

**Official Minutes of the
Oak Park Board of Education District 97,
260 Madison Street, Oak Park, Cook County, Illinois
Special Meeting June 23, 2017**

President Spurlock called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m.

ROLL CALL

Present: Spurlock, Broy, Liebl, Spatz and Breymaier
Absent: O'Connor, and Datta
Also Present: Chief Academic and Accountability Officer Dr. Amy Warke, Senior Director of Special Services Mike Padavic, Senior Director of Policy, Procedures and Communication Chris Jasculca, Sr. Director of Administrative Services Dr. Felicia Starks Turner, and Board Secretary Sheryl Marinier

President Spurlock explained that the need to hold this meeting at 10:00 am was due to the busy schedules of the Board members and the ability to meet quorum outside of the regularly scheduled meetings.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

PE WAIVER

Felicia Starks Turner came to the table and read a statement explaining the need for the PE Waiver. She explained that the waiver will not change what we are doing in the schools, just codify what we are doing at all of them. She noted that administration will work with the teachers to design other structured activities. If approved by the Board of Education and the State, it would be in place for a maximum of two years. If the Board decides to put the plan in place in January, the waiver would only be good for 18 months. The waiver is renewable for up to six years (five and one half years if the Board chooses to go with the 18 month option).

Starks Turner explained that due to increased enrollment, the elementary schools are unable to hold PE daily, so it offers PEA in place of PE. She noted that PE is being offered in the middle schools on a daily basis. She shared that the concept has been brought up in the past, but was never supported because the district offers PEA and recess on a daily basis. She explained that the public hearing is necessary to ensure that the district is in compliance and noted that the State is considering legislature for districts to have a permanent waiver for daily PE.

Starks Turner explained that each elementary school has a gym and a multipurpose room, while the middle schools have two gymnasiums each.

The structure of PEA was discussed. Starks Turner explained that she shared a document with the PE chair that identified structured activities that could be done in a classroom setting.

President Spurlock explained that during the waiver period, administration will be asked to supply figures on how much it would cost for the district to offer daily PE at the elementary schools. This should include the cost of building gymnasiums, additional teachers and supplies. During that time, the district will also consider other ways that PE can be offered, such as partnerships with the Park District.

It was noted that Berwyn, Maywood and Chicago are all offering structured PE two days a week and 30 minutes of playground activity on the other day. All of this is outside of the gym and without PE teaches.

The current options given to children during PEA were shared, noting that it consists of 45-60 minutes a week and students are allowed to choose their activity.

Board comments included noting that at least for the last 20 years, PE has not been offered daily in the elementary schools. It was assumed that the majority of school districts waive daily PE. It was noted that the Board has considered space needs in the recent past, at that time its priority was classroom space needs, ADA compliance and HVAC needs. It was later determined that HVAC was too costly to be considered. Interest was expressed in seeing a plan in writing that identifies where we are, what we are evaluating and where we want to go. It was suggested that the district use the time of the waiver to add more consistency and clarity, and to compare its offerings to that of other districts. The need to understand the full impact was expressed. Interest was expressed in knowing what is best practice in the Nation, Illinois and internationally. It was suggested that the district talk to others in the community and determine what is valued around PE. It was noted that the decisions made regarding PE may affect the teachers' contract.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Diane Shea, an Oak Park resident and Yoga teacher, expressed opposition to the waiver as a long-term solution. She explained how physical education on a daily basis enhances a student's performance. She shared results from a study in Naperville that indicated that 60 minutes of daily activity helps children to learn. Shea shared that she would support PE at any cost, and implied that it should trump music, etc. Additionally, Shea noted that this is also an equity issue, as not everyone has the ability to participate in activities outside of school.

Christina Welter, an Oak Park resident, shared a statement from Gina Barnett. Welter noted that both ladies are public health professionals. She shared that kids who are healthy learn better, noting that behavior, attendance, and cognitive skills improve with increased physical activity. She expressed concern that 20 percent of Oak Park lives in poverty and may not have access to activities outside of school. She noted that equity and best practices are an issue, and schools need to strive for both. Welter reported that Illinois has one of the best standards in the country. She noted that teachers have been communicating with her about other ways the district could be in compliance and asked the Board to involve the parents. She suggested inviting the Wellness Council to participate in the planning and asked if she could be included on that team. Welter expressed opposition to the waiver, but expressed understanding to the compliance issue.

Elizabeth Carrier an Oak Park resident asked a series of questions and requested answers before the end of this year. She asked that the Board work quickly, concisely and excel above the guidelines.

- What are each of the schools doing for PE at this time?
- How can we fit PE into the facilities that we already have?
- How many of our schools have a PR teacher? It was noted that each school has at least one PE teacher and larger schools have an additional traveling PE teacher.
- Can the Board provide "specifically" what each school is doing?
- Why additional structure needs? It was explained that each of the buildings have already had at least one addition put on to them. Additionally, it was noted that PE has not been offered daily since at least the 1970's.
- What is normal accountability to addressing health in our decisions as a district?

Courtney White, an Oak Park resident and PE chair for Downers Grove High School, expressed concern that physical activity is not a priority in this district. She suggested that the Board engage the PE teachers in the decision making process, noting that they will find a way to get the children active and teach them about their bodies. She suggested that the Board make this a priority and get it done. She noted that as an Oak Park resident, she is willing to pay to make this happen.

Tracy Brunette, an Oak Park resident, expressed concern about the Board's comment of "that is the way it has always been". She explained that she moved to Oak Park because the district is focused on the whole child. She suggested that the district use the PTO's and the parents to lead PEA.

It was explained to Brunette that using PEA also requires a waiver and must be led by a classroom teacher. The only thing that does not require a waiver is 150 minutes a week with a PE teacher. Additionally, it was suggested that PE teachers could be coming into the classroom and doing stretches.

Tom Rocco, an Oak Park resident, and a PE teacher for 15 years, expressed his opposition to the waiver. He explained that he understands that there are a lot of issues, but went on to explain that he has worked both at the elementary level and the middle school level. He shared that when a PE teacher meets with the students on a daily basis there is better communication and the ability to work on improving student goals, etc. He noted that retention is a problem at the elementary level because they forget material between class sessions. He explained that PEA time is not in the best interest of the kids, and suggested that the community would see better health and learning benefits when PE is offered consistently. He noted that LaGrange and LaGrange Park have five day a week programs. Rocco offered to help, and noted that he works with the Illinois Health Institute.

Todd Black, explained that he has taught PE at the high school level for 30 years, and noted that the children are in dire need of physical fitness. He expressed the need for the children to be in one mind, one body, and one spirit. Black explained that it would crush him to not see kids have physical activity.

Max Sakellaris, an Oak Park resident, explained that he taught at the elementary level for two years and is now at the high school. He explained how he has taught in classrooms, hallways, and outdoors and the lessons were always great. He encouraged the Board to not let facilities and money be the priorities. He noted the importance of activity for the kids in the community, and encouraged the Board to work quickly to resolve this concern.

Linda Carlson, an Oak Park resident with two kids, shared that she is a PE teacher at the high school and won the National PE Teacher of the Year award. She recommended the book “Spark” by John Ratey. She explained how educators have found that struggling students who exercise prior to classes excel. She expressed concern that PEA is not fair to the students or the classroom teacher, as this is not their specialty. She expressed concern about the possibility of the waiver being extended and trusting the Board to keep their word. She expressed concern that in six years there may be no PE being offered at all. She reminded the Board that Illinois is the best in the county when it comes to physical education, as it is the only state that requires three out of five years of PE in high school. She suggested that the Board look at what Naperville, Berwyn and Maywood are doing. She asked if PE was considered when passing the referendum, and expressed concern that the village may be asking for more money.

An additional meeting was requested for the parents who were unable to attend a meeting during the day.

It was noted that the public comments were appreciated and will be considered. It was noted that history is not an excuse, that this is the first time that there has been this much public comment on the topic in at least ten years. This is the first time that the parents have indicated that the status quo is not acceptable.

Discussion continued about possibly committing to another public engagement opportunity and reporting back by December 31, 2017.

Member Liebl expressed concern about the waiver and encouraged the Board to move quickly to find a solution.

APPROVAL OF PE WAIVER

Breymaier moved, seconded by Spatz, that the Board of Education of Oak Park District 97, approves the PE waiver, for 18 months, and submit same to the Illinois State Board of Education and that we commit to keeping the community updated on the status of our efforts to comply with physical education requirements in the State of Illinois in a timely manner and provide opportunities for input or feedback from the community. Roll call vote.

Ayes: Breymaier, Spatz, Broy, Liebl and Spurlock
Nays: Liebl
Absent: Datta and O’Connor
Motion passed.

PUBLIC HEARING - FOOD SERVICE WAIVER

Alicia Evans came to the table and explained that a food service waiver has been in place for the last five years allowing groups to sell food as fundraisers and keep the profits for use by their organizations. By approving this waiver, the Board would be extending this action for another five years.

It was noted that the food in question is outside of the regular offerings, and is required to meet the nutritional guidelines. CAST and BRAVO both use this kind of fundraiser and could not survive without in revenue would not be able to sustain their initiatives without this income.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Stephanie Kiesling, an Oak Park resident expressed support for this waiver. She explained that, because of this waiver, every Wednesday, kids support the CAST program at Julian by purchasing healthy meals, and on Friday’s the profits from the meals support the PTO. She explained that families can sign up at the beginning of the year or kids can buy a meal on that day. She shared how the fundraiser is staffed by volunteers, which allows the parent’s time to participate in the social experience of the lunch program. She noted that the income from the fundraiser brings in about 42 percent of the CAST income.

Laura Lollis, an Oak Park resident and CAST council member, shared that she is involved in other fundraisers but they do not come close to the profits made through the lunch program. She noted that the fundraiser takes place in the cafeteria, not in other areas of the school.

Debra Woods, an Oak Park resident and member of the PTO governing board, shared that the money brought in from the sale of healthy meals is over 80 percent of what the organization takes in. She noted that other fundraising activities do not come anywhere near the profits from the lunch time meals. She noted that Domino Pizza goes out of their way to make a nutritional pizza.

Randi Orlin, an Oak Park resident and Administrative Assistant for the BRAVO program at Brooks Middle School, emphasized the importance of the healthy meal fundraisers and noted that the nutritional information is always provided.

It was noted that the profits go directly to the organizations and do not affect the district's budget in any way. Additionally, it was noted that the district's regular food service is in partnership with the high school, which is aware of the district's fundraising practice and supports the process.

3.1.2 APPROVAL OF FOOD SERVICE WAIVER

Broy moved, seconded by Breymaier, that the Board of Education of Oak Park District 97, approves the food service waiver, for the next 5-year period of time, and submit same to the Illinois State Board of Education. Roll call vote.

Ayes: Broy, Breymaier, Spatz, Liebl, and Spurlock
Nays: None
Absent: Datta and O'Connor
Motion passed.

ACTION ITEMS

3.2.1 APPROVAL PERSONNEL ACTION

Spatz moved, seconded by Liebl, that the Board of Education of Oak Park District 97, approves the Personnel Report as presented. Roll call vote.

Ayes: Spatz, Liebl, Breymaier, Broy, and Spurlock
Nays: None
Absent: Datta and O'Connor
Motion passed.

3.2.2 APPOINTMENT OF SENIOR DIRECTOR OF BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS

Broy moved, seconded by Breymaier, moved that the Board of Education of Oak Park District 97, appoint Jeanne Keane as the Senior Director of Buildings and Grounds at a salary of \$121,501 for the 2017-2018 school year, effective July 1, 2017. Roll call vote.

Ayes: Broy, Breymaier, Liebl, Spatz, and Spurlock
Nays: None
Absent: Datta and O'Connor
Motion passed.

Alicia Evans introduced Jeanne Keane to the Board.

3.2.3 APPOINTMENT OF DIRECTOR OF SPECIAL EDUCATION

Breymaier moved, seconded by Spatz, moved that the Board of Education of Oak Park District 97, appoint Donna Middleton as the Director of Special Education at a salary of \$98,654 for the 2017-2018 school year, effective July 1, 2017. Roll call vote.

Ayes: Breymaier, Spatz, Liebl, Broy, and Spurlock
Nays: None
Absent: Datta and O'Connor
Motion passed.

Eboney Lofton introduced Donna Middleton to the Board.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to conduct, President Spurlock declared the meeting adjourned at 11:43 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

Board President

Board Secretary