

**Official Minutes of the  
Oak Park Board of Education District 97,  
970 Madison Street, Oak Park, Cook County, Illinois  
Meeting March 19, 2013**

President Barber called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m.

Present: Barber, Gates (6:06 p.m.), Felton, Sacks, Traczyk (6:04 p.m.), Spatz, and O'Connor

Absent: None

Also Present: Superintendent Dr. Al Roberts, Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations Therese O'Neill, Assistant Superintendent of HR and General Counsel Joanne Schochat, Director of Policy, Planning and Communications Chris Jasculca, Director of Special Education Mike Padavic, and Board Secretary Sheryl Marinier

ROLL CALL

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

O'Connor moved, seconded by Sacks, 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 of the Public Body or Legal Counsel of the Public Body, 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(1), Purchase or Lease of Real Property 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(5), Pending Litigations 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(11), Collective Negotiations, 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(2)). Roll call vote.

EXECUTIVE  
SESSION

Ayes: O'Connor, Sacks, Traczyk, Felton, Gates, Barber, and Spatz

Nays: None

Absent: None

Motion passed.

**OPEN SESSION**

Traczyk moved, seconded by Felton, that the Board of Education move into open session at 7:06 p.m. All members of the Board were in agreement.

OPEN SESSION

The meeting was reconvened at 7:12 p.m. with all Board members in attendance.

**SPECIAL REPORTS**

**ECRA GROUP PRESENTATION**

John Gatta from the ECRA Group came to the table. He explained why ECRA Group's data analysis and report preparation services would be helpful to District 97, noting that his organization will be able to produce a variety of report including some that compare District 97 to similar districts throughout the state.

SPECIAL  
REPORTS

Gatta reported that it is a safe assumption that Illinois will transition to common core. There will probably be a new testing tool to go along with this transition and a mandated test at the state level that identifies if a district meets standards or not. The burden of what it all means and how a district can make better decisions for its students will be left up to the individual districts. He reported that there will be an annual assessment that will be compared year after year with an objective of holding districts accountable.

He explained that it is ECRA's role to make this kind of work as easy as possible for the district. Once the process is in place, the district and ECRA will be able to readily share information.

## ECRA GROUP PRESENTATION (Continued)

Gatta noted that models will identify appropriate benchmarks by reviewing the data. This information will assist the Board in goal setting and long range planning.

It was noted that contracting ECRA to create the reports, would allow the district's administrators and data coaches the ability to use their skill sets to help staff figure out how to use this information.

Dr. Roberts shared that the district needs information that it can look at in a purposeful way. He suggested that the district needs to get better at asking difficult questions when using data to make improvements.

Board comments included noting that the main items identified by ECRA are noted in the Board goals and that the district is required by law to develop a growth model. It was also noted that some of the best districts use this format to get in front of the issues and that teacher performance, evaluations and how it compares to student growth will be included. It was reported that as long as the district gives 90 days notice, it can cancel the contract with ECRA on March 30 of any year.

## FAST FORWARD

Felicia Starks Turner and Harla Hutchinson came to the table. They update the Board on the history of the program that began with a pilot during the summer of 2011. This year all third graders were given the opportunity to participate in the program. Out of 666 students in the third grade, 574 participated and have results.

As a whole, 67.2 percent of the students posted gains after participation. Hutchinson reported that this demonstrates normal gains for the first product. She noted that 66 percent of the students fell into the 67<sup>th</sup> to 99<sup>th</sup> percentile. The outcome of the fall DIBELS assessment were also shared noting that the students who made the most gains are the children at the lowest end of the scale. The overall results were typical for students completing one product. The first product was most successful among least proficient students, low income students and students with IEPs.

It was noted that starting with the first product for all students may not be the most effective approach. Second grade students are now working with Fast ForWord with the implementation level automatically determined by the Fast ForWord program.

Starks Turner noted that there were technical difficulties (bandwidth, etc.) that affected some programs more than others. It was noted that some of the problems are affecting the MAP program as well. The district is still experiencing a few of these problems, but working to resolve them. The Board was ensured that the irregularities were not due to differences in implementation.

Board comments included interest in seeing the third grade scores after they take the MAP testing again. It was suggested that ECRA may be willing to help with the data analysis. It was suggested that in future reports, the data be divided into three groups (below, above and no change). Interest was expressed in knowing what this program is "better than" and a summary that tells the community why it is worth the investment. Interest was expressed in receiving PowerPoint presentations in advance and in seeing the number of referrals for other interventions.

Dr. Roberts shared enthusiasm that even with the glitches that occurred, the district experienced a 70 percent achievement rate. He noted that when looking at the students who are struggling and who may not require special services because of their improvement after the Fast ForWord program, makes up for the investment.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

None

ACTION ITEMS

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**2.1.1 Approval of Minutes of February 26, 2013**

Traczyk moved, seconded by Felton, that the Board of Education, District 97, accept the amended minutes from the February 26, 2013. Roll call vote.

Ayes: Traczyk, Felton, Barber, Sacks, O'Connor, Gates, and Spatz  
Nays: None  
Motion passed.

**2.2.1 Approval of Consent Agenda**

President Barber read the items on the consent agenda. Sacks moved, seconded by O'Connor, that the following items be approved on the consent agenda. Roll call vote.

- 2.3.1 Bill Lists and Related Reports
- 2.2.1 Personnel Action as presented are revised
- 2.3.2 Appointment of Additional IMRF Authorized Agent

Ayes: Sacks, O'Connor, Traczyk, Felton, Spatz, Gates, and Barber  
Nays: None  
Motion passed.

**2.4.1 Adoption of Board Policy Manual**

Gates moved, seconded by Felton, that the Board of Education, District 97, adopt the policy manual that was drafted by the district's policy committee with the assistance of the Illinois Association of School Board's Policy Reference Education Subscription Service, and reviewed by the Board during its meetings on February 12, 2013 and February 26, 2013.

The policy committee was commended for their efforts to convert the policy manual. It was noted that a few additional policies will need to be considered. Jасulca reported that PRESS will need one or two months to complete the new manual and post it online. Roll call vote.

Ayes: Gates, Felton, Sacks, Spatz, O'Connor, Traczyk, and Barber  
Nays: None  
Motion passed.

**2.4.2 Adoption of Intergovernmental Schoolyard Agreement between Oak Park Elementary School District 97 and the Park District of Oak Park Regarding Reconstruction, Management, Scheduling, Use, and Maintenance of the Irving School Play Field**

O'Connor moved, seconded by Spatz, that the Board of Education, District 97, approve the intergovernmental agreement between Oak Park Elementary School District 97 and the Park District of Oak Park regarding reconstruction, management, scheduling, use and maintenance of the Irving School play field.

President Barber thanked the members of the Irving community, administration and the Park District. It was reported that the Park District will pay for half of the cost of the construction (not removal) of the new turf field. Roll call vote.

Ayes: O'Connor, Spatz, Felton, Sacks, Gates, and Barber  
Nays: Traczyk  
Motion passed.

### **2.4.3 Approval of Playground Plan**

Gates moved, seconded by Sacks, that the Board of Education, District 97, award the playground upgrade work for the summer of 2013 at Hatch, Irving, Mann and Whittier Schools, and Alternate #2 at Irving School to Clauss Brothers, the lowest responsible bidder, in the total base bid amount of \$2,077,148.70 and for Alternates #5M (Mann new entry - \$17,815.25) and #6 (Mann Relocation of Trash Enclosure - \$17,486.20) to be funded by the Mann PTO, and Alternate #7W (Whittier Play Equipment - \$27,155.05) to be equally shared by the Board of Education and the Whittier PTO for a grand total contract award to Clauss Brothers of \$2,139,605.20 and as outlined in the memorandum to the Superintendent dated March 19, 2013.

A fence was recommended between the new Irving playground and parking lot and a taller fence was recommended at the south end of the Irving field to protect the property of the neighbors. Interest was expressed in the purchase of basketball hoops and soccer balls. O'Neill reported that no conversations have taken place with the homeowners about the fence at the north end; a landscape buffer of trees, bushes and a sidewalk will be placed around the playground.

Dr. Roberts reported that the EDGE Soccer Club will be donating \$15,000 toward the cost of the field. It was noted that the EDGE may consider paying for the goals at a later time.

Interest in a water fountain at Whittier was expressed. O'Neill reported that the request can be explored, but installation would not be at the cost of the district. Roll call vote.

Ayes: Gates, Sacks, Traczyk, Felton, O'Connor, Spatz, and Barber  
Nays: None  
Motion passed.

### **2.4.4 Approval of Landscaping Bid**

Felton moved, seconded by Sacks, that the Board of Education, District 97, award a contract to McAdam's Landscaping for July 1, 2013 through June 30, 2014 in the total amount of \$35,400 and then for the next two fiscal years (July 1, 2014 – June 30, 2015 and July 1, 2015 – June 30, 2016) for \$35,400 and \$36,100 respectively, as delineated in the memorandum to the Board dated February 26, 2013. Roll call vote.

Ayes: Felton, Sacks, Traczyk, O'Connor, Spatz, Gates, and Barber  
Nays: None  
Motion passed.

## **TOPIC REPORTS**

TOPIC REPORTS

### **PROJECT LEAD THE WAY**

Lisa Schwartz, Todd Fitzgerald, Adrienne Court, Brian Shinnors and Tim Walsh came to the table. They recommended that District 97 consider Project Lead the Way (PLTW), a challenging, hands-on three-year project based middle school design program, designed to challenge and engage the natural curiosity and imagination of middle school students. They suggested a class that demonstrates creativity and critical thinking where students can envision, design and test their ideas with the same advanced modeling software used by professionals.

The team recommended implementing the program by offering Design and Modeling to the sixth graders. During the second year of implementation, Automated Robotics and Green Architecture would be added, and the third year would offer Medical Detectives and possibly an Advanced Robotics class, with each offering being a trimester long. They recommended surveying the students and community before the course decisions are made.

## PROJECT LEAD THE WAY (Continued)

Schwartz reminded the Board that the full IB model will be implemented next year starting with the sixth graders. She noted that Project Lead the Way would be a perfect fit, as it supports the IB program. It was also reported that District 200 and D90 will be running this program.

Schwartz reported that the cost of the program would include professional development expense of \$4,700, an annual participation fee of \$1,500, design modeling equipment of a one-time cost of \$3,000 and consumables at \$300. A total cost of \$9,500 for the first year. Year two expenses would total \$22,000, and the third year would cost \$17,500. The two existing middle school computer labs would need to be upgraded to accommodate the needs of the program. The detailed list of computer requirements totals \$96,800; however the technology budget currently has \$90,000 identified for this purpose.

Board comments included concern about scheduling. It was suggested that Project Lead the Way may be an opportunity for a renewed partnership with the Education Foundation and with the high school. Member Traczyk shared positive feedback on the program as his child is participating in this program at the high school level.

This item will return to the Board for approval on April 8, 2013.

## IPAD PURCHASE

Dr. Roberts recommended that the district purchase 30 iPad carts as identified in a proposal sent to the Board under separate cover. He explained that the Netbooks currently in the elementary schools will be transferred to the middle schools for use there. It was noted that DSEB will be used to pay for this purchase.

Board comments included noting that the shift of Netbooks to the middle schools is a better allocation of devices.

This item will return to the Board for approval on April 8, 2013.

## BOARD GOALS

### *(1.3) Public report of priorities for recruitment*

Dr. Roberts reported that a recruitment video is being considered to highlight Oak Park and District 97. He shared that Skype and Facetime will be used for screening candidates who live far away, but explained that hiring out-of-state teachers has become extremely difficult because they are required to become certified by the state of Illinois before they can be hired.

Board comments included interest in knowing where the district's best teachers are coming from, and if the district can target those schools.

### *(1.5) Evaluation documents – Faculty and Staff. (Status Report)*

Dr. Roberts reported that the principals evaluated 209 staff members this year, at a range of 9 to 35 in each elementary school and up to 44 at in the middle schools.

It was noted that 167 staff members are not in the cycle this year, however, each have had walk-throughs, and participated in meetings. Additionally, DIEBELs data, RtI team feedback and report card comments have all been reviewed and feedback shared with them. Dr. Roberts reported that there is a good divide between excellent and distinguished.

He reported that the evaluations are not finished, and recommended sharing another report at the end of this year.

## BOARD GOALS (Continued)

After discussion regarding the need for the public forum scheduled for April 18, 2013. The Board decided to postpone this event until fall.

### *(2.1) Administrator and Board Review of the strengths and areas for improvement on the Common Core Forum.*

It was noted that the substance of what was shared at the forum was amazing. It was recommended that the PowerPoint from that evening be posted online.

It was reported that another opportunity for the community to learn about common core will be held on April 29, 2013 at Irving School at 7 pm.

Additionally, it was noted that the sheet that explained the standards should be shared at curriculum nights.

### *(2.2) Endorse a plan for communicating more effectively with residents using various technologies.* The inclusion of information in the FYI newspaper was recognized as being notable. This item was identified as done.

### *(3.1) The completion of the next four school playgrounds on time and on budget*

This item was addressed earlier in the meeting under action item 2.4.2.

### *(3.2) The official adoption of the 10-year capital improvement plan (Review preliminary revised timeline for the 10-year capital plan)*

It was reported that the comprehensive 10-year plan should be ready for approval in September. Therefore, member Sacks recommended that the Board extend the deadline on this goal. Air conditioning, furniture and technology needs were identified as some of the areas that need to be kept in focus and more time needs to be given to them before a true plan can be shared.

### *(3.3) Adopt a plan for our Madison Street Properties (Set tentative Direction) Review and Updating of Timeline*

This topic is ongoing.

### *(2.3) Approved lists of districts to be used for a variety of financial and academic comparisons, including a district dashboard.*

Vice President Spatz reported that PMI is opening another product line that supplies financial comparisons. It was suggested that they may have better ways of creating comparisons than what is currently being produced.

## **SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT**

SUPERINTENDENT'S  
REPORT

Dr. Roberts reported that D200 and D97 hosted the MSAN Mini Conference earlier this week. Jonathan Ellwanger and Lisa Schwartz were recognized for their efforts on this project, and Mike Padavic who recommended Sue Gamm as the keynote speaker. Jonathan Ellwanger, Angela Dolezal and Sheila Carter were part of an action panel. Dolezal gave a presentation, and Sheri Lenzo did a piece on digital technology and closing the gap.

## **BOARD CONCERNS / ANNOUNCEMENTS**

BOARD CONCERNS /  
ANNOUNCEMENTS

President Barber congratulated the district for receiving the Bright Red Apple Award. He acknowledged that the district has earned this award 12 out of the last 13 school years.

The Oak Park Education Foundation Staszak Dinner will be held on April 27, 2013 at the Oak Park Country Club.

**BOARD CONCERNS / ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Council of Governments met last week. In response to a concern brought up at the previous Board meeting, it was reported that the Village feels that they are doing a good job with snow removal.

An update on the middle school scheduling relevant to IB was requested.

Concern was expressed regarding the next Board meeting being scheduled on Election Day. All members agreed to reschedule the April 9, 2013 meeting to Monday, April 8, 2013.

Interest was expressed in receiving all PowerPoint presentations prior to the actual Board meetings.

On March 11, 2013 member Felton attended a meeting with administrators from District 54. They discussed compensation strategies.

It was noted that the Brooks Math Night was well attended. It was suggested that some kind of recognition be sent out after events to celebrate their success and that handouts from the events be posted online.

It was noted that the response to the 5 Essentials survey has met the threshold in all categories except parents. The deadline for participation has been extended.

The Special Education Advisory Committee hosted a successful event last Saturday.

This coming Saturday is the League of Women Voters Candidate Forum.

The Teacher Retirement Dinner is scheduled for Thursday, April 25, 2013.

The FORC committee met last Wednesday and reviewed the PMI projections. The need to reevaluate the figures was expressed, but it was noted that the district will be below what was projected and have more money in reserve. It was reported that the district will receive two million to three million less than what was projected in revenue from the state.

The Board retreat will be scheduled on June 22, 2013

ADJOURNMENT

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to conduct, President Barber declared the meeting adjourned at 10:35 p.m.

The next regularly scheduled meeting of the Board will be held on Monday, April 8, 2013 beginning at 7 p.m. at the administration building located at 970 Madison Street.

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Board President

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Board Secretary