



Oak Park Elementary School District 97

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**TO: Members, Board of Education
Dr. Carol Kelley, Superintendent**

FROM: District 97 Policy Review Team

RE: Policy Review and Discussion

DATE: April 12, 2016

On February 23, 2016, the District 97 Board of Education discussed the results from the second quarterly review session that the policy review team (Rupa Datta, Amy Felton and Chris Jasculca) performed in conjunction with our plan for monitoring policies on an annual basis. During this discussion, the board talked about potential changes to three of the policies our team thought might need to be updated and/or spot checked for enforcement based on changes in the law, district operations or standard best practices. These policies included:

- 3:10 (Goals and Objectives)
- 3:50 (Administrative Personnel Other Than the Superintendent)
- 8:100 (Relations with Other Organizations and Agencies)

The board also charged our team with reviewing policy 7:30 (Student Assignment and Intra-District Transfer) so we could determine if the section titled “Class Assignments” needed to be revised based on feedback it received from two parents/guardians via email and public comment.

Below is an update on all four policies.

- **3:10 (Goals and Objectives)** – We asked the board if it was interested in customizing the list of “specific goals and objectives” featured in the policy. The board decided to leave the list as written to prevent the policy from becoming too narrowly focused and prescriptive. As a result, no changes are being made to the policy at this time.
- **3:50 (Administrative Personnel Other Than the Superintendent)** – The policy currently states:

The Board will consider the Superintendent’s recommendations when setting compensation for individual administrators. These recommendations should be presented to the Board no later than the March Board meeting or at such earlier time that will allow the Board to consider contract renewal and nonrenewal issues.

Steve Cummins, the senior director of human resources, told us that the conceptual design table for salary changes could be presented by March. However, he said that the process of making final salary refinements could take until May or June to complete. With this in mind, we asked the board if it wanted to keep the language written as is since the initial information could be presented in March, or update it to reflect the duration of the process (i.e., March to May or March to June).

The board charged our team and the administration with identifying a solution for bringing the policy language into alignment with the district’s current practices. Cummins recommended, and the team and administration agreed, that the solution be based, in part, on the following footnote that corresponds with the policy:

State law does not address when the board should consider salary issues. The March deadline was chosen because the statutory notice deadline for reclassification is April 1 of the year in which a principal or assistant principal's contract expires unless the contract provides for an earlier deadline (105 ILCS 5/10-23.8b). Alternatively, the policy could require that recommendations be presented "in a timely manner."

Since the district's process extends beyond March, and the administration has the latitude from a legal standpoint to present the board with salary recommendations in a "timely fashion," we recommend that the paragraph from the policy be changed to:

The Board will consider the Superintendent's recommendations when setting compensation for individual administrators. These recommendations shall be presented to the Board in a timely fashion so that it will have ample opportunity to consider contract renewal and nonrenewal issues.

- **7:30 (Student Assignment and Intra-District Transfer)** – Two parents/guardians asked the board review and consider revising the section in the policy titled "Class Assignments" that reads as follows:

The Superintendent or designee shall assign students to classes.

The team reviewed the versions of the policy that are currently being used by neighboring and/or comparable districts. Almost every district uses either the same language featured in our policy, or a slight variation of it (i.e., The Building Principal shall assign students to classes.). Only District 90 in River Forest uses language that could be construed as different from a substantive standpoint. The language in its policy reads as follows:

The Building Principal shall assign students to classes, and in so doing consider teacher recommendations, individual student's needs, and any other applicable factors. All final decisions are subject to the approval of the Superintendent.

Since our policy aligns with the ones being used by our peer districts, we recommend that it remain unchanged. We also recommend that the administration consider spelling out the class assignment process via procedures.

- **8:100 (Relations with Other Organizations and Agencies)** – We asked the board if it believes that any additions should be made to the list of agencies and organizations currently featured in the policy. The board charged our team and the administration with assessing whether the policy should remain unchanged or include a "catch-all" bullet point that would cover all other entities not included on the list.

In an effort to keep the policy less prescriptive, but also recognize the various entities the district works with on a daily basis, our team and the administration are recommending that the following bullet point be added to the end of the list of agencies and organizations:

All other community agencies or organizations with which the District has an intergovernmental agreement or collaborative relationship

Proposed revisions to policies 3:50 and 8:100 are being presented to the board tonight for a first reading. A second reading and approval of these policies are scheduled for the board meeting on April 12, 2016.