This meeting was held virtually using Zoom during the time of the Coronavirus pandemic. Everyone participated via electronic means.

President Broy called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m.

Present:  Broy, Kim, Spurlock, Liebl, Kearney, Moore, and Breymaier
Absent:  None
Also Present: Superintendent Dr. Carol Kelley, Director of Communications Amanda Siegfried, Senior Director of Technology Michael Arensdorff, Senior Director of Human Resources Gina Herrmann, Chief Academic and Accountability Office Eboney Lofton, Associate Superintendent of Education Felicia Starks Turner, Senior Director of Equity Carrie Kamm, Consultant Rob Grossi, and Board Secretary Sheryl Marinier.

EXECUTIVE SESSION
Kim moved, seconded by Kearney that the Board move into executive session for the purpose of Appointment, Employment, Compensation, Discipline, Performance, or Dismissal of Specific Employees 5 ILCS 120/2(C)(1), Collective Negotiations 5 ILCS 120/2(C)(2) at 6:02 p.m.

Ayes:  Kim, Kearney, Broy, Spurlock, Breymaier, Liebl, and Moore
Nays:  None
Absent:  None
Motion passed

OPEN SESSION
Broy moved that the board move into Open Session at 6:54 p.m. The motion was seconded by Moore. All members of the Board were in agreement. The Board reconvened in Open Session at 7:00 p.m.

PUBLIC COMMENT
Vice President Kim read aloud the public comments that were emailed to the board prior to the start of the board meeting.

Elyse Smith and Nikki Pines
First of all, we would like to thank you for your time that you have spent on this hybrid plan. We know it has been a long road, but we appreciate the board and district administration having the health and safety of the students and staff as a top priority!

As you finalize the details of the hybrid plan, we ask that you please allow staff members the opportunity to leave the school building after hybrid students go home for the day. (At or shortly after 12:30pm.) We cannot see an advantage to keeping us all at school until 3pm once students go home since it will be our lunch and planning time or asynchronous time. Many districts, like Riverside District 96 and Glenbard District 87, allow their teachers to go home when the hybrid day is done.

By allowing us to leave after the students leave, it would allow for us to safely eat lunch without our masks on. Some of us share spaces and do not feel comfortable taking our masks off around others. Many of us do not want to take our masks off at all after having multiple students eat in the classroom unmasked. Unfortunately there is nowhere else to eat. Many staff members do not live in or near Oak
Park and would not be able to drive home and come back. With the cold winter months, we do not want to have to eat in our cars or outside. In addition to this, allowing us to leave after the students leave would give the custodians more time to effectively clean all learning spaces.

We appreciate you taking this into strong consideration. We know that this will make all staff members feel more comfortable and safe.

**Jamie Winchel and others (see below)**
As you finalize the details of the hybrid plan, we ask that you please limit the number of staff who have to be in the buildings at any one time. We ask that you allow us to leave the building after hybrid students go home for the day and to limit the number of staff onsite by allowing remote teachers to work remotely.

Working remotely would increase our safety, our students’ safety, our comfort level, and allow us to keep the connections we made with our students without having to wear a mask.

Most elementary schools in our district have over 100 adults working in the buildings and middle schools have close to 130. Having fewer adults in the building for less time would allow custodians more time to sanitize and more space for classes to spread out.

Some of us work in spaces where multiple people share the same entryway. Some of us work in co-taught classrooms with other teachers and TAs. Some of us share small offices. The potential for so much exposure seems like an unnecessary risk. Many staff have said that they will only feel comfortable eating in their cars. We believe many teachers will be dehydrated and exhausted in these working conditions.

Allowing us to be off-site for remote learning would recognize the time and effort staff have put into developing a robust remote learning environment. This would also allow us to teach without a mask on, which would allow students to continue to see our facial expressions and to keep our connections strong.

Many districts, like Riverside District 96 and Glenbard District 87, allow their teachers to go home when the hybrid day is done. We implore District 97 to do the same.

Dr. Kelley has been assuring us that we are “stitching a new garment.” We have the opportunity to create that garment by considering all of our staff when making decisions. We ask that you consider our humanity when you negotiate for the structure of our work day. This is the chance for District 97 to show that they are considering staff as “whole people” when making this hybrid plan. Please have us in the buildings for as little time as possible.

Jamie Winchell, Julian teacher and Longfellow and Julian parent  
Ryan Winchell, Longfellow teacher and Longfellow and Julian parent  
Élizabeth Patterson, Longfellow teacher  
Elizabeth Vietzen, Holmes teacher  
Matthew Daniel, Longfellow teacher and Irving parent  
Mandy vonBokern, Holmes teacher  
Jenny Raia, Longfellow teacher and Irving and Julian parent  
Annie Darley, Whittier teacher  
McKenzie Kula, Whittier teacher  
Savannah Heidloff, Irving teacher  
Sarah Perros, Brooks teacher and Longfellow parent  
Gina Harris, Julian teacher  
Maggie Cahill, Lincoln, Hatch, Holmes, and Whittier teacher and Irving parent
Nora Flynn, Julian teacher and Lincoln parent
Alice Martin, Julian and Lincoln teacher and Longfellow and Julian parent
Leslie Weiss, Whittier Teacher and Julian parent
Sheila Schrems, Longfellow teacher
Elena Kontos, Irving teacher
Lauren Giorango, Julian nurse and Julian and Longfellow parent
Liza Marinelarena, Longfellow teacher
Nora Heide, Longfellow teacher
Allison Nelson, Longfellow teacher
Laura Eggert, Holmes teacher
Carolyn Rapoport, Mann teacher
Lori Janu-Chossek, Beye Social Worker, Longfellow and Julian parent
Jill Pacyna, Longfellow teacher
Maria Colmenero, Beye teacher
Rasheedah Williams, Hatch teacher and Hatch parent
Shilpa Advani, Beye nurse
Jessica Milburn, Beye teacher
Petra Choi, Beye teacher
Colleen Berger, Longfellow teacher
Katherine Quickery, Hatch teacher and Hatch parent
Porsche Winfield, Hatch teacher
Paula Andries, Holmes teacher and Beye parent
Carrie Doyle, Julian social worker
Stephanie Small, Whittier teacher
Alli Lamb, Hatch teacher and Mann and Julian parent
Katy Alejos, Brooks teacher and Lincoln parent
Desi Alejos, Julian TA and Lincoln parent
Jean Walsh-Kallay, Beye teacher
Maggie McElherne, Longfellow speech pathologist
Matt Downs, Julian teacher
Maddie Datz, Mann teacher
Lizz Chu, Julian teacher
Bessie Santos, Julian teacher
Rebecca Meisinger, Lincoln teacher
Erin Jacobson, Whittier teacher
Tamara Koransky, Irving teacher, Irving and Julian parent
Kim Jones, Holmes teacher
Lee Brummell, Hatch teacher
Taylor Kula, Whittier teacher
Sherita Lyles, Hatch teacher
Sharon Pearce, Longfellow teacher
Marianne Rehfield, Holmes teacher
Steve Perkins, Hatch teacher
Cecilia Villalobos, Julian teacher
Amy Vogt, Lincoln and Longfellow teacher
Ericka Shannon, Hatch, Irving, Lincoln, Mann teacher, and Brooks parent
Molly Bruno, Hatch teacher
Conchi Ruiz, Lincoln teacher
Timothy Walsh, Julian teacher, Lincoln parent
Susan Walsh, Brooks teacher, Lincoln parent
Katie Noonan, Irving teacher
Georgina Swanson, Whittier teacher
Mike Dolan, Holmes teacher
Emilie Dolan, Irving teacher
Jennifer Milliern, Holmes teacher
Sarah Moore, Holmes teacher
Caitlin Tisch, Beye Teacher
Catherine Meredith, Lincoln teacher and Irving parent

**Erin Connor**
I hope you and your families are healthy and well and that you had a nice holiday.

I am eager for my three elementary-aged, typical learners to safely return to the classroom, however, I was particularly disheartened to hear that students with special needs were not allowed to return to the classroom today.

It’s my understanding from friends with children with special needs that the number of that population of students who elected to return to in-person learning in the fall was low; these numbers might not be exact, but they advised that there were less than 10 students for grades K-5 and approximately 30 students for grades 6-8.

I know you recently sent an updated survey, and perhaps the numbers of special needs students that would like to return increased, but I am left wondering how this school district wasn’t able to create a solution for this small number of students to return to the classroom. Even if you set aside the facts that CPS was able to return their special needs students this week, that studies conclude that the risk of spreading Covid in schools is low, and that parents of District 97 special needs students weren’t notified until after 4:00 pm yesterday that their students would not return in person today, I still believe that, especially in our equity-focused community, District 97 must be able to do something to accommodate this small and vulnerable population of learners.

I urge each of you that are in a leadership position and have influence over the decision to return these students to school to ask yourself if there is really nothing else you can do to get special needs students back in the classroom. Please see the individuals instead of the policy in this circumstance - from what I understand from the Fall, literally, 9 grade K-5 students - and please stand up for them.

**Lauren Pero**
I heard today that those families of children with IEPs were given a 16 hour notice- and no explanation as to why- their kids would not be returning to school today as scheduled. Can the board please address what it will do to keep that from happening to the district at large with our return to school plans for February 1? Parents (and teachers!) need and deserve more warning as to what can be expected. Continually moving goal posts cannot be the answer. We need a hard and firm plan, I beg you. My two elementary age kids have INCREDIBLE teachers, but 10 months has taken its toll educationally, mentally and psychologically on my kids. They’re drowning.

Thank you to the board, the teachers and to Dr. Kelley for your continued efforts in getting our kids back to school.

**Garrett and Katie Diamond**
First we would like to wish the entire board and administration a happy new year.
Our names are Garrett and Katie Diamond and we are parents of three elementary aged (1st, 3rd, and 5th grade) children in District 97. We are eager for our 3 children to return to in person learning especially for our 3rd grader, who is on the autism spectrum, with an IEP.

We were disheartened to hear, at 4 p.m., on Monday evening that he wouldn't be returning to Mann, along with his aide today (Tuesday, January 12, 2021). We were given no explanation as to why students would not be allowed to return back to in person learning and it left us scrambling for childcare once again. This is another example of the lack of respectful communication the district has shown to working parents who are essential workers, and are unable to work from home.

Children with special needs who would have returned to Mann would have numbered less than 10 students and approximately 30 students in 6-8th grade. Our son has only been in person with his aide for 7 days before an adaptive pause began in October and was extended until yesterday. We as parents, of a child with a disability, are wondering how District 97 was unable to devise a creative solution to allow the most vulnerable children to return safely in-person.

Our son is at a critical point in his education. He needs a lot of individual instruction, structure and routine, and social interaction. It is imperative to not only to his educational development but his social and emotional wellbeing for him to return to school. Every day he is e-learning, every day he does not get his full supports as outlined in his IEP, is a day lost.

We urge the school board to advocate for these children to get them back as soon as possible.

Mara Maas
The Oak Park Health Department's website states that "health officials anticipate demand will far exceed supply when vaccination shifts to Phase 1b, and local health officials are still determining the allocation process under the guidelines set out by state and federal officials." Teachers and other essential workers in our schools are among those included in group 1b. Anecdotally, I have heard that people who qualify to receive the vaccine in group 1a have had trouble scheduling their vaccine in Oak Park. Knowing this, I would like to learn more about how the district is partnering with the Oak Park Health Department to ensure timely and efficient immunization of District 97 employees. Are there plans for a centralized immunization site where district personnel can receive their immunization without having to schedule individually with the health department? Please keep the community up to date on this. As always, thank you for your hard work.

Ashley Flemming
Members of the Oak Park community have worked diligently to limit the spread of COVID-19.

I would like to know what the district is doing in regards to vaccinations for staff members returning to in person learning. The return date is fast approaching and the vaccine takes time to fully inoculate.

Also, schools around the country as well as within the state have provided employees some form of hazard pay for staff members who are to return to their buildings. What is the district doing about providing hazard pay to its returning employees? If hazard pay is opposed, will all board members, as a show of good faith, become certified as substitutes? If not, Why?

Finally, what is the district’s position on what to do with students who do not comply with mask expectations? In order to keep students and staff safe, those who choose to not wear their mask and maintain a safe distance should be sent home to continue learning in a remote setting. Will the district back up building staff when making that decision? If no, why not?
Patrick Bracco
I am shocked that there were no follow up questions from the board following the public comments and the presentation about hybrid learning, especially pertaining to the health and safety to everyone who will be exposed to many more individuals outside of their COVID bubbles.

Kryss Miller
I am a parent of a Hatch fourth grader. Making a decision about whether to send my daughter back to in-person school with the hybrid schedule was incredibly difficult. It was particularly difficult because the deadline of January 6th required that we make a final 2nd trimester decision at a time when COVID cases are high and without having any understanding of whether new peaks would occur based on Christmas and New Year’s interactions. For that reason, I intentionally waited as long as possible to make a final decision, hoping for a clearer picture of the case data.

I question why the deadline was set for so soon after the holidays and so far away from the projected start of hybrid learning, especially given the uncertainty of COVID case counts in Illinois. It appears that there was no limit to the number of students who could choose hybrid. So I am unclear what preparations are impacted this far in advance, beyond scheduling. And while the district is looking for certainty from parents, it is frustrating that they are essentially offering flexibility to one group – those who opt in to the hybrid schedule, and are free to switch to remote learning at any time, while eliminating flexibility for those who might be unsure about making a decision on this timeline.

Unfortunately, after much deliberation, when I finally sat down in the evening of January 6th to complete the selection form, I realized that I had missed the deadline by a mere two hours. As soon as I realized the form had been taken down, I immediately e-mailed the district and our school principal to let them know I had tried and would like to please opt in. I did not get a response. I called the district several times on the 7th and again did not get a response. Finally on the 11th, after I e-mailed another staff member, I received a response that I was out of luck and there would be no exceptions. I e-mailed one last plea to the Dr. Kelley and our principal Ms. Mendez. Again, we were denied. In the event that another student changes back to fully remote between now and February 1st or even during the 2nd trimester, there is no wait list.

My understanding is that I could have half-heartedly opted in back on December 18th, knowing full well that I had not made a final decision and that I could change my mind at any time. That would have been forgiven and perhaps I should have chosen that route just to cover my bases. Instead, I weighed my options deliberately – too deliberately – and waited for as much information as I could to feel comfortable making a full commitment. When I finally made my decision, this busy mom who knew the form was due on the 6th, didn’t realize the time, and missed the deadline by two hours. Two hours with 3-1/2 weeks to go. No exceptions will be made.

I respect that district has a lot of work to do to get our kids back into the classroom safely. I also understand that having hundreds of parents make decisions on their own timelines is what you are trying to mitigate. But please remember that this is also an incredibly difficult decision for parents, especially given the recent COVID trends, and a small amount of flexibility would have been greatly appreciated.

Dr. Kelley spoke
To staff members. We are planning to send response to them. Thanked them. Many of the issues raised are being discussed by admin, board and union reps meeting to make the plans for return. Want to keep staff and community informed please reach out to your union leadership.
Well-being of students and staff are our highest priority when making decisions to return to school. Complimented Donna Middleton about the amount of work she is doing. Each communication she sent in November and December said that we would make a decision on January 11.

The following comment was received after the start of the meeting and was not read aloud.

**Sarah Yaffe**

My son is a special needs student in the early childhood program at Whittier. I want to acknowledge the hard work of the teachers and commend them -- and the program administrators -- for all they've done to deliver a meaningful experience and education this year. I believe they are doing the very best they can and we appreciate their work. My son enjoys seeing his teacher and therapists on the computer. I am impressed with the resources provided, including equipment and materials to aid in at-home therapies.

All that being said, remote learning is a disservice to those students who very much require special services to thrive. Teaching and therapy over a screen -- with support from my husband -- comes nowhere close to the experience he'd receive in person. Not to mention important classroom skills, like listening to a teacher or waiting your turn -- skills that many special needs students must learn and practice -- are simply not replicable on a screen. As a result, there is no doubt in our minds that he has not advanced the way he would if he were in school. He is not building the required skills to successfully prepare him for kindergarten.

Special needs students need to be in person. And I urge the board to take a close look at new metrics to govern their return to the classroom. An emerging body of evidence suggests that schools do not increase the spread of COVID. The special needs programs have prepared for the return of students, outlined clear protocols and transparently shared those with parents. The means exist to send this vulnerable population back -- to ensure they can grow and succeed.

**SPECIAL REPORTS**

**District 97 ANTI-RACISM CURRICULUM UPDATE**

Eboney Lofton reported that the Teaching and Learning Department has developed a path forward in ensuring that anti-racist curricula are implemented in both teaching and learning for students in kindergarten through eighth grade. She suggested that it is our collective responsibility to ensure that we support our students in becoming global citizens in a wonderfully diverse democracy. Below are the plans for supporting the implementation of anti-racist curricula at both the elementary and middle school levels.

In order to support the delivery of anti-racist curriculum in kindergarten through fifth grade, the Teaching and Learning Department has established a committee comprised of culture and climate coaches, curriculum specialist, and teachers across the district to:

- Compile resources for teachers to utilize consistently across the district
- Develop units by incorporating Teaching Tolerance Social Justice Standards
- Establish concrete expectations for implementing the Teaching Tolerance Social Justice Standards
- Explore options for continued professional learning

In order to support the delivery of anti-racist curriculum in grades six through eight:

- The Language & Literature Department began the year with *all* students in sixth through eighth grade reading *Stamped* by Jason Reynolds and Dr. Ibram X. Kendi
- The Individuals and Societies and Language and Literature departments will spend department time unpacking *Teaching Tolerance* Standards and incorporating them into
Lofton was joined by several members of the Teaching and Learning team who shared details on the program and examples of how the curricula is being used.

It was noted that although the team presenting the presentation this evening lacked diversity, the team that did the work was made of diverse staff and partners (public library, DIVCO, E-Team and an Austin area school district).

It was reported that a student survey was distributed with results due at the end of the month. The team is also collecting feedback from the teachers. The team will discuss the results during a weekly department meeting, and use that information when considering future plans.

Communication about the program is being shared via PTOC, the principals, teacher newsletters and DivCo.

Board comments included interest in knowing whether people in the district who have already done work in this area were consulted.

DISTRICT 97 RETURN TO SCHOOL PLAN UPDATE
Dr. Kelley reminded the board of the priorities for the hybrid learning plan. Joseph Terry, the Director of the Oak Park Health Department updated the board on the status of the pandemic and the vaccine distribution. He reminded the board that the Village website and the CDC website have accurate information related to the pandemic, and discouraged everyone from getting their information from social media. It was reported that District 97 submitted the necessary documentation to test students for the COVID virus onsite, and is awaiting approval.

It was reported that a meeting between the transportation coordinator and Lakeview is scheduled for next week to make plans for the return of the students. The district’s safety team is meeting regularly and will determine how students will enter and dismiss from the buildings safely, and how to communicate that process. They are considering how to train staff on the new guidelines. The principals are meeting weekly to ensure alignment between schools. Building walkthroughs have been completed, and signage and markings have been put in place to ensure safety.

Holmes Elementary Principal Zelaya explained that the principals are working with the PBIS teams to identify a universal training process for all students. She explained that the principals are working to balance classes and determine the final configurations of classrooms. She explained that some classrooms may need to be moved to other locations within their buildings to ensure a safe learning space for every student.

Jim Hackett, Safety and Security Coordinator reported that the district is using the Harvard University Standards, and is working with the local infectious disease professionals for guidance.

Amanda Siegfried, Director of Communications reported that the district sent a communication to families on December 18 asking them to express their interest in sending their students to in-person school or remaining remote. The deadline of January 6, 2021 was given allowing time to organize the results prior to this evening’s meeting. Siegfried explained that administration will need to review every
classroom to make sure that everyone can be accommodated. She explained that this process will be completed again for trimester 3.

Michael Arensdorff, Senior Director of Technology and Eboney Lofton, Chief Academic and Accountability Officer explained the school schedules and indicated that additional staff may be needed.

Next steps will include:
- Meeting with the medical/public health experts this week to discuss health metrics
- Planning for safety professional development for staff
- School health/safety plans finalized
- Hosting teacher to teacher town hall (hybrid teacher panel) next week
- Professional development with Meg Ormiston (ongoing)
- Board meeting on January 26 - provide final update and seek board approval for the planning and hybrid learning plan

Board comments included asking that the board be updated with more details around the metrics and timing in order for them to be prepared when it is time to make the final decision. A special meeting was suggested in order to facilitate this need. It was suggested that the Memorandum of Understanding with the OPTA could be approved during a special meeting to expedite the process.

**ACTION ITEMS**

3.1.1 **APPROVAL OF MINUTES FOR THE DECEMBER 14, 2020 SPECIAL BOARD MEETING**
Spurlock moved, seconded by Breymaier, that the Board of Education, District 97, approve the minutes from the December 14, 2020 special board meeting as presented.

Ayes: Spurlock, Breymaier, Moore, Kearney, Kim, and Liebl
Nays: None
Absent: None
Abstain: Broy
Motion passed.

3.1.2 **APPROVAL OF MINUTES FOR THE DECEMBER 15, 2020 BOARD MEETING**
Spurlock moved, seconded by Kim, that the Board of Education, District 97, approve the minutes from the December 15, 2020 board meeting as presented.

Ayes: Spurlock, Kim, Moore, Breymaier, Kearney, and Liebl
Nays: None
Absent: None
Abstain: Broy
Motion passed.

3.2.1 **APPROVAL OF THE CONSENT AGENDA**
Spurlock moved, seconded by Kim, that the Board of Education, District 97, accept the consent agenda as presented.

3.2.1 Bill List
3.2.2 Personnel

Ayes: Spurlock, Kim, Breymaier, Liebl, Moore, Broy, and Kearney
Nays: None
Absent: None
Motion passed.

3.3.1 APPROVAL OF SUMMER BID RECOMMENDATIONS
Spurlock moved, seconded by Breymaier, that the Board of Education, District 97, approve the summer 2021 work bids that were presented on December 15, 2020 in the amount of $17,463,783.

Ayes: Spurlock, Breymaier, Moore, Kearney, Broy, Kim, and Liebl
Nays: None
Absent: None
Motion passed.

ADMINISTRATIVE ITEM
ASBESTOS ABATEMENT
Jeanne Keane shared the request for asbestos abatement. She reminded the board that this is an annual request that requires board approval. She reported that 10 bids were received and the lowest bid came in lower than the budgeted amount. This item will return for approval on January 26, 2021.

BOARD ASSIGNMENTS
STANDING BOARD COMMITTEE LIAISON REPORT FOLLOW UP (as needed – FAC, FORC, CCE and CLAIM)

COMMITTEE FOR LEGISLATION ACTION, INTERVENTION AND MONITORING (CLAIM)
It was reported that last spring, the committee worked on legislation for school districts to share data. That bill did not move forward because of the pandemic, so the committee is planning to reintroduce the bill. It was suggested that having the board’s expressed support for this bill would be helpful. After a brief discussion, the board members expressed support.

The committee expressed interest in knowing if there are other issues that they could address at the state level. It was suggested that Ed-Red might be a good resource for upcoming bills needing support.

FINANCE OVERSIGHT AND REVIEW COMMITTEE (FORC)
The FORC committee is scheduled to meet on January 21, 2021.

INTERGOVERNMENTAL LIAISON REPORT FOLLOW UP (as needed – IGOV, PTO council, CEC, OPEF, Community Council, Tri-Board on Equity, Policy, and Self-Evaluation

POLICY COMMITTEE
The Policy committee is scheduled to meet this coming Friday.

IGOV
IGOV is scheduled to meet on January 23, 2021. They will be hosting a special meeting for candidates. It was noted that this would be a good place to go to learn about what is involved in being elected to a public body and how to be a good board member.

Members Spurlock and Breymaier will share the board member’s emails with the District 97 candidates.

PARENT TEACHER ORGANIZATION (PTOC)
The PTOC is scheduled to meet on the last Monday in January.
CLOSING ITEMS
BOARD REMARKS
Member Spurlock shared that she signed up to be a substitute teacher and successfully completed her first assignment. She shared that it was a good experience, and expressed appreciation to the teachers, students and parents.

Concern was expressed about the options shared for a session for an upcoming National Equity Project (NEP) workshop, noting that one of the dates conflicts with the next board meeting. Dr. Kelley offered to find out if any of the discussion would be specific to District 97, and see if the sessions will be recorded. Member Spurlock indicated that she would only be able to attend part of a session, and asked if her leaving early might be disruptive.

AGENDA MAINTENANCE
The draft agendas for the January 26, 2021 meeting was reviewed.

ADJOURNMENT
Liebl moved, seconded by Moore that the meeting be adjourned. There being no further business to conduct, President Broy declared the meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

________________________________________  _________________________________________
Board President                            Board Secretary