

**Official Minutes of the  
Oak Park Board of Education District 97  
260 Madison Street, Oak Park, Cook County, Illinois  
March 17, 2020 Meeting**

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 6:03 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Present: Broy, Kim, Spurlock, Breymaier, Liebl, Moore, and Kearney

Absent: None

Also Present: Superintendent Dr. Carol Kelley, Director of Communications Amanda Siegfried, Chief Academic and Accountability Officer Eboney Lofton, Senior Director of Buildings and Grounds Jeanne Keane, Senior Director of Equity Carrie Kamm, Senior Director of Technology Michael Arensdorff, Interim CFO Mark Sheahan, Consultant Rob Grossi, and Board Secretary Sheryl Marinier.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Breymaier moved, seconded by Kim that the Board move into executive session for the purpose of Appointment, Employment, Compensation, Discipline, Performance, or Dismissal of Specific Employees or Legal Counsel for the District 5 ILCS 120/2(C)(1), Pending Litigation 5 ILCS 120/2(C)(11) at 6:03 p.m.

Ayes: Breymaier, Kim, Moore, Liebl, Spurlock, Kearney, and Broy

Nays: None

Absent: None

Motion passed

OPEN SESSION

**OPEN SESSION**

Kim moved, seconded by Moore that the Board move into Open Session at 7:03 p.m. All members of the Board were in agreement. The Board reconvened in Open Session at 7:13 p.m.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

PUBLIC COMMENT

Due to the nature of a virtual board meeting, the public was asked to email their comment to the Board. All comments that were received prior to 7:00 p.m. were read aloud. The Board made it clear that any comments that were received after this portion of the meeting would be included in the minutes, but not read aloud. All comments were received prior to the start of the meeting and were read aloud.

Emily Lloyd, wrote via email;

My sixth grader was bullied by his bus driver. He told him he did not “have any friends”. The incident is verified by several other students. My son came into our house and burst into tears. I was told that the District’s hands were tied because the bus company is an independent contractor. I had to insist my son be allowed to take another bus. If District 97 truly supports the anti-bullying and kindness campaigns it must hire contractors who are serious about holding employees accountable.

Lisa Peloquin wrote via email;

Dr. Kelley's Lincoln After Action report is a step on the path towards addressing the crisis at Lincoln. I am glad to see she is proposing adding needed staff for Lincoln. I encourage you to approve this in the budget. I am also glad to see her calling for more town halls and newsletters to keep the Lincoln community informed. Perhaps these town halls can start in a virtual forum?

As you consider the next steps in helping Lincoln, I want to revisit the items on our petition, Lincoln Deserves Better. I am happy to see the increased staffing made in Dr. Kelley's report. The second item was for a "post-mortem" including exit interviews of the last three principals with the findings presented to us by May 1. I appreciate you conducted an exit interview with Ms. Zaniolo. Have you scheduled the interviews with Dr. Carlos and Ms. Silva yet? How will you report on what you have learned about Lincoln and how will that information go into the plan to address the climate and culture problems?

The third item asked for performance goals for Dr. Kelley that include principal retention and turnover metrics. Where are you in developing those goals? Having read Dr. Kelley's report, I see her naming actions that other people will do, but I am still unsure of exactly what she, herself, is committed to doing differently to create the needed change at Lincoln. Outlining your expectations for her could provide more clarity for all of us.

The final request in our petition is to have a third party analyze the situation at Lincoln and make recommendations to rebuilding trust. Ms. Graham Washington's report described toxicity at Lincoln, and that newer staff are excluded. I believe Dr. Kelley report addresses this problem through supporting the Building Leadership Team and a new leader with "executive coaching and PD support" and "climate and culture coaching". I encourage you to think critically about these ideas. Just like there are many parents at Lincoln who work hard to support teachers, and a few bad apples who are oppressive, I suspect the same might be true of the BLT. Are most of the BLT focused on creating an inclusive culture, with a few that contribute to toxicity and making new staff feel unwelcome? As you analyze your exit interview data, please be sure that our building leadership team is full of people committed to doing the right thing for children and making Lincoln a space where everyone thrives.

Also I would appreciate clarity on these proposals for executive coaching and climate and culture. Just to be clear, these are proposals coming from third parties, outside the district, correct?

Finally, I would like to ask, who will the principal of Lincoln be next year? I can understand taking a year to work on creating a positive climate and culture so a new principal can step into a healthy space. However, our kids and teachers need a leader next year to work to right the ship. Ideally, this person will know District 97 and the history of Lincoln, and have a track record of success leading schools. I would like the district to consider Faith Cole for the position.

Thank you for your time and commitment to fully understanding what is up at Lincoln.

Sabina Wong wrote via email;

I have a fourth grader and a Kindergartner at Lincoln, and a preschooler who will attend Lincoln in two years.

I understand that the Lincoln town hall follow up has been tabled for now, due to the current circumstances with COVID 19. However, I have some questions about the next steps that I hope the Board and Superintendent Kelley will be able to communicate clearly to the Lincoln community:

1. Since the discussion on the Lincoln After-Action review will not be happening today, when will it be rescheduled, and how will the delay affect the decisions for the 2020-2021 budget? One of the questions at the Town Hall was whether the recommendations from RGW will be incorporated into the budget, for example, increased staff and hiring of a third party to address the culture and climate challenges. I ask for reassurance that the Lincoln review action - items will be taken into consideration and accounted for before the budget is approved and finalized.

2. Given the lack of adequate staff in proportion to student population at Lincoln, I appreciate the request submitted by Dr. Kelley to increase the Lincoln staff by two social workers, one psychologist, one student support specialist, and one receptionist, and hope that all of these will be approved. However, if these are not approved, what is the long-term plan for creating an equitable distribution of resources across District 97? Will the staff/resources be provided within 3 years? 5 years? And if student population shifts toward another school, what protocols will be in place to redistribute staff accordingly so that that school will also get increased staffing? How will the district stand by its declared priority on equity?

3. One of the major recommendations from RGW was to hire a third party organization to address the problems of culture/climate at Lincoln, and to rebuild trust among teachers and administrators alike. While the recommended measures from Dr. Kelley include formation of a leadership team, there is no mention of a third party. How can trust be re-established if we do not rely on an outside unbiased professional to address the toxicity that was identified by RGW?

Sarah Gullette wrote via email;

I would like an answer to, and follow up to the following questions:

Spanish Immersion Program:

- Who is evaluating the program and how?
- What they are reporting on, and what is the intention of this report?
- The issue of the Spanish Immersion legacy placement has not been addressed for the upcoming school year (legacy placement was extended through the 2019-20 school year and beyond that was tabled), we request that the Board extend the legacy placement for the 2020-21 school year until which time the District can properly evaluate the existing program and make appropriate recommendations for the improvement of the program.

On Behalf of DivCo Initiatives:

DivCo Questions:

— What is District 97 hearing from families about needs and concerns? What can PTO / DivCo / Community do to support families?

— How many families have picked up lunches and do they have a sense for if additional delivery support is needed?

— How can District 97 better support students with specific learning needs (eg. wireless keyboard for dyslexic students); how is special services supporting / engaging these families about what they need specifically?

— Families can use toilet paper, paper products, etc., that District 97 may have access to, is this an option in addition to financial support?

— How can District 97 help distribute PTO / Divco / Community support to families in need?

— Can District 97 partner with the Oak Park Park District to clean / disinfect playground equipment weekly or more often during the home school period?

— Can District open up Google Hangouts or Zoom so students / teachers can make visual contact with classes / classmates?

— Comcast has just opened up free wifi to all customers and non customers for 60 days. Does District 97 have a plan to get information like this, to families?

— How is District 97 getting key information to families as updates are happening?

**ACTION ITEMS**

ACTION ITEMS

**5.1.1 APPROVAL OF REVISED MINUTES FROM THE FEBRUARY 18, 2020 BOARD MEETING**

Breymaier moved, seconded by Kearney, that the Board of Education, District 97, approve the revised minutes from the February 18, 2020 Board meeting.

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

**5.2 APPROVAL OF THE CONSENT AGENDA**

Moore moved, seconded by Spurlock that the Board of Education, District 97, approve the consent agenda as presented.

- 2.2.1 Approval of Bill List
- 2.2.2 Personnel (revised)
- 2.2.3 Donation - Irving
- 2.2.4 Donation – Parent Teacher Organizations

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

**2.3.1 APPROVAL OF ERATE**

Kearney moved, seconded by Spurlock, that the Board of Education, District 97, award the eRate switches/stacking modules contract to Summit Information Resources in the amount of \$21,840 as presented at the February 18 Board meeting.

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

The motion to enter into a 60-month agreement with ICN (services with Comcast and AT&T) to provide WAN and Last Mile circuit services, at a monthly cost of \$0, inclusive of taxes and fees as shared at the February 18 board meeting and listed in the Board packet, was tabled.

Spurlock moved, seconded by Moore, that the Board of Education, District 97, award the eRate switches/stacking modules contract to CDWG in the amount of \$47,408 as shared at the February 18 Board meeting.

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

Absent: None  
Motion passed.

**2.3.2 ACCEPTANCE OF MIDDLE SCHOOL PA PROJECT**

Kearney moved, seconded by Spurlock, that the Board of Education, District 97, approves the Middle School PA upgrade bid that was presented today, March 17, 2020, in the amount of \$544,194.00.

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

**APPOINTMENT OF ADMINISTRATORS**  
**INTERIM CO-PRINCIPAL AT LINCOLN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

Spurlock moved, seconded by Breymaier, that the Board of Education, District 97, appoint Ryan Gordon as a Co-Interim Principal of Lincoln Elementary School at an annual salary of \$117,375 effective July 1, 2020.

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

**PRINCIPAL AT MANN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

Spurlock moved, seconded by Breymaier, that the Board of Education, District 97, appoint Hussain Ali as the Principal of Mann Elementary School at an annual salary of \$129,000 effective July 1, 2020.

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

**PRINCIPAL AT BEYE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

Spurlock moved, seconded by Kearney, that the Board of Education, District 97, appoint Jennifer Schemidt as the Principal of Beye Elementary School at an annual salary of \$123,000 effective July 1, 2020.

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

Gina Herrmann introduced the three principals and explained the rigorous process that led to their hiring.

**APPROVAL OF RETIREMENT AGREEMENT**

Breymaier moved, seconded by Kearney, that the Board of Education, District 97, approve the retirement agreement between Marie Stack and Oak Park School District 97.

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

**ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS****LINCOLN AFTER ACTION REPORT**

Dr. Kelley reviewed the Lincoln After Action Report from RGW consulting. She noted that many of the recommendations made in the report are connected to other items on this agenda, especially the staffing recommendation.

Dr. Kelley noted that many of the recommendations the district would like to follow from the report and recent public comments, continue to strengthen the collaboration and culture of the school. She explained that administration is working on strengthening leaders, instructional coach, and organizational learning has been providing the district with leadership opportunities focusing on efficacy and adult practices. The district also has a district liaison for staff members, suggesting that this might be a way to improve staff morale. Administration is suggesting an HR coordinator position who can serve as an objective contact for staff. Administration heard a call for us to strategically staff Lincoln School and try to increase the number of administrators and social workers at the school. The staffing proposal for 2021 includes a few positions that will meet that need (psychologist, social worker, adding to building principals, student support specialist, and receptionist).

Dr. Kelley reported that a baseline audit will be completed, and an audit of the Spanish Immersion program. The district will offer two town hall meetings at Lincoln, one after spring break, and one toward the end of the year. Updates will share the status on the actions on these recommendations so that all the stakeholders are informed as we do the search for the permanent leader.

Dr. Kelley shared that the RGW report recommends holding off on a permanent search for the Lincoln School Principal so administration can focus on the culture of the school and build relational trust. Administration feels that an outside audit to plan a method of support would be helpful, and administration would have time to provide a solid foundation for the permanent principal. Our plan is to stay with the interim team at the school for this year.

**NATIONAL BOARD CERTIFICATION FEES**

Carrie Kamm emailed the correct document to the Board and read the memo aloud. This item requires Board approval and will return to the Board on April 7 for action.

Kamm explained that the \$10,000 annual recognition for National Board certification is identified within the teachers' contract. She explained that this request is different, and is not part of the contract, but is part of the professional development dollars identified in the district's budget.

Dr. Kelley explained that teachers are provided compensation for achieving masters degrees and doctorates, not the individual classes to achieve them.

Board comments included concern that the National Board Certification does not come with as good a payoff as ESL (English as a Second Language) does, and concern was expressed that National Board may not be the best investment for the district.

**UPDATE ON FOOD SERVICE AGREEMENT WITH THE HIGH SCHOOL**

Rob Grossi recommend a one year extension of the agreement with Oak Park River Forest High School for meals with an unchanged dollar amount.

**ASBESTOS ABATEMENT SUMMER 2020**

Jeanne Keane explained that asbestos abatement work will be needed as a part of the Summer 2020 renovation work that will be completed.

When the summer work scope was approved there were budgetary numbers for abatement under the, 'Costs by Owner' line as a place holder for the district in anticipation for some of these costs. The place holder approved was \$225,000. However, the actual cost is \$231,000 based on the bid results. Bids were opened on February 26, 2020 at 2:00 p.m. with Cove Remediation being the lowest qualified bidder. Included in the \$231,000 bid was a \$25,000 allowance. AV and FF and E numbers came in below the placeholders and we will move funds to the abatement line. Keane explained that asbestos abatement is an ongoing project.

#### POLICY COMMITTEE UPDATE

Member Liebl shared the committees recommended policy changes and asked for questions. She explained that the committee considered possibly adding a statement of cooperation with District 200 in the definition of the district's philosophy. Support was expressed for this recommendation, and interest was expressed in including District 90 as well. President Broy offered to communicate with the District 200 Board for approval and suggest that they word their philosophy statement in a similar way.

#### TRANSPORTATION BID RESULTS

Mark Sheahan told the Board that he has been working with legal on this process. He explained that he is considering separating contracts for the regular education, special education buses from the out-of-district buses. He reported that Lakeview, Zum and Grand Prairie submitted bids. Grand Prairie did not submit a bid for the regular bus service, therefore, that vendor's bid will be rejected. The only responsible bid for regular bus service is Lakeview. He reported that Lakeview is offering a competitive rate. Sheahan reported that the special education department administrators expressed concern about awarding Zum with the out-of-district routes. He told the Board that Zum has been servicing the out-of-district routes for the high school. Because of this, he requested more time to breakdown the cost. He estimated a savings of about \$100,000 if the district awards Lakeview the Regular/Special Education routes and, Zum for the out-of-district routes. Additionally, Sheahan recommended a three year contract for both vendors.

Sheahan shared that he does not see Zum ever expressing interest in the in-district routes. He explained that they are a specialized service, not a yellow bus company. Drivers use their own cars, which are inspected by IDOT and cleaned daily. Students would be transported by the same driver every day. Sheahan continued by explaining that Zum drivers are trained on how to transport special education students, and District 97 staff would not ride along in the cars with the students.

Board comments included interest in hearing more from the special education department regarding their opinion of using Zum for the out-of-district routes. Interest was expressed in knowing if there are school communities using this service that could vet the service.

One Board member expressed concern about the lack of vendors interested in bidding, and suggested considering the development of a better bidding process.

One Board member shared that this is the second time that the issue of timing has been a problem with the transportation bids, noting that Lakeview was the only bidder last time too. A one-year extension to the current contract was suggested instead of a three-year contract. Interest was expressed in knowing if the timing was the problem or if something else, like vendor loyalty.

Rob Grossi explained that there are not many transportation vendors in the state, and he shared that even Lakeview is having difficulty hiring bus drivers. He suggested that even in a robust environment the district would only get one or two more companies to bid.

The Board asked Sheahan to make sure that the district does its due diligence before bringing in a new vendor.

2020-2021 CALENDAR REVISION

Gina Herrmann reminded the Board that they expressed interest in reviewing the recommended 2020-2021 start date, and possibly change it to a later day within the same week. This would allow students to start back into a routine more slowly. Herrmann reported that the calendar committee reviewed the recommendation and agreed to move the teacher institute days to Monday and Tuesday, and have the students begin classes on Wednesday. She explained that this change also allows for a full week of emergency days at the end of the year. This item will return to the Board for action on April 7.

ENGAGEMENT LETTER FOR FISCAL YEAR AUDIT

Grossi recommended that the Board extend the agreement with the current auditor for a three year period. He noted that next year’s audit will be a reduction from the current year, and the auditor’s fee structure is very competitive. He reported that the firm is one of the largest and fastest growing firms. He reported that a lot of firms are having difficulty keeping auditors on staff, so he recommended locking in a three year agreement. This item will return to the Board for action on April 7.

STAFFING

This item was tabled until April 7.

**BOARD ASSIGNMENTS**

BOARD ASSIGNMENTS

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

This item was tabled until April 7.

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

This item was tabled until April 7.

**CONCLUDING ITEMS**

CONCLUDING ITEMS

BOARD REMARKS

The teachers and administrators were commended for the great job they did at getting E-Learning up and running.

It was noted that the Board remarks regarding the Lincoln Town Hall will be included on the next agenda. There were a lot of “asks” of the Board, and more time is needed to review them and get back to the community. It was reported that the Board did participate in the exit interview with the Lincoln principal as requested by the community.

The teachers, PTO and administration were commended for their efforts regarding COVID-19.

AGENDA MAINTENANCE

This item was tabled.

**ADJOURNMENT**

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to conduct, President Broy declared the meeting adjourned at 8:48 p.m.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Board President

\_\_\_\_\_  
Board Secretary