



# Oak Park Elementary School District 97

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## **District 97 and OPESP Reach Four-Year Agreement**

On Tuesday, April 9, 2019, the District 97 Board of Education approved the terms of a new four-year collective bargaining agreement with the Oak Park Educational Support Professionals (OPESP) that will run through the 2022-23 school year. Below are several of the outcomes and highlights from the agreement, which was approved by the OPESP membership on April 2, 2019.

- OPESP members will receive a wage increase of 7% in the first year of the contract, and 2% in each of the three subsequent years. The increase in the first year is aimed at addressing the higher than expected rate of growth in CPI-U (Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers) that occurred over the past two years, while also trying to align the salaries for this group more closely with the current market. The increases in the subsequent years are aimed at providing the members with a more consistent rate of growth in their salaries over the course of their employment with the district, which will help with the recruitment and retention for these positions.
- The funding and management of the sick leave bank will be shifted from the board to OPESP following an initial contribution by the board of 50 days (valued at approximately \$9,000) at the start of the first year of the agreement. Depending on the total number of days used, this move could save the district up to \$9,000 per year.
- Similar to other employee groups in the district, OPESP members will continue to share the cost of insurance.
- The certification requirements for the technology specialists have been updated to align them with current standards. This includes amending the type of certifications that are required and exams that need to be taken in order to improve the efficiency and expand the knowledge and expertise that our specialists have of the systems, software, etc. from Apple, Microsoft, Cisco and CompTia that we use on a daily basis.
- OPESP members who retire from the district with a minimum of eight years of consecutive service in the bargaining unit will be eligible for a one-time post-retirement payment of \$200 for each year of service. For example, if someone retires with 10 consecutive years of service within the unit, he/she will be eligible for a one-time payment from the district of \$2,000. The purpose/goal of this provision is to recognize and reward the hard work and longevity of the members of the group.
- Two OPESP members will be appointed to serve on the district's professional learning committee, and will be responsible for helping to plan professional development for the other members of the bargaining unit.

### **Joint Statement Regarding New OPESP Collective Bargaining Agreement**

During the past several months, the board of education, district administration and Oak Park Educational Support Professionals (OPESP) have worked together on the creation of a new contract that will further the district's vision and reward the hard work and contributions of an amazing group of dedicated employees.

We want to thank everyone who was involved in the negotiations not only for their time and expertise, but also for the professionalism, respect and collaborative spirit they exhibited throughout this important process. Both the agreement and the collective efforts we undertook to reach it reflect the strength of our partnership and our shared commitment to the continued long-term success of our schools and the more than 6,000 children we have the honor and privilege of serving on a daily basis.