

**Official Minutes of the  
Oak Park Board of Education District 97  
260 Madison Street, Oak Park  
August 17, 2021 Special Meeting**

This meeting was held in-person and virtually using Zoom during the time of the Coronavirus pandemic. One or more of the board members met in-person and everyone else were virtual.

President Kim called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m.

Present: Kim, Duffy, Moore, Ross Dribin, Hurd Johnson (joined at 6:07p.m.)

ROLL CALL

Absent: Kearney, Spurlock

Also Present: Dr. Griff Powell Interim Superintendent, Dr. Patricia Wernet Interim Superintendent, Michael Arensdorff Senior Director of Technology, Lonya Boose Board Secretary

**OPEN SESSION**

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Kim motioned that the board move into Open Session at 6:05 p.m. The motion was seconded by Ross Dribin. All members of the Board were in agreement. The Board reconvened in Open Session at 7:19 p.m.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

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Dear Board,

On August 8, 2021 Ashish K. Jha, Dean of the Brown School of Public Health detailed five mitigation tactics that are critical to reducing the spread of COVID: 1) Vaccinate, 2) Ventilate, 3) Masks, 4) Tests, and 5) Avoid indoor crowding. He further notes that NONE alone are enough.

While I'm proud to live in a state and district that requires masking and has taken limited steps to avoid crowding, I am incredibly concerned as the mother of two children currently enrolled in d97, including one who is as of yet unable to be vaccinated, that the district has not done enough in these other areas. With Delta raging through the country, including here in Chicago, and it having a greater impact than previous variants on young children, I'm quite frankly panicked.

I am concerned that the district has not decided to require vaccinations of our faculty, staff, or eligible students. In an area where only 66% of those who are eligible are vaccinated, and with teachers and staff coming from throughout Chicagoland, I'm incredibly concerned we're not requiring them to start the year vaccinated. Colleges across the country have taken this step, I'm sure we as a district require other vaccinations, and I'm confounded why in such a life and death situation we're not doing the same here.

I'm concerned that I've heard little to nothing about ventilation, despite the federal government offering grants to schools to make upgrades or purchases to take mitigation steps in this area. Hell, I'd at least like to hear clear guidance on keeping windows open and that the district is purchasing standalone air purifiers for classrooms.

I'm concerned that I've heard nothing about testing at the elementary level. While relying primarily on masks and spacing was highly successful with the previous variants with R values (how many others are likely to be infected) of 2.5-5, Delta is estimated to have an R value of 5-8. That is as much as 3x that of previous variants. It is time to consider a testing strategy for the elementary level.

Today I read of a doctor's child who was intubated within a week of starting back to school. They were looking for language to explain to their other child that their sibling may never come home. I implore you, please, rapidly move to take these additional mitigation steps as we head into this most dangerous period of the virus to date.

Yours,  
Heather Cohen

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Kim moved, seconded by Ross Dribin 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, Collective Negotiations, 5 ILCS 120/2(C)(1)(2), at 6:09 p.m.

Ayes: Kim, Duffy, Hurd Johnson, Ross Dribin, Moore  
Nays: None  
Absent: Kearney, Spurlock  
Motion passed

**ADJOURNMENT**

Kim moved, seconded by Ross Dribin that the meeting be adjourned. There being no further business to conduct, Vice President Kim declared the meeting adjourned at 7:23p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

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Board President

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Board Secretary