

Official Minutes of the  
Oak Park Board of Education District 97  
260 Madison Street, Oak Park  
November 17, 2021 IGA Tri-Board Special Meeting  
Oak Park & River Forest Highschool – Oak Park Village Board

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.

District 200 called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

**District 200 – Hosting Board – Oak Park & River Forest Highschool**

Sara Dixon Spivy President, Tom Cofsky Vice President, Fred Arkin, Kebread Henry, Gina Harris, Dr. Greg Johnson Superintendent, Ralph Martire, Secretary, Gail Kalmerton, Clerk of the Board

ROLL CALL

**Oak Park Village Board**

Vicki Scaman President, Lisa Shelly, Ravi Parakkat, Lucia Roberson, Jim Taglia, Arti Walker-Peddakotla

**District 97- Oak Park Elementary**

Jung Kim President, Venus Hurd Johnson Vice President, Members; Cheree Moore, Nancy Ross Dribin, Holly Spurlock, Gavin Kearney, Dr. Patricia Wernet Interim Superintendent, Lonya Boose Board Secretary

**Collaboration for Early Childhood**

John Borrero Executive Director, Laura Crawford, Shannon Ellison, Dr. Rebecca Barbato, Dr. Gina Lowell, Dr. Stephanie Weller, John Mayes, Becki Streit

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

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Policy 7:50, as written, while seeking to achieve an important goal, is flawed and does not meet the needs of this community.

The written policy does not identify any criteria, does not identify any guidelines, and does not identify what kinds of documentation or issues would be given weight, does not define which individuals or roles are responsible for evaluating requests for delayed entry (thus, there is no public accountability), and does not adopt a formal process. Nor is there any appeal process.

The lack of criteria, guidance, transparency, and formal process are particularly problematic on the second year of Covid, which has been extremely disruptive to children.

Without clear, express criteria, without any guidance as to what information may carry weight or is necessary to be granted delayed entry - and perhaps most crucially - without any transparency or formal process, children may be rejected for delayed entry without any real articulation of why and without accountability, even where the child's medical and other providers feel that delayed entry would best serve that child.

Some questions for the Board:

First, exactly what role/weight will the conclusions and recommendations of child's prior teachers,

caregivers and existing providers have in this process?

Second, what criteria need to be established?

Third, what material will be given weight?

Fourth, what is the process considering an application for delayed entry, which individuals have input, and who makes the final decision.

A policy with no guidance, no standard, no express written SOP for what material is relevant, does not explain how decisions will be made and does not provide for an appeal process, can be applied arbitrarily, or improperly, to the detriment of children in this community, with no accountability.

I urge D97 to put Policy 7:50 on hold until an actual transparent plan with clear criteria, guidelines and process, can be proposed. This is particularly crucial to reevaluate on year two of covid, where children have lost out on substantial education and socialization.

Stephanie Harris

### **OPEN SESSION**

#### **Overview of 2020/21 Program Year (Led by Collaboration)**

(Documents available online)

The Collaboration for Early Childhood has an agreement with the Village of Oak Park, Oak Park Elementary School District 97 and Oak Park and River Forest High School District 200, to develop an integrated system of quality early childhood programs and services to benefit all children birth to kindergarten that reside within Oak Park and River Forest. This Year the Collaboration has 3 Goals:

- Elevate Voice
- Facilitate Access
- Illuminate Health Needs

Historically, the Collaboration has taken a community effort approach to ensuring the success, health and safety of its children. This process is outlined in four parts:

- Community Engagement
- Family Engagement
- Early Learning
- Health and Development

The Collaboration is driven by data and provides the Tri-Board with demographics around the children of which the organization serve. They also continue to look at Equity, as they work jointly with Districts 97, 200 and The Village Board to support Early Childhood Learning.

#### **Panel Discussion on Early Childhood Development and Social Emotional Health in this Community (Led by Collaboration)**

The Collaboration led a discussion with a panel of Doctors that provide services to many of the students that reside in Oak Park and River Forest. Dr. Rebecca Barbato, Dr. Gina Lowell and Dr. Stephanie Weller provided medical insight into the growth, development and future success of school aged children.

**Has your practice changed in response to COVID-19?** What are you seeing in your day-to-day practice? Response; Early on, we were seeing missed appointments, having to do more outreach to encourage families to have their check-ups, and also an increase in appointments around mental health services.

**Are you getting more questions about vaccine, and altering vaccine schedules?** Response; Yes, lots of questions and hesitancy although rates of vaccination seem to be the same as pre-COVID.

**What are you seeing from families with children that have developmental delays?** What changes to access to services have you seen through the pandemic? Response; There are some services that have long been challenging. Parents are now realizing that remote or virtual services are not benefiting their children and with few places to turn to for support, we are seeing three to four month gaps in those needed medical services. They go on to say, we may not see full impact until three to five years from this pandemic year.

**What strengths are you seeing in the community?** Response; The resilience of children, playing together on playgrounds and attending school in person.

**What is the role of schools and early learning programs, school systems, governing bodies and community partners in the work that you do?** Response; As medical professionals that service many families in the community, we would like to be more involved with schools and daycares. We would like to discuss what we are seeing, how we can support and together provide the necessary supports to all children and adults.

### **Financial Report**

**FY21 Year End Financial Statements** (Led by Collaboration)  
(available online)

**FY22 September Year-to-Date Report** (Led by Collaboration)  
(available online)

**Administrative Agent Report and IGA Administrative Fund** (Led by District 97)  
Patrick King, Senior Director of Finance for District 97 presented a summary of the operating fund balances for The Collaboration. (summary available online)

### **Informational**

Audited Financial Statement for FY21(available online)

### **ADJOURNMENT**

Tri-Board moved, that the meeting be adjourned. There being no further business to conduct, Tri-Board declared the meeting adjourned at 8:41 p.m.

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Board President

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Board Secretary