

**Official Minutes of the  
Oak Park Board of Education District 97,  
970 Madison Street, Oak Park, Cook County, Illinois  
Meeting February 23, 2016**

President Gates called the meeting to order at 6:04 p.m.

Present: Brisben, Gates, O'Connor, Spurlock, Felton, Datta (6:05 pm), and Spatz  
Absent: None  
Also Present: Superintendent Dr. Carol Kelley, Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations  
Therese O'Neill, Senior Director of HR Steve Cummins, Senior Director of Special  
Services Mike Padavic, Senior Director of Policy, Procedures and Communication Chris  
Jasculca, Director of Technology Michael Arensdorff, Director of Curriculum and  
Instruction Carrie Kamm and Helen Wei, and Board Secretary Sheryl Marinier

ROLL CALL

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Felton moved, seconded by O'Connor, that the Board of Education move into Executive Session at 6:05 p.m. to discuss (Appointment, Employment, Compensation, Discipline, Performance, or Dismissal of Specific Employees or Legal Counsel for the District 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(1), Collective Negotiation 5 ILCS 12/2(c)(2), Purchase or Lease of Real Property 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(5)). Roll call vote.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Ayes: Felton, O'Connor, Spatz, Brisben, Spurlock, Datta, and Gates  
Nays: None  
Absent: None  
Motion passed.

**OPEN SESSION**

Spatz moved, seconded by Brisben, that the Board of Education move into Open Session at 6:57 p.m. All members of the Board were in agreement. The meeting reconvened at 7:03 p.m.

OPEN SESSION

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

Jason Wulkowicz, an Oak Park resident, expressed his opinion about standardized testing and opting out. He noted that Dr. Starks Turner said it is now the practice of the district to allow a student to read a book after the testing has begun. If that is not the practice, he would like a response. Wolkowicz expressed interest in knowing if the assessment audit will be performed, and if it is being conducted, he requested to know the status. He asked for information regarding the Superintendent Advisory Panel, specifically if the public can be informed as to who is on it?

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. and Mrs. Victor Ancieta, Oak Park residents and parents of a Brooks' student, referenced a note that was emailed to Dr. Kelley yesterday. Ancieta told the Board that the issues they wanted addressed are:

- The safety and wellbeing of their child
- Rectification of discrepancies rendered from review of video footage
- Establishment of a formal process to address professional conduct of involved school officials in connection with the February 18, 2015 meeting

They expressed concern about the wellbeing and safety of their student and requested that it be addressed before March 7, 2016. They suggested that the prompt designation of an interim point of contact is critically important to the continued progress of current intervention plans. They recommended that Assistant Principal April Capuder be considered for this position as she has demonstrated a capacity for enabling resolution of similar incidents in the past.

They requested that the details provided in their email of February 22, 2016 be entered into the record, as they will be referenced on a letter that will be submitted to the Office of the Superintendent by week's end.

**REPORTS****REFERENDUM DETERMINATION DISCUSSION**

Therese O'Neill came to the table with Steve Miller from Forecast5 Analytics (formerly PMA).

Member Brisben share the history of the referendum process, noting that the 2011 referendum was the first operating funds referendum sought by the district in 20 years. The district had successfully extended its resources to the maximum possible before unacceptable program cuts would have been required, and all of the District 97 employees, including bargaining group partners, shared the sacrifice by freezing salaries. The timing was less than ideal following the recession, but the referendum passed with 54 percent of the 11,172 votes cast. Brisben explained that the 2011 referendum was a "stopgap" – the Board projected that a new referendum would be required in the 2017-2019 timeframe. Brisben credited the administration on their financial stewardship, noting that data supports that the expenses have been coming in below budget, but noted that enrollment increased by 225 student above the 2011 referendum projections and several mission-critical teaching and learning initiatives were implemented (middle school IB, 1:1 technology and Early Childhood Collaboration).

Brisben shared that Board Policy 4:12 requires the Board to make decisions and direct the process when funds are nearing a specific balance. He noted that the district's fiscal policy and financial management have helped the district become just one of ten districts (out of 850 statewide) to earn Illinois Association of School Board's (IASB) "Recognition" status for sound governance. He explained that the process of evaluating, sizing, planning and preparing for a referendum takes about 15 months. Because of this, the Board needs to consider the options and make a decision on the need for a referendum sometime in the very near future.

Brisben presented the options to the Board and Steve Miller reported on the expenditures, benefits and how they will be impacted by the potential enrollment (based on the recent demographics report). The aggregated projection summary was detailed showing that since 2011, the deficit has been growing from year to year.

After careful consideration, the Board unanimously agreed to move forward with a referendum in the spring of 2017, making sure that they are cognizant of the referendum needs of the other taxing bodies and to synchronize their plans with the other bodies as necessary.

O'Neill reminded the Board that during the referendum of 2011, the district told the community that the referendum they were seeking at that time would sustain the district for only a few years, and an additional referendum would be necessary. The sizing was very strategic to minimize the burden to the taxpayers. She noted that the district was able to bring expenditures under the referendum assumptions every year.

O'Neill reported that the expenses for the administration building were not included in these documents because they are a part of the Capital Improvement Fund.

Board comments including noting that just because the Board agrees to run a referendum, does not mean that there would not be any cuts. If the Board agrees to a timeline, there would be quarterly check-ins to make sure that the assumptions are still good. They could always change their minds and extend the timeline. Concern was expressed regarding the money owed to the district by the state, noting that the delayed payments could continue. Interest was expressed in seeing the full local burden before making a decision.

The Board agreed to ask the FORC committee to consider the options and share their input. Discussion on this item will continue during the special meeting scheduled for Saturday, February 27, 2016.

The next step will be to adopt a non-binding resolution. Therese O'Neill and member Spatz will draft a resolution to be reviewed during the February 27, 2016 special meeting, and return to the Board for action during the March 15, 2016 Board meeting. It was noted that the resolution will detail next steps.

Additionally, it was suggested that the non-operating fund and the County Agency Report be added to the documentation for the Saturday meeting.

## FOOD SERVICES PRESENTATION

Therese O'Neill and Saad Bawany came to the table. Bawany reported that the Research Stewardship Committee (Goal Area 4) is responsible for identifying key non-instructional areas that have opportunities for improvement. These areas could include accounting, payroll, food services, transportation, buildings and grounds, technology and human resources. The food service program was reviewed as part of this committee's work and the committee felt that the information that was gathered would be meaningful to the Board.

Batwany reported that the Food Service Program has been producing a deficit for three consecutive years, based on information extracted from the state submitted Annual Financial Reports for 2013, 2014 and 2015. He noted that the program is not consistently fully staffed throughout the school year, and based on the employee survey; employees have low morale due to working conditions, pay, benefits and a lack of trust. Additionally, he noted that the tracking and collection process on negative student account balances is contributing to an overall annual deficit (over \$100,000).

Batwany shared data comparing the program deficit to neighboring districts, noting that most of them are also running a deficit. He introduced the paid lunch equity (PLE) noting that the fee for school lunches should be a weighted average of \$2.70, and explained that District 97 is currently at \$2.69.

He reported that six of the seven school districts surveyed use the MealTime online payment system for parents to fund student accounts. Three of the six district using Mealtime extend the transaction fee of 4.9 percent to parents (including District 97). The other three districts fully absorb the cost. He noted that each district has its own policy on method of communication to parents about negative account balances (District 97 sends automated phone calls and email messages, as well as call parents personally when appropriate).

He noted that District 97 also allows five regular lunches to be served to a student with a negative balance at no cost. Alternate lunches are served thereafter until the account is funded. (Other districts range from 0-3 regular lunches). Alternate lunches consist of: apple sauce, graham crackers, vegetables, fruit, and milk. Each school has its own procedure in terms of handing out alternate lunches to students on a daily basis. Procedures are generally careful to alleviate any embarrassment a student may feel from receiving one.

Batwany reported that the district is collecting about \$26,000 in revenue from fees charged to parents. But the cost of the program exceeds the revenue. Batwany noted that the idea behind the program is to break even; he was alarmed when a deficit was identified.

In an effort to shrink the deficit from this program, Batwany recommended that the district;

- Increase the meal prices, noting that they have not seen an increase in at least eight years
- Reconsider the negative balance allowance
- Split the transaction fee
- Reconsider the staff pay rate
- Consider offering benefits for the full-time positions and increase the sick and personal days for these employees

Batwany suggested that these changes could lower the deficit by approximately \$52,000. He explained that the changes should reduce the FY2015 deficit by about 20 percent, in addition to any saving arising from the improved efficiency of the program. Increasing the lunch worker pay rate and lunch manager leave benefits, should encourage staff to continue employment with our district. Increasing the lunch worker I pay rate and Lunch Manager Leave benefits, should boost morale and demonstrate the district's desire to continually improve the quality of life for our staff. Additionally, the other recommendations show encouraging signs in regards to improving the quality of the program and day to day routine of our staff. Reducing the regular lunch allowance from five to two should eliminate tasks for principals, as well as make the tracking process simpler for the schools and Food Service Coordinator. Additionally, it will create cost savings by reducing the number of free meals served.

Batwany noted that the individual lunches cost the district \$1.93. O'Neill noted that 43,500 lunches have been served through October.

FOOD SERVICES PRESENTATION (Continued)

Board comments including noting that the school districts that were used in the comparison are the predetermined Forecast5 peer group defined by the Finance and Oversight Committee. Interest was expressed in hoping that the next CFO is interested in benchmarking.

ACTION ITEMS

**ACTION ITEMS**

**2.1.1 APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM THE FEBRUARY 5, 2016 SPECIAL BOARD MEETING**

Felton moved, seconded by Brisben, that the Board of Education of Oak Park District 97, approve the minutes from the February 5, 2016 Special Board meeting. Roll call vote.

Ayes: Felton, Brisben, Gates, and Datta  
Nays: None  
Abstain: O'Connor, Spurlock and Spatz  
Motion passed.

**2.1.2 APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM THE FEBRUARY 8, 2016 BOARD MEETING**

Felton moved, seconded by Spatz, that the Board of Education of Oak Park District 97, approve the minutes from the February 8, 2016 Board meeting. Roll call vote.

Ayes: Felton, Spatz, Gates, Datta, Brisben, and O'Connor  
Nays: None  
Abstain: Spurlock  
Motion passed.

**2.2 APPROVAL OF THE CONSENT AGENDA**

Felton moved, seconded by O'Connor, that the Board of Education, District 97, approve the consent agenda as presented.

2.2.1 Approval of Bill List

2.2.2 Personnel Action

2.2.3 Change the April 26, 2016 Board Meeting Date to April 25, 2016

Ayes: Felton, O'Connor, Gates, Brisben, Spatz, Spurlock, and Datta  
Nays: None  
Motion passed.

**2.3.1 SUSPENSION WITHOUT PAY**

Brisben moved, seconded by O'Connor, that the Board of Education of Oak Park District 97, suspend, without pay, custodian Charles Ford for 2 days, and send Charles Ford notice thereof.  
Roll call vote.

Ayes: Brisben, O'Connor, Felton, Spurlock, Datta, Gates, and Spatz  
Nays: None  
Motion passed.

**2.3.2 MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING WITH THE OPTAA FOR RETIREMENT BENEFIT NOTIFICATION DATE EXTENSION**

Datta moved, seconded by Felton, that the Board of Education of Oak Park District 97, accept the memorandum of understanding with the OPTAA regarding retirement benefits.  
Roll call vote.

Ayes: Datta, Felton, O'Connor, Spurlock, Gates, Spatz, and Brisben  
Nays: None  
Motion passed.

There was a bit of confusion over the date change motion being included in the Consent Agenda, therefore the motion was made independently.

2.2.3

**CHANGE THE APRIL 26, 2016 BOARD MEETING DATE TO APRIL 25, 2016**

Brisben moved, seconded by Felton, that the Board of Education of Oak Park District 97, change the April 26, 2016 Board meeting to Monday, April 25, 2016.

Roll call vote.

Ayes: Brisben, Felton, Datta, O'Connor, Spurlock, Gates, and Spatz

Nays: None

Motion passed.

**SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATE**

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UPDATE

**2015-2016 DISTRICT GOALS**

Dr. Kelley updated the Board on the status of each goal area.

Goal Area 1

A brief survey will be distributed to principals after they complete the 5Essentials survey next week. The next step will be to create a joint learning walk process to support the principals. Each school should be performing these learning walks by April, 2016.

Goal Area 2

The team is working on building a collaborative expertise. The winter test (MAP and DIEBELS) have been administered, and the Ad Leadership team reviewed the data. Dr. Kelley wished to make the community aware that there are now RtI teacher level leaders who are also performing data chats at the schools, and the principals will use data to hold school level data chats.

The administrators met with ECRA yesterday to view and monitor growth targets for the year. Members of Cabinet will be performing visits to the schools to discuss principals action plans based on this data.

Cohort 3 met for full training.

Parent workshops will be held at each of the schools. They have completed the first of three, with each workshop having an average of 30 - 40 parents. Dr. Kelley reported that the feedback from the events is positive, and noted that the second round of training will be next week at Julian. Dr. Kelley will work with the parent engagement stakeholder group when they meet on March 11, 2016.

Goal Area 3

The district and other community agencies will be co-sponsoring a Fostering Family Resilience event at Brooks Middle School.

Goal Area 4

Dr. Kelley met with leaders across the district to engage them in a discussion on how to make the district a visionary district. Those in attendance met in small groups and created six word stories (vision statements). These stories were reviewed and shared with the community for further input.

Dr. Kelley asked the Board to consider contracting M2 to lead the vision process. She noted that M2 shares the Board's belief in two way communication. Additionally, they worked with Evanston School District to make sure that all voices were heard and engage with those who are not traditionally at the table. M2 will help the district organize the vision process and participate in the Superintendent's Advisory Panel which will be formed in the future. This item will return to the Board for action on March 15, 2016.

**OTHER DISTRICT UPDATES**

Plans are underway for the next Institute Day, scheduled for March 15, 2016, at which time PARCC training will be offered for those who will administer testing.

**DISTRICT HIGHLIGHTS AND EVERYDAY HEROES**

Dr. Kelley acknowledged employees Ellen McKay for organizing the collection of water for the residents of Flint, Michigan and Joe Tayler who has been picking up the donations and storing them at the warehouse where a charity will pick them up on March 1, 2016. The goal is to collect 1,000 cases of water before that date.

Dr. Kelley acknowledged student, Aidan Bertocchini who received the Philanthropy award from the Oak Park River Forest Community Foundation. It was noted that the student's efforts exemplifies an IB community.

**BOARD ASSIGNMENTS**

**STANDING BOARD COMMITTEE LIAISON REPORT FOLLOW  
FAC**

The regular meeting for FAC will be held on March 8, 2016 and the FAC committee will tour the administration building construction site on March 22, 2016.

**FORC**

This committee is scheduled to meet on February 29, 2016. It was noted that FORC will not be an advocate for the referendum efforts, but will be asked to review the numbers.

**CLAIM**

This committee is scheduled to meet on February 25, 2016.  
The most recent CLAIM liaison report was sent to Board members and will be posted online.

**INTERGOVERNMENTAL AND LIAISON REPORT FOLLOW UP**

It was reported that President Gates and member Spatz attended a recent IGOV meeting. Those in attendance agreed to hold three IGOV assemblies within a two year period. A liaison report will be sent out to the Board members in the near future.

**OAK PARK EDUCATION FOUNDATION (OPEF)**

A liaison report for the Oak Park Education Foundation (OPEF) will be sent out tomorrow.

**COLLABORATION FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD (CEC)**

This group is scheduled to meet tomorrow.

**ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS**

**POLICY QUARTERLY REVIEW**

Chris Jasculca reported that the quarterly policy review covered sections three and eight of the Policy Manual. He noted a minor change to Policy 8:30 and asked for the Boards input on the following;

Policy 3:10 (goals and objectives) – Jasculca asked the Board if they would be interested in customizing the list found in this policy, noting that the committee's recommendation is to keep the policy as written. It was agreed that this policy will not be changed.

Policy 3:50 (administrative personnel other than the superintendent) – The policy is written to require the presentation of salary changes to be submitted to the Board by March of each year. It was noted that typically, these recommendations have been made to the Board later in the year. It was recommended that the wording be changed to require this process to be completed "by June".

Policy 8100 – The Board was asked to consider adding in a list of non-profits agencies to this policy. The Board agreed, noting that it needed to be clear that the list does not include vendors.

It was agreed that administration will create the language needed for the above modifications and present the policies for consideration on March 15, 2016 and action on April 12, 2016.

**DOCUMENTARY REQUEST**

The Board discussed the request to allow scenes for a documentary to be filmed within the district. Several options were considered and the Board agreed to bring the item back for action on March 15, 2016. Additionally, the importance of family communication on the process was noted.

**NATIONAL CENTER FOR EDUCATION RESEARCH AND TECHNOLOGY (NCERT)**

Dr. Kelley introduced the idea of membership into NCERT. After a brief discussion, it was noted that Dr. Kelley's contract allows for memberships in professional organizations that she feels will benefit her and the district. Concern was expressed regarding the length of the membership, and it was suggested that legal be asked to review the membership agreement. This item will return to the Board for action on March 15, 2016.

**D97 VISION PLANNING (STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT)**

Dr. Kelley shared a community engagement proposal that will support the districts efforts in stakeholder groups and help the district develop a plan of action to identify a vision. She explained that this plan will recruit and engage stakeholders, keep them organized and analyze the data. The Superintendent’s Advisory Panel and the Minority Action plan would be part of this effort. Dr. Kelley assured the Board that the Board members would be included in this process. This item will return to the Board for action on March 15, 2016.

**RECLASSIFICATION OF JOB TITLE AND DESCRIPTION FROM DATA INSTRUCTIONAL TECHNOLOGY COACHES TO INSTRUCTIONAL COACHES**

Dr. Kelley noted that in January she suggested reclassification of the data technology coaches to instructional coaches. She suggested that if the district wants to eliminate the achievement gap, every student must receive the highest educational experience. By changing the job description of the Data Instructional Technology Coaches to Instructional Coaches, the district would be able to prepare trainings to help the teachers offer the best educational experience for every student. Dr. Kelley shared a draft job description for Instructional Coaches, and will share the concept with the OPTA leadership this coming Friday.

Dr. Kelley reported that the district’s attorneys recommended that the Board and OPTA should make sure to vet the job description. She explained that part of the process will be to look at the people in the current roles and see if they are qualified for the changed job description. Each person in the current roles will be considered for the new position. If the individuals do not fit the qualifications, tenure teachers will be reassigned, non-tenure could be reassigned.

Board comments included considering rotating teachers in and out of the role every two or three years.

**CONCLUDING ITEMS**  
**BOARD REMARKS**

**CONCLUDING  
ITEMS**

ED-RED is working with IASBO, the Center for Tax Accountability and other groups to redefine the school funding formula. The hope is to have something to present publically in a month or so. There is some traction in Springfield toward redefining the school funding formula; however, District 97 should not expect a huge increase in revenue.

Member Spatz and Carolyn Newberry Schwartz from the Collaboration for Early Childhood, attended the McCormick Foundation on an EDI Early Development instrument and Tax Total Early Childhood Systems. Spatz reported that Ericson approached the district for funding about 18 months, and the Collaboration has what they need to fund the local piece. Member Spatz will meet with Dr. Kelley next Monday night to discuss the opportunity to work with this group. Paul Goren from District 65 has expressed interest in partnering with District 97 on this project.

It was reported that Carollina Song received the Oak Park River Forest Community Foundation adult Philanthropist Award. The Buzz Café was also recognized by the Foundation.

President Gates attended the Park District Task Force meeting and will share his feedback.

One of the ED-RED pre-dinner workshop slide decks was sent to the Board.

President Gates and Vice President Felton will attend the Feasibility Focus Group meeting scheduled for tomorrow at 1 p.m.

It was noted that the Internet Access issues should remain on the Parking Lot. A recent story in the New York Times was noted that highlighted the disadvantages to students who lack internet access at home.

**BOARD RESPONSE TO PUBLIC COMMENT**

Dr. Kelley will respond to the public comment. She explained that based upon the email request, she will need to do some research before she responds. She noted that she typically gives herself 10 days to compile evidence, but will need more time to respond to this request. She reported that the students being allowed to read during testing (if they opt out), is not new this year, and that students will be allowed to remain in

**BOARD RESPONSE TO PUBLIC COMMENT (Continued)**

the testing environment and read if they choose not to take the test. She reported that the district received a negative letter from Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) regarding the lack of student participation on PARCC. She noted that because so many students opted out of testing, the administration will need to prepare for a review from the ISBE, which will impact the time that administration has for other tasks.

**AGENDA MAINTENANCE**

The February 27, 2016 and March 15, 2016 draft Board agendas were reviewed and modifications were recommended. It was agreed that President Gates and Vice President Felton will facilitate the February 27, 2016 special Board meeting.

Discussion took place about possibly receiving reports sooner and possibly not presenting full PowerPoint presentations when a long report has been included in the Board packet.

**LONG-TERM CALENDAR AND PARKING LOT**

The Long-term calendar and Parking Lot Documents were reviewed and modified.

**BOARD MEETING ASSESSMENT**

It was agreed that the Board will be asked to complete an assessment after the February 27, 2016 special meeting and then every two months after that.

**ADJOURNMENT**

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to conduct, President Gates declared the meeting adjourned at 10:13 p.m.

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Board President

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Board Secretary