



Oak Park Elementary School District 97

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COURT DISMISSES APPEAL OF REFERENDUM LAWSUIT FILED AGAINST DISTRICT 97

Board of Education pleased with the decision and ready to move on

OAK PARK, IL -- On April 11, 2012, the First District Illinois Appellate Court dismissed the appeal filed by the individuals who were seeking to prevent District 97 from implementing the limiting rate increase that was passed by the citizens of Oak Park on April 5, 2011. The court had given the plaintiffs several opportunities to file their appellate brief; however, they repeatedly failed to meet the court's deadlines, which led to the dismissal of their appeal.

On July 1, 2011, Judge Mary Mikva of the Cook County Circuit Court issued a five-page written decision that had initially dismissed the plaintiffs' lawsuit. The plaintiffs chose to appeal Judge Mikva's decision, and asked the appellate court for an expedited treatment of their appeal in July 2011 (their request for the expedited treatment was denied). The plaintiffs then repeatedly sought filing extensions to drag the case out, but District 97's objections ultimately prevailed, and the appellate court brought an end to the suit.

"We applaud the appellate court's decision to dismiss the appeal, and are excited to finally put this matter behind us," said District 97 Board President Peter Barber. "While it was unfortunate that fighting this lawsuit forced the district to waste valuable resources that should have been invested in meeting the needs of the families we serve, we believed it was important to defend the decision the residents of this village made regarding the District 97 referendum—a measure that passed by nearly 1000 votes."

While Barber stressed that the district "did not allow the lawsuit to impede our efforts to build on the academic excellence that is the hallmark of our schools," he stated that it was time to officially move on from the matter.

"Now that this case has been dismissed, we can fully focus our efforts on providing our students with a high-quality education that will help them succeed both in and out of the classroom."

The district spent a total of \$52,235 during the past year to fight the lawsuit.