

**Official Minutes of the
Oak Park Board of Education District 97
260 Madison Street, Oak Park, Cook County, Illinois
July 14, 2020 Meeting**

This meeting was held virtually using Zoom during the time of the Coronavirus pandemic. Everyone participated via electronic means.

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

ROLL CALL

Present: Broy, Kim, Spurlock, Breymaier (arrived at 6:05 p.m.), Liebl, Moore, and Kearney
Absent: None
Also Present: Superintendent Dr. Carol Kelley, Associate Superintendent of Education Felicia Starks Turner, Director of Communications Amanda Siegfried, Chief Academic and Accountability Officer Ebony Lofton, Senior Director of Buildings and Grounds Jeanne Keane, Senior Director of Equity Carrie Kamm, Senior Director of Technology Michael Arensdorff, Consultant Rob Grossi, and Board Secretary Sheryl Marinier.

EXECUTIVE
SESSION

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Kim moved, seconded by Kearney that the Board move into executive session for the purpose of Appointment, Employment, Compensation, Discipline, Performance, or Dismissal of Specific Employees or Legal Counsel for the District (5 ILCS 120/2(C)(1), at 6:01 p.m.

Ayes: Kim, Kearney, Spurlock, Moore, Liebl, Broy
Nays: None
Absent: Breymaier (arrived at 6:05 p.m.)
Motion passed.

OPEN SESSION

OPEN SESSION

The Board move into Open Session prior to 7:00 p.m. All members of the Board were in agreement. The Board reconvened in Open Session at 7:00 p.m.

PUBLIC HEARING – PE WAIVER

Ebony Lofton explained the need to request a physical education waiver for the 2020-2021 school year. Members of the community were invited to speak. No interest was expressed by the public to comment, so the hearing was closed.

PUBLIC COMMENT

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COMMENT

Due to the nature of a virtual Board meeting, the public was asked to email their comment to the Board. All comments that were received prior to 7:00 p.m. were read aloud. The Board made it clear that any comments that were received after that time would be included in the minutes, but not read aloud. All comments were received prior to the start of the meeting and were read aloud.

President Broy read the following statements.

Laura Lentino

I am the spouse of a District 97 teacher. I am contacting you today to ask that you vote to continue with e-learning, exclusively, until a vaccine or cure for Covid-19 becomes available. Some of you may already be of this opinion; others may not.

Perhaps for a moment you can put yourself into my shoes and consider how YOU would feel if your spouse contracted Covid-19 because of exposure to the virus in their workplace. Can you imagine how fearful you might be, not knowing how the virus would affect your spouse? Can you imagine the anxiety of not knowing whether your spouse would end up in the hospital, possibly requiring life-saving intubation that may or may not save your spouse's life? Can you imagine how you would feel if the last time you saw your spouse was when you or an ambulance brought your spouse to the hospital? Can you imagine the anguish of seeing your spouse die via a Facetime conversation with their nurse or doctor? Can you imagine having to break the news to your young children that their Mommy or Daddy was not coming back?

These are the terrible thoughts that I have been tortured with since the first day of summer vacation. It is not a stretch to say that any of these God-awful possibilities could happen to my spouse, to my children, to my elderly Mother, for whom I provide care, to me, or to any other member of the faculty and staff of District 97. Indeed, Covid-19 has already claimed the lives of over 13,000 Americans in only five months. **One hundred and thirty thousand Americans.** This disease is no joke; Covid-19 is a very dangerous virus. It does not discriminate. It kills people of all ages. Until a vaccine or a cure becomes available, the safest and most prudent option is to continue with e-learning. I sincerely hope that you agree and will decide to continue with e-learning. The health and safety of students AND staff should be the driving factor in this **crucial life-and-death decision.**

I will leave you with this final thought: if you vote to bring the students and staff back to school, and God forbid one of them contracts Covid-19 as a direct result from being exposed to the virus at school, and subsequently dies, could you live with that for the rest of your life, knowing that had you voted to keep students and staff at home that person would still be alive? That is one weight I would never want to bear.

Juan and Emi Ortiz

I understand that this message is past the deadline provided in the original email but as the models are being planned out we wanted to suggest a few items:

* With the various models being reviewed and with remote learning being a challenge to working parents and engagement for the children can a live classroom "stream" be considered? To elaborate if some students are physically in the classroom and others are at home they would receive a consistent experience and also allow for the "rotations" if learning days alternate.

* Also when the fall and winter come around and flu season arises, students that may just have a sniffle but historically would still attend school may opt to miss a full day of school. If the "stream" classroom is available they would have the opportunity to still attend but not create an unsafe environment. If it is just done as either "Zoom" OR classroom and if the child is scheduled to attend in person on that day we run a higher risk or a poor learning experience. If the child is scheduled to attend in person but stays home due to any symptom they can still get a similar experience.

* Perhaps for projects or assignments pairing of an in person child with a remote learning child can help with social interaction and keep students in both environments engaged.

Patrick Scanlan

Education in OP is in a downward spiral, change of leadership, all over, and a constant...lack on continuity. Julian is our school and the situation there is dire. The word is that middle schools are a waste of time...just a holding period. Last year at the board meeting, springtime....teachers cried for help, over 90 minutes, for support, hearing and seeing no changes, more committees yes, but no changes. High taxes, more committees, more assistant principals (why?), leaders should lead.... driver of the home

values here, and if that goes south, and it has been happening, and if continues another year or so, no one will want to live here...and then, that is that....done.

Ian Kash

I would like to register my strong disapproval of any "hybrid" plan that involves students attending only a limited fraction of days in person and attending remotely other days. Such a plan seems to be to be the worst of both worlds, delivering neither the educational benefits of full in person instruction nor the health benefits of remote learning.

In particular, it seems that such a hybrid model, at best, only moderately reduces the risks associated with in person instruction. Teachers will still be exposed to all their students and the additional distancing seems likely to have a relatively small effect on the possibility of spreading infections given that other appropriate measures are being taken. Meanwhile the complexity of arranging childcare for the remote days creates new opportunities for infection since children will be in different groupings than in their classrooms.

Studies are suggesting that children are, on average, already substantially behind in terms of educational progress due to the remote learning during the last school year. We cannot afford to see children fall further behind unless there is absolutely no other option. The CDC and AAP guidelines, as well as my reading of the ISBE recommendations, all emphasize that while distancing is ideal to the extent possible, it should not stand in the way of in person education.

I strongly encourage the district to develop the best possible plan to enable full time in person instruction and resort to period(s) of full remote learning only if the state of the pandemic worsens so as to make in person instruction unacceptably risky.

Cara Camodey

I would like to follow up from the meeting that took place with parent volunteers Monday, June 29th. I am aware that this is an extremely difficult situation with many uncertainties, many guidelines that are vague, and emotions that are high. I understand the complexity of the position you all are in, and I want you all to know that I am here to help in any way I possibly can. I am a teacher with a master's degree in education. I taught for many years in Forest Park District 91, and have been subbing in District 97 for six years. I am an advocate for children, and that is why I am sharing my thoughts. Based on the perspective from social media, it appears that we are dividing our community instead of bringing it together. We are all in this together, as stated on the D97 building. As a community of parents, teachers, and students, we need to work together to figure out the best solution for all. This is clearly a very sensitive subject about which people feel strongly and I think that we need to be looking for solutions rather than criticizing and polarizing. I understand as a teacher, the teachers concerns, and I understand as a working parent, the parent concerns. What we must focus on is the children. It is our job to provide them with the best possible education. If the AAP, IDPH, CDC, and Dr. Fauci are all recommending in person learning, I feel it is our job to provide them with that. I realize that it may feel like there are conflicting recommendations from many experts, but there also is space to be nible and creative and innovative within these guidelines. We need to understand what the issues are; is it an issue of space? Is it the work force to clean diligently and frequently? Is it the cost of PPE? Let's attack these issues together. Mike Charley, the director of the Oak Park Department of Public Health, would also be a great resource for all of us.

My biggest concern is where children of working families, especially single parents, will go. Dr. Kelley suggested that district 97 was in discussions with the Oak Park Park District to provide child care for non-school days. I spoke with someone at the Cook County YMCA and he said that in order for the park district to provide that care, they would have to have licensed day care facilities and they would have to

follow DCFS guidelines, which are stricter than ISBE. That would mean 15 students to a classroom with two adults. If, for example, approximately 500 students needed these services, the park district would have to hire 75 staff members and have 32 classrooms available. That seems like something that would be extremely difficult for the Park District to provide. I know this email may seem critical, but I am hoping that you are aware of such guidelines in planning for childcare for working families.

I have spoken with local preschools, daycare centers, Montessori schools, and the local YMCA about how they have reopened their businesses. They all provided me with great insights and helpful strategies into making schools and daycares safe learning environments for students, children, and staff. I would be happy to share this data with you. Just like you, they have all been faced with the daunting task of interpreting guidelines in moving forward and have managed to do it successfully. They all offered to be resources for our district 97 community.

Families in my community are scared and frantic. I hear them talking about moving, transferring to private schools, or home schooling. I chose to raise my family in this community for all that it represents and provides and that feels like it is getting lost in this process. While I know that this current time is difficult for everyone in just about every part of the world, I do think that we can find a way to do right by our community. It won't be easy but I know that if we all work together, using the strengths of our community, we can accomplish great things.

If all our surrounding school districts: D90, D91, Berwyn, and Cicero are all going back to school in person in the fall, then so should we. Otherwise our students will be farther behind.

Jessica Sanguma

As stated in the Board Meeting, childcare will be a major issue for working parents. Although I understand it will be difficult to fulfill all parent requests to have their children in the same pod as another family, this could help alleviate some of this stress. Minimally, if parents could list a preference, it would be appreciated.

Megan Elsener

While today provided some information, it also highlighted many areas of concern.

* Have you considered sending K-2/3 for four days in person? Our youngest learners are the most vulnerable and virtual learning doesn't work. Seems it could be managed by using the larger spaces in the schools to accommodate these younger grades. This would also be a place to spend to add teachers if needed. Please take this into serious consideration. If you are able to make it work for students with IEP and 504s, there is a way to make it work for the younger grades.

* Have any other hybrid options been considered beyond the 2 days a week? La Grange is considering a five day a week half day option. With group A in person during mornings and specials on zoom in the afternoon, then vice versa. With lunch at home and cleaning done between groups. This would provide a more consistent routine that children need to thrive, as well as guaranteed in person teaching each day.

* The most disheartening aspect was the lack of detail on what the remote days at home would look like. From your answers, it appears the same as the spring (which was a disaster). Teachers CANNOT teach both in person and virtual at the same time, yet that's what you seem to indicate will happen or small zooms for kids at home while students work in person. You've had months to create a better e-learning experience and it's clear that hasn't happened. Also, again for K-2/3, those days at home can be considered non-learning days unless each student has an adult to sit with them and guide them through links and worksheets. Another reason to consider finding a way for the youngest learners to be in person more.

* ISBE guidelines suggest 6ft separation or "as much social distancing as possible with a space." Many experts have also recommended between 3-6 feet is adequate for children. That seems to not even be an option in your plan. Have you considered less spacing, with the addition of shields between students. It would be worth the \$1.4 million if it allowed students to learn in person.

Please consider more ways to be creative to help our youngest learners be in person. There are going to be costs, but they are worth it.

Caroline Nikolakakis

I was astounded and disappointed that the governor made an announcement about returning to school before June had even ended as reports of outbreaks are everywhere. As we moved into Phase 4 I read avidly about what was considered ok. When you go to the the webpage for the state it says Restore Illinois and then Revitalization - Phase 4. Two things are foremost in my mind from the first paragraph under these headings. First "Additional measures can be *carefully lifted* allowing for schools and child care programs to reopen *with social distancing policies in place.*" and second "Gatherings with *50 people or fewer will be permitted.* Testing is widely available, and tracing is commonplace."

As I have read more it becomes clear that the governor is leaving many of the choices to the individual school districts while contradicting these 2 statements. Why? There are so many possible reasons but why waste time on that? If we have the power to make safe decisions for our kids, we should really think about 50 people or fewer. We have over 300 kids at our building (which is one of the smaller ones in Oak Park) and over 30 teachers and staff. How can we possibly cut that up to meet these requirements at any of our buildings? How can we clean enough even if we did? We can't. We shouldn't. Additionally, testing and tracing is not commonplace or easy to obtain. How could the district be expected to have the money, staff, and space to do this if the state has not been able to make it happen? To the best of my knowledge the state is not offering to make this happen at the schools they are saying we can open in the fall. Please do not let political irresponsibility endanger our kids.

Right now I implore all of you to realize *being comfortable with the risk does nothing to reduce it.* We know how to reduce the risk and the number one thing to do is stay apart in small groups. We should focus on robust remote learning with socially distant, outdoor, small groups for short times to see each other and learn in person until we have reduced or eliminated the spread and/or a vaccine is available. It won't be the same and it will be hard but it is better than getting and/or spreading Covid-19. School is a community that is more than a building and right now being in these buildings is not safe.

I wish I could read this out loud myself. I wish you could see my face and hear my voice so you could hear my sincerity and justifiable anxiety. I also worked from home while my kids were remote learning and I know how hard it is. I am worried for my kids too. I read the APA statements and have considered them carefully. I am also a teacher and want to say something that I do not think is said or heard enough. **We too are experts.** While the wonderful doctors of the APA have so much medical knowledge about children and how they grow, so too do we teachers and ours is informed by every day experiences and more intensely focused on their emotional well-being. I believe the APA statements have some validity but there is room for more than one voice of expertise and in a pandemic, we have to weigh our decisions differently. The advice of epidemiologists and those working on the front lines with Covid-19, like that of vast majority of teachers/child experts I know, think a return to school is a dangerous mistake. Let's continue to plan for remote learning with in person socially distant small group meet ups when we can. Let's stick together to reach that place of real safety so we can be together again.

Schools and the staff at them are always called to face inequities that exist in our community and our larger society. I am deeply aware and pained by the suffering this causes and the way the inequities we

have always faced are exacerbated. We have and will do our very best but to try to do so while ignoring the fact that being together - even if we manage to pull off the proposed safety protocols - will still most definitely spread a disease that can make anyone, yes ANYONE (including children) very ill, have long term health problems, or die is beyond frightening. Based on my decade of experience actually teaching with kids in these buildings, I feel confident when I say it will be impossible to try to implement these measures. Going back will be dangerous and likely to cause an outbreak that will create illness, cost lives, and set us back in trying to get back to school and life as we knew it. **Let's not lose the progress we have made to protect each other.** Also let's not underestimate the dedication teachers and staff continue to have to addressing the issues of equity even though it is not safe to be in school together as we were right now.

In my last public comment I included details about the poor conditions of our school buildings and bathrooms. That might seem odd to those who do not teach but I imagine all parts of school buildings being a center to spread Covid-19 and I imagine the bathrooms to be epicenter within an epicenter. I invite you to talk to teachers, especially those of us who teach younger kids, about the realities of physical space in bathrooms and beyond and children's behavior in school.

One anecdote I can share is that for the past few years asking children to keep their fingers out of their mouths, noses, and eyes has become so frequent I made up a song. I sing "First Grade Fingers..." and the kids respond "are far from your face!" and half the class (sometimes more!) pulls their hands away from their mucus membranes with a smile. I change up the melody to keep it fresh because it is CONSTANT. Even if we magically reduce class sizes, alternate days, and somehow manage to keep the kids at 6 feet away, they put their fingers in those places nonstop and that spreads illness. An asymptomatic child could easily infect others if we rush to share space.

And we share materials. We have to WHEN we are together. Sharing space and materials is part of what we are missing not being at school. Even if we manage to regulate the physical aspects, how on earth can we manage it emotionally? I cannot tell you how many kids need physical proximity to stay on task or a hug when they are scared or hurt or sick or have to leave their families in the morning. What are teachers supposed to do? Pat them on the head with 2 yard sticks taped together? What if they do become ill? What are the protocols? What about the inevitable fears they will have? How can I assuage them when they are valid?

The emotional wellbeing of my kids and yours weighs heavy on my heart and my mind. My own kids have suffered and I know yours have too. All of us have experienced an unprecedented amount of scrambling and stress. Teachers and staff watched and listened and tried to help students and families when these changes happened overnight while doing the same for our own families, It was so hard. It still is. We are still processing and dealing with it. But we are doing so safely. Now we have the benefit of time to prepare for mostly if not all remote learning for the time being. It is a hard choice. It is the safe choice. It is the right choice.

Also kids are not necessarily good listeners. (Neither are we grownups to be fair!) Issues of personal space come up constantly. I would doubt our ability to keep kids at a distance in the best of times but this is the worst of times. That physical proximity has *always* spread illness like wildfire in classrooms and the school building, and now the illness is life threatening. And what about other illnesses? Are we going to do temperature checks? How will that work? Are teachers going to be expected to manage and report that on top of are overly full plates?

Schools have a 24 hours fever free rule. Is that rule going to be expanded? Will a fever mean your child must take a Covid-19 test? It seems it should and then who will verify before said children are allowed back? Or would 2 weeks of remote learning be required? Also if a child runs a fever or feels sick, it

sometimes takes hours or until the end of the day for someone to get them. What if we have many kids who need to wait? The reality at our building is that we have 2 cots in our small nurse's office. I think that is pretty standard in K-5 schools. 2 cots.

Are teachers going to have rotations days or will we be exposed to all the time? We have had a year long sub crisis. How on earth will it be feasible to continue school when teachers inevitably fall ill? Will we have to stay home for 2 weeks if we run a fever? What if we have no fever but feel sick?

How on earth will we be able to make lunch and recess feasible?

What about our kids with special needs, compromised immunity, and other health concerns? What about teachers and staff who might have compromised immunity? How can we protect them if we return to school? We are all vulnerable to Covid-19 but how can we ask those who are most vulnerable to take the risk?

Something else that weighs heavily into this situation is the other people at home or in our lives who we could possibly be exposed to Covid-19. My father who lives with us is in his 70s and has some underlying health issues. We have practiced an abundance of caution to try to make sure we are not putting him at risk. Returning to school when the Covid-19 crisis is spiraling out of control seems like we did all that for nothing. It is unfathomable to me that we would not continue to do all we can to protect the many people in all our lives like him.

I have seen such a spectrum of adherence and non-adherence here in Oak Park since school went to remote learning, through the shelter in place, and through the Illinois state phases. How can we meet this demand that we all now adhere to the most unsafe model when people simply have not been following the rules? When the parks were closed, I saw people using them anyway. Throughout this time I have seen people fragrantly disregarding the guidelines put forth by the CDC. Even now I regularly see big groups and without masks. These choices put us all at risk and will continue to do so. I wish I could be at school. I want to be at school. I want the kids and my kids to return WHEN it is safe to do so and it is not.

We are living through an unprecedented time but the facts of how infectious disease , especially this deadly infectious disease do not change no matter how hard and heart -breaking that makes our daily lives. *This is hard and heart breaking but it is also survivable.* We need to focus on surviving and wait until it is truly is safe to return to school. This choice is not just for the individual schools, Oak Park, Illinois, the U.S. During this ordeal we have been examining societal inequities on a micro and macro level. We have been seeing and trying to understand our connections globally. We have engaged in what learning is all about - productive struggle. It is not easy but it is so worth it. Let's keep that commitment to each other strong and think about the example it will set and the literal health impact it will have on this community and all those larger ones it is connected to.

Martha Irvine

As a parent of an incoming freshman, I also wanted to pass along my thanks to the district for the work on the fall plan.

We are sad but also relieved — and VERY grateful that student and staff safety was clearly the priority, as is creating a better online learning experience.

We know this hasn't been easy. We know this isn't ideal.

Leslie Truelove

I missed most of the presentation and I'm listening to the Q&A.

My son will be going to Julian in the fall (6th grade)

How will the school day work for middle school students at Julian and Brooks, since the middle school model has students moving from class to class during the school day.

Will there be bus service or will we need to drop off / pick up our kids?

Where will the presentation and recording of the zoom call be posted?

Due to the number of public comments received, the rest were read at the end of the meeting.

SPECIAL REPORTS

BOARD OF EDUCATION DISCUSSION ABOUT THE USE OF SRO'S IN THE MIDDLE SCHOOLS

Member Kearney read the following statement.

“As many of you know, in 1999 the District 97 School Board entered into an Intergovernmental Agreement, also known as an “IGA” with the Village of Oak Park under which the Village would fund and provide police officers to be embedded within District 97 schools. As recently as the 2019-20, school year, these police officers, also known as school resource officers or “SROs,” were positioned full-time at District 97’s two middle schools - Brooks and Julian.

Over the recent past, the School Board, the District and our broader community have begun to consider the need for SROs more closely. A number of students, parents and community members have expressed significant concerns about the effect of having armed police officers in our schools on our culture and climate. Most recently, several hundred members of the District 97 community reached out to the Board urging us to discontinue the use of SROs.

At the same time, members of the District administration and staff have told us that the SRO role has evolved since the Intergovernmental Agreement was originally signed 21 years ago. They have indicated that the current SRO role is less focused on discipline and law enforcement and may not require a uniformed, armed officer. They also shared ways in which they viewed SROs as bringing value to the middle schools.

Given all of this, as well as the Board’s own consideration of SROs and our review of the existing research on the effect of SRO’s on schools, the Board will be terminating the Intergovernmental Agreement with the Village as soon as is possible.

The agreement is 21 years old and reflects a perspective on police officers in our schools that is out of date. It does not reflect current understandings and values, and is not supported by empirical evidence. It also does not accurately represent how district personnel have indicated SROs are currently used.

It is also bad practice in general to have an agreement that goes without update for 21 years and that contains no evaluation metrics or measures. Typically, District 97 contracts last for 1-3 years and contain provisions for assessing their effectiveness.

Our termination of the IGA means that there will not be SROs in our schools as we begin the 2020-21 school year. We have shared with members of the district administration that they are welcome to come

back to the Board with a proposal for a new position. For such a proposal, we would be interested in a job description that:

- Clearly describes the role
- Clearly describes the qualifications for the role, i.e. a background in counseling, social work, and so on; and.
- Indicates where that person would exist within the district's organizational structure.

In order to formally terminate the IGA, the Board must vote to do so and then provide the Village 30 days notice of our decision to terminate. While we cannot take this vote tonight because it requires 48 hour notice, as I indicated the vote and notice to the Village will happen at least 30 days prior to the start of the school year.

The Board would like to thank everyone that reached out to us and spoke to us about this issue, particularly our students. We would also like to thank the Village for its willingness to support our schools over these years and we look forward to future collaborations that support our common goal of creating a positive, healthy, and inclusive school environment.”

REOPENING PLAN UPDATE

Dr. Kelley recognized the 100 staff members who helped to draft this reopening plan. She thanked the parents for their patience, and support. She reported that administration shared a draft reopening plan during the special July 9, 2020 board meeting. She expressed the desire by administration and staff to get the students onsite, but expressed concern about the pandemic still being present.

She reported that after carefully reviewing the states guidelines for schools, and analyzing the condition of the schools, the plan is to start the school year using a hybrid learning model.

Dr. Kelley explained that the plan was guided by three key objectives; health and safety of the students and staff, consistent high-quality learning experiences for the students, and equity. She told the Board that the plans are highly dependent on the current status of Covid-19 and the restore Illinois plan.

Dr. Kelley acknowledged the many questions submitted to administration after the July 9, 2020 special board meeting, and thanked Eboney Lofton and Michael Arensdorff who addressed each of them.

Lofton explained that the shift in spring was based on guidance from the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE), but the district is now using parent's voice, and what was learned since spring to make the decisions on how to move forward. The district will be hosting a two-step summer program next week that will offer core instruction.

Arensdorff explained that the teachers will be using SeaSaw and Google Canvas Classroom to engage the students electronically. He reported that about 250 devices have been deployed to students who did not have them in the spring. Thanks to CARES money, the district was able to support the Kindergarten – second grade students, so that everyone will have devices in the fall. He assured the Board that the technology department will continue to leverage the Internet for All program to assure that everyone has internet access.

Dr. Kelley reported that the recent family survey received 3,307 responses. 3,142 families responded to the childcare question. Of those responses, 37.1 percent of the families indicated that they will not need childcare. 41.7 percent indicated the need for childcare this fall. Half of the families that responded indicated that the cost of childcare would be challenging.

Childcare Questions and Answers

1) What does the district mean when it says “childcare” and what are our objectives?

When attending remotely, student will still need to attend classes. As far as childcare, we are working with local partners to discuss how we might come up with innovative solutions. We would be looking to provide a structure for the students to attend classes, eat lunch and complete assignments. The childcare would be a partnership between the provider and the family.

2) Is there space for childcare to take place on school grounds?

Unfortunately, there is not space on school grounds for childcare. After-school care would be available from our providers, only to students who are onsite for those days.

3) When is the childcare survey going out?

We are prioritizing needs. First priority is getting the cohort list developed.

4) When are we going to bring all of the childcare partners together in one room to build one comprehensive child care plan and engage with the community around this?

Today was the first day that we were in the same physical space. We recognize that we did not include all of the partners. We are still working on a list to include everyone.

5) Who are the partners who are going to work with us on childcare? Are they involved in the planning process?

The partners will be involved in the planning process. All those we have been in contact with (OPPD, OPEF, Hephzibah, CEC) are supportive. We want to be able to supply resources when families express the need.

June 9 Deliverable

- Regarding communication, a communication was sent out to the public last week, along with a slide deck and the survey summary. This meeting is being recorded and will be made available on the website later this week.
- The district has created an FAQ document based on messages that the district has received. The district is planning to hold virtual Q&As with staff and families to address common questions/concerns.
- We have created a brief video to recap our announcement from last week.
- The planning team is working to address specific details of our plans in the coming weeks, including safety protocols, cleaning procedures, social-emotional support, etc. Communication updates will be shared weekly.
- A survey for remote only learning options is being created and will be distributed in the next few days.
- Staff members will be asked to self-identify and will be in need of accommodations when returning to school.

Dr. Kelley shared that if a family member feels uncomfortable with students attending school physical, we are prioritizing those concerns. Attending school in person will not be a requirement. The survey should be going out to the families this week. Additionally, a four day a week option will also be offered to accommodate students with special needs.

Dr. Kelley explained that there is always a possibility that the Illinois Board of Education and/or the Governor will direct the district to close the school buildings again. By planning the hybrid blended approach, we are developing a plan so we could move to remotely again. We are monitoring the situation daily, talking to the village weekly and communicating with the director of public health. We are monitoring the situation with the main priority being the health and safety of the students and staff.

The childcare information and the cohort decisions should be shared with families by the end of the month of July. Administration was asked to consider sharing cohort lists with the families.

Board comments included suggesting that the family survey include an option for families to indicate that they would be interested in remote learning only. Dr. Kelley assured the Board that the district does plan to offer a fully remote learning option for any family who chooses to attend school in that manner.

The childcare survey will be created jointly with the childcare sponsors. The survey should help the sponsors determine the need. Many of the sponsors have scholarships available, but there may come a time when administration asks the Board to support families in need. Dr. Kelley indicated that the biggest struggle in planning childcare will be identifying locations. She is not currently aware of what the demand will be.

Dr. Kelley was asked to create a project plan that would identify dates of activities and sequencing. Interest was expressed in knowing when the parents will learn their cohorts. Dr. Kelley assured the Board that this is a top priority.

Interest was expressed in including Hanover Research in the survey work. The Board was assured that Hanover has been included in some of the work, and they will be used for back to school planning for social and emotional wellness. Carrie Kamm offered to share the timeline for this work with the Board in a weekly report.

Interest was expressed in knowing how parents would have the ability to move between options. Dr. Kelley explained that the district is looking to a trimester approach, and she is not sure if a student would be required to stay in an approach that is not working for them. As a community we need to prepare ourselves to be prepared to move to remote again at some point.

Dr. Kelley explained that the school leadership will keep track of family options. There are a lot of moving parts, but the team works closely together.

Interest was expressed in understanding how the remote students will participate with the onsite students. Eboney Lofton explained that a lot of the content taught remotely will be the special area content. Students who are fully remote will have a remote teacher team to support them. For the cohorts, we are trying to determine how to blend and build that classroom. It was noted that the middle schools will basically be using a blocked schedule where the teachers move in and out of the student cohorts.

The board was assured that the culture climate team at the middle schools will consider how to build friendships and comradery among the sixth graders.

Lofton explained that the district is required by law to follow the students IEPs and 504 plans, so a self-contained classroom cannot be created if it does not already exist. We are still trying to work out what their days will look like, and work with families to make decisions that support the individual students.

Interest was expressed in understanding the timeline of what will be completed and when. Dr. Kelley explained that the planning that the team is doing is contingent to the Covid-19 metrics. Determining which students will be in each cohort is the first priority, and then childcare. Administration is planning to host question and answer session for staff. She indicated that she will work on the project plan requested earlier and get that developed. She reminded the Board that this is not the only work that administration is working on.

Interest was expressed in knowing if there are opportunities outside of the school environment for the district to use. If so, interest was expressed in understanding what the additional space would give us? Dr. Kelley explained that additional space would allow us to decrease the density in the buildings. Jeanne Keane, Senior Director of Buildings and Grounds explained that until we know the cohorts, it is hard to respond. Keane noted that our first concern is to house the students and staff safely. If we could possibly have childcare, we would consider that. She told the Board that there is not a lot of space available because all of the partners are looking for extra space too. Everyone is still trying to determine what space might be available.

Regarding common assessments, Lofton explained that the team is looking at assessments and are trying to determine how we will administer them. The team is also considering ways to review project monitoring with the current systems. She expects that the district will be able to give good information to families about how students are performing and demonstrate progress.

ACTION ITEMS

ACTION ITEMS

5.1.1 APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM THE JUNE 16, 2020 BOARD MEETING

Moore moved, seconded by Breymaier, that the Board of Education, District 97, approve the minutes from the June 16, 2020 Board meeting.

Ayes: Moore, Breymaier, Spurlock, Kearney, Liebl, Broy, and Kim
Nays: None
Absent: None
Motion passed.

5.1.2 APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM THE JUNE 29, 2020 BOARD MEETING

Breymaier moved, seconded by Kearney, that the Board of Education, District 97, approve the minutes from the June 29, 2020 Board meeting.

Ayes: Breymaier, Kearney, Broy, Spurlock, Liebl, Moore, and Kim
Nays: None
Absent: None
Motion passed

5.2 APPROVAL OF THE CONSENT AGENDA

Spurlock moved, seconded by Breymaier that the Board of Education, District 97, approve the consent agenda as presented.

- 5.2.1 Approval of Bill List
- 5.2.2 Personnel
- 5.2.3 Donation – Whittier
- 5.2.4 Overnight and Out-of-State Field Trips for SY2020-21
- 5.2.5 Policy Adoption
 - Policy 2:125 (Board Member Compensation, Expenses)
 - Policy 2:125-E1 (Board Member Expense Reimbursement Form)

Policy 2:125-E2 (Board Member Estimated Expense Approval Form)
 Policy 2:160 (Board Attorney)
 Policy 2:160-E (Checklist for Selecting a Board Attorney)
 Policy 4:50 (Payment Procedure)
 Policy 4:170-E1 (School Staff AED Notification Letter)
 Policy 5:35 (Compliance with the Fair Labor Standards Act)
 Policy 5:50 (Drug, and Alcohol Free Workplace; E-Cigarette, Tobacco, and Cannabis)
 Policy 5:60 (Expenses)
 Policy 5-60-E1 (Employee Expense Reimbursement Form)
 Policy 5-60-E2 (Employee Estimated Expense Approval Form)
 Policy 5:150 (Personnel Records)
 Policy 5:210 (Resignations)
 Policy 5:280 (Duties and Qualifications)
 Policy 6:135 (Accelerated Placement Program Procedures)
 Policy 6:235 (Access to Electronic Networks)
 Policy 6:280 (Grading and Promotion)
 Policy 7:70 (Attendance and Truancy)
 Policy 7:90 (Release During School Hours)
 Policy 7:130 (Student Rights and Responsibilities)
 Policy 7:190-E2 (Student Handbook Checklist)
 Policy 7:325 (Student Fundraising Activities)
 Policy 7:325-E (Application and Procedures to Involve Students in Fundraising Activities)
 Policy 8:10 (Connection with the Community)
 Policy 8:30 (Visitors to and Conduct on School Property)
 Policy 8:30-E1 (Letter to Parent Regarding Visits to School by Child Sex Offenders)
 Policy 8:30-E2 (Child Sex Offender’s Request for Permission to Visit School Property)
 Policy 8:80 (Gifts to the District)
 Policy 8:110 (Public Suggestions and Concerns)

Ayes: Spurlock, Breymaier, Broy, Kim, Moore, Liebl, and Kearney
 Nays: None
 Absent: None
 Motion passed.

5.3.1 APPROVAL OF LUNCHROOM, PLAYGROUND PERSONNEL COMPENSATION FOR SY21

Gina Herrmann reported that the lunchroom managers have not received a raise in several years, and there is a huge discrepancy in their hourly rates of pay. She proposed a staggered increase that would bring them all up to the same rate in three years. Interest was expressed in knowing what the total amount of the increase would be over the three years. Herrmann was asked to supply that information in the weekly report, and the Board agreed to table this item until the special meeting scheduled on July 20, 2020.

5.3.2 RENEWAL OF CONSORTIUM AGREEMENT WITH DISTRICT 200 AND DISTRICT 90

Broy moved, seconded by Spurlock, That the Board of Education of Oak Park District 97, approve the agreement to extend the Tri-District Technology Consortium Agreement as presented at the June 16 board meeting and listed in the board packet.

Ayes: Broy, Spurlock, Kearney, Kim, Moore, Breymaier, and Liebl
 Nays: None
 Absent: None
 Motion passed.

5.3.3 APPROVAL OF SEIU MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING FOR CONTRACT EXTENSION

Spurlock moved, seconded by Moore, That the Board of Education of Oak Park District 97, approve the Memorandum of Understanding with the Service Employees International Union that extends the 2015-2020 Collective Bargaining Agreement for one (1) year with a 2.3 percent increase in wages.

Ayes: Spurlock, Moore, Kim, Kearney, Breymaier, Broy, and Liebl
Nays: None
Absent: None
Motion passed.

5.3.4 APPROVAL OF PPE PROCUREMENT

Broy moved, seconded by Breymaier, That the Board of Education of Oak Park District 97 approve the PPE procurement that consists of hand sanitizer, wall dispensers and adult and child masks that was presented in the weekly report dated July 10, 2020 in the amount of \$167,200.

Dr. Kelley explained that families will be asked to supply masks for their students just like any other school supply, but the district will have some available when necessary. Siegfried assured the Board that the operations committee will start communicating the expectation to parents, and encourage students and staff to supply their own masks when possible.

Ayes: Broy, Breymaier, Liebl, Spurlock, Moore, Kearney, and Kim
Nays: None
Absent: None
Motion passed.

5.3.5 APPROVAL OF YOUTH SERVICES AGREEMENT WITH THE OAK PARK TOWNSHIP

Broy moved, seconded by Spurlock, That the Board of Education of Oak Park District 97 approve the Oak Park Township Youth Interventionist Agreement 2020-2022 that was presented at the June 16, 2020 Board Meeting.

Ayes: Broy, Spurlock, Breymaier, Kearney, Moore, Liebl, and Kim
Nays: None
Absent: None
Motion passed.

5.3.6 APPROVAL OF PERMANENT SUBSTITUTES FOR THE 2020-2021 SCHOOL YEAR

Moore moved, seconded by Breymaier, That the Board of Education of Oak Park District 97, approve the hiring of permanent substitutes for the 2020-2021 school year as presented.

Ayes: Moore, Breymaier, Broy, Spurlock, Kearney, Liebl, and Kim
Nays: None
Absent: None
Motion passed.

ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS

ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS

PRELIMINARY 2020-21 BUDGET

Financial Consultant Rob Grossi shared the status of the budget development process. He noted that there will still be changes made to the budget before it is presented for approval in September. He shared the preliminary end of the year figures, and the timeline for the budget approval.

- August 11 – The Board will review the tentative budget and call for a budget hearing on September 22.
- September 22 – The Board will hold a budget hearing and approve the budget
- September 23 – The budget

Grossi told the Board that they will review the tentative budget on August 11, 2020 and call for the budget hearing on September 22, 2020. The tentative budget will be available for viewing for at least 30 days. The Board will approve the budget on September 22, 2020, and it will be filed on September 23, 2020. Grossi reported that he met with FORC to discuss the financial concerns related to the State of Illinois.

Grossi reminded the Board that all financial decisions are inter-connected, and the Board needs to adopt the budget, the staffing size, summer projects, tax levies, tax abatement considerations and summer 2022 summer projects. Tonight’s discussion is the first of 10 major financial decisions that will need to be made by the Board.

Grossi shared his recommendations with the Board and a brief discussion took place.

SELF RENEWAL

Grossi reported that the district received the renewal request for the employee lost fund for Workers Compensation insurance. He reported that the aggregate cost for FY20-21 is a nine percent increase. He told the Board that this is an expense that is out of their control. This item will return on August 11, 2020 for approval.

BOARD ASSIGNMENTS

STANDING BOARD COMMITTEE LIAISON REPORT FOLLOW UP (as needed – FAC, FORC, CCE and CLAIM)

BOARD ASSIGNMENTS

No updates were shared.

INTERGOVERNMENTAL LIAISON REPORT FOLLOW UP (as needed – IGOV, PTO COUNCIL, CEC, OPEF, COMMUNITY COUNCIL, TRI-BOARD ON EQUITY, POLICY, AND SELF-EVALUATION)

BOARD RETREAT

The Board was reminded that they are scheduled to hold a retreat on July 20, 2020.

PARENT TEACHER ORGANIZATION (PTOC)

It was reported that the PTOC is schedule to meeting later this month.

OAK PARK EDUCATION FOUNDATION (OPEF)

It was reported that the OPEF met a couple weeks ago. They talked about how they are adjusting during the pandemic. They are waiting to see what District 97 is planning before they schedule anything in the future.

DISCUSSION OF THE COMMUNITY OF THE WHOLE

President Broy asked the board members to consider holding committee meetings as a committee of the whole. She expressed interest in slowly moving to this kind of structure for FAC, FORC and CLAIM and CCE, suggesting that a lot of the information shared at those meetings is not being shared with the full Board. She suggested that the Board discuss this option during the July 20, 2020 retreat, and consider starting the transition in August. Concern was expressed that some of these committee meetings already take two hours and some committee members might not want to volunteer if the meetings will take too

long. It was suggested that this might be a good approach when topics overlap from one committee to another. Concern was also expressed because the current committee set up is a much less formal meeting approach makes the meetings more candid than they might be if everyone was in attendance. It was suggested that the meetings are valuable, and a hybrid model was suggested for consideration.

CONCLUDING ITEMS

CONCLUDING ITEMS

BOARD REMARK

The staff and board members were acknowledged for their hard work on the return to school plan, noting that a lot of good work has been done by the group.

PUBLIC COMMENT (Continued)

Max Sakellaris

I have lived in Oak Park for 33 years. My family has lived in Oak Park since 1972. I am a former District 97 PE teacher and now teach and coach at Oak Park River Forest. My son will attend Irving as a second grader next year.

Hybrid learning plan is what has been chosen.

D97 employees will be asked to do their normal day to day job, prepare lessons for in class teaching and prepare lessons for remote learning, and now of course control Covid-19 within their students in schools and classrooms. This also means to carry the weight and worry of their own health, their family's health, and every single student and their family's health.

Controlling Covid-19 should be interesting since we can't even come close as a country or state to achieve this with adults. Should be interesting with kids, ages 5 to 13.

Bathrooms, fights, CPI holds, kids taking their masks off, kids touching one another, kids touching adults, or eating lunch with masks off at lunch time. These are all instances where Covid-19 can't be controlled in a school day. WHY? Because schools have kids in them and kids are unpredictable.

I hope that for the sake of our kids, community, my family, my wife, and our children that the administration thinks very carefully about this hybrid plan. Listening to the presentation yesterday and listening to the great questions by board members and the lack of answers the administration is not ready to support this community with a hybrid model.

There is too much unknown. As a District 200 board member said in our meeting last night, "There is so much that can go right with remote learning. There is so much that can go wrong with returning to school".

Lisa Peloquin

As you consider the plan for the 2020-21 School Year, I encourage you to remember that Lincoln continues to be in a state of crisis and requires your special attention. While some problems have been put on hold during the pandemic, the leadership challenges and toxic climate among the adults at Lincoln continues to worsen. It might be easier to only focus on the needs of the entire district during this difficult time, and return to thinking about Lincoln down the road, but the students and teachers at Lincoln have already waited far too long for appropriate support.

Of course, not all of our students are equally impacted by the lack of leadership and the toxic climate- it dispositionally impacts students' who already face other challenges. We have heard from parents of children with special needs that are being unmet because of this leadership crisis. If we are a district committed to walking the walk of equity, then as a board you must prioritize supporting Lincoln by

getting multiple proposals from experts in school climate reform and leadership to support Lincoln immediately. We are counting on you to select experts that are up to all the challenges Lincoln faces - from the toxic climate to remote learning support. Please do not walk away from this responsibility thinking that our superintendent is addressing it. It appears she has moved on to other things.

The 2020-21 School Year will be difficult for teachers all over the country, let us commit to lessening the challenge for the teachers and students at Lincoln. Instead of allowing the climate problems to continue to fester and grow, bringing in a third party to recreate the climate at Lincoln will support teachers to collaborate and pave the way for lasting thoughtful leadership. Our students and their teachers have waited for years for us to address these challenges. Students entering 4th grade this year will have had a different principal every fall. We must do better.

I request a response to this email to let me know your progress in getting proposals from experts in school reform to support Lincoln, your criteria in selecting the group to work with, and your timeframe.

Lori Chossek

Thank you for all of your diligent work on behalf of our community of Oak Park.

I will be streamlined in my communication and outline 2 points for you to consider:

1.) I posit that the **staff survey is an inaccurate summation of staff attitudes and beliefs** about reopening and specifically the hybrid model as presented. Staff largely gleaned from previous meetings and planning that a hybrid model would look more similar to a part time in person work model. Staff, I believe, in the interest of partnership and goodwill, rated that they could ready themselves up for reduced exposure, and assumed, based on available information, that that exposure might look like 2 half time in person days (essentially 8 total hours). Not full time exposure reporting to in person learning 4 days, all day, maximizing exposure risk to a minimum of 32 hours per week. My middle school age son, upon hearing the plan himself, and holding a 504 plan (which would put him in-person 4 days) quipped "Really? The district is trying to get rid of all the dumb kids by increasing our exposure." For the record he does not feel he is dumb, and would never call anyone else dumb, but he clearly is confused and knows increased indoor, in person instruction puts him at greater risk.

Outcome: I hypothesize that this will have direct financial impact on the estimated cost of this model as many staff and teachers will look to other options to protect their life and those of their families via FMLA, sick leave, paid or unpaid leaves of absence, or possibly resignation. If this occurs this will have a long term impact on the functioning of our schools for years as we seek to stabilize and replace a seasoned and knowledgeable workforce. Given that it takes typically 1-2 years for a new hire to acclimate and additionally 44% percent of new teachers leave within the first 5 years (Education week July 2020). As a district it would be irresponsible to create a situation in which our most experienced and dedicated professionals are considering leaving in order to safeguard their life. That scenario will negatively impact us and our community of children for years.

2.) Comprehensive and regular Covid testing needs to be conducted on-site for safe reopening. Not just symptoms, as we know many children are asymptomatic. For instance, Florida 10,000 children under age of 18 test positive for Covid-19 - July 2020)

This presents a hardship, as securing quick tests and results for children under age 18 is difficult. This also presents an equity issue if the district does not provide this service in partnership with a medical entity on site, as many of our families will not be able to travel or complete this on their own, but research points to this necessity if we are truly going to put the safety of children and staff at the forefront as we suggested we would. As a mental health professional I am reminded daily in my work that learning occurs best if only the first basic needs are met. We cannot ignore best practices for safety.

Aleksandra Tadic

I am asking the Board to consider grades K-2 to be full time in school.

1. Kindergarten students – this is their first impression of school. They have no prior experience of classroom setting. How can parents introduce e-learning to such students?
2. Equity Issue - K-2 grades have no tablets, Chrome books or computers- some of the families will not be able to provide that resource to their kids. How will D97 handle this issue?

Elizabeth Vietzen

District 97 Board Members: Please consider the location of where lunches will be consumed by students and staff in the event of schools reopening in the Fall. Will students be allowed to eat snack in the classroom? In order to eat and drink, masks will need be removed. According to Governor Pritzker's Phase 4 guidelines, indoor restaurants can only be at an occupancy of 25%. If classrooms are being considered as a place for students to eat then the capacity should also only be at 25%. Also how will rooms be ventilated and cleaned before the teacher returns to the classroom? Outdoor options must be prioritized. Thank you, Elizabeth Vietzen-D97 teacher

Stephanie Suerth

OPTA, speaking as an individual.

I will not take credit for these words for they are not mine, but these are the thoughts of many educators trying to figure out how to risk their lives and do the job you think will happen in August. This is from an educator.

I am troubled by a false dichotomy I see in the discourse around schools reopening.

I keep seeing the discussion weigh the merits and flaws of remote education against face to face instruction.

Obviously, face to face instruction is advantageous in almost every way, except for the obvious health concerns (which I weigh very heavily, but you may not.)

However, face to face instruction is NOT what is on the table for next year. What is currently being evaluated and planned for is more accurately described as socially distanced education.

Fanny Rodolakis

I am increasingly nervous about the upcoming school year, trying to figure out how my husband and I, both full time workers with highly demanding jobs, will manage to organize our life around this new schedule. I echo the concerns of many parents that scrambling a patchwork of childcare will only increase our children's exposure.

When will the cohorts be announced?

It is impossible to make plans without even knowing which days will need which type of childcare. Cohorts and classroom compositions must be released before the end of July for parents to be able to self-organized: family pods, nanny share, tutor share, etc. I dread an anonymous announcement 2 days before the first day of school. We need to know which families are in the same boat (i.e. cohort / classroom).

This situation will require a tremendous amount of creativity and coordination from parents and family which can only happen if we are given the time to prepare for it.

Joshua Tepfer

I am a Lecturer-in-Law at the University of Chicago Law School. I have dedicated my career to representing adults and children criminally accused, and have seen time and time again wrongful accusations and convictions, overcharging, and youthful behavior unnecessarily criminalized. I have three children who have attended D97 schools for the past four years. I write to voice my strong opposition to having SROs in our schools.

There is no data that supports a conclusion that SROs give our students a safer learning environment. Frankly, based on both the data and experiences I have witnessed, the opposite is true. Increased police presence in schools escalates and criminalizes issues that can be handled more appropriately through school discipline. As throughout the criminal justice system, students of color are the most adversely impacted. And the inappropriate entry into the criminal justice system for youthful behavior simply increases the likelihood of more criminalization down the road. Even where that is not the consequence, a mark on a youth into the criminal justice system may result in collateral consequences that can stay with a young person throughout his or her life.

Police officers are simply not adequately trained to interact with students in a school environment. Many students of color have had poor interactions with police during their lives and seeing their presence in school creates real fear and angst, and thus decreases their abilities to feel safe and thrive in school.

My first goal is the safety of my children and that of all the students in D97. SROs do not aid that goal. They hinder it. Investing in more resources for employment, education, economic opportunities, and healing and trauma recovery is what will make our students safer; not investment in policing schools.

Eric Friedman

Thank you for holding the July 9 Board meeting to provide more information about our plan to return to school. What struck me is a key piece of information the administration didn't tell the Board: that the rationale for the proposed plan conflicts with guidance from the Illinois State Board of Education.

The administration said that returning to school full time was virtually impossible, because there was no way to space out desks six feet apart in the classrooms, thus requiring more classrooms and teachers than we can get. However, the Illinois State Board of Education FAQ on transition includes the following quote:

"Are all individuals in a school building required to maintain social distance (remain 6 feet apart) at all times? Social distance must be observed as much as possible. Desks do not need to be spaced 6 feet apart." (Source: <https://www.isbe.net/Documents/FAQ-Part-3-Transition-Guidance.pdf>)

This guidance from the Illinois State Board of Education is consistent with scientific sources. For example, research in "The Lancet" concluded that 1 meter is sufficient social distancing, with masks and other PPE, based on a review of many studies on social distancing (source: [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(20\)31142-9/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(20)31142-9/fulltext)). This is the primary source used by the American Academy of Pediatrics in making its recommendation to get kids back in school, and they've also stated that three feet distance between desks is adequate.

If our district will be more conservative than the guidance from the best scientific sources and government guidelines, let's own that decision rather than saying it is not possible to fully open the schools.

Christine Fenno

I'm a new Brooks parent. I appreciate the hard work of our board at this time. My main concern as we bring children into d97 buildings is that Oak Park doesn't seem to have an equitable (meaning: easily accessible to all) infrastructure to test people of all ages. Will a teacher or school nurse who sees symptoms in-person advise a parent or guardian of a simple testing protocol? I'm aware of same-day testing sites in Oak Park, but they're for age 18 and up. I know friends who found a same-day testing site in Harwood Heights for people under 18, but with a long wait when you arrive.

In a district where not all families have a car or health insurance, asking a parent to drive far to have their student tested is not equitable, nor is telling them to visit their pediatrician for next steps. For the safety of their classmates and teachers, a child who needs a test should be able to access one promptly and locally at no cost, with test results reported to the school promptly. Some same-day testing sites in our area don't return results for a week.

We have the factual data that children are not completely immune from contracting the virus. I believe there will be an outbreak in school if any student who had contact with a Covid19 case or exhibits symptoms can't be isolated immediately, with a fast covid test easily accessible. We are exposing people most who will spend 4 days a week in the buildings, namely, teachers + d97 students with IEPs. Without a testing plan, our whole community is gambling that mask rules and 6-foot-distance rules in school will be respected at all times and never breached.

Can the district partner with Rush, or consult how other districts are solving this? If we want the Hybrid Model to succeed and put health and safety first, I urge you to include *access to Covid testing* in the challenges to plan for, to protect all who come into the building as well as their immediate family members.

Monyka Pettis

I didnt see anything in the Agenda packet regarding the Brooks 7th grade trip to Springfield that was cxld this year. Will the kids possibly be allowed to make it up as 8th graders in 2021 sometime?

Karl Leonard

I write regarding the Board's discussion this evening about the use of SROs in the middle schools. As a parent of 3 -- soon to be 4 -- D97 students, I believe that schools are a place for students to learn from educators, not law enforcers.

Alison Miller Singley

I am the parent of a rising Kindergartner, and I have been SO looking forward to joining the Holmes community. That said, my primary goal for my son this year is that he enjoys school and is not afraid to attend this year or any following year. Whatever form the classroom procedures take, please provide the teachers adequate supports that they can build personal connections with their students. Perhaps provide face shields instead of masks so they can share their expressions? Provide time and tech support to arrange 1:1 or small-group zooms instead of large groups to foster interaction? I truly don't know *what* the solutions are, but seeing as my son will not have a normal school experience for his introduction to formal schooling, I can only hope he has a positive one.

Thank you for your leadership and service during this time of irreconcilable challenges!

Amy Krefman

I understand your decision for the upcoming school year was a difficult one. I'm writing again to share my concerns as well as a few questions I hope you will be able to answer.

First, I took the time to read ISBE's guidelines for reopening schools. As noted on page 17 of the document,

"When crafting student schedules, it is important to keep child care needs of your community in mind. It is estimated that 700,000 school age children (ages 6-12) in Illinois reside in households where all parents work and likely require some form of out-of-school child care. When children aged 0-6 are included, an estimated 1-1.2 million parents rely on child care to return to work. Blended remote learning will likely increase the rate of infection and the demand for center based and non-relative care, increasing the number of different people that children are in contact with each week and, thereby, their probability of exposure to the virus."

When we talk about exposure, I think the hybrid model puts our teachers, staff, and students at the greatest risk compared to other schedules. Not only are the teachers exposed to the 20 or so students in a given class over the course of the week, but many of those students will also be enrolled in a large variety of childcare environments, possibly mixing with children from other schools as well.

In almost all of the sample schedules shown in Appendix D of the ISBE document, elementary (or at the very least K-1) children are prioritized for in-person learning every day. Are we past the point where we can explore the option of prioritizing in-person learning for the youngest learners who may struggle most with at home learning and who are most likely to be in childcare for the days they are not in school?

Beyond those concerns, If the hybrid schedule is definitely the path forward, I have a few additional questions.

First, I would like to see science-based benchmarks for moving forward to more in-person learning, or backward to 100% remote learning. Will the hybrid plan be reassessed during the school year, or are we committed to this schedule until June?

After accounting for the families who are choosing to opt-out of in-person school (either 100% remote through D97 or enrolling in private school), if the number of remaining students who want to stay at D97 for in-person learning is small enough, could they attend in person for 4-5 days instead of 2?

How *specifically* will eLearning look different than it did in the spring? What have you learned from the spring and from summer school?

A major issue for us in the spring was that my children did not know how to use the platforms that their coursework was on. Will students receive hands-on instruction in how to use any technology that is required for the work?

Can we encourage teachers to utilize outdoor space when possible for class time?

When will we receive class assignments or at the very least, which days of the week our children will be learning at school?

These are just a few of the many questions I have, but I'm hoping we can begin to hear some concrete answers so we as a community can plan for the fall.

Anita Maddali

I am a law professor, have one child in D97, and am against having SROs in schools.

Everyone agrees, I'm sure, that keeping our children and communities safe is of vital importance. Of

course, that goal does not eliminate the question of whether any particular measure is necessary or even desirable to keep our children safe. Moreover, it's important to consider how much safer a school community is compared to the downside of the measures employed. Indeed, research has shown that children of color, in particular, do not necessarily feel safer and, instead, many feel unfairly targeted by SROs in schools. Are we, as a community, willing to prioritize feelings of comfort (presumably, SROs give some constituents of D97 comfort, otherwise, why were they hired in the first place?) for some over the potentially worse emotional and educational outcomes of others, as demonstrated through the data and through the lived experience of students? Are there other measures that would foster a greater sense of belonging and safety for all members of the D97 community? Would hiring more social workers or other measures address some of these needs and concerns?

I have observed that fostering inclusion (a sense of belonging also creates safety) often requires a willingness to consider perspectives that may challenge accepted norms and practices. Specifically, how can we make changes that are actually transformative - rather than performative (i.e., they give the appearance of change but maintain the status quo)? This may be a good question to start with when evaluating the pro/con of continuing to have SROs at D97 schools.

There are smart, creative and caring people who live in this community. I am confident that we can address safety concerns in a way that allows children and teachers to feel safe and included within their school community. I am happy to participate in such efforts.

Lauren and Dan Johnson

We express our support for removing SROs from D97 schools. Law enforcement officers do not belong in the educational setting, and have not proven to be helpful in the exceedingly rare event of a school shooting. Any potential social/community benefits do not justify the expense; the funds would be better spent on social workers.

We are newly learning about the gifted and advanced placement programs available in D97, and are still trying to understand APP vs GTD and the changes that are being made. We would like to express our strong support for any program and policy changes aimed at eliminating the glaring racial disparities of these programs.

Bob and Jen Hall

As the parents of a D97 student (a Julian sixth grader), we want to express our support for keeping the School Resource Officers present in our middle schools. The safety of all of our children must remain the highest priority. Support for SROs.

Ileana Gomez

I am an AMI-trained Montessori elementary teacher with 30 years of experience. I'm a proud Oak Park resident, and the owner and director of Seed Montessori. I come to you as a neighbor, and as a lifelong educator.

Seed is a dynamic, educational after school classroom at 500 Madison Street. For 4 years now, OP kids grades K-5, have been learning at Seed after school. Our multi-age, hands-on classroom, is founded on the Montessori principles of freedom and responsibility, and our work would blow your mind. Seed students perform skits, study fractions, build atoms, and replicate Leonardo DaVinci at will. Sometimes we eat the kale that we grow, or the Rice Krispie Treats we made.

After last spring's sudden transition to remote, **Seed** worked with families giving new educational support. I Zoomed into the homes of a dozen students from 4 different schools, one-to-one, 25 hours per

week. It was challenging and very rewarding; an intimate time with kids and families, a closer connection to District 97.

I saw firsthand how students and families adjusted—which varied significantly. I got insight into family resources, childcare, and socializing arrangements—which varied significantly. I heard at some length what parents had to say. I worked with work plans and schedules from four schools. Those weekly plans—*you guessed it*—varied significantly. With each family seeking different solutions to the remote learning challenges, it is clear to me is that flexibility for families is paramount.

Here is some of what I learned last spring:

1. **This is hard on everyone.**

2. **Parents want a punch list each week with the work plan.** Whatever is to be handed in that week, explicitly listed with each work plan. While juggling a million demands, they want to be able to literally check boxes and be confident their children are meeting the standard in D97 work. Elementary work plans were full of jewels and the Herculean efforts of the staff were apparent, but show me a list of the things that are due. (A note on my observation: Last spring I dove into work plans from 4 schools, 5 grades.)

3. **Families I heard from yearned for less scheduled contact on remote days, not more.** Scheduling is a challenge for everyone, so let’s lengthen the tether. Group Zoom should be limited and locked on schedule. Sometimes the virtual world supplants the real world and the kids would be better off tracing leaves from the yard. It is impossible for me to imagine the difficulty of what D97 teachers will be asked to juggle this fall. To be teaching live and then Zooming, or having ancillary staff do the Zooming, or however it goes, all sounds very difficult. Kids last spring seemed to value class Zoom for the friendships, and the parents valued that the kids enjoyed the social time during isolation. Seed Zoomed one:one, not full group, because a full group of elementary kids on Zoom is a beast that will not yield to normal powers. *You guys! They’re kids!!* For elementary Zoom, please schedule minimal regular meetings, ideally not required multiples in a day. **Let us live in the real world.**

4. **Standardizing schedules and work across the district will help families leverage the support of friends and community. Zoom schedule needs to be tight and unchanging. All assignments at the start of the week, all due at the end.** Again, to allow for family flexibility on remote days. The school work plans given on or before Monday, with all due by the end of the week allow for maximum adaptability of schedule and support. Access to the assignments online was preferable, as it saves parent the job of forwarding it. I recognize the need for security, but perhaps parents can have a code that they can share responsibly with other assigned helpers.

5. **Where can go for guidance on the limits that are placed on District 97 iPads so that kids can use them to full advantage? Please set the iPads to the widest boundary that is safe and publish consistent guidelines.** Security restrictions are necessary, but are the limitations consistent and ideal? We need to educate kids on these powerful tools we are so lucky to use. Some students are, or believe themselves to be, restricted from simple tools. I don’t know if kids are misunderstanding, or if sweeping limitations vary and deny us the full advantage this technology we are forced to overuse during the pandemic. It would be helpful for remote home support to know and understand iPad security restrictions. Each school seems to have different iPad rules. Seed students report that they aren’t allowed to Google, others “aren’t allowed to use Safari,” or Wikipedia, or a host of other common resources. Can this all be true? It’s hard to know what is true as the kids aren’t always clear, themselves. If the virus accelerates and schools close down hard again, the iPad will become again the main tool of research. Knowing what we can and can’t do would be helpful.

Pat Kennelly

Thank you to the board for their hard work planning back to school this fall. I have 2 comments about the plan laid out at last weeks' meeting:

1) The board indicated that plan A will cost \$5-\$11 million for additional teachers vs. plan B which "costs" \$0. What do you think is the cost directly to the parents in Plan B? Extra child care, tutors, work leave etc.? With 6,000 students, many of these families are going to pick up \$100s to \$1000s per week of child care or lost wages (easily in excess of \$11 million for an entire school year). I think we all agree that plan B is not in the best interest of students (particularly K-3), but the notion that it does not cost anything financially is ridiculous. Perhaps the hybrid plan is inexpensive for D97, but it costs the community significantly both financially and educationally.

2) Given that 100% school is not being considered an option, let's say we start the year with a hybrid plan. What sort of triggers does the board need to see to go back to 5 days on site after that? Every science/medical based review seems to suggest 5 days a week works right now - so what is it that the D97 board needs to see to change it?

Lisa Cohen

Thank you for your hard work thus far on preparing for the Fall. Now that the numbers of COVID cases are increasing across the country are you going to be flexible with your stated plan B hybrid model? The hybrid model neither protects our children or teachers from being exposed to a large number of potential cases of Covid nor provides high quality education. How are teachers supposed to teach both live and online at the same time?

A full remote program must be offered to all families. Including those who have kids with IEPs and 504s. For those families that choose a full remote option it will allow for less children in the school buildings at a given time and a new hybrid model will emerge.

A new survey of families should be conducted so the administration has a better handle on how many families would actually sign up for your current hybrid model.

Kyla McKinley

I would like to start by thanking you for all of the effort you have put forth during this pandemic! There is no question that educators are in a very unique and challenging time.

I am a cardiovascular Nurse Practitioner and will have two children at Hatch this fall. I am writing to you regarding my concerns related to public health in the school. I understand the planning process is ongoing and that the meeting on July 9th was a high-level meeting focused on education plans. I appreciated the detailed presentation! However, there is much that is unknown about how school will be in the fall from a health perspective. It is clear that District 97 is dedicated to following IDPH guidelines and keeping the health and safety of our students the highest priority. However, there are still large gray areas that are extremely important to consider and that I feel strongly enough about to reach out to you both personally. I ask you to please consider the following:

What will happen when the first child or teacher tests positive for Covid-19? Will the school be closed immediately? Who will be required to be tested? Will parents be notified if someone is positive? Additionally, if a child is sent home from school for flu like illness (such as cough, runny nose, fever), will they be required to be tested for Covid-19 prior to returning to school? If so, will only the high-sensitivity PCR test be accepted or would the rapid molecular test (which is highly inaccurate) be accepted? How involved are the school nurses in the planning process?

Additionally, there is growing evidence that Covid-19 is spread not only by droplet but also by airborne transmission. Last week, over 200 scientists signed a letter (<https://academic.oup.com/cid/article/doi/10.1093/cid/ciaa939/5867798>) addressing the World Health Organization stating “beyond any reasonable doubt that viruses are released during exhalation, talking, and coughing.” This statement has significant implications in both the health care system and school settings. Scientists further made recommendations to “mitigate airborne transmission including providing effective ventilation, supplementing general ventilation with local exhaust, high efficiency air filtration, and germicidal ultraviolet lights...We are concerned that the lack of recognition of the risk for airborne transmission of Covid-19 and the lack of clear recommendations on the control measures against the airborne virus will have significant consequences: people may think they are fully protected by adhering to the current recommendations, but in fact, additional airborne interventions are needed for further reduction of infection risk.”

I implore you to consider taking measures related to the airborne transmission of Covid-19. It is imperative that all measures be taken now, not after we experience a death. I trust that the school nurses have a strong voice in informing the school board as well as leadership in the development of health policies in the schools.

Answers to the above questions will help my husband and I, and many other families, decide if we will be sending our children to school or be opting for 100 percent E-Learning.

Sinead Aylward

I would like the board to respond to my questions.

(1) Please indicate how a child who cannot tolerate a mask due to sensory issues, or other disabilities, will be educated in the upcoming school year?

(2) Now that it is considered safe for students to return to school, is the board planning on having future meetings in person?

Amy Stewart

It came to my attention at 6:30pm this evening (Tuesday, July 14th) that parents will NOT be given the option to enroll their children in 100 percent remote learning. I am surprised and extremely disappointed that this option is not currently being considered, and I feel by doing so, the Board will be forcing many families to take on potential health risks that are unacceptable.

My son is a rising 5th grader at Whittier Elementary. Charlie has been at Whittier since Early Childhood in the fall of 2014, and has had an IEP in place since January 2014. Since the fall of 2017, Charlie has been placed in a fully co-taught classroom, which has been an excellent fit for him. However, this also means that by sending Charlie to school 4 days a week, due to his IEP, my son will be exposed to TWICE as many students, from TWICE as many different households, than most of Whittier’s student body. In light of skyrocketing Covid exposure numbers across the country, and a now-increasing rate of infection here in Illinois, I am not comfortable with his additional risk. I have every right, as a parent, to determine that for my son, and for his health.

I am also a single parent with compromised lungs, ever since a scary and medically traumatic incident with pulmonary emboli in both of my lungs in 2011. I was hospitalized and had to take an extensive leave of absence from work because of it; my blood-oxygen levels have never fully recovered, and I will remain on blood thinners for the rest of my life to minimize the risk of a recurrence of these clots, which could easily kill me. If my doctor and I determine that it places too much unnecessary risk for my own

safety and health to have my son in physical school 4 days a week, why would that important need not be respected and accommodated?

As I have only minutes to write this email before your deadline, I can focus only on my own family's details and needs. However, I am certain I am not the only parent who has been considering a fully remote option for my child. Our high school is doing 100 percent remote learning. Many other surrounding elementary districts are accommodating full e-learning for their students, based on each family's personal decision and choice. I ask that our rights in that regard be acknowledged and respected as well.

Greg Webster

I am the parent of a child at Holmes Elementary. I appreciate the exceptionally challenging circumstances that you are facing. The safety of students, of staff, education of students, and the overall wellbeing of everyone involved must weigh heavily on you. I appreciate you navigating a crisis that I doubt you anticipated when you originally ran for school board. Thank you for your service to the community in this unpaid role! Unfortunately, we did not have a great experience with Holmes at the end of the 2019-2020 school year, even given the exigencies of the pandemic. I know that this was common in many districts, not just District 97. I hope that this email serves as a constructive contribution to the discussion that you're having.

I have no quibbles with the hybrid location model that has been proposed. Here are the questions I would like to see addressed:

- 1) **What platform are you going to communicate on?** A morning email at 8:00 am with lessons and worksheets for the day was ineffective. Can you be explicit about the communication platform you've chosen and give parents an opportunity to explore that platform now?
- 2) **Demonstrate the academic preparation you've done over the summer.** It would help if you would send parents the first four weeks of curriculum in detail now. Send us a full week of work from week 3 or 4 (after academics are in full swing), including the specific deliverables that you're going to expect back from students. I would like to understand what a week's work of activity looks like in the new model. If you haven't developed the hybrid curriculum in a format that can be shared 6 weeks before the school year starts, then it's hard to have confidence that it's going to be ready.
- 3) **What is your vision for the arc of the school year?** At the end of the 2019-2020 school year, our daughter received reams of worksheets, many at a very basic level. Her main responsibility was to sit and do worksheets. This is a poor strategy for a new school year. What will be rolled out instead? How will you engage the resources that exist outside the classroom? What about the outdoors? This is a "concept/vision" question, as opposed to the concrete question articulated in #2.
- 4) **Publish a classroom-specific schedule for remote days.** How many meetings a day? Who is running those meetings? How many kids in each meeting? Which are group meetings and which are 1-on-1 meetings? Tell us that now, for our specific grade and teacher, not on the first day of school. Let us prepare our kids for how this is going to work.
- 5) **What do we need to have at home?** If you need us to purchase supplies, now is the time to think about it. As an example, our family doesn't have a color printer. Do we need one? These are different questions than a typical school year "pencils and erasers" trip to the store.
- 6) **Two working parents.** We are looking for a location for remote days where our kids can maximize their ongoing education, with supervision. However, if that other location has a separate learning

curriculum in place, what will the expectations be about completing remote work for District 97? The goal should be to serve the educational needs of the kid, not to get all the worksheets done.

7) **Who is communicating once the school year starts?** Despite attempts to engage Dr. Zelaya at the end of the 2019-2020 school year, she did not respond to our emails. I suspect that she was overwhelmed, but if she didn't have the ability to respond to a family emailing directly to ask questions, she needs more help. I suspect she was working 15 hours a day trying desperately to hold things together. How are you going to support the school management to adapt? Is the goal that they will just "do their best" or is there a more coordinated plan?

The main point of my request is to understand that your team is ready to educate our kids on the first day of school. I haven't seen that level of concrete preparation yet.

I understand that the 2019-2020 school year was an emergency and I appreciate that D97 tried their best to respond. This year is a new opportunity – and we have all known that these challenges were coming since the last day of school.

I also know that on an individual level, faculty, staff and school board leaders are giving their best. I appreciate all that work and effort. I look forward to hearing concrete steps for District 97, Holmes school, and individual classes.

Most importantly, we feel fortunate to be part of the diverse, enthusiastic, and passionate parents and students of District 97. We are lucky to be surrounded with so many opinions -- often very different than our own. I am sure that this email fails to recognize many successes that District 97 achieved and fails to appreciate the perspective of many families who I respect and admire, but whose concerns I can't appreciate effectively enough from our house, isolated by the current social-distancing rules. Thank you for all that you're doing and for caring about our children's education.

ADJOURNMENT

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to conduct, Vice President Kim declared the meeting adjourned at 10:26 p.m.

Board President

Board Secretary