



# Oak Park Elementary School District 97

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**TO: Members, Board of Education  
Dr. Albert Roberts, Superintendent**

**FROM: Chris Jasculca**

**RE: Adoption of Policies**

**DATE: January 13, 2015**

The District 97 Board of Education conducted a first reading of the following policies during its meeting on December 16, 2014:

- Policy 2:140 (Communications To and From the Board)
- Policy 4:45 (Insufficient Fund Checks and Debt Recovery)
- Policy 4:110 (Transportation)
- Policy 4:120 (Food Services)
- Policy 4:150 (Facility Management and Building Programs)
- Policy 5:10 (Equal Employment Opportunity and Minority Recruitment)
- Policy 5:185 (Family and Medical Leave)
- Policy 5:220 (Substitute Teachers)
- Policy 5:250 (Leaves of Absence)
- Policy 6:20 (School Year Calendar and Day)
- Policy 6:60 (Curriculum Content)
- Policy 6:110 (Programs for Student at Risk of Academic Failure and/or Dropping Out of School and Graduation Incentives Program)
- Policy 6:280 (Grading and Promotion)
- Policy 6:340 (Student Testing and Assessment Program)
- Policy 7:50 (School Admissions and Student Transfers to and From Non-District Schools)
- Policy 7:100 (Health, Eye and Dental Examinations; Immunizations; and Exclusion of Students)
- Policy 7:270 (Administering Medicines to Students)
- Policy 8:80 (Gifts to the District)

Board members asked questions, offered comments and/or provided feedback about several of the policies. Below is an update on those policies.

- **Policy 2:140 (Communications To and From the Board)** – Per Public Act 98-930, which went into effect on January 1, 2015, the following new language regarding the process for contacting the board via email, as well as how the board responds to messages it receives, is being added to the policy.

**Individuals may submit questions or communications for the Board's consideration to the Superintendent or may use the electronic link to the Board's email address(es) that is posted on the District's website. In accordance with the Open Meetings Act and the Oath of Office taken by Board members, individual board members will not (a) reply to an email on behalf of the entire board, or (b) engage in the discussion of District business with a majority of Board-quorum.**

## **The Superintendent or designee shall**

- 1. Ensure that the home page for the District's website contains an active electronic link to the email address(es) for the School Board, and**
- 2. Provide the Board, such as in the Board meeting packet, with all emails that are received and any feedback regarding them.**

**If contacted individually, Board members will refer the person to the appropriate level of authority, except in unusual situations. Board members' questions or communications to staff or about programs will be channeled through the Superintendent's office. Board members will not take individual action that might compromise the Board or District.**

Melinda Selbee and Kimberly Small from Policy Reference Education Subscription Service's (PRESS) legal department offered additional information/further clarification regarding the change in the law, which included the following requirements and recommendations.

- No board member should ever reply to a message sent to him/her individually or to the entire board. The most any board member should ever say is something akin to "Thank you very much for your message. I have forwarded it to X. He/she will respond to you shortly."
- While it is not legally required, best practice is for board members to forward all messages sent to their individual, district-issued email accounts to the rest of the board to ensure they are aware of all communications sent by members of the general public.
- Any messages the board wants to address as a group must be added to a board meeting agenda.

The board established the following goals based on the changes, requirements and recommendations described above.

- Make sure people know about the change in the law and its impact on how the board will communicate with the general public moving forward.
- Align its communication practices with the revised law and the procedures being utilized by other boards within the community.

The policy review team and/or administration have or will complete several key tasks in support of the board's goals. These tasks include:

- Adding a drop-down menu under the Board of Education link in the main navigation on the home page of the district's website that includes a link titled "Contact." This link takes users to a page (<http://www.op97.org/BOE/Contact.cfm>) that features the group and individual email addresses for board members.
- Contacting other local governing bodies (Village of Oak Park, District 200, Oak Park Public Library, Park District of Oak Park, Oak Park Township, etc.) to get information about their current practices for communicating with the general public, as well as insight regarding how those practices may be altered in accordance with the change in the law.
- Posting information about the change in the law on the district's family of websites, including on the contact page mentioned above, and disseminating it via various print and electronic resources, including the district's community listserv, Facebook page, Twitter account and insert for the Village of Oak Park's OP/FYI newsletter.

- Updating the board protocol document on the district website (<http://www.op97.org/BOE/documents/BoardProtocols.pdf>).

Since the changes to the policy are required by law, and the completion of the tasks listed above will not impact the board's ability to adopt them, the policy review team recommends approving the revisions as presented on December 16, 2014.

- **Policy 4:120 (Food Services)** – In 2012, the district received an extension on a waiver granted by the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) that allows for competitive food sales during lunch at our two middle schools through the 2016-17 school year. Kimberly Small from PRESS is currently working with ISBE to determine what impact, if any, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's *Smart Snacks* rules, as well as ISBE's rules that implement them, will have on the status of the waiver (override it, limit it, etc.). Small did say, however, that even if the status of the waiver remains unchanged, all competitive food sales moving forward must comply with the *Smart Snack* rules, which can be accessed by visiting <http://www.fns.usda.gov/healthierschoolday/tools-schools-smart-snacks>.

The administration will provide the staff members and Parent-Teacher Organizations from Brooks and Julian middle schools with updates regarding the changes to the policy, the status of the waiver and the implementation of the *Smart Snack* rules. In the meantime, the policy review team recommends approving the revisions to the policy as presented on December 16, 2014.

**Policy 4:150 (Facility Management and Building Programs)** – According to a change in the law, more specifically the mandate for the decennial safety survey report, all “new school building construction built after January 1, 2015 must include a storm shelter that meets or exceeds the ICC/NSSA Standard for the Design and Construction of Storm Shelters (ICC-500) published jointly by the International Code Council and the National Storm Shelter Association (105 ILCS 5/2-3.12, Public Act 98-883).”

The district is currently working with its architectural firm to determine if the storm shelter requirements will apply to the construction of the new administration building. However, since the law requires that the policy be updated, the policy review team recommends approving the revisions as presented on December 16, 2014.

- **Policy 6:20 (School Year Calendar and Day)** – In accordance with Public Act 98-773, school districts that serve as polling places are encouraged to either close for the day or hold a teachers' institute with students not in attendance. We contacted PRESS to determine if the change in the law is a recommendation or requirement. Kimberly Small said the organization interprets the change as a preference by legislators that school or students not be in session on election days. This information has been shared with the district's calendar committee, which will take it into consideration when developing the school calendars for 2015-16 and beyond. In the meantime, the policy review team recommends approving the updates to the legal references as presented on December 16, 2014.
- **Policy 8:80 (Gifts to the District)** – On December 16, 2014, the policy review team recommended that the district replace its existing version of policy 8:80 (Gifts to the District) with the one that was drafted and is currently maintained by PRESS. There was a discussion by the board about the difference between the two versions, more specifically that the current version states that “all accepted gifts, grants, and bequests shall be acknowledged by the Board,” while the PRESS version states that “while the Board encourages unrestricted gifts, donations to fund specific projects are acceptable if the project is approved by the Board.”

Based on this difference, the board members recommended, and the policy review teams agrees, that the adoption of the policy be tabled until the administration develops guidelines for approving and/or acknowledging donations. They also recommended that the guidelines be shared with them when the policy is presented for adoption.

The administration will begin work on the guidelines in the days ahead, which will include seeking input from the board, parents/guardians and other community members on the process for approving and/or acknowledging donations. Once the guidelines are finished, they and the policy will be presented to the board during an upcoming board meeting.

Additional information about the policy review and discussion that took place on December 16, 2014 can be accessed by visiting <https://v3.boardbook.org/Public/PublicItemDownload.aspx?ik=36319517>.

Attached are the policies that are being presented to the board tonight for adoption.

Attachments:

- Policy 2:140 (Communications To and From the Board)
- Policy 4:45 (Insufficient Fund Checks and Debt Recovery)
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