

**Official Minutes of the  
Oak Park Board of Education District 97,  
970 Madison Street, Oak Park, Cook County, Illinois  
Meeting April 8, 2013**

President Barber called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

Present: Barber, Gates, Felton, Sacks, Traczyk, 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**

EXECUTIVE SESSION

O'Connor moved, seconded by Sacks, that the Board of Education move into executive session at 6:30 p.m. to discuss (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), Sale of Property 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(6)). Roll call vote.

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

**OPEN SESSION**

OPEN SESSION

Traczyk moved, seconded by Felton, that the Board of Education move into open session at 7:01 p.m. All members of the Board were in agreement.

The meeting was reconvened at 7:06 p.m. with all Board members in attendance.

**SPECIAL REPORTS**

SPECIAL REPORTS

**CEC PRESENTATION**

Perry Soldwedel from CEC came to the table to report on the systems assessment. He shared that a team of 28 volunteers from neighboring school districts interviewed different departments, team leaders, principals, etc. Each school was visited and over 300 people were interviewed. He reported that the results of the interviews indicates that students enjoy coming to school and that the district offers a comprehensive array of programs and services that serve the needs of the "whole child". He acknowledged that the district is assisting staff in the transition to the Common Core state standards. Additionally, the district is providing training and support to assist staff and students with the use of assessment data and informed instruction. He noted that District 97 teachers go above and beyond to meet the needs of learners, the Response to Intervention, and problem solving teams in each school provide extra time and support for struggling students.

He reported that District 97 has 10 excellent schools. He defined them as a system of schools, not a school system, and recommended that the district make its expectations clear. He noted that the districts greatest asset is its staff.

#### CEC PRESENTATION (Continued)

Soldwedel reported that the criteria for the analysis is divided into three parts; learning, collaboration and results. He recommended that the district continue its efforts to assist staff with the transition to the Common Core state standards. He pointed out a need for the district and staff to work together to ensure that there is sufficient collaboration time for grade level teams at the elementary schools, and subject area departments at the middle schools to address curriculum, assessment, intervention and enrichment initiatives for each unit of instruction.

He expressed a need for better collaboration between the district and school staff to improve the relationship between the groups and staff morale in relation to the central office. He acknowledged a need to improve two-way communication between district departments and the schools through active listening. He also acknowledged a need to improve the opportunities for sharing input and feedback about critical decisions that impact teaching and learning; and communicate how that input and feedback will be used moving forward.

Soldwedel reported that the relationship between the teachers and students is great and that the relationship between teachers and parents, as well as the teachers and schools is strong. He commended the district for having good communication between administration and the Oak Park Teacher's Association.

Soldwedel reported that the relationship between the schools and the district is not as strong, noting that there is a lot of stress and anxiety at the school level. He acknowledged that it is natural to have anxiety when you are making changes, and noted that this is a common concern among districts at this time. He noted that the stress the staff may be feeling is not being passed on to the children.

He noted that for the past 20 years, the district has focused on site-based decision, and the focus is now changing. He expressed concern that the district lacks a data system that identifies the critical indicators, measures and targets by which it can consistently report its performance both internally and externally. He recommended a data system that is aligned to the district's long-range plan. He suggested that the key data indicators should be aligned from the boardroom to the classroom. They will assist staff in developing a shared accountability system, and it will enable all staff to see how their work drives classrooms, teams, schools and district performance. He noted that the district has accumulated a lot of data and sometimes staff does not have time to analyze it. He recommended comparing District 97 to the benchmark districts and aligning to the District 97 strategic plan. He recommended that the district set some very clear priorities and long-term goals.

It was noted that IB and Common Core will work hand in hand. Concern was expressed with the fact that District 200 is not an IB district and what will happen when the District 97 students feed into the high school.

Soldwedel reported that he would describe District 97 as moving from excellent to premier. It was reported that CEC will be working with the district on Common Core during the April Institute Day.

#### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

None

PUBLIC  
COMMENT

**ACTION ITEMS**

**2.1.1 Approval of Minutes of March 19, 2013**

Traczyk moved, seconded by Felton, that the Board of Education, District 97, accept the minutes from the March 19, 2013 meeting. 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. Traczyk moved, seconded by Sacks, 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

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

**2.3.2 Non-Renewal of Probationary Teachers**

Traczyk moved, seconded by O'Connor, that the Board of Education, District 97, approve the resolution for non-renewal of probationary teachers. Roll call vote.

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

**2.4.1 Approval of Project Lead the Way**

Gates moved, seconded by Traczyk, that the Board of Education, District 97, approve the Project Lead the Way initiative for the middle schools starting with the 2013-14 school year as defined in the report to the Board during the March 19, 2013 meeting.

Member Gates shared that he sent some question to administration regarding the program and will send them to the Board members as well. Vice President Spatz noted that the program will require some professional development and selection of the best teachers to lead it. He commented on the importance of keeping the program current and noted that Project Lead the Way is supported at the high school and college level.

It was recommended that the Board not approve any more curriculums until vetted by staff. Concern was expressed that the contract for Project Lead the Way does not identify the associated costs. President Barber made a motion to amend the motion to identify the cost of \$1,500 a year. (\$750 per school). The amended motion was seconded by Gates. Roll call vote.

Ayes: Gates, Barber and O'Connor  
Nays: Traczyk, Spatz, Felton and Sacks  
Motion was not passed.

President Barber asked for a vote on the original motion. Roll call vote.

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

#### **2.4.2 Approval of iPad Purchase**

Felton moved, seconded by O'Connor, that the Board of Education, District 97, approve the purchase of four carts of iPads at the cost of \$67,879.80 to be used at Beye, Lincoln, Longfellow and Holmes Schools. Each of these schools will send one cart of Netbooks to the middle schools in order to help increase their device to student ratio. Roll call vote.

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

Nays: Traczyk

Motion passed.

#### **2.4.3 Action on Student Discipline 20130308**

O'Connor moved, seconded by Sacks, that the Board of Education, District 97, uphold the suspension of student 20130308. Roll call vote.

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

Nays: None

Motion passed.

### **TOPIC REPORTS**

#### **EARLY CHILDHOOD COLLABORATION INTERGOVERNMENTAL AGREEMENT**

Discussion took place regarding the proposed intergovernmental agreement between the Village of Oak Park, District 200 and District 97 to support the Collaboration for Early Childhood and to approve a contract between the district and the collaboration. The contract states that the Board would have the ability to pull out of the agreement annually. It was reported that both agreements have been reviewed by legal counsel for all involved.

It was noted that the funding from each entity will be placed into separate accounts and it will be the responsibility of the Early Childhood Collaboration to follow the guidelines for financial distribution outlined by each party. It was reported that District 97 will be the administrative district and the bank will waive all fees.

It was noted that article seven needs to be completed. This area of the intergovernmental agreement (IGA) defines the expansion of the IGA and the ability to add new parties to the agreement.

Board members who participated in this process were commended. This item will be approved by all parties during a joint meeting scheduled for April 24, 2013 at the high school.

#### **AMENDED FY13 BUDGET**

Therese O'Neill came to the table. She noted that the debt service fund and the capital projects fund need to be amended due to the purchase of technology. She noted a change in the dates identified in the memo, and reported that the public hearing and approval of the amended budget will take place on May 24, 2013.

#### **LETTER OF ENGAGEMENT FOR FISCAL YEAR AUDIT**

O'Neill reported that the fiscal year 2013 audit is scheduled for September with approval in October, at a cost \$53,500. She noted that with the conclusion of this audit, McGladrey will have completed their second contract with the district. She reported that the district will need to go out for proposals during the summer, and if McGladrey is chosen again, a new principal from McGladrey will need to be assigned.

#### **CLASSROOM FURNITURE BID**

O'Neill updated the Board on the history of furniture replacement. She noted that Beye was completely refurnished last year, and some of the replaced furniture was relocated to other

#### CLASSROOM FURNITURE BID (Continue)

schools within the district, while the remainder was donated. O'Neill reported that a survey was done at Beye regarding the new furniture. Information was reviewed and addressed. Principals at Lincoln, Hatch and Mann reviewed the survey responses and spoke to their staffs about the selections prior to making the recommendation. The total bid for the three schools is \$662,557.30 and will be brought back to the Board for approval on April 23, 2013. The Board was reminded that the replacement of furniture is part of the referendum commitment.

The Board expressed gratitude for the survey. Concern was expressed regarding the lack of bidders and interest was expressed in pursuing more bidders in the future.

#### ECRA GROUP PROPOSAL REVIEW

The ECRA Group agreement was reviewed and will return to the Board for approval during the April 23, 2013 meeting.

Interest was expressed in receiving a preliminary timeline prior to the May 7, 2013 meeting. Member Traczyk will meet with Dr. Roberts and John Gatta from the ECRA Group regarding the need for a dashboard.

#### ELEMENTARY GRADE STAFFING UPDATE

Dr. Roberts reported that the updated enrollment/staffing charts were shared at the table and will be sent to the Board electronically.

He noted that Longfellow has a trend of kindergarteners who register at the last minute. He stressed the importance of students reading at grade level by third grade, noting that it helps them become college ready. He noted the importance of finding teachers who are adaptable, and defined as the best and bright. He noted the importance of the district doing its work in an aggressive way and in a timely manner. Dr. Roberts shared that the next report will focus on the charts shared with the Board, and requested that questions be submitted to him ahead of time.

It was noted that class size limitations are outlined in the OPTA contract, identifying that the student to teacher ratio for first through fifth grades is 19.5 to 20.5. Joanne Schochat shared that the report was calculated using the salary of the incoming teachers over the last three years and averaging their total income and benefits.

Board comments included interest in knowing what the estimated amount of General State Aid is and the population differences at each school. It was recommended that the report be modified to recognize the districts focus on hiring diversity, noting that it is part of the district's practices.

#### BOARD GOALS TIMELINE

##### **(3.3) Adopt a plan for our Madison Street Properties**

This topic will be discussed in closed session.

##### **(2.1) Four to six public reports on areas of community interest**

Member Felton reported that the data coaches will be meeting in the near future. They will review the lessons learned and consider where the district is going with ECRA. Dr. Roberts noted the importance of determining how the district will use data, analysis of MAPs, etc., and noted that there are a lot of assessments that do not include testing. The amount of instructional time lost due to testing was shared as a concern, and the difference between testing and assessments was discussed. It was reported that a better outline will be shared at the next meeting. Dr. Roberts will share a draft agenda in the weekly report. He noted that the team will consider what ECRA will be able to do for the district without initiating additional testing, etc. He reminded the Board that data can include information other than test scores.

**SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT**

Dr. Roberts, in response to the systems audit, noted that a systems approach is necessary if the district wants to become a world class school district. He shared that Common Core is demanding and the district is transitioning at the same time that it is looking at teacher assessment. He noted the time that the Board and administration has put into communication, and noted that this effort will be ongoing. He noted that the Education Council is considering reorganization and suggested that perhaps the Education Council might have a bigger role in decision making that is based on non-negotiables with the focus on the children. He found the CEC report helpful and challenging.

He reported that he has asked the Full Plate committee to weigh in regarding priorities.

Dr. Roberts participated in a webinar called Teacher Match. It is a system that puts emphasis on methods that get teacher results. The district is looking at tools that will help with the hiring process.

**BOARD CONCERNS / ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Everyone was reminded to vote tomorrow. Security at the schools on Election Day was questioned.

Vice President Spatz and member Traczyk met regarding the Board retreat scheduled for June 22, 2013. They will meet with IASB representative Jeff Cohn next week. Board self evaluation, meeting structure and goal setting are being considered as topics of discussion. This topic will be discussed during the next meeting.

“10 things legislators should know and do when making education policy” was recommended to be shared with C.L.A.I.M. Additionally, it was reported that the C.L.A.I.M. committee is requesting that the Data Committee be allowed to share input with ECRA.

Member Gates and Vice President Spatz attended the ED-RED meeting which focused on pensions.

IGOV will meet this Saturday in the Township boardroom.

Concern was expressed about stress.

Member Felton attended the high school transition meeting which was hosted by the middle school PTO's last Wednesday. She reported that it was well attended.

Dr. Roberts was commended for choosing to pursue the systems audit. Interest was expressed in building strong feedback groups and long-term planning.

The Common Core event is scheduled for April 29, 2013 at 7 p.m. at Irving School.

The job fair scheduled for April 11, 2013 was announced. Emails are being sent to diverse candidates and they are being instructed to bring a hard copy resume with them.

Concern was expressed about the signage used to advertise the New Life Community Church on Sundays at Julian. The policy was read regarding signage of outside groups. Dr. Roberts will review the policy and enforce it if necessary.

**BOARD CONCERNS / ANNOUNCEMENTS** (Continued)

Interest was expressed in readdressing the strategic plan. It was noted that the strategic plan provides the guidance and direction for the district. Dr. Roberts noted that the plan should be limited to four or five goals; students should be agents of their own learning, the need for interdisciplinary lessons that support Common Core and IB, and safety in schools were recommended. This topic was recommended as an agenda item for the retreat.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

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Traczyk moved, seconded by Gates, that the Board of Education move into executive session at 9:33 p.m. to discuss (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), Sale of Property 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(6)) Roll call vote.

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

OPEN SESSION

**OPEN SESSION**

Traczyk moved, seconded by O’Connor, that the Board of Education move into open session at 7:01 p.m. All members of the Board were in agreement.

**ADJOURNMENT**

ADJOURNMENT

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

The next regularly scheduled meeting of the Board will be held on Tuesday, April 23, 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