

**Official Minutes of the  
Oak Park Board of Education District 97,  
970 Madison Street, Oak Park, Cook County, Illinois  
Meeting November 27, 2012**

President Barber called the meeting to order at 7:00 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

**SPECIAL REPORTS**

SPECIAL REPORTS

**EDUCATION FOUNDATION**

Deb Abrahamson, Executive Director and Angie Dodd, President of the Board of the Education Foundation came to the table. They shared copies of their annual report, and reported that they are seeing an increase in the number of children they are serving. Additionally, they reported that most of their funding comes from individuals and camp fees, and 78 percent of their funds go directly to programming.

Abrahamson shared that they participated in a market research project with DePaul University. Two focus groups were developed and surveys were distributed. The findings indicated that the Foundations programs are important to the district and the children, however, many parents were unsure if their children actually had the opportunity to participate in any of the programs. Parents indicated that they preferred to see the same programs delivered to more students versus adding new programs. 93 percent of the teachers appreciate the Foundations programs, but some are unsure as to how to bring the programs into their classrooms. Moving forward, the Foundation will increase communication to the parents of participating children, increase visibility at major school events, and improve communication to teachers about how they can obtain the OPEF program in their classrooms.

Dodd reported on the Foundations strategic planning process. Data demonstrated that the Foundation is doing a great job. Interest was expressed in focusing the needs at the elementary level, with focus on applied and hands-on learning. Equity and program delivery was also expressed as an interest, along with interest in every child having access to the programs.

Programs will be vetted on a three year cycle, where they will be reviewed by the community. The focus will continue on quality programs that enhance the district's curriculum. The Foundation's goal is to ensure that all programs are available in all schools and made available to all children.

Abrahamson invited teacher Kathleen Priceman and her students from the Lincoln School Immersion program to share information on their experiences with the programs offered through the Foundation. Priceman explained that she taught the same group of children in first grade and now in fourth grade. Their first experience with the Foundation programming was with Art Smart where they learned ethnic dances and expression. They furthered their experience by participating in the Architecture Adventure program where they learned how to design a virtual village with the help from Mr. Mark Klancic, an architect volunteer. During a field trip to Graue Mill, the children identified a concern regarding accessibility at the facility. After the field trip,

the students wrote to the Mr. Klancic and asked him to assist them in designing a solution for Graue Mill and the accessibility concern. The DuPage County Forest Preserve District was impressed with the work done by the children and asked the students to be consultants on the installation of an elevator at the facility.

The Board expressed their excitement for the children's efforts with a standing ovation, and invited them to return to update the Board on their progress with this project.

### **2.2.2 Approval of the SEIU Contract**

ACTION ITEM

Traczyk moved, seconded by O'Connor, that the Board of Education, District 97, approve the terms of a new three year collective bargaining agreement between the Board of Education and Local Number 73 of the Service Employees International Union, with the understanding that the Board President is authorized to execute the final copy of the agreement once it is prepared by the District's legal counsel.

Joanne Schochat came to the table along with union steward Ron Helm. Helm expressed appreciation for the process. He shared that the union members are pleased with the agreement and excited to continue their work under this new contract. Dr. Roberts shared that it was truly a team effort. He reported that the language was significantly changed for clarity and to be functional in 2012. Dr. Roberts recognized attorney Cindi DiCola for facilitating this process.

It was noted that the district values the work force, and comments are often shared reporting on how warm, welcoming and clean the buildings are.

Roll call vote.

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

Nays: None

Motion passed and contracts were signed.

### **SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PROCESS**

SPECIAL REPORTS

Felicia Starks Turner came to the table with Cynthia Baranowski from West 40 who updated the Board on the school improvement process and the Rising Star Program. Turner reported that School Improvement Plans were put into place at all the schools last year when six of them did not meet the AYP goals. This year, only two schools did not meet AYP; however, all schools and the district will participate in the School Improvement Plan process.

Turner explained that the Rising Star Program is the state approved programs for this year's planning process. She noted that it is a type of GPS for districts and schools that helps them reach a specific destination, and shows the distance to that goal. It allows for alternate routes and allows for stops, diversions, and road blocks along the way with the goal in focus. The plans will continually change as the teams meet and identify new needs. She explained that the Rising Star program is research-based and field tested. It guides everyone to move in the same direction with a goal to improve learning. Baranowski explained that state support will be in the form of her services and guidance, which will be free to the district during the 2012-13 school year.

Baranowski noted that last year the state was in a pilot program with the Rising Star tool. It was compared to the two-year plan that was in place. Some of the materials collected for the two-year plan may be used under the Rising Star program.

Baranowski reported that it is all about transformation, not compliance. The process begins with self assessment, followed by implementation of the plan and monitoring to ensure success. Adjustments can be made at any time and the process can be restarted if success is not achieved.

## **SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PROCESS (Continued)**

The program will focus on comprehensive planning, conditions for learning, community and family, professional development, leadership, curriculum instruction and assessment. These elements will be assigned within four categories (continuous improvement, learning environment, educator quality and, teaching and learning.

Culture of candor, formal team structures, leadership, coaching and support (external for district, internal for schools) and indicators of effective practice were identified as the foundations for success. The team and meeting dynamics were identified. The state mandates beginning with two foundational elements, and 25 (assigned by priority) of the 189 indicators. Evidence of implementation must be documented prior to the creation of the actual plan. It was noted that the school improvement process and the systems audit will work hand-in-hand.

During the December 11, 2012 meeting, the Board will be asked to approve the plans that will support the two schools that did not make AYP and the district on their journey to full implementation. Approval for the additional schools will be requested during a meeting in January, 2013. The individual school teams, made up of six to eight members (including a parents) will monitor the process and write a brief description of the evidence to support the rating for the selected level of development / implementation. After the evidence of implementation is complete, the teams will write a detailed action plan to bring the school or district to full implementation of the indicator.

It was noted that the school improvement plans will be online for the community to review and that the Board will be receiving their systems audit survey in the near future. It was also noted that this process will directly correlate with the superintendent's evaluation.

Interest was expressed in seeing a summary of the schools plans by priority. It was noted that policy and budget changes may be necessary to complete implementation of some of the goals, and could take time to implement. Appreciation was expressed for attention to "culture and candor", noting the need to ensure that the "candor" is received appropriately. Concern was expressed over the quantity of identified indicators. It was suggested that the C.L.A.I.M. committee address some of the concerns expressed about the indicators.

Dr. Roberts expressed appreciation to Baranowski, noting that she has the district working on best practice and allowing it to focus on learning and not on test scores.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

None

PUBLIC  
COMMENT

### **ACTION ITEMS**

#### **4.1.2 Approval of Minutes of November 13, 2012**

Traczyk moved, seconded by Gates, that the Board of Education, District 97, accept the revised minutes from the November 13, 2012 meeting. Roll call vote.

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

Nays: None

Motion passed.

ACTION ITEMS

#### **4.2.1 Approval of Consent Agenda**

President Barber read the items on the consent agenda. Traczyk moved, seconded by Spatz that the following items be approved on the consent agenda.

2.3.1 Bill Lists and Related Reports

2.2.1 Personnel Action as revised

Roll call vote.

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

Nays: None

Motion passed.

#### **2.4.1 Approval of Schoolyard Proposal**

Gates moved, seconded by O'Connor, that the Board of Education, District 97, authorized its landscape architectural firm, Altamanu, Inc., to prepare the necessary construction documents and bid specifications associated with the schoolyard upgrades at Hatch, Irving, Mann and Whittier Schools as outlined in the memorandum to the superintendent dated November 27, 2012.

O'Neill came to the table. After explaining the turf options to the districts insurance carrier, the Collective Liability Insurance Cooperative (CLIC) recommendation was to put the turf field at the South end of the school, noting that reoccurring accidents could impact the insurance premium. She reported that the CLIC Cooperative told her that installation of padding on the building would not cause immediate liability concerns. The CLIC representative suggested temporary padding that could be installed during games and then removed.

O'Neill explained that Altamanu expressed concern about requesting bids for too many options and Dr. Roberts recommended eliminating the U8 field option. O'Neill shared the three options that the Board expressed interest in during the November 13, 2012 meeting. After discussion, the Board agreed to include all three options in the bid documents.

Roll call vote.

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

Nays: None

Motion passed.

### **TOPIC REPORTS**

TOPIC REPORTS

#### **PRESENTATION OF TENTATIVE LEVY**

O'Neill explained that this evening's discussion is the third step of a four step process. She noted that a public hearing will be held on December 11, 2012, followed by adoption during the same meeting. She explained that the levy is a formal request sent to the Cook County Clerk's office, asking that taxes be collected for district operations. The levy amount is based on the district's projected needs. The final levy amount and related tax rate (or extension) is determined by the County Clerk's office based on the requested amounts, after applying PTELL reductions (tax cap law). With presentation of a tentative levy which is lower than the five percent threshold, there is no need to publish a notice announcing the need for a public hearing. However, Oak Park District 97 has consistently chosen to publish such notice to fully inform its constituency. If tentative/final levy is in excess of five percent, a Truth-In Taxation notice must be published and a Public Hearing conducted. Once the levy is adopted, it must be filed with the Cook County Clerk.

She reported that the CPI for the Levy is at three percent. She shared a spreadsheet that identified the change in each fund, and noted that the net debt dollars would actually decrease. To ensure maximum dollars are coming into the Education Fund, the direction to be given to the Cook County Clerk is to reduce other "capped" funds by the formal prepared resolution.

## **JOINT ADMINISTRATIVE FACILITY**

President Barber reported that the Park District is no longer interested in plans to build a joint administration building behind the Village Hall. He spoke with Christine Graves from the Park District who assured him that the Park District is still interested in partnering on a facility with District 97. He also spoke to David Pope who informed him that the financial analysis should be released later this week. This document would include the financial impact of the current District 97 administration building and the Park District administration building being added back on the tax list. Barber recommended reviewing the report and touching base at the next meeting.

Barber expressed concern that the district was not part of the Park's discussion before they made a decision.

## **BOARD GOALS TIMELINE**

Member Felton shared a list of 10 items for consideration for community reports.

- 1) Update on IB
- 2) Teacher Retention
- 3) Common Core
- 4) Teacher Evaluation Update
- 5) Referendum Promises Made and Promises Kept with Financials
- 6) Curriculum Audit
- 7) Closing the Achievement Gap
- 8) Teacher Mentoring
- 9) Teacher Feedback
- 10) KIDS Pilot Program

The list was discussed. It was agreed that items 4) Teacher Evaluation Update, and item 9) Teacher Feedback could be combined. It was recommended that the Board consider focusing on only four topics this year, with one presentation a month during February, March, May and June.

Board comments and suggestions included a request for more follow up, a suggestion that the Board embrace reality and have a discussion with the CEC. A forum for the teacher evaluation topic was suggested, followed by a discussion on what the district is or is not doing regarding mentoring. A third discussion could follow on retaining the best teachers. It was noted that principal evaluations should be considered as part of the discussion on teacher evaluations. It was suggested that data should include student growth and gaps. It was suggested that an update on "promises made/kept" could include playground and furniture updates and could be held in a school setting. Concern was expressed that the community does not understand how much work goes into meeting the state changes (PARA, PARCC, etc.). Interest was expressed in receiving growth data late enough in the year so comparison districts can be identified.

The Board agreed to focus on three areas during this school year;

- 1) Teacher evaluation, teacher retention and teacher feedback
- 2) Common Core
- 3) Closing the Achievement Gap, including data and comparisons to other districts. It was noted that this discussion could run into goal setting for the next school year.

The Measures of Success Timeline was reviewed. It was decided that Dr. Roberts will identify a time when the first discussion can take place. An FYI report on the training status of administrators who evaluate will be included in the December 11, 2012 Board packet.

## **DR. JAMES HECKMAN EVENT DISCUSSION**

It was noted that the November 14, 2012 event was attended by more than 300 people. The Board discussed the presentation and shared their opinions. It was suggested that the family/home connection should be kept in mind, and families should be reminded that the district is a resource.

Comments stated by Dr. Heckman that should be kept in mind included, “courageously embrace the reality that we live in a divided society with polarized leadership; success in life depends on having the right skills and abilities; income and equality is a skills issue; and invest in prevention, not remediation. It was suggested that the district needs to help parents get the skills they need to support their children. It was recommended that the district consider a way to partner with the CEC to reach parents early on, and that the district/community make an investment in the children as soon as they are born.

It was noted that President Barber and member Traczyk have been meeting with members of the Collaboration for Early Childhood, Village representatives and District 200 representatives to find ways for Oak Park to support parents in a manner identified above. During that meeting, it was noted that the Collaboration does not service River Forest. The Collaboration has begun to look into ways to support River Forest in this way. A follow up meeting will take place tomorrow evening.

It was noted that Parenthesis and the Collaboration for Early Childhood have concrete plans in place that are very impressive.

It was suggested that the Board add this topic to a meeting in January or February to receive more details on this subject.

## **SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT**

Assistant Principal Dave Dotson plans to retire at the end of this year.

SUPERINTENDENT'S  
REPORT

Whittier, Hatch and Longfellow Schools were congratulated for their implementation of PBIS.

The first meeting of the Superintendent’s Advisory Council for Technology will be held on December 3. The committee is made up of parents, staff and administrators.

The Police Department expressed interest in adding an additional School Resource Officer out of their budget. The middle school principals interviewed candidates and made a selection. Dr. Roberts noted that this addition is not in response to a need, but an opportunity.

Dr. Roberts requested a legal opinion on the legal brief submitted by the Collaboration for Early Childhood. It was the opinion of legal that all intergovernmental agreements should be reviewed by legal prior to approval.

## **BOARD CONCERNS / ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Copies of the *State We’re In* were distributed.

BOARD CONCERNS /  
ANNOUNCEMENTS

The first meeting of the administrative committee on Accessibility will be meeting on Thursday.

The next FAC meeting will be held on Tuesday, December 4, and FORC will be meeting on Wednesday, December 12.

It was recommended that the Education Foundation communicate with the middle school scheduling staff. It was reported that IB scheduling has been difficult, noting that there may be some difficulty with scheduling the Foundations programs in the middle school as well.

**BOARD CONCERNS / ANNOUNCEMENTS** (Continued)

The Board was reminded of its policy to review outside contracts on a regular basis.

The Board was reminded that deadlines for presentations to the Triple I and the National Association of Young Children are about the same (mid February, 2013), and it was recommended that the Board consider submitting presentation proposals to both. Everyone agreed that C.L.A.I.M. would be a perfect submission. A joint proposal with the Collaboration for Early Childhood, and the Education Foundation were also suggested.

Members Felton and Gates attended the 2012 School Law presentation on the top five things you should know, which was presented by Hodges and Loizzi. It was noted that two of the five items addressed media.

Vice President Spatz was thanked for leading the last Board meeting in President Barber’s absence.

President Barber shared that he attended the CAST performance of Seussical and the BRAVO performance of Once on This Island, and both were excellent.

President Barber also attended an event where two Julian PE teachers received the Blue Ribbon Award from the Illinois Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance for their PE program. He noted that Julian is one of five schools in the state to receive this award.

BOARD  
RESPONSE TO  
PUBLIC  
COMMENT

**BOARD RESPONSE TO PUBLIC COMMENT**

None

**ADJOURNMENT**

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to conduct, President Barber declared the meeting adjourned at 10:45 p.m.

The next regularly scheduled meeting of the Board will be held on Tuesday, December 11, 2012 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