



Oak Park Elementary School District 97

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

FROM: Chris Jasculca, Director of Policy, Planning and Communication

RE: First Reading of Policy 8:20 (Community Use of School Facilities)

DATE: June 25, 2013

On June 11, 2013, the following policies were presented to the District 97 Board of Education for adoption:

- Policy 5:80 – Court Duty
- Policy 6100 – Finance Goals and Objectives
- Policy 8:20 – Community Use of School Facilities

The board elected to table the adoption of policy 8:20 in response to feedback provided by several members of the community regarding the proposed revisions to the policy language. These individuals were concerned that the changes in the language might result in increased costs and reduced access for PTOs and other school-related organizations that host a variety of events and activities in our schools. The board charged the policy committee with reviewing the changes again to determine if additional revisions could/needed to be made that would:

- Successfully align the policy with the district's current practices and procedures.
- Reaffirm the district's longstanding commitment to provide school-related organizations with priority access to our facilities whenever possible, as well as the limit the cost these organizations would incur in conjunction with hosting events or activities in our schools, since altering this commitment was never meant to be one of the intended outcomes of revising the policy.

The board also suggested that the committee might be able to address some of the concerns by revisiting the language featured in the facilities use policy that the district had in place prior to changing policy service providers during the 2012-2013 school year.

In response to the board's request, the policy committee reviewed the district's former facilities use policy (9700.01 – Access to School Facilities for Community Groups), which is attached, and is recommending that the language regarding fees that is featured in the final two paragraphs on the last page of this policy be incorporated into policy 8:20. More specifically, the committee is suggesting that the second paragraph be changed from:

Student groups and school-related organizations may be granted the use of school facilities at no cost. Other organizations granted use of facilities shall pay fees and costs.

To two paragraphs that read:

Recognized community groups may use school facilities free of charge when such use does not require the school district to incur costs for staff overtime. Otherwise, a fee shall be charged for the use of school facilities pursuant to schedules which shall be approved annually by the Board of Education.

Community recreation organizations that charge fees for participation in their programs will also be expected

pay appropriate costs for using school facilities.

This suggested language aligns with our current practices and procedures, and clearly spells out our agreement with school-related organizations regarding the costs they will incur in conjunction with the use of space in our schools.

The policy committee is also recommending that the revision it proposed on June 11, 2013 regarding the access to facilities remain unchanged. This recommendation was to change the second sentence of the first paragraph from:

The use of school facilities for school purposes has precedence over all other uses.

To:

The use of school facilities for school purposes has precedence over all other uses unless those other uses have been approved by the District via a written agreement with a local government or other organization that is not affiliated with the school or District.

Like the language about fees, this change reflects the district's current policies and practices regarding access to our facilities—more specifically, the policies and practices spelled out in the intergovernmental agreements we have with the Park District of Oak Park regarding the use of the fields at Irving and Longfellow. For example, the intergovernmental agreement regarding the field at Irving states that “the Park District has priority of use of the Play Field for its programs and activities, and the scheduling will reflect that priority. The Park District will apply its standard scheduling methods to the Play Field, including among other elements its P.A.C.T. and other affiliation agreement;” while the intergovernmental agreement regarding the field at Longfellow states that “the Park District will maintain a schedule for the use of Longfellow Field that includes the following time periods for the programs and activities of the Park District and its affiliates: When school is in session (i) Monday through Friday one hour after school dismissal and (ii) Saturday and Sunday every week from 8 a.m. until 8 p.m. The school will be given four weekend days per school year for school activities. These dates need to be scheduled in advance with the Park District. During summers from the end of the spring term until the beginning of the fall term, the time periods are every day from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.”

The policy committee recommends that any additional clarifications or specifications that need to be made regarding fees or access as they relate to this policy be spelled out in the administrative procedures that correspond with it. The administration will be working on those procedures this summer, and would welcome input from the community. This input can be sent via e-mail to d97feedback@op97.org.

The committee also recommends that the district continue to keep the community apprised of any changes that may impact use of our facilities, including the creation of new or revision of existing intergovernmental agreements.

Attached is revised version of policy 8:20 (Community Use of School Facilities) that is being presented tonight for review, as well as the district's former facilities use policy (9700.01 – Access to School Facilities for Community Groups). The recommended changes to policy 8:20 that are referenced above are featured in bolded red text on the document. A second reading and approval of this policy is scheduled for the board meeting in July.

Attachments:

- Policy 8:20 (Community Use of School Facilities)
- Former policy 9700.01 (Access to School Facilities for Community Groups)