

**Official Minutes of the  
Oak Park Board of Education District 97,  
970 Madison Street, Oak Park, Cook County, Illinois  
Meeting - December 13, 2011**

This meeting was held at Julian Middle School which is located at 416 South Ridgeland Avenue.

President Barber called the meeting to order at 7:34 p.m.

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

Absent: None

Also Present: Superintendent Al Roberts, Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations Therese O'Neill, Director of Human Resources Trish Carlson, Director of Policy, Planning and Communications Chris Jасulca, Director of Special Education Mike Padavic, and Board Secretary Sheryl Marinier

ROLL CALL

President Barber thanked Dr. Sharts and the Julian Community for hosting the meeting this evening.

SPECIAL  
REPORTS

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**STRATEGIC PLAN REPORT**

Chris Jасulca came to the table. He reported that this is the final year of the five year program. He reviewed the seven strategies and asked if there were any questions since the last update. There were none. He reminded the Board that he and Dr. Roberts presented the idea of strategic thinking instead of strategic planning and suggested that strategic thinking be the approach moving forward, identifying goals and strategies on an annual basis.

Dr. Roberts recognized the importance of some of the original strategies and assured the Board that key issues will not be lost in transition. He suggested that items be put into a checklist order, explaining that if the district knows what each building is taking on, it will be easier to support them.

Board comments included noting that the list of completed tasks is impressive. Dr. Roberts noted that allowing staff members to be creative could create a longer list. Jасulca was commended for his efforts regarding communication, noting that the Promises made/kept document on the Web page is very clear and a powerful message. The new Web site was commended. It was noted that everyone is doing so much work, and it's hard to see how it all fits together. When the Board sees the results of a strategy, it gives them a better idea of the successes. A Board study session was recommended during the planning phase to help influence the work of the administrators.

## PUBLIC COMMENT

Peggy Kell, Oak Park resident, offered her congratulations on the TIF settlement. She noted that the Web site is easily read and full of information. She expressed concern about purchasing the Fast ForWord program, questioning how the program would work with current programs. She requested that the Board be very thoughtful of this decision.

## ACTION ITEMS

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### **2.1.1 Approval of Minutes of November 29, 2011**

Sacks moved, seconded by Traczyk, that the Board of Education, District 97, accept the minutes from the November 29, 2011 meeting as revised. Roll call vote.

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

Nays: None

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, Gates, O'Connor, Felton, and Barber

Nays: None

Motion passed.

### **2.4.1 Approval of Levy**

Gates moved, seconded by Traczyk, that the Board of Education, District 97, approve the attached resolutions providing for adoption of the 2011 levy.

Gates requested that the community be kept informed as to how these dollars are being spent so they can understand and appreciate the need and efforts. Roll call vote.

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

Nays: None

Motion passed.

### **2.4.2 Resolution providing for the issue of \$5,060,000 General Obligation Limited School Bonds, Series 2011, of School District Number 97, Cook County, Illinois, and for the levy of a direct annual tax to pay the principal and interest on said bonds**

Traczyk moved, seconded by Gates, that the Board of Education, District 97, approve the attached formal resolution providing for the issue of \$5,060,000 General Obligation Limited School Bonds, Series 2011 of School District Number 97, Cook County, Illinois, and for the levy of a direct annual tax to pay the principal and interest of said bonds.

Therese O'Neill and Liz Hennessy came to the table. They noted that the number reported in the Board packet was an estimate and announced that the actual number will be \$5,060,000. Hennessy reported on the sale that took place today, explaining that she pushed hard for a rating update, although everything was positive, some history was requested, so the current rating was maintained. A comparative analysis was shared. Hennessy noted that both the referendum and the overall attractiveness of the village/schools played into the sale price. It was noted that updated documents would be distributed to the Board tomorrow. Roll call vote.

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

Nays: None

Motion passed.

### 2.4.3 Field Trip Approval

Traczyk moved, seconded by Gates, that the Board of Education approve an out of state field trip for the Brooks BRAVO Students. Roll call vote.

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

Nays: None

Motion passed.

## **TOPIC REPORTS**

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### COMMUNITY DIGITAL INCLUSION

It was noted that this initiative is a good example of the Council of Governments (COG) taking a proactive approach on a goal. Dr. Roberts shared that this is a great way that the community boards can start to work together. It was noted that the hope is that each of the governing boards will move to support this.

Dr. Roberts reported that Board members weighed in on some of the wording in the Community Digital Inclusion statement. He explained that the initiative is to encourage the community to come together with shared services, interfacing with one another in a variety of ways. Suggested changes were read and discussed. It was clarified that the district will provide technology opportunities to children in school, not at home. Dr. Roberts suggested that there could be ways that the district might be creative by extending the school day, making technology accessible to students later in the day. The Board expressed support as long as initiatives stay within the current budget.

President Barber explained that approving the Community Digital Inclusion statement would be indorsing the initiative, allowing the COG to move forward. He explained that it is a framework for working together on different kinds of projects.

Board comments and concerns included interest in knowing how many students have technology available to them at home. It was noted that one-to-one computing was identified as a wave of the future during the Triple I conference. It was suggested that this might be a way for the community to share disaster recovery sites and record retention. This item will return as an action item on January 24, 2012.

## FAST FORWARD

Dr. Roberts is convinced by the research that Fast ForWord is an extraordinary tool for the district to have. He explained that every year takes a toll on students who don't get it, and reported that the district would see a return on investment in three to four years. He reported that this gives our teachers a new tool, as the district does not have anything that addresses cognitive development for students who do not get it the traditional way.

It was noted that Dr. Roberts's estimates were very conservative. Given the research, it is believed that the district could see a larger return.

Dr. Roberts reported that he will update the Board on the success and fidelity of the program. He shared that he is committed to working with the OPTA to develop a plan that works best at elementary and another that will work at the middle school level. He shared that some schools have teachers ready to go now and a uniform plan will be prepared for the 2012-13 school year.

Dr. Roberts reported that an independent audit will be done to evaluate the current programs the district is currently using. He asked the OPTA for recommendations on who will assist with this audit. He reminded the Board that Fast ForWord is not a replacement program, however, when this program is in place, there could be programs that will no longer be necessary. He reported that other districts have saved three to five percent. The administrators believe that once the program is implemented, that the district can save more than \$175,000 annually.

Mike Padavic reported that the cost of resources for one student is \$13,000 a year. Dr. Roberts shared that if we can give a child a 13 week program that will give the child the skills he/she needs to be attentive and focused versus a year of another program, that is significant.

Board comments and concerns included a suggestion to continued the education of the teachers so they feel like part of the investment. A phase in was suggested. Interest was expressed in knowing if there are any programs that could be eliminated and therefore save dollars that could be put toward this program. Interest was expressed in knowing how many students are in resource, etc. Interest was expressed in knowing how this program relates to the common core. It was noted that one Board member would feel better about the program if the incentives were structured differently. It was noted that the bottom line has got to be the success of the children. Concern was expressed about the cost of the program and the implications in the mind of the staff. Interest was expressed in seeing a report on how this program supports staff and frees up time. It was noted that the Board just approved a 5.2 million bond sale for playgrounds, etc., with much less concern, it was noted that this purchase is only 10 percent of that amount and for educational purposes.

It was noted that the purchase of the Fast ForWord program has been included in the budget. This item will return to the Board for approval on January 24, 2012.

## COMMUNICATION COMMITTEE RECAP

It was reported that the communication committee was created about 18 months ago, with Jennifer Reddy and Jim Gates as the Board liaisons. The committee has been struggling to get some momentum going and the Board was asked if the charge might be too broad. It was suggested that the committee might do better if it focused on only one or two areas.

Jasculca gave a brief history of the committee and asked the Board to determine the purpose of this committee, consider how long the committee should remain operational and requested a sense of direction.

After a brief discussion it was determined that there is little interest in keeping the committee as it stands. It was suggested that the Board wait until after the January 10, 2012 joint board meeting and revisit this issue.

## DATA TASK FORCE

Member O'Connor shared goals for this potential administrative committee. He asked the Board to consider additions to the data group, staff development benchmarks and a climate survey supported by the state.

Board comments included a suggestion for the group to evaluate the FERPA guidelines and help the data sharing with District 200. A full-time data person was recommended. Interest was expressed in getting feedback from the Ad Leadership team on what they would like to do and how they would like to proceed. Base line data was requested.

It was agreed that this topic will return to the Board with a report from Ad Leadership.

## EVALUATION OF BOARD GOALS

The Board goals were reviewed. It was reported that the team is doing well on goal one. Town hall type meetings were discussed as a way to achieve goal 2. A State of the District meeting was suggested. Members Gates and Sacks were asked to brainstorm on some formal outreach ideas and report back to the Board on January 24, 2012. It was reported that the Board is doing very well on goal 3 and members Barber and Traczyk will report on goal 4 in the future.

## SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

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REPORT

Dr. Roberts reported that the expulsion hearings should be ready to process on January 24, 2012. He will share confidential data on these incidents with the Board members and explain the process before that time. Additionally, the Board may need to hold an executive session on January 24, 2012 relative to a grievance.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS/BOARD CONCERNS

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Members Traczyk and Gates participated in the Intergovernmental Committee (IGOV). The committee will include two representatives from every taxing body in the village. They will focus on cost savings to the tax payers, looking at where there are areas of overlap. The committee plans to meet regularly for a year or two, with each Board adopting a recommendation supporting its efforts.

The Facilities committee met with the Park District prior to holding their regular meeting last Tuesday. The committee has sent questions to legal and will report to the Board in the future.

The Policy Committee met and will meet with the Wellness Council in January. The next policy the committee will review is the Student Records policy.

President Barber and member O'Connor reported that they will meet next week to discuss the superintendent's evaluation. They are considering the use of the same format as in the past and will consider a new tool to use in the future.

President Barber reminded the Board that there will be no business approved until January 24, 2012. If necessary, a special meeting of the Board could be held on January 17, 2012.

Dr. Roberts thanked member O'Connor, Sacks and Therese O'Neill for attending the Gates Foundation workshop, reporting that it was a worthwhile event.

**BOARD RESPONSE TO PUBLIC COMMENT**

None

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TO PUBLIC  
COMMENT

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to conduct, President Barber declared the meeting adjourned at 10:05 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

The next regularly scheduled meeting of the Board will be held on Tuesday, January 10, 2012, beginning at 7 p.m. at Roosevelt Middle School in River Forest.

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Board President

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Board Secretary