

**Official Minutes of the  
Oak Park Board of Education District 97,  
970 Madison Street, Oak Park, Cook County, Illinois  
Meeting September 10, 2013**

President Spatz called the meeting to order at 6:32 p.m.

Present: Spatz, Gates, Felton, Traczyk, O'Connor and Brisben  
Absent: Sacks  
Also Present: Superintendent Dr. Al Roberts, Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations Therese O'Neill, Director of Policy, Planning and Communications Chris Jasculca, Director of Special Education Mike Padavic, Director of HR Steve Cummins and Board Secretary Sheryl Marinier

ROLL CALL

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

EXECUTIVE  
SESSION

O'Connor moved, seconded by Gates, that the Board of Education move into executive session at 6:33 p.m. to discuss (Appointment, Employment, Compensation, Discipline, Performance, or Dismissal of Specific Employees 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(1), Collective Negotiations, 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(2), Purchase or Lease of Real Property, 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(5)). Roll call vote.

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

**OPEN SESSION**

OPEN SESSION

Traczyk moved, seconded by Gates, that the Board of Education move into open session at 7:00 p.m. All members of the Board in attendance were in agreement.

The meeting was reconvened at 7:08 p.m.

**PUBLIC HEARING ON THE BUDGET**

PUBLIC HEARING  
ON THE BUDGET

Therese O'Neill came to the table. She reported on the history of the budget process and explained that this would be the time for anyone from the public to speak regarding the budget. No one expressed interest in speaking and the public hearing was closed.

**Approval Personnel Action**

APPROVAL OF  
PERSONNEL  
ACTION

Traczyk moved, seconded by O'Connor, that the Board of Education, District 97, approve the Personnel Action as presented.

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

New hires were introduced to the Board.

**SPECIAL REPORTS****BOND DISCUSSION – WM. BLAIR AND COMPANY**

Therese O’Neill and Liz Hennessy from William Blair came to the table. Hennessy reported that interest rates are beginning to rise. She noted that the short-term bonds like the district usually issues are still very low, at 1.8 percent over three years. She explained that the district can issue bonds without a referendum to fund capital projects, if the debt service payments fit within the district’s debt service extension base for levy year 2013. She noted that the sale of the Series 2013 limited tax bonds; Series 2013 completes the vision from the referendum. The timeline for the bond sale was identified.

**SPECIAL EDUCATION UPDATE**

Mike Padavic came to the table with Regina MacAskill, along with the special education coordinators, Donna Middleton, Keri Smith, Michele Suedbeck, Paula Andries and parent, Beth Caplin.

Padavic reported that the department is working on building a strong professional team with a strong parent advisory group. The group is involved in the parent educator partnership program, packets are created for the students moving into middle school and the first resource fair was held last year and will expand this year.

This year’s parent survey was sent out electronically as well as via paper response. They received 65 responses which is a decrease of 15 from the previous year. The responses indicated that the parents view themselves as part of the educational team for their children and that the district needs to do a better job of informing parents of the assessments and extra-curricular activities that are available to these children. The need for improved inclusion opportunities was also identified.

He noted that the IDEA grant was cut by five percent. Padavic reported that the department needs to support the common core standards to be in conjunction with the general education students; support the implementation of the International Baccalaureate program in the middle schools and improve the use of data collection.

The team will follow up with the Facilities Advisory committee (FAC) regarding the recommendations from the accessibility committee. They will focus on disproportionality, and increased use of technology for instruction. They will continue to monitor the increased number of special education referrals, both internal and external, and monitor the increased number of early childhood students.

Padadic shared a seven year review of students in resource, instructional and speech. Although the numbers fluctuated from year to year, they appeared to remain consistent as a whole.

He noted that the district does not have any self contained classrooms, and that out-of-district placements have remained consistent during the last seven years. MacAskill celebrated that two to three students in out-of-district programs return to the district successfully every year.

Padavic noted that student eligibility in speech-only services offered to private/parochial placements are increasing.

He reported that in 2011, the percentage of special education students in the district was at 16 percent and now it is at 19 percent. He noted that the national and state percentages are at 14 percent. He suggested that Oak Park may be slightly higher because families move to Oak Park because of the special education services.

## **SPECIAL EDUCATION UPDATE (Continued)**

It was reported that local hospitals often recommend Oak Park to parents seeking special education services, and parents moving to the Chicago area from around the nation choose Oak Park because of the services and the proximity to Chicago. MacAskill noted that she recently spoke to families in Ireland and South America. She celebrated that a minimum of 60 students have been released from the special education program. A breakdown of these students along with a breakdown of services by school was requested, along with a list of where the crossover is in students with multiple disabilities.

Concern was expressed about being penalized for disproportionality. Dr. Roberts noted the need to take a stronger RtI approach and reminded the Board that the focus should be about the kind of support the students need, not percentages.

Board comments included noting that the special education student count remained the same even though the district population has increased. Member Gates noted that in his profession he is often hearing about how wonderful the services are in Oak Park. Interest was expressed in seeing how neighboring districts percentages compare to Oak Park.

Caplin noted that the parent advisory committee partnered with the PTO Council to identify one parent at each school who would step up and be the liaison for the PTOs. She noted that the extra activities at the schools have not always been inclusive and this will help to collaborate. She shared the idea of a quiet room for those who are over stimulated and a site map of activities. Additionally, she reminded everyone of the need to be aware of food allergies when snacks are offered.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

Dr. Roberts reported that a number of things have been done recently to make the learning environment tolerable during the current hot weather; windows have been left open over night to cool the third floors, water has been delivered to each of the schools, and frequent water breaks are being encouraged. He noted that the district considered closing the schools today, but noted an equal numbers of families counting on the district to remain open. He expressed the concern that many families do not have air conditioning at home and child care would be a issue. The district watched other schools and none in the immediate area closed. He noted that the school districts that closed today typically did not have cooling centers available. He explained that the administration tried to get frozen ice pops for the children today, but they were not frozen in time. They will be shared tomorrow. Administration felt that keeping students in the classroom with their teachers was a better than the alternative for most of our parents.

President Spatz reported that part of the goal of moving from this administration building is to make it a revenue positive move. It would free up money for capital expenditures and shrink the district's footprint in the community. He assured the audience that there are no current plans for building behind Village Hall. He noted that the Village Hall location is only one location out of four that are being considered.

President Spatz noted that an accessibility study was done and the district has needs there too. He shared that about \$50,000,000 or \$60,000,000 in repairs have been identified as necessary and the district only has about \$30,000,000 available. The district is taking time because it cannot do everything. He reminded everyone that the district is still paying off the construction of the middle schools and currently state funding is not available for capital projects.

Zerrin Bulut, Oak Park resident, reported that it was very hot in the classrooms during the recent curriculum night event. She questioned if any of the Board members had their work day disrupted or were displaced because of the heat, and how many of them actually experienced the unbearable heat in the student's classrooms. If they have not, she suggested that the district does

**PUBLIC COMMENT** (Continued)

not deserve to receive tax dollars. She expressed concern about the learning environment in such heat. She expects the best from the district; this is a huge obstacle to the children's learning in her opinion. She is confident that a solution can be resolved. She noted the need for an immediate temporary fix until a permanent one can be put in place. She asked the Board to show the teachers that they support them, the children that they respect their learning environment and the parents that they are listening.

Rick Boultinghouse, Oak Park resident, commended the teachers and support staff for working through the hot weather. He asked for the air conditioning research to be shared with the community. He felt that the numbers quoted are being muttered as a justification for inaction, and that the districts focus is truly on a new administration building. He shared two articles from the late spring/early summer that indicated that an administration building behind Village Hall was seriously being considered.

Martha Moylan, Oak Park resident, explained that she is a special needs parent and thanked Mike Padavic for the Special Education report. She reminded the Board that they are Oak Parkers, their neighbors and their friends, they are part of the community and they share the same core values. She thanked them for their time and service. She told them that many people believe that they are being misled away from Oak Park values. She expressed concern that their focus would be on a new administration building and not about the heat in the classrooms. She explained that the heat issue is not about today, it is about the excessive year-round heat that goes unaddressed. She noted that a new administration build erected without addressing the need for a good learning environment would be a shameful monument of their abstinence. She encouraged the Board to fix the school's first.

Jeff Parsons, Oak Park resident, expressed his concern regarding the heat issues in the schools. He is concerned about the lack of policies dealing with extreme temperatures, and he expressed the need for guidance. He shared that his children had physical education today, but noted that it was reduced; however he questioned why they were outside at all. He referred to the military where stringent rules must be followed when heat is an issue. He noted that in prisons, people are given more consideration. He suggested that the district needs to adopt policies that will guide our principals and force them to make decisions that will keep the children safe.

Jeanine Pedersen, Oak Park resident, requested a joint response from the entire Board knowing if they are all behind the statement sent to her from President Spatz and Dr. Roberts. Additionally, she noted that, in reviewing the budget, the new budget has a \$1,000,000 increase in capital projects. She would like to know what that \$1,000,000 increase is for. She also noted that she had requested that the Board meeting be held without air conditioning today and asked for a response.

Deana Herrman, Oak Park resident, noted that her children went home from school early today because they had headaches. She asked Mike Padavic to answer the following questions: With respect to the accomplishments that he listed in the special education report about expanding the TA programs and expanding inclusion opportunities, she is interested in knowing how Padavic identified that there were problems with the program, what the problems were, and what best practices the department is putting forward and how this will be communicated to parents.

Dawn Glossa, Oak Park resident, asked which Board members have spent time in the classrooms in the last two weeks. She shared that she was in the classrooms last night and the windows were closed. She noted that the teacher indicated that she was instructed to keep the windows closed. She expressed concern that asking teachers to relocate throughout the day is

**PUBLIC COMMENT** (Continued)

disruptive. She encouraged the Board to fix the problem now. She expressed concern that the Facilities Advisory Committee (FAC) was allowed to go all summer without holding a meeting. She expressed interest in knowing what will happen with the FAC air conditioning reports and she requested a plan.

Chris Williams, Oak Park Resident, thanked the Board for addressing the concern about the building behind Village Hall. He reminded the Board of the negative feedback when the proposal behind Village Hall was originally suggested. He informed the Board that all that concern still exists within the community and will continue if the district decides to pursue relocation to the Village Hall neighborhood.

**ACTION ITEMS**

ACTION ITEMS

**2.1.1 Approval of Minutes from the August 20, 2013 meeting**

Traczyk moved, seconded by Felton, that the Board of Education, District 97, approve the minutes from the August 20, 2013 meeting.

Ayes: Traczyk, Felton, O’Connor, Gates, Spatz, and Brisben

Nays: None

Absent: Sacks

Motion passed.

**2.2 Approval of Consent Agenda**

Traczyk moved, seconded by Felton, that the Board of Education, District 97, approve the consent agenda as presented to the Board.

2.2.1 Bill List

2.2.3 Non engagement in Intergovernmental Agreements Regarding No Child Left Behind Act

2.2.4 Adoption of Policies

- 2:260 Uniform Grievance Procedure
- 4:15 Identify Protection
- 4:140 Waiver of Student Fees
- 4:172 Video Surveillance and Electronic Monitoring
- 5:10 Equal Employment Opportunity
- 5:20 Workplace Harassment Prohibited
- 5:50 Drug and Alcohol-Free Workplace
- 5:260 Student Teachers
- 6:170 Title I Programs
- 6:190 Extracurricular and Co-Curricular Activities
- 6:240 Field Trips
- 7:305 Student Athlete Concussions and Head Injuries
- 8:25 Advertising and Distributing Materials in Schools Provided by Non-School Related Entities

Ayes: Traczyk, Felton, O’Connor, Gates, Brisben, and Spatz

Nays: None

Absent: Sacks

Motion passed.

**2.3.1 Approval of Grants**

Traczyk moved, seconded by O’Connor, that the Board of Education, District 97, receive and award all grants delineated on the attached two spreadsheets, on behalf of Oak Park District 97, for the 2013-14 school year. Roll call vote.

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

**2.3.2 Adoption of Charge for the Ad Hoc Dashboard/Benchmark Committee**

Gates moved, seconded by O’Connor, that the Board of Education, District 97, approve the charge for the Ad Hoc Dashboard/Benchmark Committee as reviewed by the Board during the August 20, 2013 Board meeting. Roll call vote.

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

**2.2.4 Adoption of Policy 4:170 (Safety)**

Traczyk moved, seconded by Felton, that the Board of Education, District 97, adopt policy 4:170 (Safety). Roll call vote.

Ayes: Traczyk, Felton, Gates, O’Connor, and Spatz  
Nays: Brisben  
Absent: Sacks  
Motion passed.

**TOPIC REPORTS**

TOPIC REPORTS

**OUT-OF-STATE/OVERNIGHT FIELD TRIPS**

Dr. Roberts reported that the administrators tried to get all the out-of-state field trips into one approval. It was noted that the Brooks trip to Washington DC is sponsored by the PTO and that Julian is not currently offering the same opportunity, however, Julian may consider this in the future. This item will return to the Board for action on September 24, 2013.

**DONATIONS FOR THE IRVING SCHOOLYARD**

O’Neill noted the ongoing support of the playground projects, and reported that the Irving PTO, Chicago Edge and the American Youth Soccer Association made large donations to the Irving Schoolyard project. She noted that the Park District also contributed \$200,000 to this project. This item will return to the Board for action on September 24, 2013.

**ECRA MEETING UPDATE**

Lisa Schwartz shared some data and sample reports supplied by ECRA along with some local growth model data. She noted that the principals will receive training on how to utilize the ECRA data next week. Schwartz reported that this will help the district narrow its focus and allow it to look at data in a consistent way. It was noted that some of the actual data will be used during the Student Performance Report scheduled on September 24, 2013 and ECRA will share a full report on October 22, 2013.

## **BOARD COMMITTEE/WORK GROUP REPORTS**

### **POLICY REVIEW**

It was reported that a meeting is scheduled for tomorrow to review Press updates and procedures and how they related to policy and the 1:1 initiative.

### **FACILITIES UPDATE (FAC)**

It was reported that the FAC committee is meeting Thursday evening. President Spatz reminded everyone that the committee is made up of volunteer members and only two staff members. He noted that several issues are on the agenda for discussion. They will review the playground renovations, consider 2014 projects, discuss the 10-year capital plan, discuss air conditioning needs, and consider the role of the new architects in the plans for the administration building.

### **FINANCIAL UPDATE (FORC)**

It was noted that the FORC committee was scheduled to meet tomorrow but needs to reschedule. It was noted that the meeting may be rescheduled to next Monday. President Spatz reported that the only meeting currently scheduled for this committee is in December, but the committee plans on considering additional meetings.

### **LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE UPDATE (CLAIM)**

It was reported that the CLAIM committee met last week. They are in the process of planning the forum. It was noted that three legislators have confirmed their attendance at that event. The committee is considering ways to incorporate children into the meeting, suggesting that they could meet and greet the representatives. The committee is also working on the IASB conference presentation scheduled for November, 2013.

It was noted that the committee was charged to come up with three sub committees. They requested direction from the Board on the Data committee as this team has completed the task at hand. It was suggested that this committee share their ideas regarding data sharing between elementary districts and high school districts with the legislators during the forum.

### **SUPERINTENDENT EVALUATION**

The third draft of the superintendent's evaluation tool was shared electronically and in hard copy. The Board was asked to submit comments to Vice President Gates by September 19, 2013. Dr. Roberts was asked to share data targets for the principals and the principal tool.

Assistance was requested in a way to streamline the scoring. Interest was expressed in knowing if conversations about bonuses are considered an open or closed session topic.

### **MADISON STREET PROPERTIES / TIF**

President Spatz met with the village team to discuss the TIF dollars that are due to the district and make sure it receives them in a way that makes sense. Another meeting date has not been scheduled, but will occur in the next few weeks. He noted that there was no conversation about building options at that meeting, as the teams need to resolve money issues first.

### **SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT**

Dr. Roberts reported that the husband of Cheri Hilton would like to donate two statues to be placed outside of Mann school. Dr. Roberts asked the Board members to email their concerns to him or he will move forward with the request.

SUPERINTENDENT'S  
REPORT

### **BOARD CONCERNS / ANNOUNCEMENTS**

It was reported that the District 97 Board is one of ten districts in the state to earn the Illinois Association of School Boards 2013 School Board Governance Recognition Award. They will receive the award during the West Cook Dinner scheduled for September 30, 2013. Member

BOARD CONCERNS /  
ANNOUNCEMENTS

## **BOARD CONCERNS / ANNOUNCEMENTS** (Continued)

Brisben will also be recognized during the event for earning his Leadership Academy Membership.

It was requested that EXPLORE data and the ISAT exceeds data be included in the next Student Performance Report. Additionally, it was requested that the strengths and weaknesses that are actionable from the data also be included.

Interest was expressed in seeing the Harvard report on Closing the Achievement Gap and to learn what steps the district can take to mirror their successes.

It was noted that seven Those Who Excel awards will be given to district staff, volunteers and teams; the Vex Robotics being one of these teams, on October 19, 2013 during the Those Who Excel Award banquet.

It was reported that meetings have been taking place regarding the Park District Intergovernmental Agreement. A few additional meetings may be necessary, however, it is anticipated that the agreement will be ready for approval before the current agreement expires at the end of 2013.

IGOV is scheduled to meet in the Board room on Saturday, October 12, 2013.

COG met last Tuesday.

The Collaboration Governing Board will be meeting on September 25, 2013. The agenda will be forwarded to the District 97 Board members. An invitation was extended to the Board members to attend the Collaboration event at Beye School on September 23, 2013 at 7 p.m. The topic of the event is Promoting Social-Emotional Competence in Early Childhood.

It was noted that the Park District used some of their old infields to replenish some of the districts. They also repurposed benches at some of the schools.

The need for the Ad Hoc Dashboard committee to recruit members was expressed. President Spatz asked the Board to submit names of people who might be interested in serving on this committee. He asked that suggestions be sent to him within the next two weeks.

## **RESPONSE TO PUBLIC COMMENT**

RESPONSE TO PUBLIC  
COMMENT

President Spatz acknowledged that several issues have been raised during public comment this evening and through recent emails. He assured the audience that a letter will be drafted in response to all. He noted that the FAC minutes from March 11, 2013 and the PowerPoint presented at that time will be made available. He explained that the \$3,000,000 to \$27,000,000 ranges shared for air conditioning costs were the high and low from the PowerPoint and the \$5,000,000 to \$20,000,000 was simply a rounded version of those numbers. He noted that District 90 was quoted \$6,000,000 (2,000,000 per building) to air condition only three buildings and Indian Prairie had estimates of \$1,900,000 per building, noting that the estimates the district received are in line with other districts. He reported that the volunteer Facilities Advisory committee (FAC) includes two architects and two civil engineers and they agreed that the numbers quoted for air conditioning installation were reasonable. He noted that the FAC committee will meet with the new architects during the last week in September and will report back to the Board on October 22, 2013. He acknowledged that the buildings are also consistently hot in the winter and therefore, window units would not be the best way to address the issue. President Spatz noted that a presentation on capital improvements will be presented during the September 24, 2013 Board meeting.



**RESPONSE TO PUBLIC COMMENT** (Continued)

It was noted that Mike Padavic will supply information to those with Special Education questions.

Member Brisben acknowledged those who addressed the Board with concerns this evening. He reported that he has a son who attends school on the third floor of Longfellow School. He expressed the need for the Board to communicate the history behind decision making to the public, so they have a better understanding of the decisions that the Board needs to make. He explained that there are 30 work teams that the Board members are currently working on. He noted that he is also a part of the Capital Project work team and suggested that this group will pay attention to the way they communicate the history behind their decisions as well.

**BOARD TIMELINE**

BOARD TIMELINE

The Board timeline was reviewed and revised.

**PREVIEW AGENDA FOR THE SEPTEMBER 24, 2013 MEETING**

PREVIEW AGENDA  
FOR FUTURE BOARD  
MEETING

The draft agenda for the September 24, 2013 meeting was reviewed and revised.

**ADJOURNMENT**

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to conduct, President Spatz declared the meeting adjourned at 9:47 p.m.

The next regularly scheduled meeting of the Board will be held on Tuesday, September 24, 2013 beginning at 7 p.m. at the Administration building located at 970 Madison Street, Oak Park, Illinois.

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Board President

\_\_\_\_\_  
Board Secretary