are receiving them. The Collaboration is very close to reaching all of the at risk children.

The Board was asked to affirm that developing a fully integrated early childhood system is vital to the work and success of District 97. They were encouraged to engage in a leadership role, to convene a working group of Board members and a lead administrator from District 97, District 200 and the Village to explore/identify strategies for establishing a fully integrated early childhood system in Oak Park.

Board comments and suggestions included noting that it is impressive how much the Collaboration accomplishes with such little resources. Their contribution is an investment that the community should be making. Interest was expressed in knowing what percentage of the at-risk population are being reached.

It was noted that IGOV discussed the importance of the Collaboration and will encourage the taxing bodies of Oak Park to improve the quality of life in the village. There is a willingness of the committee members to bring a recommendation to their boards to increase funding to early childhood education. Gershenson reminded the Board that this is a unique time and place where the governing bodies have the opportunity to raise the bar.

Dr. Roberts noted that there is a need to change the focus from lifetime of remediation to a lifetime of learning.

WORLD LANGUAGE UPDATE

Lisa Schwartz, Dawn Deaton and Liza Marinelarena reported on the changes made to the World Language program, noting that the focus of the academic year 2011-12 has been to create a sustainable program that will be transformative in nature. They noted that curriculum assessments with greater focus on communication and increased

instructional time in the languages offered were the major changes. They reported that the

WORLD LANGUAGE UPDATE (Continued)

district has always taught to the national foreign language standards, but never put an emphasis on communication skills. They reported that communication was the focus that had been missing.

Deaton reminded the Board that the program received a professional development grant last year, which provided resources for collaboration, additional training and additional staffing. Dr. Laura Terrill was brought in for mentoring and will continue to support their efforts and review the new curriculum.

They reported that a new theme based curriculum is being developed with each theme being taught on a two-year cycle. Sample FLES unit plans were shared that demonstrated how specific vocabulary will be used within each unit.

During the 2012-13 school year, the team will continue to;

- Prepare lessons and assessments
- Identify, create and acquire materials and other instructional tools
- Continue the current model of FLES instruction time
- Assess students in select grades using the national on-line early language assessment (NOELLA)
- Create a plan for inclusion of other language(s) for the 2013-14 rollout
- Review the current immersion program and consider expansion options
- Consider possible expansion of immersion to other schools

The new program will focus on 250 hours of instructional time. It was reported that although the amount of time has increased, it is still shy of best practice.

The team will continue to review the middle school language programs to ensure that the middle schools are building on what was taught in the elementary FLES programs. Additionally, efforts will be made to ensure that the programs at the middle schools are consistent with each other.

Deaton reported that the principals have been instructed about what to look/listen for in the classrooms, so even if the principal does not speak the language, he/she has the tools to assess the program and evaluate the teacher.

Many members of the world language advisory committee were recognized.

Board comments and suggestions included interest in seeing a benchmark. The team was cautioned to be careful when considering additional languages. A concern was expressed about the possibility of the immersion program dictating class size. How to handle transfer students was also brought up as a concern. It was suggested that the team reach out to the Collaboration. It was recommended that staff across the discipline

support each other and that the content of the program be in line with the common core. Concern was expressed regarding consistency across the district, suggesting the

WORLD LANGUAGE UPDATE (Continued)

possibility of immersion in all schools; although some Board members prefer that each school offer something unique.

Dr. Roberts recognized that the program is supported by highly competent teachers and great support from the community members. He acknowledged that the middle school cohort needs to be addressed quickly. He challenged the team to talk about best practices in the best way possible and to shoot for above the status quo.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Stephanie Thomas, an Oak Park resident with a student starting Kindergarten at Whittier in the fall, and member of the World Language Advisory Committee, encouraged the Board to support FLES. She shared that Kindergarten, first and second grade students are only in foreign language for a short time each week. When her son enters Kindergarten, his exposure to Spanish will decrease drastically. This is a disservice to the children. She would like to see another immersion program at Whittier. She noted that little information is provided to the pre-kindergarten parents about how much language the Kindergarten students will receive. She ended her statement by noting that she loves the PKP program.

Kimberly Plaxton-Drobot, an Oak Park resident and member of the World Language Advisory Committee, reported that she has written to the state encouraging them to support the FLES program. She reported that her children speak three languages. She noted that she would like to see an immersion program at Longfellow. She suggested that the district hire bilingual teachers starting in Kindergarten and work upward. She shared that the parents are not aware of how the children are learning, but would like to be supportive.

Mara Block, an Oak Park resident, expressed support for the World Language initiative. She explained that she bought her home in the Lincoln area because of the immersion program. She explained that she speaks a second language and believes that it is important to have that skill as it makes her more employable. She volunteered her services as a resource.

Charity Caldwell, an Oak Park resident, explained that she is a true believer of immersion and hopes it will be expanded to Beye School. She explained how she learned Spanish quickly by living with her Spanish speaking mother-in-law and being immersed in the language.

Arlene Pedraza, an Oak Park resident, reported that she speaks Spanish to her children at home. The changes in the FLES program mean that her son is now getting Spanish taught to him daily. She is looking forward to more days of instruction and commended the changes being made. She noted that she can see where her 10-year old son is already

benefiting from the changes made to the program. She suggested a more challenging curriculum in the middle schools and suggested expanding the immersion program to Longfellow.

ACTION ITEMS

2.1.1 Approval of Minutes of February 14, 2012

Gates moved, seconded by Traczyk, that the Board of Education, District 97, accept the minutes from the February 14, 2012 meeting with revisions. Roll call vote.

Ayes: Gates, Traczyk, Sacks, O'Connor, Barber, Felton, and Spatz

Nays: None

Motion passed.

2.3.1 Approval of Consent Agenda

President Barber read the items on the consent agenda. Sacks moved, seconded by Felton, that the following items be approved on the consent agenda. Roll call vote.

2.3.1 Bill Lists and Related Reports

2.2.1 Personnel Action as presented are revised

Ayes: Sacks, Felton, Traczyk, Spatz, Gates, O'Connor, and Barber

Nays: None

Motion passed.

2.2.2 Notice of Suspension Without Pay

Gates moved, seconded by Traczyk, that the Board of Education, District 97, approve a five (5) day suspension without pay for employee 0112. The suspension dates will be February 29, March 1, 2, 6 and 7. Roll call vote.

Ayes: Gates, Traczyk, Sacks, Spatz, Felton, O'Connor, and Barber

Nays: None

Motion passed.

2.4.1 Approval of Summer 2012 Capital Projects – Mann and Whittier Secured Entrances

Traczyk moved, seconded by Sacks, that the Board of Education, District 97, award a contract to Vengar Construction Company, in the total bid amount of \$1,373,000, for the summer 2012 capital project work, specifically the secured entrances at Mann and Whittier schools, as outlined in the memorandum to the Superintendent dated February 14, 2012. Roll call vote.

Ayes: Traczyk, Sacks, Gates, Spatz, Felton, Barber, and O'Connor

Nays: None

Motion passed.

2.4.2 Approval of Whittier School Auditorium – Air Conditioning

Felton moved, seconded by Sacks, that the Board of Education, District 97, award a contract to F. E. Moran, in the total bid amount of \$176,800, for the air conditioning of

the Whittier School auditorium, as outlined in the memorandum to the Superintendent dated February 14, 2012. Roll call vote.

Ayes: Felton, Sacks, Gates, Barber, Spatz, Traczyk, and O'Connor
Nays: None
Motion passed.

2.4.3 Approval of IMET Resolution

Traczyk moved, seconded by Felton, that the Board of Education, District 97, approve the formal attached IMET resolution declaring District 97 as a participating member, effective February 28, 2012, as outlined in the memorandum to the Superintendent dated February 14, 2012. Roll call vote.

Ayes: Traczyk, Felton, Sacks, O'Connor, Spatz, Gates, and Barber
Nays: None
Motion passed.

2.4.4 Approval of Mann Overnight Field Trip

Gates moved, seconded by Traczyk, that the Board of Education, District 97, approve the Mann overnight field trip for the Odyssey of the Mind Club students to participate in the State competition in Belleville, Illinois on March 30, 2012 and March 31, 2012. Roll call vote.

Ayes: Gates, Traczyk, Felton, Spatz, Sacks, O'Connor, and Barber
Nays: None
Motion passed.

TOPIC REPORTS

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SUMMER SCHOOL TASK FORCE UPDATE

Lisa Schwartz reported for Duane Meighan. She shared that a task force was created to consider a new vision for the summer school program. The team is recommending an early start model, "Prep for Success," for kindergarten through eighth grade students, that would run in August, just prior to the beginning of the fall term. The length of the program would be extended to 80 hours to meet best practices. The kindergarten readiness assessment will be administered in June to identify students in need of support. Older students in the 14 percentile and under will be identified and recommended for this program. Schwartz explained that the student population was reviewed. Out of those recommended for the program, it is anticipated that only 50 percent will attend. This will give the program approximately 150 participants, which is a similar enrollment as last year. Students will be grouped together in RIT band groups, not by grade level. Because this program will not be run until the end of summer, the curriculum can be developed during the months of June and July. Schwartz reported that all students in the summer program will participate in Fast ForWord. Rtl and MAP will be used to assess the success of the program. Middle school will look at students in need of reading and math, targeting students who need support to become successful. Consideration will also be given to identify why students were not successful so they

can receive the support they need. The program will run at the end of the summer leading into the beginning of the fall session.

SUMMER SCHOOL TASK FORCE UPDATE (Continued)

The MAP testing will be moved from April to May 9-25, and reports will be run the week of Memorial Day. Students will be evaluated at the beginning of the school year, and observational data will be obtained.

Dr. Roberts noted that the teachers for this program will need to focus on how they motivate the children. An assessment will be developed for interested teachers as the program will require teachers to think outside of the box.

The budget will need to be reviewed. A fee based enrichment program will also be offered, along with School Daze and middle school math.

Board comments and questions included acknowledgment that this program was created in a matter of three weeks. Interest was expressed in knowing if the data collected would allow the district to compare to other districts. Interest was expressed in the objectives in choosing students for the program. An assessment from the student's point of view was suggested. Recommendations were made to the program outline, noting that project based learning should be included in the tasked identified for Kindergarten. The team was cautioned on the choice of wording used when promoting the program.

COMMUNICATION / TECHNOLOGY FOLLOW UP

This item was tabled until the March 13, 2012 meeting.

FIELD TRIP REQUEST

Requests for the Vex Robotics national competition trip to Omaha, Nebraska and the Hatch fifth grade overnight trip to White Pines, Oregon, Illinois were shared. It was recommended that the district financially support the robotics trip in some way. It was noted that the Education Foundation has supplied countless hours of volunteering and wonderful programs for the children. The amount of up to \$500 was agreed upon.

These items will return to the Board for approval during the March 13 meeting.

IRVING SCHOOLYARD UPDATE

President Barber reported that the committee has expressed interest in a turf field and will present their recommendation to the Park District on Thursday evening.

The amount of \$250,000 to \$500,000 would be earmarked in the district budget for the Irving schoolyard in addition to the funds raised by the school's PTO.

Concern was expressed that the district should determine how much will be spent on school yards district wide before settling on a set amount for Irving.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Dr. Roberts gave a presentation at MSAN about initiatives for underachievers. Duane Meighan and Jonathan Ellwanger also participated. Dr. Roberts reported that all other districts are facing the same challenges. MSAN is holding a mini conference in Shaker during the month of March. Dr. Roberts recommended that Meighan and Ellwanger attend with him.

OPTA agreed to support the Race to the Top along with administration.

Cao Mac is on leave for at least an additional week.

Dr. Roberts questioned how the district can package the concept of data specialist / technology specialist at our schools. He would like to find a way to have teachers who are both technology and data coaches at our schools. These staff members would analyze and interpret data, and help teachers use technology. They would become a key member of the principal's data team. Candidates would have to be willing to achieve proper certification, understand what is happening with data/tech within the education field, as well as focus on trying to improve getting things done in the classroom and mentor the teachers to do it themselves. If the district is making a commitment to data, it needs to hire a data person in each building to monitor the data. He met with the teacher leaders for technology today and was impressed with ideas they came in with. A decision on these positions will need to be made by April.

Felicia Starks Turner did an analysis on the Title 1 grant for this year. Her findings show that the funding the district anticipates receiving is similar to prior years, but regulations on how to spend the funds will be different. She did a comparison of Title 1 teachers and Title 1 tutors and noted that the use of tutors showed equivalent growth and used less funds. Dr. Roberts recommended that the district use properly certified tutors for the purpose of Title 1 next year, with one teacher to coordinate the program and ensure that the curriculum is being taught correctly. A recommendation will come to the Board on this subject on March 13 with approval in April.

ANNOUNCEMENTS/
BOARD CONCERNS

ANNOUNCEMENTS/BOARD CONCERNS

IGOV will meet on March 13.

The Collaboration Symposium was last Saturday. The Julian Middle School was thanked for hosting.

FAC will be meeting on March 6.

The Irving Fun Fair was last Saturday. An amazing amount of the staff participated.

ANNOUNCEMENTS/BOARD CONCERNS (Continued)

It was noted that the PKP is the greatest missed opportunity. Interest was expressed in knowing if the testing will be done early enough for the summer program? Is our program targeted enough? Is Carolyn Newberry Schwartz involved in assessing? The Treasurer's program is a high bar; kindergarteners need to know their letters when they begin school. We need to be more strategic with the kids who participate in this program. This needs to be addressed before the beginning of next school year. It was noted that part of the district funding to early childhood is funding to the publicly funded preschools. The Board secretary was asked to share criteria with the Board on this.

Ed DeYoung will present during the special Board meeting on March 8 from 7 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. Board members were asked to send questions for Mr. DeYoung to Jim O'Connor prior to the meeting. Following the presentation, an executive session will be necessary.

The Board has the opportunity to host Charlotte Danielson on April 17.

A middle school forum about supporting a positive climate will be held on March 6, at Brooks. On April 3, a forum about fostering a world class middle school will be held at Julian.

The Data Sub Committee is interested in having District 97 representation. This committee is focused on sharing data between District 97, 90 and 200. Member Traczyk will share the invitation with the Board.

BOARD RESPONSE TO PUBLIC COMMENT

The World Language program report was considered the response for the evening.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Felton moved, seconded by Gates, that the Board of Education move into executive session at 10:27 p.m. Roll call vote.

Ayes: Felton, Gates, Sacks, Traczyk, Barber, O'Connor, and Spatz

Nays: None

Absent: None

Motion passed.

OPEN SESSION

Sacks moved, seconded by O'Connor, that the Board of Education move into open session at 11:16 p.m. All members of the Board were in agreement.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to conduct, President Barber declared the meeting adjourned at 11:16 p.m.

The next regularly scheduled meeting of the Board will be held on Tuesday, March 13, 2012 beginning at 7 p.m. in the administration building located at 970 Madison Street, Oak Park, Illinois.

Board President

Board Secretary