

Official Minutes of the
Oak Park Board of Education District 97
260 Madison Street, Oak Park
March 14, 2023 Regular Meeting

This meeting was held in-person and virtually using Livestream. Board members met in person along with Administration.

President Kim called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m.

Present: Kim, Moore, Kearney, Spurlock, Hurd Johnson, Kinhal (arrived at 6:10pm), Ross Dribin (virtual closed session)

Absent: Ross Dribin (absent open session)

Also Present: Superintendent Dr. Ushma Shah, Associate Superintendent of Education Dr. Felicia Starks Turner, Chief Academic and Accountability Officer Dr. Ebony Lofton, Director of Human Resources Dr. Margo Schmitt, Senior Director of Equity Dr. Carrie Kamm, Senior Director of Buildings & Grounds Jeanne Keane, Senior Director of Finance Patrick King, Senior Director of Communications Amanda Siegfried, William Brackett Director of IT Services and Lonya Boose Board Secretary.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

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SESSION

Spurlock 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 6:04 p.m.

OPEN SESSION

OPEN SESSION

President Kim motioned that the Board move into Open Session at 7:00 p.m. All present members of the Board were in agreement. The Board convened in Open Session at 7:06 p.m.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

PUBLIC
COMMENT

From: Gregg Rosen

The legacy of the Oak Park school district is one of high-level academics, two-way communication between the school board, superintendent, administration and community. Oak Park was a sought-after place to live for parents looking to raise their children. Many in this community left the city of Chicago due to the constant issues surrounding CPS and challenges due to classroom sizes. As parents we did the math on private school tuition with taxes in the city compared to the higher home prices and taxes in Oak Park. We justified the move because of the legacy of the Oak Park school district.

But now we find ourselves at a crossroads. A crossroads of legacy vs the reality of today.

I was informed 17 teaching positions across D97 were being eliminated in a work force reduction. Technically it's not being called a work force reduction, but regardless of the words you choose or how it is technically classified, it is just that. A work force reduction.

Knowing the pulse of teachers & faculty within D97 is already a hot button, and the pending reallocation of some classroom assignments and the move to significantly expanded class sizes, I ask is the intent to achieve additional attrition? Which brings me back to legacy vs the reality of today.

Would any of you be willing to come into a classroom & teach 27 kids, all requiring different levels of support & be responsible to the state for state requirements on classroom progress as well individual academic & social/emotional success for each student?

Who loses in this scenario? We all do. The students, the teachers, the community and the district.

What does the potential head count of 27 mean in terms of class size in IL? Way to set the bar!

What about when compared across the US average elementary classroom size? What are we doing.

Dr. Shah, everything we have heard from you thus far has been through the lens of fostering a culture embracing the uniqueness of children and their individual learning needs and ensuring the teachers & faculty are in lock step with this vision.

You have stated you are looking to modernize the playbook on teaching. For teachers to hone in on soft skills and compassion, with awareness and understanding. The essentials of building relationships and trust between student and teacher. You have said how curriculum previously taught and classroom expectations in years past simply does not translate to today's children. We all agree. Which brings me back to the conversation of legacy vs the reality of today.

That legacy of the Oak Park school district was one built by your predecessors. The new reality is that our classroom size on average has the potential to be the largest America and as discussed in previous board meetings, we are in an ongoing battle to retain & develop our top teaching talent.

The days of open communication between the board, superintendent and your voting public also appears to be a thing of the past. We have archaic forums like this board meeting only allowing for 1 way communication.

HERE IS MY ASK OF THE GROUP:

Where is the human element, the soft skills, the compassion, the awareness and point of view from the tax paying community, the D97 staff and our students? Is it too much to ask the same in which you seek of us?

We would like to see focus groups, townhalls and have the ability to have two-way conversations with the board and Dr Shah. Your obligations to being an interactive part of the community does not stop upon being elected. Be available. Communicate. Engage. Talk with us not at us. We are Oak Park and we are better than this.

From: Hannah Boudreau

Good evening, Board of Education Members and D97 Administrators,

I am speaking tonight to urge everyone here to please reconsider Mr. Lawrence Galloway's request for an unpaid leave. Mr. Calloway has the very unique and exciting opportunity to go on tour with globally

recognized blues singer and Grammy Award Nominee, Joanna Connor and The Wrecking Crew. You may, or may not know, that Mr. Calloway, is a profoundly talented bass player who has performed all over the world as well as at some of our very own local favorites like Fitzgerald's and Friendly Tap. He has also been a resident performer at Chicago's Kingston Mines for years, perhaps some of you have even seen him perform!

Mr. Calloway recently requested an unpaid leave from April 4th through May 7th (I've included the official letter from his recording label for your review) and, sadly, he was told he would have to resign. Losing Mr. Calloway would be a tremendous loss to our school community. He consistently goes above and beyond to serve our students and staff and is an integral member of our Brooks family. Furthermore, as we seek a more diverse staff, losing a young, talented black man should not be the message we are sending. We should be excited for him and this incredible opportunity he's been afforded, not forcing him to quit a job he loves. Thank you for your time and I am hopeful you'll reconsider this unpaid leave request. As always, if you'd like to speak further, please don't hesitate to reach out, I'm always happy to talk!

Sincerely,
Hannah C. Boudreau

From: Tania Haigh

I have been an Oak Parker for 17 years. I have a daughter at Longfellow Elementary and a leader in this community. What brings me to you tonight, about a month ago my student brought to me some information about a LGBTQ club starting soon at Longfellow. She had seen it on a white board. The reason I come to you is because I was surprised to have heard this information from my child first and not the school similar to what we receive about sexual health education. I took to a platform that a lot of parents use to communicate, social media. Not with bad energy, but from a harmless post on the parent Longfellow page, about this club and communication to parents, got me trolled by another Longfellow dad who has called me a homophobe.

People not understanding why I have put this out is a huge flag for me. I have got some good dialogue started with this post, other families and questions they might also have. How did this club come about? Roll out to elementary kids, is there any clear policy from ISBE on this topic as there is guidance on other areas of health education. Our ask is for further insight and engagement of the Longfellow community. We support LGBGTQ but believe there are sensitive topics involved. Engage the community to gain all perspectives, this also does not make me non inclusive. My questions do not make me a homophobe.

Thank you.

From: Sideeka Ryan

My name is Sideeka Ryan, and I am a School Social Worker at Whittier as well as a parent of two students at Irving. I am advocating on behalf of the Culture and Climate Coaches, who were recently informed that their positions will be eliminated. Eliminating their positions would negatively impact the social-emotional well-being of many, many D97 staff and students in numerous ways.

Firstly, the Culture and Climate Coaches have GREATLY enhanced D97's Multi-Tiered Systems of Supports for Behaviors (MTSS-8) - a complex system of varying degrees that supports students' behavioral, social, and emotional needs so they are able to learn in the classroom. The Culture and

Climate Coaches support MTSS-B with the implementation of evidence-based, curriculums and practices in all classrooms as well as the implementation of evidence-based interventions for students with more intensive behavioral and social emotional needs in small groups or on an individual basis. The Culture and Climate Coaches ensure this is done in a systematic, fair manner with fidelity. Their role supporting MTSS-B is vital, especially now when students are exhibiting more extreme and frequent behaviors associated with the difficulties the COVID19 pandemic has caused.

In addition to the immense responsibility of supporting D97's MTSS-B process, the Culture and Climate Coaches provide D97 students, staff, and families in the following ways:

- They provide training and consultation regarding restorative practices, classroom management strategies, social-emotional learning techniques, and trauma-informed care.
- They support D97's partnership with DePaul University which links D97 students and families to housing, medical insurance, various therapies, and other essential supportive resources.
- They support and coordinate services for LGBTQ+ students which supports D97's initiative of inclusion.
- They support Second Step and Learning for Justice curriculum as well as other lessons on anti-racism.
- And much," much more!

In conclusion, please reconsider the decision to eliminate the Culture and Climate Coach positions. Their roles directly support every School Improvement Plan goal aimed to increase students' sense of belonging and engagement as well as D97's larger vision of creating a positive learning environment for all students that is equitable, inclusive and focused on the whole child.

Thank you

4. Special Reports

4.1 Bike/Walk Safety Report-out

Sylvia Schweri and Doug Chien from Bike Walk Oak Park Advocacy Team, joined the board meeting to share the safety report compiled by this independent non-profit group here in oak park. Both Sylvia and Doug believe through this process, they have been given an opportunity to connect with families and hope that this project will drive interest and participation by the community and the Oak Park Board of Education along with the Village of Oak Park.

The complete presentation is available on the Board of Education board packet materials page.

5.DISTRICT PRIORITY UPDATE

Family Conferences Update

Presented By: Dr. Eboney Lofton

The Be a Learning Designer priority workgroup presented information on family conferences to include survey feedback results, and perspective by way of Q&A with stakeholders. Joining tonight to share process included a Brooks Middle School sixth grade team, Parents from elementary and middle school along with Principals Patrick Robinson and Ryan Gordan.

Additional information regarding survey and experience can viewed by watching the livestream recording of the board meeting on the districts YouTube channel

SPECIAL
REPORTS

PRIORITY
UPDATE

SY23-24 District Redesign Update

Dr. Ushma Shah provided the Board of Education and community with an overview of the SY23-24 district redesign. You can find this update and details of the redesign by viewing the screen cast of the presentation from Dr. Shah or by watching the livestream of the board of education meeting on the District 97 YouTube channel.

6. #D97 JOY AND CULTURE CELEBRATION

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CELEBRATION

Student Celebrations

Speech Team

On Saturday, February 25, 2023, the District 97 Middle School Speech Team earned first place at the West 40 Speech and Drama Festival, which was held at Elmwood Park High School. District 97 had earned a first-place trophy for ten consecutive years prior to the pandemic. The team was thrilled to return their winning tradition! Five of our performances earned perfect scores! Congratulations Brooks and Julian Middle School Speech Teams. Great representation of #D97Joy!

Robotics

Julian Middle School won first place in the VEX Robotics Competitive League Tournament. Of the 32-Teams in the league, all three tournament champions came from Julian. This was the first time a sixth-grade Julian team was crowned champion! Great representation of #D97Joy!

Brooks Middle School also took home trophies from the robotics league competition and tournament. Brooks students were league champions and the skills contest and design award winners. They also had two tournament finalists.

Congratulations to all of our robotics students, families and coaches on this incredible achievement!

Staff Celebrations

In honor of School Social Worker Week, which was held the first full calendar week of March, we want to recognize the wonderful team of school social workers in District 97. School social workers design and implement school-based programs to promote a positive school climate among all students. They work with the entire student body to identify students in need of more intensive interventions and connect students to additional services where needed. Thank you, school social workers, for the impact you make on our schools and the community!

All celebrations can be seen by viewing the livestream of the board of education meeting on the district 97 YouTube channel.

7. ACTION ITEMS

ACTION ITEMS

7.1 APPROVAL OF THE CONSENT AGENDA

Consent Motion

Spurlock moved, seconded by Kearney that the Board of Education of Oak Park Elementary School District 97 moves to approve the consent agenda as presented.

- 7.1.1 Approval of Minutes from the February 21, 2023 Board Meeting
- 7.1.2 Bill List
- 7.1.3 Personnel
- 7.1.4 Approval : Beye Elementary PTO Donation
- 7.1.5 Approval : Curriculum Donation and Recycle Request

Ayes: Kim, Kearney, Moore, Hurd Johnson, Spurlock, Kinhal
Nays: None
Absent: Ross Dribin,
Motion passed.

8 DISCUSSION/ACTION

8.1 Approval: SY24 Food Services Agreement (2.21.23)

Spurlock moved, seconded by Kearney that the Board of Education of Oak Park Elementary School District 97 moves to approve extension of the food service intergovernmental agreement with Oak Park River Forest High School for the 2023-2024 school year.

Ayes: Kim, Kearney, Kinhal, Moore, Hurd Johnson, Spurlock
Nays: None
Absent: Ross Dribin
Motion passed.

8.2 Approval: SY24 Food Services and Student Registration Fees (2.21.23)

Moore moved, seconded by Kearney that the Board of Education, of Oak Park Elementary School District 97 moves to approve the 2023-2024 food service and registration fees as presented.

Ayes: Kim, Kearney, Kinhal, Moore, Hurd Johnson, Spurlock
Nays: None
Absent: Ross Dribin
Motion passed.

9. ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS

9.1 SY24 Revised District Calendar (action 4.11.23)

(Presented by Dr. Felicia Starks Turner)

Overview

The SY23-24 school calendar was approved by the District 97 Board of Education on May 24, 2022. The information that was included with the Board materials appears in Appendix A below.

In late February 2023 a question was raised regarding the possible need to consider having a non-attendance day on March 19, 2024, the day of the municipal election. Our Be Safe and Healthy district priority team reviewed this option and is recommending that we make this change in the SY23-24 calendar. The change eliminates the need for the voting public to enter school buildings while students are in session.

As our team began to review the calendar, it came to our attention that there were other errors on the approved SY23-24 calendar. The adjustments are outlined in the table below.

This revised calendar has been reviewed and approved by the district’s Calendar Committee, Professional Learning Committee, Diversity Council as well as members of the district’s senior leadership team. Upon approval by the Board of Education, we will send the revised calendar to staff, included in the Friday Wrap-up and post on the website

Appendix A

Revision	SY23-24 Calendar Approved May 24, 2022	Proposed Revision	Rational
Non-attendance day during municipal election	April 29 th	March 19	The spring Institute Day has been shifted up to March 19 th to align with the municipal election on that date and better support student safety on election days. April 29 th will now be a student attendance day.
Overall number of student attendance days	180 days	178 days	The previous draft of the calendar contained 180 student attendance days, rather than the contractual 178. The addition of the Fall Institute Day (November 10 2023) and adjustment to the last day of school (formerly ended on June 5, 2023 and now ends on June 4, 2023) resolves this error.
Institute Days	3 Institute Days (August 21-22 and April 29)	4 Institute Days (Add November 10 th to the other three days - August 21-22 and March 19)	The approved calendar identified 3 Institute Days, rather than the contractual 4 Institute Days. The Nov 10 date was selected as a fall date due to its alignment with Veterans Day.
Calculation of student attendance days in December	The number of student attendance days is listed as 13	The number of student attendance days is listed as 15	The previous draft of the calendar miscalculated the number of student attendance days in December, this has now been corrected.
Adjustment to the last day of school	June 5 th	June 4 th	The revised last day of school will now be June 4 th
Adjustment to emergency days	June 6 th - 12 th	June 5 th – 12 th	The adjustment of the last day of school means that the end-of-year emergency days will now be June 5 th -11 th

10. BOARD ASSIGNMENTS

No report-out for board assignments. More information to come as provided.

BOARD
ASSIGNMENTS

11. CONCLUDING ITEMS

11.1 Board Remarks

- Board member Moore attended Black in Oak Park at Julian. Principal Christian invited families, the Assistant Principals and both Moore and Vice President Hurd Johnson attended the well-received event. During this time, Principal Christian discussed assessments, importance of families and students, an open forum space for all involved to be seen and heard. Moore mentioned there was no barriers, there was child care for the event and appreciated the opportunity to be a part of the space.
- Board member Hurd Johnson also shared, there was a culture of excellence in mentoring. Two African American teachers were part of the event, and spoke to work they are currently doing with students and supports provided around STEM, where for the Black Community, is an area largely underrepresented.
- Board member Spurlock commends Longfellow Elementary for starting the LGBTQ space. Making sure students of all ages are supported. Related to the IGA with the Police Department, Since I will not be present at our April 11 meeting, I wanted to expand on the SRO conversation that took place in 2020. We had a structured conversation. In the memo outlining our steps forward, there was language that read, in consideration of dissolving an agreement with the police department, we are not cutting ties. We are open to collaboration as we expand on policy. Our concern is criminalizing behavior that is more school aged and adolescent behavior related. I appreciate that we are working collaboratively with our local governing bodies, but we do did not want armed officers in our schools.
- Board member Kearney further mentions, the IGA maps on to law. We we are required to have in place with our local law enforcement so that these types of scenarios are not up to individuals, more guidance and insuring people/staff knows when it is time to call or not call the police and alternatives to supporting school-based occurrences.

CONCLUDING
ITEMS

12. 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 by voice vote at 10:07 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

Board President

Board Secretary