

**Official Minutes of the
Oak Park Board of Education District 97,
260 Madison Street, Oak Park, Cook County, Illinois
Meeting March 13, 2017**

President Gates called the special meeting (retreat) to order at 6:06 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Present: Gates, Spatz, Spurlock, Datta, Felton, and Brisben
Absent: O'Connor
Also Present: Superintendent Dr. Carol Kelley, Facilitator Dr. Allan Alson and Board Secretary Sheryl Marinier

PUBLIC COMMENT

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None

BOARD RETREAT

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REVIEW AND DISCUSSION OF THE SURVEY RESULTS FROM "EIGHT CHARACTERISTICS OF EFFECTIVE SCHOOL BOARDS"

After the January 31, 2017 Board retreat; the Board members were asked to complete a survey regarding the Eight Characteristics of an Effective School Board. The survey results were reviewed and Board members shared their feedback. Discussion occurred regarding the interpretation of the questions. It was noted that a few of the responses included a three point spread, and discussion continued focusing on those specific questions/responses.

The Board discussed communication strategies (one way and two way communication) and the need to reach out to those who do not have a connection with the district. They discussed the need to work on;

- Ways to increase trust/outcomes
- Board goals and objectives
- Strategies, plans and committees
- How administration solicits input
- The Board work structure

The interpretation of the instrument was questioned. Dr. Alson asked the Board to consider using a similar instrument over time. It was recommended that the Board consider comparing their communication techniques with other districts, suggesting that District 97 is above the norm. Concern was still expressed about the need for more and better communication, noting that the Board should structure the pushes of information in a different ways. It was suggested that there should be ways for people to talk without synthesizing. Dr. Alson shared examples of ways that other districts involve the community, and he asked the Board to consider what success will look like, and how to measure an increase in trust.

Board comments included suggesting that;

- The Board should hear more about the many offerings that the district invited them to participate in this year
- New Board members should take the Data First training
- Interest in knowing if the other instrument has more norms attached to it
- Interest in knowing what the baseline is versus what is ideal or desirable
- A tool might be needed to determine how the community feels about the effectiveness of the Board
- It was suggested that possibly the best performing boards do not agree all the time and are successful because of the pushing and tugging
- Interest was expressed in knowing how the Board is doing now and knowing if they are on the right path

It was suggested that the survey used during the August 2016 Board retreat be sent to the Board members to see if that might be a better comprehensive tool when onboarding new members.

Dr. Kelley noted the variance in the responses and questioned if that could be because of the Board development or the way the questions were worded. She questioned if the next step might be to develop a common understanding.

Summary

- It was noted that questions arose about the survey and the questions
- The Board participated in a good discussion about differences and the degrees of difference
- The Board agreed that communication needs emphasis on the need to define what success looks like for our community endeavor
- The need to identify increasing trust was suggested
- Interest was expressed in ways to connect with community members who do not have children
- The need to learn a bit more about how the administration communicates was suggested
- The need to identify some structures and figure out what fits the community was expressed
- Determine what is the agreeable amount of disagreement

DEVELOP PROTOCOLS AND PROCEDURES FOR ON-BOARDING AND INDUCTION OF NEW SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS

The Board considered the topics that the new Board members should learn immediately and the items that can be learned down the line. It was agreed that timing is an issue as well as who delivers the information. Individual peer mentors were suggested for this purpose.

Items identified as immediate were;

- District goals
- Superintendent's evaluation
- Budget
- Policy
- Meetings & committees
- Protocols – lead
- Bureaucracy
- Administration departments
- Community
- Code of Conduct
- Confidentiality
- Facilities

It was suggested that the new members be brought on as a team effort, much like members Spurlock and Datta were brought on with the superintendent interview process, or perhaps engaging in an activity along with the administration.

The Board members agreed to not use the current training manual and to assign mentors, noting that committee assignments and mentors should be assigned accordingly. It was agreed that members Spurlock and Datta will coordinate the training meetings between April 5, 2017 and April 25, 2017. Each meeting will be attended by all three new board members and whomever else the team identifies as useful to the meeting. Dr. Kelley will drop in at one point during the training.

Additional topics of interest included;

- District goals
- Meeting/committees/protocols
- Organizational chart
- Code of Conduct
- IASB principals
- Ask the new Board members what they are in it for
- Enforce the notion that goals drive our work
- Identify areas of the Website that they will access the most

A special meeting focused on the referendum post-mortem was suggested some time during the month of May (before the preliminary budget discussion).

It was agreed that the mentors would;

- Provide a monthly check-in
- Be open to communication
- Supply support during meetings
- Continue support through the first retreat

It was agreed that the out-going Board members would submit five to seven comments about their Board experience to member Spurlock. These comments will be shared with the new Board members as part of the onboarding process.

Some suggestions included;

- New Board members need to learn how the Board handles public comment
- Current Board members should think about questions that might come up and be prepared to answer them
- The President of the Board should not be a mentor
- The Board officers should be able to change annually
- There should be no assumption that the Vice President will step into the presidency

Dr. Alson left the meeting at 9:00 p.m.

DISCUSSION ON WELCOMING COMMUNITIES RESOLUTION

It was reported that the resolution was reviewed by legal and a marked up version of the document was shared with the Board. It was reported that legal noted that the document is in line with the law; however, they recommended removing the term “safe haven” and replacing it with “welcoming”. Vice President Felton drafted a brief statement that she would like to read prior to the adoption of the resolution. She shared that once the resolution has been adopted by the Board, a stand-alone email will be sent to all District 97 families and staff.

It was noted that a Facebook page exists encouraging families to attend tomorrow’s meeting and speak in support of this topic. It was suggested that someone reach out to this group and let them know that the Board intends to take action on the resolution during that meeting. This item will return for action on March 14, 2017.

OAK PARK EDUCATION FOUNDATION SUMMER PROGRAM AND DATA SHARING AGREEMENT

Due to timing issues, the Board was asked to review the summer program agreement and data sharing agreement and take action on them tomorrow evening. This item will return for action on March 14, 2017.

APPROVAL OF THE 2017 SUMMER PROJECT BIDDERS

It was noted that this item was approved by the Board during an earlier meeting; however, this motion identifies the individual vendors who will be performing the tasks. The need for clarity was expressed regarding the expenditure, noting that the \$5,500,000 expenditure is for mandated life safety improvements and the funds are already available through bonds sold earlier this year. This item will return for action on March 14, 2017.

ADJOURNMENT

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There being no further business to conduct, President Gates declared the meeting adjourned at 9:22 p.m.

Board President

Board Secretary