

**Official Minutes of the
Oak Park Board of Education District 97,
970 Madison Street, Cook County, Oak Park, Illinois
March 9, 2010**

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

Present: Gates, Spatz, Clouser, Reddy, Harton, and Barber
Absent: Traczyk
Also Present: Superintendent Constance R. Collins, Director of Human Resources Trish Carlson, Assistant Superintendent of Finance and Operations Therese O'Neill, Assistant Superintendent of Teaching and Learning Kevin Anderson, Communications Coordinator Chris Jasculca, Director of Special Education Mike Padavic, and Board Secretary Sheryl Marinier

ROLL CALL

Executive Session

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Reddy moved, seconded by Harton, that the Board of Education move into executive session at 6:02 p.m. Roll call vote.

Ayes: Reddy, Harton, Gates, Clouser, Spatz, and Barber
Nays: None
Absent: Traczyk
Motion passed.

Open Session

OPEN SESSION

Harton moved, seconded by Reddy, that the Board of Education move into open session at 7:08 p.m. Roll call vote.

Ayes: Harton, Reddy, Gates, Barber, Spatz, and Clouser
Nays: None
Absent: Traczyk
Motion passed.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1.1.0 Approval of Minutes of February 22, 2010

Harton moved, seconded by Clouser, that the Board of Education approve the minutes from the February 22, 2010 meeting. Roll call vote.

Ayes: Harton, Clouser, Gates, Spatz, Barber, and Reddy
Nays: None
Absent: Traczyk
Motion passed.

1.2.0 Approval of Minutes of February 23, 2010

Gates moved, seconded by Harton, that the Board of Education approve the minutes from the February 23, 2010 special meeting with revisions. Roll call vote.

Ayes: Gates, Harton, Spatz, Barber, Clouser, and Reddy
Nays: None
Absent: Traczyk
Motion passed.

CENTRAL OFFICE REORGANIZATION

Vice President Barber announced that item 5.2 Central Office Reorganization will be tabled this evening.

Public Comment

PUBLIC COMMENT

Kimberly Werner, Oak Park resident and parent, commented on behalf of the SEA members in regards to the proposed reorganization of the central office staff. She reported that the SEA members are disappointed and concerned. Werner shared that Oak Park schools have a long history of struggling to support children with disabilities, and in their opinion, the proposal shows a change for the worse. She shared a story about a teacher who refused a parent's request for an IEP, noting that the teacher was not following the District's procedures. Werner continued by sharing that this teacher has a pattern of denying special services testing to students. Werner implied that the director of special education has no authority to impose discipline on this teacher. She reported that the SEA members support the current director of special education and suggested that the director should have authority to comply with state standards.

Michelle Mascaro, Oak Park resident and parent, spoke against the reorganization. She explained that her family chose to move to Oak Park because they were impressed with the District 97 Special Education department and its director. Although her child is currently doing well, she expressed concern that the changes would stretch the director too thin. She encouraged the Board to involve more people in the decision process, and requested that someone be accountable for the education of those with special needs. She suggested that adding additional responsibilities to the director of special education would dilute his capacity to oversee both programs. Mascaro also express concern over the mentoring program for next year.

Special Reports

SPECIAL REPORTS

FACILITIES COMMITTEE

Jamil Bou-Saab, chairman of the Facilities Committee (FAC), began by expressing thanks to all of the FAC members and the support staff. Bou-Saab reflected on the committees accomplishments in 2009, which included:

- The 2009 Capital Improvements plans and bids
- Continued discussion on the administration and warehouse space needs, analysis and cost estimates. Reviewed and evaluated the Madison Highlands Development option
- Participated in discussion with the Village and Seven Generations Ahead regarding sustainability and green practice
- Initial review of operation and maintenance and ongoing capital improvements financial projections
- Evaluating the recommendation of middle school roof improvements

Bou-Saab reported that the future initiatives of the committee include:

- Administration and warehouse analysis and recommendations
- Review of capital improvements and O & M plans
- Review and evaluate O & M costs (compare annually)
- Sustainability and green practice review and recommendation
- Provide recommendation on roof improvements for the middle schools
- Provide recommendation for Performance Contract Phase II
- Review and evaluate site improvements such as playgrounds and landscaping

CURRICULUM ADOPTION: MIDDLE SCHOOL LANGUAGE ARTS

Dr. Anderson introduced the Language Arts co-chairs Lisa Hendrix and Carise Comstock who discussed the Prentice Hall/Pearson Language Arts materials. After piloting this program in both middle schools, the co-chairs and Dr. Anderson, on behalf of the middle school Language Arts departments, recommended the purchase of these materials for grades six-eight. A representative from Pearson demonstrated the online resources included in the purchase price. Additionally, the District will be allowed to keep the unedited versions of the textbooks used during the pilot. Prentice Hall has submitted a proposal

CURRICULUM ADOPTION: MIDDLE SCHOOL LANGUAGE ARTS – (Continued)

of estimated costs to District 97 that includes approximately \$205,000 in “No Charge” items. The total cost of the materials for the adoption is approximately \$107,506.

They explained that Pearson is currently supplying District 97 with social studies materials. District 200 is also a customer of Pearson. The Language Arts department is reviewing the high school requirements and working backwards to create a curriculum map that will assist in preparing the middle school children for their high school experience.

Dr. Anderson recommended bringing this to the Board for adoption during the March 23 meeting. The materials will be delivered prior to the beginning of the 2010-2011 school year, and in time to conduct any necessary professional development prior to the beginning of the school year.

Board comments and suggestions included interest in knowing if the online videos within the program are rated. Interest was also expressed in knowing how the textbooks will be numbered and labeled to prevent loss. The strategies to assure utilization were questioned. Interest was expressed in knowing if focused grammar will help the students in writing and processing. Interest was also expressed in knowing if the students are mastering the skills in the time frame allowed.

Dr. Collins reported that she is working with Mark Pickus to get test scores from the high school.

Action Items

ACTION ITEMS

4.1.1 Approval of Bill List and Related Reports.

Clouser moved, seconded by Harton, that the Board of Education approve the Bill List and Related Reports. Roll call vote.

Ayes: Clouser, Harton, Gates, Barber, Spatz, and Reddy
Nays: None
Absent: Traczyk
Motion passed.

4.1.1 Approval of Personnel Action

Clouser moved, seconded by Reddy, that the Board of Education approve the Personnel Action Report for Leave of Absence and Terminations only. Roll call vote.

Ayes: Clouser, Reddy, Harton, Gates, Barber, and Spatz
Nays: None
Absent: Traczyk
Motion passed.

4.1.2 Approval of Engagement Letter for Fiscal Year Audit

Harton moved, seconded by Reddy, that the Board of Education authorize McGladrey & Pullen to conduct its FY10 audit as delineated in the attached formal engagement letter dated February 16, 2010 at a base fee of \$49,500. Roll call vote.

Ayes: Harton, Reddy, Barber, Gates, Spatz, and Clouser
Nays: None
Absent: Traczyk
Motion passed.

4.3.1 Adoption of Board Policies

Clouser moved, seconded by Reddy, that the Board of Education adopt Policy 5601 Serious Misconduct as presented and 8310 Public Records as amended. Roll call vote.

Ayes: Clouser, Reddy, Gates, Barber, Harton, and Spatz
Nays: None
Absent: Traczyk
Motion passed.

District Activity MULCH BID

DISTRICT ACTIVITY

Therese O'Neill reported that last year the principals expressed concern regarding the need for mulch at the schools. Norman Lane was able to facilitate some of the work and agreed to complete the project during the summer of 2010. Seven bids were accepted in February 2010, and the administration is recommending award of a contract to the lowest bidder, McGinty Brothers, in the total amount of \$5,810. The mulch bid will be brought back to the Board for formal award at its March 23, 2010 meeting. Work will be scheduled during late July or early August 2010.

Superintendent's Report

SUPERINTENDENT'S
REPORT

The District received three FOIA requests, one regarding the ARRA grant submitted to the state, one regarding substitute teaching costs/teacher sick days, and the third regarding emails. The ARRA grant FOIA is being denied for the following reason: Section 7(1)(h) exempts proposals and bids for any contract, grant, or agreement, including information which if it were disclosed would frustrate procurement or give an advantage to any person proposing to enter into a contractor agreement with the body, until an award or final selection is made. The request for emails will require extensive work therefore an extension has been requested. The substitute FOIA is being processed in accordance with the law.

District 97 has earned the SchoolSearch™ 2010 Bright Red Apple™ Award for educational excellence. Districts are chosen based on five key factors: academic performance, pupil/teacher ratio, expenditure per pupil, educational level of teachers and average teacher salary. This information will be added to the Web site.

Dr. Collins and Bob Spatz attended the IASB West Cook Executive Committee meeting last night. The spring dinner meeting is Tuesday, April 27, which is a District 97 Board meeting night. The Board was encouraged to consider changing their meeting date. Due to other conflicts, the Board agreed to not reschedule the April 27 Board meeting. IASB will be contacted letting them know that District 97 cannot have representation at the spring IASB event. It was suggested that the West Cook board consider scheduling events on the fifth week of a month to avoid conflicts.

Board members were reminded that they can register for online training through IASB by using their password after logging onto <http://www.iasb.com/training/onlinelearning.cfm>. There is a 20 percent discount for courses in March and April.

The Board needs to identify an April meeting to discuss committee structure/charges. Dr. Collins and President Traczyk will work on identifying a date.

Dr. Collins reported that more than 500 candidates have visited with the District at the various job fairs. During these visits, candidates are screened to determine if they will potentially move forward in the interview process.

Dr. Collins congratulated the Board for having six members registered for the NSBA conference. This is a great opportunity as the conference will be held in Chicago.

District 97 has received \$3,598.56 for the FY2010 School District Library Program Grant from the Office of the Secretary of State. This is similar to what the District has received in previous years.

Superintendent's Report – (Continued)

A number of questions have arisen during the course of the year regarding differentiation and gifted instruction in District 97. Dr. Collins is working with Kevin Anderson and Kelly Baird to give a presentation to the Board regarding the District's program. Dr. Collins will schedule a 30-minute presentation during the May 25 Board meeting to discuss the role of teachers, GTDs and administration. This presentation will include gifted and classroom teachers along with principals.

The Middle School Art Exhibit Reception will be held tomorrow night, March 10, from 6 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. at OPRF. Works from Brooks and Julian students will be on display.

Dr. Collins visited Stella Turi's third grade classroom at Holmes School last Friday. Students were writing ISAT thank you letters to their book buddies. Dr. Collins shared a few letters with the Board.

Two teams of Mann School fourth and fifth graders and a team of Julian students will compete at the Illinois State Odyssey of the Mind competition. Dr. Collins shared that the Odyssey of the Mind is a team, creative problem solving program. Each team will compete in two areas: a long term problem and a spontaneous problem. The students have been working on their long term problems since December and must present the solution to the problem in an eight-minute show. The spontaneous problem will be given and solved within 10 minutes at the competition site. The state competition is at Belleville High School near St. Louis on Saturday, March 20. Board members were invited to the team's dress rehearsal in the auditorium of Mann School on Thursday, March 18 at 2 p.m.

BOARD CONCERNS

Board Concerns

It was suggested that the Board respond to the FAC committee's request for direction regarding sustainability and green issues. Several committee options were suggested for dealing with this issue within the District. Suggestions included: that the Board could choose to allow the process to move forward through the direction of the PTOs, a committee could be created that could include Board members; or an ad hoc committee could look at the area for six months to a year. It was agreed that Vice President Barber will share this item of interest with President Traczyk and suggest that the Board schedule time to discuss this concern. It was suggested that this topic might fit into the committee discussion to be scheduled in the near future.

The Board members were asked to use caution when speaking to the public and other governing boards regarding the TIF. The Board was encouraged to resolve this issue collaboratively and with respect.

Dr. Collins, President Traczyk, Trish Carlson, and Therese O'Neill met with the District attorney regarding the crossing guards. The District is waiting for feedback from the District 97 attorney, who has been in contact with the Village attorney. Tom Barwin will identify which Village attorney we should communicate with in the future.

Dr. Anderson updated the Board on the Invest and Innovation program. He explained that he is currently waiting for a Webinar and documents on the Internet.

Dr. Collins updated the Board on the Race to the Top. She explained that the process is in the preliminary stages at this time. The District will review the options to determine if the District would accept funding offered through this program. The teachers union has expressed concern regarding the evaluation process required for this program, therefore administration would need to make a decision as to whether the District could collaboratively move forward. Dr. Collins reported that the District is expecting approximately \$100,000 for Title I.

Announcements

Appreciation was expressed for sharing the information on the upcoming school events and the Bright Red Apple award.

Members Gates and Barber attended the intergovernmental meeting. Several government bodies were in attendance. Discussion included ways to link the different groups. Ideas included Web sites, volunteer programs, and group participation in activities. Their next meeting is scheduled for June 12.

A group of 15 to 20 Japanese students are visiting District 97 this week.

The District 97 staff and students were acknowledged for getting thru ISATs last week.

Dr. Collins reported that there was a misunderstanding in the community regarding the structure of the sixth grade math department for next year. She explained that the current two classes will remain the same. Collins explained that a letter was sent to parents in January, and an e-mail was sent today. Both communications emphasized this.

Highlights of the COG meeting included that the other governing bodies are aware of the D97 financial concerns. Other bodies, including the library and township boards, are also concerned about finances. The annual book sale may need to relocate this year due to construction at the high school. In addition, the Village shared some of their research in relationship to the Marion Street improvement plan. Prior to the redevelopment of that area, half a million dollars of private investments were put into this area. Since the redevelopment, more than \$3 million of private funding has been invested in this general area. The high school reported that they have been very successful with minority recruitment this year. The high school also reported that they will be adding an assistant principal position next year.

There being no further business to conduct, Vice President Barber declared the meeting adjourned at 9:45 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

The next regularly scheduled meeting of the Board will be on Tuesday March 23, 2010 beginning at 7 p.m. at the administration building located at 970 Madison Street.

 Board President

 Board Secretary