Official Minutes of the Oak Park Board of Education
Elementary District 97, Cook County, Illinois

CLOSED MEETING MINUTES – May 17, 2019 TIME: 9:00 AM

The Board convened in closed session at 9:00 AM. Answering present and attending in person were President Broy, Vice President Jung, Members Spurlock, Kearney, Moore, Breymaier, and Liebl.

Also Present: Superintendent Dr. Carol Kelley, ALMA Facilitator Monica Rosen, Perry Hill from IASB and Board Secretary Sheryl Marinier

Summary discussion of the Board on all matters:

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1) Self Evaluation

This was the second part of a board retreat. The first portion was held on Friday May 16, 2019 in open session.

Ice Breaker
The board members broke up into teams and updated the rest of their team members on the nature of the conversation from last night, and shared one insight from last night that they are bringing with them today.

Goal for Today
President Broy reviewed the goals for today's meeting; equity, working with Cabinet members, identifying the top three items the board wants to focus on, and how to make them a priority throughout the year.

Monica Rosen from ALMA Group introduced Perry Hill from IASB and explained that Hill is in attendance today so that the board could hold this meeting in Closed Session.

Rosen explained that her plan for today is to create a safe space that will enable the board members to do their work in a safe, sufficient way. To do this, Rosen expressed the need to;

- Understand the district's current state, and the work that is already underway
- Establish the board's top priorities
- Reach shared agreement on how the board communicates
- Discuss the role of the board
    - Communication
        - Determine the best way for the board to communicate with the Superintendent and Cabinet members
        - Strengthen ways to engage the community in its work

Rosen posed three questions;

- What are the best ways to prepare, get informed, pose questions before, during, and after board meetings?
- What are the best ways to strengthen communication – board to superintendent, and board member to board member?

- What are the board's most important priorities to achieve around equity?

Retreat Group Norms

Two documents were shared (board norms and discussion on active learning). Everyone in attendance participated in a "North, South, East, West" activity which allowed the board members and cabinet members alike to reflect on each person's leadership and decision-making styles and how it influences the way they show up as district leaders, how they like to receive information, and how they prefer to include others and take action. Over the course of the activity several important insights emerged:

- The Superintendent utilizes the individual styles and strengths of her team to support better decision-making, and to ensure full consideration of risks and issues before moving forward on important efforts
- There are no –South-learning board members, demonstrating a potential blind-spot in decision-making style, inclusivity, or consideration of impact on others in decision-making
- Some individuals have one style as a board or cabinet member, but a different style in other roles or contexts
- The largest representation of board and cabinet members are West-leaning

Definition of the different styles

West-Leaning board members: Moore, Broy, Cabinet: Jasculca, Arensdorff, Keane, and Kamm

- Like "getting the job done," but like to gather and understand data to make informed decision-making.
- May be seen as "bossy" or controlling. May take longer to make decisions
- Value East-going leaders' ability to avoid getting into the weeds, and South-going leaders' empathic stance and understanding of multiple viewpoints

North-leaning board members: Spurlock and Kim, Cabinet: None

- Focused on taking quick action, do not get bogged down in the details, and are willing to take risks
- May appear uncaring, taking action and miss key details, instructions or considerations. May be seen as impulsive, can crash and burn or be rushed
- They value the big picture thinking that East-going leaders bring, they appreciate West-going leaders' focus on the details, and they like that South-going leaders help gel the group

East-leaning board members: Breymaier and Kearney, Cabinet members: Campbell, Lofton and Kelley

- Focus on the big picture and identify challenges
- Not always focused on the details when they should be
- They value the West-leaning leaders' reality check, South-going leaders' ability to get buy-in from others, North-leaning leaders' "go-getter-ness,) nudging them to get work done quickly

South-leaning board members: None, Cabinet: Starks Turner and Marinier

- Are compassionate, even-tempered and inclusive of others, preferring to maintain harmony
- May be seen as "too soft", wanting to fix everything
- Need processing time, and needs to be able to understand impact on people and organization before moving forward
- They value West's accuracy and attention to detail, East's processing, and North's "getting the job done"

Equity Activity

Those in attendance read from a list of choices. They chose the statement that they believed was the most factual, and then broke up into four groups according to their answers;

A – None
B – Liebl and Campbell

C – Spurlock, Moore, Jasculca, Broy, Kim and Hill
D – Kamm, Lofton, Breymaier, Warke, Starks Turner, Arensdorff, Kearney, Kelley and Keane

Rosen asked everyone within each group to discuss why they supported that statement, and then they shared out with the full group. Rosen explained that this exercise allowed the group to appreciate that while everyone clearly has a dedication and commitment to achieving equity in the district; board and cabinet members have differing points of view about how equity should be achieved in schools, and each bring personal experiences, and underlying assumptions, that heavily influence their perspective on what matters most in order for schools to achieve equity for students.

CONCLUSION OF CLOSED MEETING

Spurlock moved, seconded by Kearney that the Board of Education move into Open Session at 11:45 AM. All members of the board were in agreement. The board concluded the closed meeting and reconvened in Open Session at 12:20 PM.

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Board President