



Oak Park Elementary School District 97

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TO: Board of Education

FROM: Dr. Carol Kelley, Superintendent of Schools

RE: BOE Item 4.8 - Lincoln Principal Resignation: After-Action Review

DATE: March 17, 2020

In February, we engaged with RGW Consulting to conduct an After Action Review. The purpose of the review was to capture lessons learned from the resignation of Laura Zaniolo, the former principal of Lincoln Elementary School. By capturing and reflecting upon these lessons, our goal was to improve the recruitment, hiring, onboarding and system of support for the future principal of Lincoln, as well as other staff members at the school and throughout the district. Since the culture and climate of an organization is an essential supporting condition for the success of the next leader, we also wanted to capture the impressions of the culture and climate of the school.

Please find the final draft of the ***District 97 After Action Report*** authored by RGW Consulting regarding the resignation of Laura Zaniolo and the culture & climate of the school (click [here](#)).

I consulted with senior members of the District 97 Cabinet team to review the recommendations outlined in the report. We would like to recommend taking these next steps as we prepare to set the stage for the selection process of a new leader:

- Focus on strengthening district and school team culture (collaborative culture):** High functioning teacher teams lead to greater success for students. We will continue to strategically place and provide support to our team leaders and the functioning of our Building Leadership Teams (BLTs) through an internal professional learning opportunity called “Leading Teacher Teams.” This professional learning stream will be designed and delivered by our District 97 Instructional Coach team, led by the Director of Organizational Learning. Our Sr. Director of HR along with our Sr. Director of Equity will oversee the selection of the teacher leaders who will fill the roles for SY21. Following the selection of these leaders, a 3-day retreat in August 2020 will be provided where the school’s BLT will come together to build their team, write their SIP, and engage in professional learning around leading adults. Additionally, their professional learning plan will continue with 3 follow-up sessions throughout the 2020-2021 school year. Lastly, this work will remain a stream of conversation and reflection for the Instructional Coach team throughout the 2020-2021 school year.

- Establish liaison for staff to give input and feedback about the district’s decisions:** In addition to strengthening district and school team culture, the “Leading Teacher Teams” professional learning opportunity will further improve the relationship between groups and improve staff morale in relation to improving two-way communication between schools and district departments. Additionally, if the March 17 staffing proposals are approved, the *HR Coordinator, Strategic Partnerships and Recruitment* will be responsible for serving as a liaison for staff to give input and feedback about the district’s decisions. If the March 17 staffing proposal for this position is not approved, we will work collaboratively with our team leaders to determine how to provide a safe space for staff members so that all voices are heard.

- ❑ **Increase administrative/social service support to Lincoln:** The proposal for increased staffing for Lincoln (*increase social workers to 2.0 FTE; increase psychologists to 1.0 FTE; add 1.0 Student Support Specialists; add 1.0 full-time receptionist*) will be shared with BOE by March 17.
- ❑ **Provide executive coaching and PD support/enrichment for building principals:** Ebony Lofton and Carrie Kamm will review proposals for executive coaching and PD support/enrichment for building principals by June 30. The proposal for this support will be shared with BOE by June 1.
- ❑ **Conduct baseline audit and ongoing culture/climate coaching and PD support/enrichment for building:** Request proposals to conduct culture/climate audit and PD support/enrichment for staff (*“deep dive to determine and address challenges”*) by June 30. An update on our progress will be shared with BOE in July.
- ❑ **Audit Spanish Immersion Program:** By May/June, we will request proposals (from contractors) to conduct an external audit of our Spanish Immersion program that will examine the program, specifically the benefits of the program on students’ academic and attendance outcomes, as well as demographic compositions. An update on our progress will be shared with BOE in July.
- ❑ **Provide parent workshops on how to advocate for children in ways that honor the professional expertise of staff:** In SY21, District 97 Parent University sessions will include at least one workshop on this topic. The workshop will be developed with a cross-role team of PTO leaders, teachers, and parents. An update on our progress will be shared with the BOE prior to each of our District 97 Parent University events.
- ❑ **Host two additional town hall meetings for the Lincoln community to provide updates on recommendations/actions:** Two additional meeting dates will be established following spring break. By April 6, additional information will be shared directly with the school community once dates are selected.
- ❑ **School leaders will disseminate newsletter to families in conjunction with the District's Director of Communications, providing updates to keep them informed about district’s efforts to prepare Lincoln to receive their new school leader:** Throughout the remainder of SY20, Amanda Seigfried will continue to support Lincoln’s leadership team with weekly updates, which they can use in their weekly school newsletter.

One area left uncovered in this review process was determining how our hiring processes could be improved. Thus, in addition to the actions outlined above, I have asked our Sr. Director of Human Resources to do a deeper dive into our processes and recommend how we might improve our expectations and guidelines in preparation for our next principal searches.

By completing these actions with fidelity, I believe we will be able to recruit, hire, and retain a candidate for Lincoln. The search for this candidate will begin in the 2020-2021 school year, with an anticipated start date of July 1, 2021.