

Official Minutes of the  
Oak Park Board of Education District 97  
260 Madison Street, Oak Park  
April 26, 2022 Regular Meeting

This meeting was held in-person and virtually using Livestream during the time of the Coronavirus pandemic. Board members met in person along with Administration.

President Kim called the meeting to order at 6:09 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Present: Kim, Ross Dribin, Hurd Johnson, Moore, Kearney, Kinhal, Spurlock (joined remote; \*left meeting at 10:47pm)

Absent: None

Also Present: Interim Superintendent Dr. Patricia Wernet, Associate Superintendent of Education Felicia Starks Turner, Interim Senior Director of Human Resources Cathie Pezanoski, Senior Director of Technology Michael Arensdorff, Senior Director of Communications Amanda Siegfried, Chief Academic and Accountability Officer Eboney Lofton, Senior Director of Equity Carrie Kamm, Senior Director of Curriculum Tawanda Lawrence, Senior Director of Special Education Donna Middleton, Senior Director of Buildings & Grounds Jeanne Keane, Principals April Capuder & Jeremy Christian, and Lonya Boose Board Secretary.

EXECUTIVE  
SESSION

### EXECUTIVE SESSION

Hurd Johnson moved, seconded by Moore that the Board move into executive session for the purpose of Appointment, Employment, Compensation, Discipline, Performance, or Dismissal of Specific Employees, Collective Negotiating and Litigation 5 ILCS 120/2(C)(1)(2)(11) at 6:10 p.m.

OPEN  
SESSION

### OPEN SESSION

President Kim motioned that the Board move into Open Session at 7:04 p.m. All present members of the Board were in agreement. The Board convened in Open Session at 7:09 p.m.

PUBLIC  
COMMENT

### 3. PUBLIC COMMENT

As a concerned mom to a D97 student & an infectious disease epidemiologist, I'm asking the board what actions are taking place in response to the rapid increase in COVID cases among the elementary and middle schools. Since removing the indoor masking requirement & moving all students to eat together in the cafeteria, cases have almost tripled from 50 last week to 145 this week. Last fall, before the Omicron winter surge, the highest weekly total was 19. The board had promised a measured approach to removing protections. In fact, announcements to parents earlier this year highlighted the possibility that masks and other protections may be used again if cases rise. As cases are clearly rising, it's time to restore some protections and keep our students safe. In particular, moving all students into the cafeterias for lunch is likely a key driver of this increase. What is being done to make lunches safer? Eating outside, in classrooms, or investing in improved ventilation are all good options. In addition, both IDPH & CDC guidance clearly state that students diagnosed with COVID MUST mask on days 6-10 or remain home. Why is D97 not following this guidance? Parents may choose the level of COVID risk they are comfortable with in the community; restaurants and movies and sports are all optional. But school is a requirement and the board must hold a higher standard that all students are reasonably protected.

Thank you,  
Maria Pyra, MPH PhD

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It is a fact that community transmission in Oak Park is extremely high right now. One way masking is not as effective as universal masking. My family has avoided COVID throughout the pandemic until this month, despite the fact that we all continue to wear high quality masks indoors at all times. With a highly contagious variant, this was not enough once everyone else removed their masks.

This is extremely risky for many families. Even healthy young vaccinated people are at risk for long term symptoms. We have no idea what the long term ramifications of this virus are, and it would be a tragedy if we lose a student, staff member or family member to COVID because we no longer care enough to try to prevent it.

We have things we can do- we can improve ventilation (HEPA filters in classrooms are effective), we can return to universal masking, we can ask everyone to return to testing. We can work with our health department.

By pretending that COVID is over, we risk the health of our community. Please show that we care.

Robin Kalish

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Dear D97 Board Members,

From what I can tell, the return to the cafeterias in elementary schools has been met with a lot of joy. I have heard that the mac & cheese is delicious! Much less exciting than the menu, but as important, is the air quality in the cafeterias. Some schools may have the benefit of new construction and/or larger cafeterias, but many students are still pretty packed-in. Open windows help and the improved HVAC helps too, but has the district measured the air quality in each of the cafeterias since the return? If not, can you make plans to do so on an ongoing and sustained basis?

This request is isolated; the cafeteria is the only place where families who choose to continue masking face unmasked close indoor contact. I understand the district is contracting with JHA to perform another survey; however, the district can act more swiftly to respond to the reintegrated and crowded lunchroom and increasing COVID rates by visiting each of the cafeterias to quickly assess with a [relatively inexpensive portable monitor](#). Remediating poor indoor air quality with portable air cleaners [as recommended by the EPA](#) could have minimal costs as well, and can also be done quickly.

Measuring air quality can help build equity across schools by ensuring air quality in the least ventilated cafeteria is as good as the school with the best constructed cafeteria. Additionally, evaluating and improving indoor air quality is a best practice that will help long after COVID surges fall. It can help decrease transmission of other illnesses, remediate airborne pollutants, and decrease the negative effects of allergies and asthma. It is a [smart investment](#) to make in the face of increasing climate change. Additionally, adopting regular evaluations without having to go through contracting with a consultant is a best practice that will enable our district to quickly respond to whatever we face in the future.

Thank you for your consideration and commitment to our community's safety.  
Meghan Paulas

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Board members,

Hi, I am Adelind Bodla, a fourth grader at Holmes Elementary. In the past few weeks, I have been feeling uncomfortable at school because kids sitting near me have been coughing and sneezing. It's mostly kids who don't have their mask on. They have been getting close to each other and me. Also, lots of kids have been absent.

Can you do anything to help me feel safe at school?

Thank you for your time.

Adelind Bodla

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Dear Members of the D97 School Board

As Covid-19 cases rise across the district, in our schools and throughout the community, I urge you to not give in to the virus. It may be unpopular to worry about Covid in some local Facebook groups, but it is our job to prioritize the safety of our children, including through mitigations in our schools.

If the district leadership is unwilling to return to mask requirements, I hope that you will consistently measure the air quality in the schools as improving indoor air quality can help decrease transmission. I would like to see this information included in communications to parents as well.

Thank you,

Ryan Jacobson, MD (Hatch Parent)

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Dear School Board Members and Superintendents,

During and after the Omicron surge earlier this year, much discussion was had around removing mitigations one at a time. The last two weeks have seen a tremendous increase in cases with a tripling of cases just last week alone. The 82 cases recorded at a single school is a new high that exceeds what was seen during the previous surge. I would implore this board to work with the public health department to identify necessary mitigations during this time.

My bigger ask is to follow and implement ALL of the approaches recommended by the recently launched White House "Clean Air in Buildings Challenge." These approaches focus on a long-term approach that will keep our kids safe not only during this latest surge, but future variants and other airborne diseases. Consistent with what I've written to this board about before, this approach calls for air purifiers in EVERY classroom and continuous monitoring to ensure that there is adequate ventilation in every room.

Thank you for your consideration.

Regards,

Ranga Bodla

Parent of Two Holmes Hawks

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Dear D97 Board,

COVID is still here, and it can still impact the health of both vaccinated and unvaccinated populations with serious consequences for everyone. We know vaccination efficacy wanes over time, and natural immunity is fleeting at best.

In Illinois, less than 71% of the state has received at least one dose of a COVID vaccine; less than 65% of the state is considered fully vaccinated; and less than 35% of the state has received a booster dose. It is established that boosters are significantly less effective after 3 months against Omicron. Children under 5 are still unable to get vaccinated, and we also have vulnerable populations within our community who need to be protected.

Therefore, it's easy to conclude that none of these numbers are sufficient. The passage of time combined with rising cases is cause for concern. School should be a safe space, not one that puts at-risk children, families, and community members in a dangerous situation.

Given this, we need answers to the following questions:

- 1) What is the plan for addressing the COVID outbreak in our public schools?
- 2) What metrics are being discussed, and what will it take to reintroduce a mask requirement for students and staff?
- 3) What steps are being taken to address air quality issues in our public schools?
- 4) Will money be spent to improve filtration and if so, when can we expect implementation?

It has been proven without a doubt that masks are an effective mitigation measure. The risk to a healthy person wearing a mask near a COVID-19 carrier who is not wearing a mask is moderately high. The risk to a healthy person wearing a mask near a COVID-19 carrier who also is wearing a mask is low. At the very least, I urge you to reimplement a mask mandate in our schools. Right now, I have zero confidence that the school administration is doing what it takes to protect the students, staff, or community at large. Be better.

John Metzger

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To: District 97 (submitted over "Let's Talk")  
District 97 School Board

I am the mother of two District 97 students. Back in February, I wrote twice about our district's need to have a proactive and longer term plan to address the day to day management of COVID-19 in our schools. I requested more transparency around the decision making process and contingency plans to support parents and their management of expectations. I wanted more information and data to inform health equity efforts (collaboration with our local health department around vaccination and booster outreach). At the time, I had concerns around prematurely rolling back the mitigations (the ones that made more sense), particularly without clearly defined dial-up and dial-down contingencies. Establishing all of these things takes quite a bit of problem solving and communication.

My comment today is coming from a place of frustration. First, I have not heard much information regarding the points I raised in February, outside of polite responses to my "Let's Talk" inquiries and enthusiastic remarks around our vaccination statistics, the return of hot lunch (which my children certainly appreciate), certain after school programs, field trips, and parent volunteers. All of these things are wonderful and appreciated; however, it is now late in April and I am still not clear on the specifics around our district's plan, moving forward. I would like more information around the structure for decision making and communication, contingencies/decisions around indoor masks, and discussion/planning around air monitoring and ventilation improvements. I continue to worry about the impact optional masking has had (and will continue to have) on disabled and chronically ill students, teachers, staff, and family members, during times of higher transmission (such as now). School is not an optional place for students, teachers,

and staff. Time goes by very quickly. Before we know it, it will be the 2022/2023 school year. If we do not plan our response during the calmer times, we will be stuck in a cycle of reactivity. I believe we have the local resources and guidance to do much better.

Thanks for your time and dedication - I truly appreciate it,

Jennifer Gorski

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Dear school board and community,

I am concerned by the recent rise in covid cases in our d97 schools and community. What's more concerning is the lack of communication by the district in response. What actions are being taken to keep our children safe while in school and when cases rise? We are seeing numbers like we did in January and then masks were mandatory and we even implemented an adaptive pause! I don't want to see us go remote again.

However, what's going on at Julian with the teacher shortages? Is it really in the best interests of our students to be gathering in large numbers in the auditorium because teachers are out? How are they learning effectively this way? Why hasn't the board or administration sent any communication with the d97 community as to what is happening? There were 82 student cases last week at Julian alone and surprising there has been nothing addressing this. Are we as a district just ignoring the data now? Wasn't there a policy in place that said when numbers rose again some mitigations would return? What are those metrics we are using?

Why is it now ok to have 175 students at once unmasked eating lunch together shoulder to shoulder in the cafeteria? Where is the data that shows how ventilation is in our lunchrooms? I question how good the airflow is in there. Current community case numbers are over 300 per 100,000 which is considered high even by the new CDC standards. What data and metrics are we using? With d97 case numbers approaching Omicron surge levels and high community numbers we are setting up our elementary school lunchrooms to be super spreader events. We have been pulling our daughter every day for lunch. It is exhausting and isn't good for her socially. We are lucky to work from home and have this option but most parents cannot do this. So, we are setting up our vulnerable populations, those who choose to still wear masks at school for high risk of exposure at lunch. Why is this acceptable?

We deserve answers and a detailed plan going forward as cases may continue to rise. We cannot simply ignore the data and pretend everything is back to normal because we want it to me. Please address the ventilation in the lunchrooms, rising cases, what mitigations will be put in place and using what metrics and the possible teacher shortages at Julian.

Thank you

Tina Harle

Parent of a vaccinated Irving student and unvaccinated preschooler

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D97 Board and Administration,

I have appreciated your thoughtful and data-driven approach to Covid mitigations over the past two years, even when it has been difficult both politically and logistically. At this time, as we see cases rising across the district, I want to voice my support of reinstating mask mandates and moving lunch back into the classrooms. I know we would all like everything to return to normal as soon as possible and I wish we were

there. Until then, thank you for your ongoing care and consideration for the students and staff in our district.

Laura Sakiyama

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Hello. This is in regards to the piloted curriculum, Lucy Calkins Reading & Writing Units of Study, implemented in Katy Alejos' Brooks Middle School 8th grade L&L classes.

Good evening. My son, William Reinholdt, is a student in Katy Alejos' Language & Literature class at Brooks Middle School. William taught himself to read when he was three. He was reading chapter books by Kindergarten. He poured through book after book, finding a series he loved and burning through every one until there were none left. I routinely went into his room after lights out to make sure he was sleeping, and not hidden under his covers with a flashlight. The kid loved to read. And then he turned 11. And then there was a global pandemic. And he stopped. Just like that. I have been mourning his lack of interest in books for two years, encouraging him to pick up something new, visiting the library, the Book Table... He just wasn't super interested. And frankly, that two-, almost two-and-a-half-year period was disruptive to most parts of his life, so it made sense that he stopped reading, too. So, when he started staying up way too late with a book again--or started talking about this new book he really liked--we noticed. I asked him where he was finding the books he loved most, and he told me they were from Ms. Alejos. So, I dropped her a note to thank her for reigniting his love of reading. It wasn't until then that I learned about their new curriculum. But even before that, I could tell there was something new. Almost a high school freshman now, William doesn't read as much as he used to. There are loads of other activities filling the time, for sure. But he's reading books he loves every day regardless, thanks in large (HUGE) part to Ms. Alejos and the new curriculum they're piloting in class. Thank you.

Abbey Lewis

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Hi,

My name is Carroyl Jones. I am very familiar and trained in both Lucy Calkins' Reading Workshop and Writing Workshop as my school has used her curricula for years. I first taught Calkins' Writing Workshop when I taught 4th grade (In fact, I was pregnant with the twins). I have a gamut of experiences with Calkins' workshops as a teacher (grades K - 4), writing tutor (remedial and enrichment for grades 4-8), and as a parent. I have witnessed Calkins' workshops evolve over the years and am aware of the heavy criticisms surrounding this model. There are pros and cons, but this is true with every other program or curriculum. I have taught for 32 years and have utilized several writing programs/curriculums. I believe the efficacy of Calkins' Units of Study is ultimately achieved with proper teacher training, fidelity in its implementation, and a true "buy-in". I believe Units of Study can help produce independent, proficient, life-long writers (and readers)!

As a parent, I appreciate the focus on the writing process in the Units of Study. My daughter Hannah benefits tremendously from explicit writing instruction. When I came home last week, I was greeted by a very excited Hannah. She was waving a stack of papers and literally shoving them in my face! Hannah was going on and on about her writing and I couldn't keep up. I asked her to please let me get settled first and then promised to sit down and give her my undivided attention. Hannah reply was something like, "Don't worry, mom! I know you're super busy and you're probably tired. I'm just so excited. I don't mind if you stand up or go cook. I'm just so happy I have to tell you now." The child followed me to my bedroom and began reading her essay as if we were sitting down and she had my full attention. I glanced

at Hannah and realized she was genuinely excited and full of pride. With my coat on, and laptop bag and purse in my hands, I sat down to listen to Hannah's essay. I was immediately impressed with the content, her voice, sentence structure, length etc. It was evident that after conferencing with Ms. Alejos, Hannah had clear goals about her next steps and knew exactly what revisions she would make. I believe this kind of feedback, clarity, and understanding is what students need to improve their writing. Hannah went on to explain that the topics were very interesting this year and she feels so inspired to write.

Hannah further exclaimed, "Mom, I really love writing. You know the topics are so interesting and I can relate to them. I also understand what I'm doing now." In this day and age of social media, Google , and instant gratification, I love seeing my daughters (and students) persevere in their writing as they journey through the many developmental stages of writing and revisions! I am so happy that Hannah is not merely learning to write from some formula as if writing is a math course. I could not be more thrilled with Hannah's improvement, motivation, and self- confidence!

My oldest daughter was also taught under Calkins' workshop models and continues to find success in writing! Leah is currently a sophomore at Syracuse University. She attended Fenwick for two years and then transferred to OPRF when we moved to Oak Park. Leah recently shared that her professor praised her midterm (she received 99/100 points) and read her paper to the entire class. The professor stated this was an example of an excellent essay.

In my opinion, Lucy Calkin's Units of Study somehow captures what it takes to not only teach students that writing is a process, but she has managed to make writing fun for children! My daughters are enjoying learning the writing process!

Thanks for allowing me to share!  
Carroyl Jones

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Dear D97 Board,

I am writing with concerns about the potential purchase of the curriculum resource Units of Study for middle school.

Units of Study has been recently looked at by international literacy experts and was found to be lacking. Ed Reports, the Consumer Reports of education materials, finds that it does not meet their standards. I certainly would not buy a car or washing machine that did not meet standards.

In addition, as IB middle schools it seems that there are many options and choices for curriculum and curriculum resources that offer more opportunities to integrate content areas and to provide more than pre-packaged materials for our students.

I wonder what other options were considered - and not considered.

I wonder if there is evidence that Units of Study is improving literacy K-5.

I wonder if there is evidence that Units of Study is the best possible option for middle school. If you examine Ed Reports, there are several superior options. Were those options considered?

I support having common curriculum standards and common curriculum resources so that ALL students have access to high quality curriculum - but high quality curriculum requires high quality resources to be chosen. Thank you for your consideration.

David Osta  
Parent of 2 D97 students

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Dear members of the D97 school board,

I was disappointed to learn that the Board not only has decided not to pass a Safe Firearm Storage Resolution, but that this decision was made without public input or awareness. Why was it decided without public involvement, and how was this decision made? Please provide some transparency to this process, as I would like to revisit my request, and discuss this very important topic publicly.

On April 7, the Illinois General Assembly passed bipartisan legislation to amend the School Code (HB 51933 SCH CD-GUN SAFETY INFO) with the specific change that "Safety Education" may include "safe gun storage." We fully expect Governor Pritzker to sign this into law. I'm hoping this information compels you to reconsider a safe storage resolution for District 97. Because if we can prevent even one death or injury by firearms in our community, it's our responsibility to do so.

Thank you for your time,  
Jenna Leving Jacobson, parent & Oak Park resident

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Good evening, Board Members and District 97 Staff.

Because of District 97's vital role in our community, we want to be sure you are aware of the upcoming return of Celebrating Seniors Week.

First, a little background about the Celebrating Seniors Coalition, for those who may not already be aware: since our first Celebrating Seniors Week in 2011, our not-for-profit organization has been fueled by a dedicated core team of volunteers. We work to dispel outdated and inaccurate myths about what it is to be a senior in our society. At the same time, we raise awareness of older adults' value and impact while raising money for some older adults in financial need.

This year, from Thursday, May 12 through Thursday, May 19, there will be over 30 events throughout Oak Park, River Forest and Forest Park held under the Celebrating Seniors banner.

The marquee event is the inaugural Celebrating Seniors Scavenger Hunt, which will bring people of all ages, both on foot and bicycle, throughout a one-square mile area of North Oak Park on Saturday, May 14<sup>th</sup>. That event showcases over 60 of the cultural, civic, architectural and historical gems in that area.

We invite each of you, as well as District 97 students and staff members, to join in the fun on that day, as well as to attend as many of the other events as possible.

You can find more details at [CelebratingSeniors.net](http://CelebratingSeniors.net). Our calendar of events can be found by clicking on the Events tab. Anyone with questions is invited to e-mail us at [info@celebratingseniors.net](mailto:info@celebratingseniors.net).

Throughout our history, the Celebrating Seniors Coalition has been strengthened by the engagement of leaders such as yours. We are extremely grateful for your ongoing support, just one of many ways that you provide extraordinary service to our community.

Pat Koko, Treasurer  
Oak Park Resident  
Longtime volunteer, Celebrating Seniors Coalition



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## 4. SPECIAL REPORTS

### 4.1 School Update

#### School and Community Metrics

Week of April 18 - ~5,605 Students

Positive Cases = 2/3% (cases up 50 during previous week)

SHIELD Testing – April 18-22

Total Samples = 3,019

Positive tests = 42 (1.4%)

Opt-out rate = 10.8% (positive tests up 18 during previous week)

Julian and Brooks Middle School account for 33.2% of all students, and 71% of all positive cases reported April 18-22.

Julian accounts for 56.6% of cases and only 16.4% of all students.

We do not attribute this increase to hot lunch, which began April 11. That transition primarily impacted operations at elementary schools (which did not see significant increases in cases) Middle Schools have been utilizing cafeterias since Fall 2021.

#### What's Driving the Increase?

The district is currently reviewing COVID-19 absence data from Julian to identify trends. Possible Factors include: IDPH reporting on April 25; cases have been increasing regionally and statewide. There was a three-day weekend April 15-17 which included three major holidays: Easter, Passover and Ramadan. Many families reported unmasked gatherings. Also, there was an increase in extracurricular activities both school and community wide and easing of mitigations statewide including masking.

#### What Can We Do?

Work with school nurses to provide additional information to the local health department, which will help determine next steps to mitigate further spread. Ensure that contact tracing is completed to the best of our ability. Strongly Recommend masks for student returning from isolation/quarantine (days 6-10). Work with Buildings and Grounds to add air purifiers to every lunchroom. Conduct deep cleanings in all affected areas and encourage staff and students to stay home when sick and to continue reporting positive cases to school nurses.

#### Vaccination Rates

As of April 22, ~95% of Staff and 79.1% of all students are Vaccinated. All schools are over 70% with six schools over 80% vaccinated. Locally, for the week of April 14-20 we are in the **Medium** category with 321 new cases per 100,000 people. New Cases; 175 which is 71.6% increase from the previous week.

In keeping our schools safe, we will continue to do the following:

Masks Recommended, Not Required  
Maximize Physical Distancing

Cleaning and Disinfection  
Handwashing/Respiratory Etiquette

Weekly SHIELD Testing  
Staying Home When Sick

Ventilation/Purifiers in Lunchrooms  
Encouraging Vaccinations

### Next Steps

Continue working through COVID-19 data at Julian; Monitor cases and absences this week; Continue to monitor hospital admissions; Continue reporting case information to the local health department; Communicate reminders to families regarding mask recommendations, and staying home when sick.

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## **5. ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS**

### **5.1 Curricular Resource Adoption Presentation (action 5/10/22)**

(COMPLETE DETAILS AVAILABLE ONLINE)

ADMINISTRATIVE  
ITEMS

### **SY21-22 Pilot Review and Findings**

The purpose of this report is to provide the Board of Education with a review of the resources District 97 piloted during the 2021-2022 school year. The information in this report is divided into the following sections:

- Curricular Review and Pilot Implementation
- Overview of Pilot Programs
- Pilot Analysis of Findings
- Resource Recommendations for Adoption
- 2022-2023 Projected Budget and Resource Requirements
- Teaching and Learning Department Next Steps

### **Introduction:**

The District 97 vision is to create a positive learning environment for all District 97 students that is equitable, inclusive, and focused on the whole child. The work of the departments and teams that piloted resources this school year contributes to the district level priority of strengthening instruction and helping all of our students experience or achieve the following goals of becoming:

- Known, nurtured, and celebrated LEARNERS
- Empowered and passionate SCHOLARS
- Confident and persistent ACHIEVERS
- Creative CRITICAL THINKERS & GLOBAL CITIZENS

The work of the teams is also captured in Board Policy 6:210, “all District classrooms and learning centers should be equipped with an evenly-proportioned, wide assortment of instructional materials, including textbooks, workbooks, audio-visual materials, and electronic materials. These materials should provide quality learning experiences for students and: 1. Enrich and support the curriculum; 2. Stimulate growth in knowledge, literary appreciation, aesthetic values, and ethical standards; 3. Provide background information to enable students to make informed judgments and promote critical reading and thinking; 4. Depict in an accurate and unbiased way the cultural diversity and pluralistic nature of American society; and 5. Contribute to a sense of the worth of all people regardless of sex, race, religion, nationality, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, disability, or any other differences that may exist.”

Additionally, District 97's equity policy requires the district to "provide every student with equitable access to high-quality instruction, culturally relevant curriculum, grade appropriate assignments, high expectations, facilities, and other educational resources necessary for them to succeed."

### Curricular Review and Pilot Implementation

The following departments and teams engaged in the resource review and pilot process:

- Language & Literature (Grades 6-8)
- Science (Grades 6-8)
- World Language French & Spanish (Grades 6-8)
- Foreign Language for Elementary Schools (FLES) (Grades K-5)
- English Language Arts (ELA) Committee (Grades 3-5)

### Teaching and Learning Department Next Steps

Evaluation and on-going improvement: What are the goals of this particular activity - how do we know if it is successful or not? What is the plan for measurement of how implementation is going? What "hard" data will be captured and what 'soft' data (impressions, opinions, etc.) will be incorporated? What information (not anecdotes) is available at this stage?

### What is the goal?

One of the root causes the teaching and learning department identified as a result of our examination of the district's performance on the Illinois Assessment of Readiness (IAR) is a barrier within our practices that have resulted in a misalignment to the Illinois Learning Standards for grades 6-8. For the past 5 years, the district has focused its efforts on providing standards-aligned resources to support instruction and student learning in grades K-5. During this time, middle school teachers did not have common standards-aligned resources and materials that were utilized across the district. The goal for implementing the curricular resources being recommended for adoption is to provide standards-aligned resources and materials to support student learning and increase students' skills in the areas of English Language Arts, Science, and World Language, specifically for grades 6-8.

### How will it be measured? What data will be collected?

We will measure the impact these resources have on student performance throughout the school year using the following data sources: Illinois Assessment of Readiness, NWEA MAP, MasteryConnect, International Baccalaureate unit assessments, various common assessments, teacher surveys, and student surveys. An area of opportunity we have identified during this curricular review process is the importance of seeking feedback from families. In the future, we will gather input from families during the curricular review process and the first year of implementation of the adopted resource.

### What is being done to achieve equity or balance?

An important lever for addressing equity is supporting teacher practice as well as providing academically challenging content (both components of the instructional core). This year teachers have been learning about Universal Design for Learning (UDL) as a means to ensure unit and lesson design related to the new curricular resources addresses the district's equity imperative. Universal Design for Learning is a framework for lesson and unit design that addresses three major principles of student learning - action and expression, representation and engagement. As District 97 continues to dig deeply into our equity

challenge, it is critical that all stakeholders create meaningful access to content for all learners - including those furthest away from our excellence targets.

### How do the curricular adoptions align with the district's professional learning related to Universal Design for Learning?

The UDL framework itself is resource agnostic and lesson/unit design dependent. Key to unpacking the UDL connection to the curriculum is the understanding that the curriculum is not solely dependent on a curricular resource. Curriculum as typically defined is “a standards-based sequence of planned experiences where students practice and achieve proficiency in content and applied learning skills. Curriculum is the central guide for all educators as to what is essential for teaching and learning, so that every student has access to rigorous academic experiences...curriculum must include the necessary goals, methods, materials and assessments to effectively support instruction and learning.” The UDL framework can be leveraged to ensure access to the curricular content with a focus on developing meaningful learning goals and utilizing the curricular resource in service of meeting said goals. Goal development is foundational to ensuring the UDL principles live and breathe in lesson and unit design that use the curricular resources adopted. As we begin the next step of our learning journey, application of the UDL principles will sit alongside professional learning related to the curricular resources.

Finally, District 97 would like to sincerely thank the Language and Literature Department, Science Department, World Language Department, Foreign Language for Elementary Schools Department, the K-5 ELA Committee, Beye School, and Lincoln School for dedicating their time to pilot these resources this year. Beye School and Lincoln School were selected to pilot grammar resources in grades 3-5. All K-5 Principals and Instructional Coaches have been informed of the resource the K-5 ELA Committee is recommending to the Board of Education for adoption and the teaching and learning department will continue to collaborate with these stakeholders as the adopted program is implemented.

## **5.2 SY23 Staffing Recommendations (action 5/10/22)**

### Certified Staff Recommendations

Human Resources has met with principals and district administrators to identify FY23 staffing needs to best serve our students. This information was also shared with the Superintendent's Cabinet team. We are closing this current year with 555.35 FTE certified staff and this same FTE (555.35) is our recommendation for beginning FY23. This doesn't include the requested additional support being requested by Student Services for English Language Learner and Special Education needs.

#### Average Class Sizes

##### Elementary Class Sizes for FY 22

Kindergarten - 16.08  
1st Grade - 18.42  
2nd Grade - 18.98  
3rd Grade - 19.58  
4th Grade - 20.24  
5th Grade - 19.48

##### Elementary Projected Class Sizes for FY 23

Kindergarten – TBD  
First Grade - 16.07  
2nd Grade - 16.83  
3rd Grade - 17.24  
4th Grade - 19.03  
5th Grade - 17.34

#### Middle School Class Sizes for FY22

6th Grade - 27.20  
7th Grade - 25.25  
8th Grade - 25.16

#### Middle School Projected Class Sizes for FY 23

6th Grade - 25.70  
7th Grade - 27.16  
8th Grade - 24.12

#### Student Services Recommendation

Request for 3.6 Additional FTE Spec. Educ./EL Learner Staff for FY23

2.6 Special Education Teachers - The justification for this increase in staff is the addition of a co-taught kindergarten class at Beye Elementary so the IEP students can attend their home school. We also need to add another special education teacher at Brooks Middle School because of the current projection of 48 IEP students in 6th grade. Lincoln Elementary is in need of 2.0 FTE special education teachers to open another K-2 instructional class and to open another co-teaching section in 3rd grade. We will also be reducing a 1.0 FTE at Mann Elementary because of the reduction in IEP enrollment and the .4 FTE hired for remote instruction for medically fragile students unable to attend in person instruction during COVID.

1.0 Occupational Therapist - (IDEA Grant Funded) There is an increase in occupational therapy minutes across the district. This person will help meet the overall needs of the district with the most focus next year on Irving and Whittier because they have the most increased need for next year.

1.0 Speech/Language Therapist - (IDEA Grant Funded) The purpose of this request is to just replace a contracted employee with a full-time district employee to be shared between Lincoln and Longfellow.

1.0 - Behavior Specialist - Already allotted.

1.0 EL Teacher - Student Services is requesting an increase of a 1.0 FTE English Language Learner Teacher to meet the growing needs of our ELL student population. Currently, we are not able to service our ELL students the ISBE recommended service minutes per week per grade level. This additional 1.0 FTE would support our growth in meeting these recommendations.

#### Permanent Substitute Teacher Recommendation

The Human Resource Interim Senior Directors honored conversations with building administration and cabinet members regarding the need for permanent substitute teachers for next school year (FY23). The data showing the use of these substitutes in each building this current school year (FY22) was also reviewed. It is unanimous by administration that there is a definite need for these 26 permanent substitute teachers in the buildings for next year (FY23). This strong voice from administration is supported by the data with very few days this current school year of permanent substitute teachers not being used to substitute teach for a teacher. Therefore, the recommendation is to rehire 26 permanent substitute teachers at \$180 per day with no benefits for FY23. We are recommending the same FY22 breakdown as follows per building for FY23:

Beye	2	Longfellow	3
Hatch	2	Mann	2
Holmes	2	Whittier	2
Irving	2	Brooks	4
Lincoln	2	Julian	4

#### Hallway Monitor FTE and Compensation Recommendation

District 97 employs Middle School Hallway Monitors. This group of employees are not affiliated with any union/labor group. The Board of Education has not approved an increase of pay since the inception of the position in SY19-20. We would like to propose the hourly rate increase to \$18 from \$15.

Given the Middle Schools are 4 floors, we hired 3 Hallway Monitor per building as each Middle School had an SRO officer who also helped to supervise the hallways as well as supervise outside social time for all 3 lunch periods. It would be beneficial to maintain the safety and supervision in the Middle School to add a 4th hallway monitor to enable all 4 floors to be consistently monitored as well as having the additional supervisor available during the lunch periods.

Below is the cost breakdown which reflects the proposed increase in hourly rate as well as the cost to add 1 hallway monitor position to each Middle School.

Position	Current Pay Since 2018-19	Number of positions 3 at each MS.	Proposed Pay SY22-23	Number of positions 4 at each MS at new pay rate
Hallway Monitor	\$15.00	\$113,400	\$18.00	\$181,440

Total Additional Cost \$68,040

#### CNA Recommendation

Human Resource Co-Interim Senior Directors had several conversations with principals and cabinet members regarding the need for continued employment of CNAs for FY23. The consensus from administration is the need to continue to employ 3.0 FTE CNAs for FY23 as follows:

- 1 full time CNA at Brooks Middle School
- 1 full time CNA at Julian Middle School
- 1 full time CNA to be shared between Longfellow, Lincoln and Whittier Elementary Schools and possibly as a substitute for nurses when we can't find a certified school nurse substitute

Savings to District - \$256,955.09

The cost per CNA for an entire year for salary only is \$28,925. So, if we would have had 10 full time CNA's all year this year, it would have cost the district \$289,250 for the year for salary only. The insurance benefit cost per CNA is \$7,782.97. Thus, the total cost in benefits for 10 CNA's is \$77,829.70. The total cost (salary and benefits) for 10 CNA's annually is \$367,079.

Our recommendation of three CNA's only in the district will cost the district \$86,775 in salary and \$23,348.91 in benefits for a total cost of \$110,123.91.

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## **6. ACTION ITEMS**

### **6.1 APPROVAL OF THE CONSENT AGENDA**

Kearney moved, seconded by Moore that the Board of Education, of Oak Park Elementary School District 97, approves the consent agenda as presented.

- 6.1.1 Approval of Minutes from April 12, 2022 Board Meeting
- 6.1.2 Bill List
- 6.1.3 Personnel
- 6.1.4 Approval : Donation and Disposal of District Furniture (4/12/22)
- 6.1.5 Approval : COSTCO Backpack Donation (4/12/22)
- 6.1.6 Approval : Whittier PTO Donation (4/12/22)
- 6.1.7 Approval : Executive Assistant to Superintendant Job Description
- 6.1.8 Approval : SY22 Amended Final Calendar

Ayes: Kim, Kearney, Ross Dribin, Hurd Johnson, Spurlock, Moore, Kinhal

Nays: None

Absent: Spurlock\*

Motion passed.

## **6.2 DISCUSSION AND ACTION**

### **6.2.1 Notice of Remedial Warning for Tenure Teacher**

Kearney moved, Seconded by Moore that the Board of Education, of Oak Park Elementary School District 97, moves to adopt the Resolution authorizing issuance of the Notice of Remedial Warning to Laura Reeves.

Ayes: Kim, Kearney, Ross Dribin, Hurd Johnson, Moore, Kinhal

Nays: None

Absent: Spurlock\*

Motion passed.

### **6.2.2 Approval: Longfellow Boiler Update (4/12/22)**

Kearney moved, Seconded by Moore that the Board of Education of Oak Park Elementary School District 97 moves to approve the Longfellow boiler replacement as presented to the Board on April 12, 2022 in an amount of \$548,000.

Ayes: Kim, Kearney, Ross Dribin, Hurd Johnson, Moore, Kinhal

Nays: None

Absent: Spurlock\*

Motion passed.

## **7. BOARD ASSIGNMENTS**

OPEF Bingo Bash is coming up!

BOARD  
ASSIGNMENTS

## **8. CONCLUDING ITEMS**

Board Remarks

CONCLUDING  
ITEMS

Board President Kim notes, this is Dr. Wernet's last Board Meeting. Thank You Dr. Wernet for all your hard work, the Board appreciates you and your contributions to our schools! You will truly be missed! The Board applauded in appreciation for Dr. Wernet, as she thanked the Board for all the work over the past year that they were able to do together!

## **AGENDA MAINTENANCE**

The draft agenda for the May 10, 2022 meeting was reviewed.

## **10. ADJOURNMENT**

All Six Present Members of the Board were in agreement that the meeting be adjourned. There being no further business to conduct, President Kim declared the meeting adjourned at 11:49 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

\_\_\_\_\_  
Board President

\_\_\_\_\_  
Board Secretary