

**Official Minutes of the  
Oak Park Board of Education District 97  
260 Madison Street, Oak Park, Cook County, Illinois  
February 20, 2019 Meeting**

**This meeting was held at Whittier Elementary School  
Located at 715 N. Harvey**

President Spurlock called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Present: Spatz, Spurlock, Breymaier, Broy, O'Connor, and Datta  
Absent: Liebl  
Also Present: Superintendent Dr. Carol Kelley, Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations Paul Starck-King, Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources Laurie Campbell, Senior Director of Policy, Procedure and Communications Chris Jasculca, Senior Director of Technology Michael Arensdorff, and Board Secretary Sheryl Marinier.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

None

PUBLIC  
COMMENT

ACTION ITEMS

**ACTION ITEMS**

**3.1.1 APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM THE FEBRUARY 12, 2019 BOARD MEETING**

Breymaier moved, seconded by Spatz, that the Board of Education, District 97, approve the minutes from the February 12, 2019 Board meeting.

Ayes: Breymaier, Spatz, O'Connor, Broy, Datta, and Spurlock  
Nays: None  
Absent: Liebl  
Motion passed.

ADMINISTRATIVE  
ITEMS

**ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS**

**UPDATE ON FOOD SERVICES**

Paul Starck-King reported that the rates for food service will not change next year.

**D97 PARTNERSHIP LANGUAGE AND PROCEDURES**

Starck-King indicated that the Board's recommendation is to keep the facility usage fees the same next year, so the language and procedures can be integrated into the equity policy and partner agreements. It was agreed that this item will return to the Board in July, 2019 for further consideration. It was suggested that Starck-King consider frequency of use of the buildings if the partners are prioritized.

It was suggested that the Board take action at their next meeting to formalize their interest to not change the pricing at this time.

Member Datta arrived at 7:04 p.m.

**GENDER SUPPORT TEAM UPDATE**

This item was tabled.

**SPECIAL REPORTS**

SPECIAL  
REPORTS

**BUDGET AMENDMENT**

Paul Starck-King reported that he met with the Finance Oversight and Review Committee (FORC) yesterday and they recommended transferring some funds to cover the cost of the Holmes School addition and other capital needs. They developed an approach and he imbedded it into the 5-year plan. He recommended transferring \$4,000,000 from the Transportation fund, \$1,000,000 from Operations and Maintenance fund, and \$5,000,000 from the

#### BUDGET AMENDMENT (Continued)

Education Fund to the Capital Fund, and he explained how the money from the Education Fund will be restored through future levy management and by FY2024.

Starck-King asked for the Board's support with this plan, explaining that once it is approved, he can begin to amend the budget for approval on April 30, 2019.

The Board will continue discussion on this topic on February 26, 2019 and take action on March 12, 2019.

#### CONTINUED DISCUSSION ON STAFFING REQUESTS AND 5-YEAR FORECAST

Dr. Kelley, Laurie Campbell and Paul Starck-King updated the Board on their staffing recommendations made during the February 12, 2019 Board meeting. Dr. Kelley reported that in response to the Board's request to identify \$460,000 in cuts to cover the cost of the recommended new hires, they reviewed the current budget and the staffing requests and recommended the following;

- Cut the recommended list of new hires, eliminating the half-time social works for the middle school, Lincoln and Longfellow, the elementary culture and climate coaches, the half-time receptionist). This will bring the cost down to \$295,075, with \$164,000 still needed to covering the remaining list of new-hires. They recommended using existing consultant fees (mostly from Teaching and Learning) to make up the difference.

Dr. Kelley reported that Carrie Kamm and Felicia Starks Turner are participating in a program and working on a capstone that will be completed at the end of April. Dr. Kelley suggested waiting on some of the roles until then because there will be a need to shift mindsets and culture. She suggested considering a multi-year approach. She explained that the capstone will identify what we need in place at the different tiers. They will plan on staff for the future to move toward a more restorative structure. Additionally, she noted that Eboney Lofton is piloting CHAMPS, and shared that classroom management varies from classroom to classroom, noting the need for more coherent plans.

Dr. Kelley suggested that the Board consider approving the funds in the budget, and not mover forward to fill the positions at the beginning of the school year. She explained that Lauren Olsen was a social worker at one of the schools and is doing a great job, suggesting that the district might have other staff members who could move into these positions.

Starck-King shared a document that showed the new hire request embedded into the 5-year forecast. His document demonstrated the curve and showed how the levy will help restore the Education Fund within two years. He suggested that the district can afford the full plan if the Board wants to move forward with it as originally presented.

Three options were considered;

- 1) Accept the list with all 12 new hires
- 2) Accept the list with proposed cuts identified above
- 3) Include funding to cover the coaching positions next year if the capstone delegates.

Board comments included concern that two of the positions being cut were in support of disproportionality. Concern was expressed that there will be no culture coaches added next year. Concern was expressed that the Board has not addressed enrollment projections yet and that it does not have a long-term plan for sustainability. Concern was expressed that there might be more important things that the money should be spent on.

Equity was discussed and it was suggested that the district ask the students of color what extra curriculars they would like to participate in.

This item will return for action on February 26, 2019.

## WORD STUDY COMMITTEE

Amy Warke and Tawanda Lawrence came to the table with teachers Jennifer Logan, Betsy Parkinson and Jackie Dinatale. They reported that the word study pilot extended over two years, starting with the team defining the meaning of “word study”, as follows;

“Word Study is explicit and systematic learning on a continuum of foundational literacy skills so that all students will become efficient word solvers, readers, and writers.”

From there, the team developed and shared the K-5 Word Study expectations for the district, created a Word Study Review tool for the curricular review, reviewed six Word Study resources and selected four resources to pilot during the 2017-2018 school year, and was extended through January 2019. After thorough examination of the four programs, the team is recommending Phonics Units of Study for the K-2 students and Words Their Way for the K-5 students.

They explained that Balanced Literacy is a model for instruction, and a framework for organizing instruction in reading and writing. Balanced Literacy draws from a variety of curricular materials, strategies, and resources. They explained that the two recommended programs will fit very well into the Balanced Literacy program.

They explained how the Phonics Units of Study transfers seamlessly to Reading Units of Study and Writing Units of Study, which are currently being used in the district, while the Words Their Way is research based, Word Study program focused on spelling and word knowledge. It focuses on developmental spelling, phonics, and vocabulary, and is structured around the stages of development and instructional levels, allowing teachers to provide differentiated, efficient, effective instruction in phonics, spelling and vocabulary.

The team recommended both programs, noting that they marry skills very well. The program will strengthen the core instruction and work though vocabulary. The programs allow for differentiation and help kids make meaning out of their lessons. Warke noted that none of the programs have everything the teachers are looking for, but together, Phonics Units of Study and Words Their Way cover the need and work very well together. The one-time cost of the two programs is \$197,137. Warke reported that there are funds at the school level that can be used to cover this cost, and offered to share details.

They reported that the next steps will be for the Word Study Committee to develop an adoption plan that will include the district-wide implementation of Phonics Units of Study and Words Their Way during the 2019-2020 school year. The Teaching and Learning department and the Word Study committee will present the Foundations program to the MTSS Committee as a potential resource for Tier three students. The Teaching and Learning department and the Word Study Committee will meet with all Spanish Immersion teachers to review the Mondo Bookshop Phonics program as a potential resource for phonics support in Spanish for grades K-1, and Mondo Word Recognition Study in Spanish for grades 2-5. During the 2019-2020 school year, the Word Study Committee will explore various programs and resources that provide support in grammar for grades 3-5.

Warke noted that moving forward, Passports will only be used as an intervention and eventually phased out. She noted that Passports is prescriptive and students are required to test out of skills.

Board comments included noting that phonics was recommended to one parent when her child struggled. Concern was expressed that the recommendation might be too fluid. It was noted that during teacher negotiations, it was made clear that the teachers are burdened by not having a standard curriculum. Concern was expressed about grouping and the use of spelling lists. It was noted that in the past, if the Board hit a money crunch, it would often defer curriculum purchases to meet the financial need.

Dr. Kelley explained that she started in the district in 2015 and visited a lot of classrooms as part of her entry work. At that time, staff was spending a lot of time finding resources. Test books had been pulled from the classrooms and nothing had replaced them. The administration has been trying to supply teachers with materials so they can teach. Reading Units of Study and Word Units of Study are a wonderful step in that direction, but are still missing the word study piece. Administration is trying to give all teachers the same materials. She shared that eventually the district will get onto a standard curriculum review cycle.

#### WORD STUDY COMMITTEE (Continued)

Dr. Warke invited member Broy to tour classrooms with her to see how the program works.

#### UPDATE ON BOND SALE

Starck-King came to the table with Liz Hennessey from Raymond James, who reported that the bond prices went up and the sales went down. She reviewed the sale documents with the Board, reminding them that the district has an AA2 rating, and having the audit results available was helpful to the sale. Hennessey shared information on bond sales for comparable districts. She reported that she was able to negotiate down their fee as well as the bond council fee.

A brief discussion occurred regarding the financial needs that will be necessary to support the 2020 capital projects and the financial need to support them.

Starck-King reported that the DSEB bond sale extension resolution will expire at the end of March and suggested that the Board wait until after the new Board is seated to take action again. He noted a few problems at the middle schools that will need attentions.

#### AUDIT PRESENTATION

Starck-King reminded the Board that the State made the audit process extremely difficult this year. He introduced Nick Cavaliere from Baker Tilly who reported that the district received an unmodified audit opinion, which is a clean audit. He reported that the audit documents were used for the recent bond sale. He reported that a \$4,000,000 deficit was identified, but it was expected. He suggested that the bond sale could be used to cover that amount if the Board chooses to use the funds for that purpose.

Cavaliere explained that part of the audit process is to review the controls that are in place. If they identify any concerns, they are required to report them. He noted a few concerned in the desegregation of duties and access to some of the software access.

He reported that he also performed a single audit, where the IDEA grant was reviewed. One of the compliance areas in Maintenance of Effort, where costs are compared from one year to another. He recommended reviewing the Special Education spending, but suggested that the issue could have come from student needs changing. He explained that Maintenance of Effect is a common issue and can be resolved easily.

#### CALENDAR DISCUSSION

Laurie Campbell reported that the Calendar Committee met in January to review the 2018-2019 calendar and how the used emergency days will affect the end of the school year. She noted that the half day will not be made up, but the two full days will. She reported that the last day of school has been publicized. The Board was reminded that the current calendar designated 178 instructional days, which is over the state minimum, so there is no need to make up the half day. The final calendar will return to the Board for approval during the month of May.

Campbell reported that the Calendar Committee considered the 2019-2020 calendar and recommends that June 5 and February 14 be changed to attendance days. She noted that this calendar aligns with the high school and includes a cushion at the start of the year because of the construction at Lincoln and Longfellow schools.

The draft 2020-2021 calendar was shared. Interest was expressed in aligning the winter and spring breaks with the high school's calendar, which has not been published yet. Campbell will reach out to the high school to try and determine the dates that they will recommend for these breaks.

It was agreed that the modified 2019-2020 calendar will return for action on February 26, 2019, and Campbell will update the Board on the high schools plan for breaks during the 2020-2021 school year at the same time. The Board expressed interest in waiting to approve the 2020-2021 calendar until March 12, 2019.

Campbell acknowledged the committee members for their hard work.

### **CONCLUDING ITEMS**

CONCLUDING  
ITEMS

President Spurlock reminded the Board that they will continue their discussion of the draft equity policy during the February 26, 2019 Board meeting. She will incorporate the prior discussion items and notes into the draft. The Board expressed support in approving the policy during the March 12, 2019 Board meeting. President Spurlock reported that she attended the last Equity Group meeting and the teachers in attendance told her that teachers need to be encouraged to have some vulnerability, and suggested that administration provide resources to them so that it becomes part of what they are doing every day.

The Board was reminded that IASB West Cook will be hosting a dinner meeting on March 7, 2019. The topic of the meeting is Trauma and Young Children and will be held at Lincoln Middle School in Schiller Park.

Interest was expressed in seeing more diversity in the teachers who are invited to present to the Board. Dr. Kelley explained that there were diverse teachers involved in the Word Study pilot, but there was an equity meeting taking place this evening that they were attending.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to conduct, President Spurlock declared the meeting adjourned at 9:43 p.m.

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Board President

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Board Secretary