

**Official Minutes of the  
Oak Park Board of Education District 97,  
970 Madison Street, Oak Park, Cook County, Illinois  
May 24, 2011**

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

Present: Barber, Sacks, Reddy, Gates (6:35 p.m.), Spatz and Traczyk  
Absent: O'Connor  
Also Present: Superintendent Al Roberts, Human Resources Director Trish Carlson, Assistant Superintendent of Teaching and Learning Kevin Anderson, Assistant Superintendent of Finance and Operations Therese O'Neill, Director of Special Education Mike Padavic, Communications Coordinator Chris Jасulca, and Board Secretary Sheryl Marinier

ROLL CALL

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Traczyk moved, seconded by Reddy, that the Board of Education move into executive session at 6:30 p.m. Roll call vote.

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

OPEN SESSION

**OPEN SESSION**

Traczyk moved, seconded by Reddy, that the Board of Education move into open session at 7:15 p.m. Roll call vote.

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

**PUBLIC HEARING ON AMENDED 2010 LEVY**

PUBLIC HEARING ON AMENDED 2010 LEVY

Therese O'Neill explained that the Board has followed all legal guidelines to move forward with this action. Upon approval, it will be filed prior to June 1, 2011. Public comment was requested. Seeing none, the hearing was adjourned.

**RECESS**

RECESS

The Board recessed at 7:19 p.m. and relocated to Lincoln School, located at 1111 S. Grove Avenue, where the meeting was reconvened at 7:33 p.m.

**ROLL CALL**

ROLL CALL

Roll call was taken and all Board members were present.

**SPECIAL REPORTS**

SPECIAL REPORTS

**NUMATS AWARD WINNERS**

Chris Jасulca, Dr. Roberts and President Barber recognized 33 students who took the SAT earlier this year and awarded them with framed certificates.

**STAFF AND SEA STAR RECOGNITION**

Those Who Excel and SEA award winners were recognized, as well as Dr. Anderson.

## EARLY CHILDHOOD COLLABORATION

Carolyn Newberry-Schwartz, Diana Rosenbrock, Bernadette Hicks, Evangeline Leggin came to the table. They asked the Board to consider supporting the Early Childhood Collaboration (ECC) financially in the amounts of \$50,000 and \$15,000. Rosenbrock reported that, in 2008, new preschool for all programs meant Oak Park had enough openings for all of its at-risk preschool children. She reported that the main focus is to make sure at-risk children are participating in the program. She explained that it is a challenge to find the children and re-enroll them. It was reported that the Collaboration has established communication and referral processes with 27 organizations, and established uniform eligibility criteria. Additionally, they have launched an outreach campaign. Schwartz reported that the District 97 grant assisted in securing another grant that helped build the information system. The Collaboration is working on aligning their system with the D97 system to ensure ease of data sharing. It was reported that the Collaboration has experienced growth, is participating in the healthy communities and eight state wide committees, and will continue the hearing and vision screening. It was reported that the symposium sponsored by the Collaboration was successful, and a great new Web site has been designed. In the future, it was noted that the staff will focus on home visiting.

Schwartz shared the need to identify the skill set of a kindergarten ready child. Once that has been established, data can be analyzed to identify how many children are not ready, and estimates can be made as to when they will reach the readiness goal.

Additionally, Schwartz shared that the Collaboration follows a strategic plan making sure that the publically funded programs are high quality, that the staff is supporting them and the curriculum matches that of District 97. The program is currently reaching out to teen and single mothers, with 75-80 families a year getting in-home extensive support.

Board members recognized the efforts of the Collaboration on such little funding. It was reported that, in some ways, Oak Park is way ahead of the state, but still has a long way to go.

Board questions and concerns included an interest in seeing information on the non-ready child, identifying the kind of preschool experience these children had and what the community is spending out of their own pockets.

## FLES

Dr. Roberts reported that he asked Dawn Deaton to take the current program and revise it using less funding. He is hoping that the World Language team will be able to bring forward a plan that can be approved for use in the fall. Deaton reported on the process that brought them this far. The ideas have been shared with Education Council and Ad Leadership. Deaton reported that studies show that the more you learn the faster your brain functions. There are many studies that support second language acquisition and higher achievement. Deaton reported that data will be analyzed in the future with a grant the district recently received.

Deaton reported that learning a second language reinforces skills in the native language and across academic disciplines. Second language acquisition strengthens cognition and critical thinking skills, affecting different parts of the brain. She reported that the current program is half of the original size, nowhere close to best practices.

The team has been charged with developing a creative model that provides students with daily language learning that includes technology, provides growth opportunities for students and teachers alike, incorporates appropriate assessment and accountability and offers as many languages as possible, while keeping the cost of the program as close to the existing expense as possible. In response to this charge, Deaton shared a recommendation to restore direct instructional time with FLES teachers to three times a week for 30 minutes. On the off days, the

FLES – (Continued)

FLES staff would provide language based lessons that students could do with non-FLES teachers. Technology based lessons could be created by language teachers. Math reinforcement could be accomplished through games and other daily activities. Deaton shared the importance of working collaboratively and stressed the need to work across buildings with language teachers and beyond.

Deaton shared that the initial poll of staff members indicates that the majority of them support the program. Initial concerns include competency implementing a lesson in a language they don't speak, concern over too much on their plate for next year, and loss of instructional time.

Board comments and concerns included interest in hearing more about lesson content and how world language would tie into the common core curriculum. Additionally, interest was expressed in understanding the logistics with multiple language options, fiscal constraints and children in schools with different languages. Concern was expressed over children moving into the district and the need for a plan to help them transition into this program.

It was suggested that the district consider a partnership with the Education Foundation or the PTO Council to ensure equity in languages at different schools. The use of PTO volunteers was suggested. The importance of fidelity was stressed and a data study was suggested. It was recommended that the program consider Eastern languages as part of the program.

#### STRATEGIC PLAN UPDATE

Dr. Roberts reviewed the strategic plan with the Board. He identified a need to better connect with faculty and staff to make sure they connect to the plan. He expressed concern over the quantity of end results and objectives. He recommended narrowing the focus of the plan and clearly identifying ongoing strategic areas. Dr. Roberts recommended the creation of a good vision statement and the need to move from a strategic plan to more action planning. He shared that the team will finish this year with the typical reporting system in June and suggested that the Board consider changes to the plan during their retreat.

#### PUBLIC COMMENT

Noel Kuriakos, Oak Park resident, asked the Board to disclose emails that include questions and answers to presentations. Regarding the FLES program, Kuriakos suggested that the district consider Asian languages. He recommended that the district reach out to other districts running similar programs and review their programs, including the financial aspect. He suggested that the district review their options carefully before moving forward, and make sure that the decision made is not biased.

PUBLIC COMMENT

#### ACTION ITEMS

##### 2.1.1 Approval of Minutes of May 3, 2011

Traczyk moved, seconded by Gates, that the Board of Education, District 97, approve the minutes from the May 3, 2011 meeting as presented. Roll call vote.

Ayes: Traczyk, Gates, Sacks, Barber, Reddy, and Spatz

Nays: None

Absent: O'Connor

Motion passed.

**Consent Agenda**

Traczyk moved, seconded by Sacks, that the Board of Education, District 97, approve the consent agenda as presented in the Board packet. Roll call vote.

- 2.2.1 Bill Lists and Related Reports
- 2.3.1 Personnel Action as presented

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

**2.2.2 Approval of Administrator's Contract**

Spatz moved, seconded by Reddy, that the Board of Education, District 97, approve the administrative employment contracts as presented. Roll call vote.

President Barber expressed the Board's gratitude to the entire staff for accepting a pay freeze for the 2011-12 school year.

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

**2.2.3 Approval of Administrative Support Contracts**

Reddy moved, seconded by Traczyk, that the Board of Education, District 97, approve the administrative support employment contracts as presented. Roll call vote.

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

**2.4.1 Hephzibah Contract - Liaison Salary**

Gates moved, seconded by Sacks, that the Board of Education, District 97, approve the 2011-12 salary for the Hephzibah Behavior Interventionist at \$45,503, the same salary as the 2010-2011 school year. Approximately \$30,000 will be paid from the Title I-D allocation received by the district, with the district's share of the contracted service being approximately \$15,503. More exact figures will be available when Title I-D funding is finalized in fall 2011. Roll call vote.

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

**2.4.2 Approval of Amended 2010 Levy**

Spatz moved, seconded by Reddy, that the Board of Education, District 97, approve the attached resolutions providing for adoption of the amended 2010 levy.

A public hearing was held earlier. There was one person in attendance with no comments made.

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

### 2.4.3 Approval of Food Service Agreement with OPRFHS

Sacks moved, seconded by Gates, that the Board of Education, District 97, extend, for the 2011-12 school year, the Intergovernmental Agreement between Oak Park River Forest School District 200 and District 97 for the provision of freshly prepared meals at the requested five-cent per meal price increase and as outlined in the memoranda to the Board dated May 10 and May 24, 2011. Roll call vote.

Ayes: Sacks, Gates, Reddy, Barber, Spatz, and Traczyk

Nays: None

Absent: O'Connor

Motion passed.

### TOPIC REPORTS

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#### FAST FORWARD PROPOSAL

Duane Meighan and several building principals shared information about the Fast ForWord program created by Scientific Learning. They explained that the program focuses on memory enhancement, attention processing rate and sequencing skills, helping to make a brain fit. They explained that working these cognitive muscles provides valuable benefits for a lifetime.

The principals shared advantages, disadvantages and implementation possibilities. They participated in a webinar with the Westfield Washington School District Superintendent who has implemented this program. Additionally, they shared a webinar with district staff. Questions were sent to Scientific Learning and in depth responses were received. Discussions took place regarding "full plates" and how this intervention can be implemented with fidelity. Meighan explained how most children who go through this protocol are no longer in need of the remedial programs.

Implementation planning includes phase 1 with summer 2011 targeting students in the Holmes ESY program, middle school summer school and Hatch Title 1 students. Phase 2-fall 2011 would include implementation in all 10 District 97 schools. The program would target the tier 1, 2 and 3 children and the early grades initially. The expectation is to see growth and less need for many of the other interventions. It was reported that the cost of full implementation would be approximately \$45,000 per school. The cost includes upgrades and weekly updates on students' success. Dr. Roberts shared suggestions on where the money might be found to fund this program. Meighan reported that if this model is implemented with fidelity, it can save the district \$100,000 annually and save many children from attending special education programs. Implementation across the district was described. Although the programs at each school appear to be different, the Board was assured that the program will function the same at each location. Some of the schools already have programs in place that target the students in question, eliminating a step in the process.

Dr. Roberts reported that he has worked with Fast ForWord in the past. He shared that 13 children were identified as potentially needing special education services. After completing the Fast ForWord program, only one child required the services. Nimisha Kumar reported that she has a teacher in her building who used the program and Meighan's former superintendent used the program successfully.

The Board was asked to think of this purchase as a capital investment that is paid over a few years. They were asked to consider whether the purchase justifies that level of cost.

#### FAST FORWARD PROPOSAL – (Continued)

Board questions and concerns included interest in having a presentation put online. Interest in a smaller package or a pilot was expressed. Concern was expressed over the cost, as this was not part of the referendum sell. It was noted that when expenses are cut, the monies should not be respent. Concern was expressed over due diligence as this program was being presented quickly and by the principals. Interest was expressed in hearing staff input. Interest in knowing what the benchmark is that would be used to measure the success of this program. Concern was expressed over the effectiveness of the other programs and the need for all of them.

Dr. Roberts acknowledged that this request has been on the fast track because the principals are all excited about the program. He acknowledged that the expense will always be an issue, but the return on investment needs to be considered. He shared that he would prefer that the district take their time and implement this program with the enthusiasm of the Board as well.

#### APPOINTMENT OF TREASURER

It was reported that this is the annual appointment of Therese O'Neill as treasurer for the next school year. It was explained that the assistant superintendent for finance and operations is not automatically appointed as the treasurer. Prior to O'Neill, Pat Siegel was the appointed treasurer, and before her, it was Cicero Township.

#### APPROVAL OF MEDICAL, DENTAL AND LIFE INSURANCE RATES

Trish Carlson reported that the increase will be six percent. The agreement with the collective bargaining groups was that the increase would not be passed on to the employees. Each employee received two rate sheets, one for 2012 without the increase and one that shows that after that the expense will be compounded.

#### RESOLUTION TO ADOPT PREVAILING WAGE RATES

It was reported that the district is required by law to adopt the prevailing wage rates as posted by the State of Illinois. This process must take place by June 15 and be reported to the state by June 30.

#### SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

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REPORT

The Face-It program was never initiated. The Board was asked to consider adding this topic to a future agenda for discussion.

Dr. Roberts is planning a retreat for the Education Council on how to make better connection. The Administrative Leadership retreat is scheduled for August 16 and 17. This retreat will focus on building a sense of team, priorities for the future year and the strategic plan.

Dr. Roberts completed the evaluations for cabinet and principals. He reported that he was pleased with their feedback.

Dr. Roberts reported that the partnership with healthier communities is going well.

A meeting was held with the Park District regarding the Irving schoolyard, with an expectation that it would consider funding part of the project. Unfortunately, there was not a lot of interest.

The budget meetings are ongoing. Some textbook funds for next year have already been spent.

BOARD CONCERNS

**BOARD CONCERNS/ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Bill 1744 was passed by the state. This bill would require a five hour minimum day to qualify as a student attendance day. It is expected to be signed by the governor and effective for the 2011-12 school year.

Everyone was invited to Winberie’s on Thursday where member Gates will be serving dinners for the CAST fundraiser.

Members Spatz and Sacks attended the annual meeting of the Early Childhood Care and Education Collaboration.

President Barber, Vice President Spatz and member Gates attended the Education Foundation thank you dinner.

The village is holding a Day in Our Village on Sunday, June 5. The Board is signed up to participate. They were asked to communicate their availability with the Board secretary who will coordinate the event with President Barber.

The Board was reminded that their annual retreat is scheduled for Tuesday, May 31 at 7 p.m. The retreat will be held in the Multicultural Center located at Julian Middle School. The meeting will begin with a one hour executive session, followed by an open session. The members were asked to prepare their list of three buckets.

Dr. Roberts was asked to pioneer healthier communities. It was suggested that a meeting be held in July or August focusing on this topic only.

**BOARD RESPONSE TO PUBLIC COMMENT**

President Barber will discuss this request with Dr. Roberts and the Board Secretary.

**BOARD RESPONSE  
TO PUBLIC  
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**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Reddy moved, seconded by Traczyk, that the Board of Education move into executive session at 11:04 p.m. Roll call vote.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

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

**OPEN SESSION**

Gates moved, seconded by Sacks, that the Board of Education move into open session at 11:24 p.m. Roll call vote.

**OPEN SESSION**

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

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to conduct, President Barber declared the meeting adjourned at 11:24 p.m.

**ADJOURNMENT**

The next regularly scheduled meeting of the Board will be held on Tuesday, June 14, 2011, beginning at 7 p.m. at the district office located at 970 Madison Street, Oak Park, Illinois at 7 p.m.

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Board President

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Board Secretary