



Oak Park Elementary School District 97

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District 97 and OPTAA 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 Teacher Assistants' Association (OPTAA) 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 OPTAA membership on April 8, 2019.

- The agreement features a wage increase of 6% in the first year of the contract that 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. It also includes increases in the final two years that will be more in line with CPI-U.
- The agreement includes a new salary structure (detailed below) that will help with the recruitment and retention of our teaching assistants. The primary change in the structure is the addition of a third level that teaching assistants will move to at the start of their fifth consecutive year of employment in the district.

OPTAA Proposed Salary Structure

	2019-2020 (6%)	2020-2021 (3%)	2021-2022 (2%)	2022-2023 (2%)
Level I (0-1 years)	\$18.02	\$18.56	\$18.93	\$19.31
Level II (2-4 years)	\$19.19	\$19.77	\$20.16	\$20.57
Level III (5+years)	\$20.34	\$20.95	\$21.37	\$21.80

- The language about training has been expanded to include requirements for teaching assistants who work with students who need assistance with toileting, lifting and the de-escalation of behavior.
- Under the new agreement, the funding and management of the sick leave bank will be shifted from the board to the OPTAA following an initial contribution by the board that is equivalent to the number of teaching assistants who are employed by the district on the final day of the 2018-19 school year. Depending on the total number of days used, this move could save the district up to \$24,000 per year.
- OPTAA members will have access to a leave of absence that is similar to the one provided under the Family Medical Leave Act. A teaching assistant will need to have worked 171 days in the prior year in order to be eligible for this leave.
- The hourly differential for serving as a substitute teacher when the classroom teacher is absent has been increased from \$3 per hour to \$6 per hour.

- The agreement allows the administration to stagger the start and end times for teaching assistants if doing so will better meet the needs of students. It also provides clearer procedures for dealing with absenteeism and tardiness, and clarifies the amount of time teaching assistants should spend in supervisory assignments.

Joint Statement by the Board of Education and OPTAA

The board of education, administration and Oak Park Teacher Assistants' Association (OPTAA) understand and appreciate how vital our teaching assistants are to the success of our district. That is why we are pleased to announce that we have come to terms on a new contract that recognizes the contributions of these dedicated employees, and reflects the critical role they play in helping every child we serve learn, grow and achieve.

We want to thank the members of both negotiating teams for their tireless efforts throughout this process. We also want to share that we remain strongly committed to continuing the important work we have done together to advance the district's vision and build a better tomorrow for our schools, students and community.