

**Official Minutes of the  
Oak Park Board of Education District 97  
260 Madison Street, Oak Park, Cook County, Illinois  
December 15, 2020 Meeting**

This meeting was held virtually using Zoom during the time of the Coronavirus pandemic. Everyone participated via electronic means.

Vice President Kim called the meeting to order at 6:32 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Present: Kim, Spurlock, Liebl, Kearney, Moore, and Breymaier  
Absent: Broy  
Also Present: Superintendent Dr. Carol Kelley, Director of Communications Amanda Siegfried, Senior Director of Technology Michael Arensdorff, Senior Director of Human Resources Gina Herrmann, Chief Academic and Accountability Office Ebony Lofton, Associate Superintendent of Education Felicia Starks Turner, Senior Director of Equity Carrie Kamm, Consultant Rob Grossi, Joseph Terry, Anne Marie Guerrier, Mara Maas, Mary Barsnti-Sekhar, Julie Howland, Gabriel Culbert, Ashima Gupta and Renee Slade.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Breymaier moved, seconded by Liebl that the Board move into executive session for the purpose of Appointment, Employment, Compensation, Discipline, Performance, or Dismissal of Specific Employees 5 ILCS 110/2(C)(1), at 6:32 p.m.

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

**OPEN SESSION**

OPEN SESSION

Spurlock motioned that the board move into Open Session at 7:02 p.m. The motion was seconded by Breymaier. All members of the Board were in agreement. The Board reconvened in Open Session at 7:03 p.m.

**PUBLIC HEARING**

PUBLIC COMMENT

Vice President Kim called the public hearing to order. Rob Grossi reported on the tax levy consideration for the collection in the fall of 2021. He told the board that the summer 2021 capital improvements will also be discussed this evening, and asked the board to keep that information in mind when making a decision on the tax levy.

Grossi reminded the board that the decision they make regarding the levy will impact the district's long-term financial condition, the long-term quality of services, and the condition of the district's facilities.

Grossi told the board that the current finances of the district are stable. Fund balance reserves are at about four months of reserves. Based on the projections, the district is scheduled to keep a stable balance for the next five years. Grossi told the board that there are about \$26,000,000 worth of major capital projects that need to be completed. Even with the district maximizing the full amount of the levy, projections indicate that the district will run below the 25 percent fund balance by 2025.

Grossi noted that he has been working for school districts for years and every year the state of Illinois keeps coming up with funding, but mathematically it does not work anymore. He told the board that the state is ready to be rated as junk status.

Grossi reminded the board that the district is capped at a 2.3 percent increase for CPI. He explained that CPI is currently trending below 1.3 percent. He estimated that the new property just coming onto the tax rolls will amount to about \$400,000 of new income for the district. He recommended that the board make its decision on the tax levy with consideration to the district's fund balance targets, the district's capital needs and wants, and the potential financial challenges emanating from the state's own fiscal crisis.

Grossi explained that approval of the tax levy represents about a \$120 increase in taxes on a \$400,000 home. Additionally, Grossi reminded the board that they will need to make a decision on the abatement before the end of February. He told the board that taxes are the only source of increased revenue.

The public was invited to speak regarding the tax Levy. Member Kearney read the following comments aloud.

**Reverend Eric Worringer**

I write as an Oak Park homeowner and parent, as well as the pastor of a historically black Lutheran church in the former Cabrini-Green public housing projects in Chicago. I am also a member of the Chicago chapter of the Democratic Socialists of America.

Recent estimates have placed approximately 40 percent of Americans within 30 days of eviction or foreclosure due to the COVID19 pandemic. Our economy is weakened and likely faces a prolonged recovery with expiring support from an absent federal government.

In Oak Park, property taxes are a recessive tax that impacts low and middle income homeowners and renters most decisively, those who are most vulnerable during this time. Even a \$120 addition on houses of \$400,000 or more is incredibly tone deaf and potentially devastating for families already with budgets pushed to the max and striving on savings. While cuts and postponements of services in the elementary and middle schools are potentially painful, taking the full levy increase will mean continuing losses of diversity and equity in Oak Park, as homeownership ossifies in the upper-middle and upper classes, who are often white, and more and more Oak Parkers are forced to leave or rent to bear the costs of increasing taxes.

While our family, a physician and a pastor, can afford these increases, many of our neighbors cannot. I encourage you to consider how District 97 will share the moral burden and pain many of our neighbors are facing in this time. In order to protect our school district, we must make difficult decisions now that will ensure the availability of our village to those who aspire to live here \*and\* those who already live here and would be made to face difficult choices with another tax increase in the face of a pandemic economy.

Please ensure that property taxes will not inflict more pain on an already vulnerable part of our community.

**Julie Johnston-Ahlen**

In a year when many are struggling, in a town where property taxes are some of the highest in the country, you are choosing to raise the levy the maximum amount. Shame on you for not tightening the belt when many taxpayers in OP are out of work or suffering from reduced compensation due to COVID, and generally drowning under the tax burden here. Taxes on a median-priced home cannot continue to go up 5 percent a year. Seriously, stop it. You don't just have a duty to the children and staff - you have a

duty to taxpayers to keep costs down. Raising the levy the maximum amount this year is unconscionable. I am so disappointed in all of the OP decision makers who have failed to hold the line this year.

**Erin Mott**

I know how hard all of you are working on helping our children safely return to in-person learning as quickly as possible. We appreciate your hard work and are hopeful to have our children return soon after the winter break.

I read that you are evaluating a tax increase (in addition to the 3 percent the Village Board approved Monday), and I would humbly ask you not to raise taxes in 2021.

This year, a number of us have experienced layoffs, furloughs and massive reductions to our household income...AND have had to invest in childcare, equipment and support to keep our children home without schools being open.

Please do not add hardship upon hardship to those of us vulnerable situations in 2020 by pushing many of us who are at the brink of not being able to afford to stay in Oak Park to have to leave our beloved village.

Many of us chose Oak Park for its community, and commitment to diversity, which includes its commitment to broadly affordable housing and socio-economic diversity (which should include poverty line but also include lower and middle class). The relentless tax increases over the past 10 years are consistently making us an only upper-middle class suburb and reducing the affordable housing stock in our village and pricing middle and lower-income families (particularly those of us who are single parents or those who are not yet at the poverty level but also not making 6 figures or who don't have dual-earner households).

None of us moved to Oak Park because we didn't believe in taxes. All of us believe in funding critical infrastructure, especially the schools, but we have to look at the impact increasing housing costs and increasing taxes will have on the demographic makeup of our village, and we have to realize these levies are contributing to widening inequity gaps and undermining the very values Oak Park was built on.

**Justin Lewis**

I'm reaching out to ask the board have sensitivity to those in our community who are experiencing financial hardship and follow the lead of OPRF and only increase the levy by the new property.

I know many in our community who are facing many financial challenges, whether pay cuts, job eliminations or businesses lost. Sadly, District 97's proposed budget acts as if everything is normal. Instead of increasing the levy by the legally allowed maximum, please show restraint and acknowledgement that like many in the community, some belt tightening at District 97 is OK. Increasing the levy by the new property still allows for an increase while acknowledging the hardships many of our neighbors are experiencing.

The community has always ensured District 97 has more than adequate resources available, please do the hard work now to show compassion for your neighbors and the community.

**Jack Powers**

My understanding is that District 97 is proposing to take a maximum levy increase and to tax new properties, and will vote on this tonight. Reviewing the presentation I note the following excerpt with interest:

Final Thought on Tax Levy. The Board of Education should make its decision on the tax levy with consideration of;

- (1) The District's fund balance targets,
- (2) The District's capital needs and wants and
- (3) The potential financial challenges emanating from the State's own fiscal crisis. Long-term fiscal and academic stability without the need for future referendum dollars should be the objective.

Not one word about making a decision on the tax levy with consideration of taxpayers.

No mention of the added stress this will cause our residents, local restaurants and small businesses that have been decimated and/or put out of business by COVID. Instead, we get the usual thinking, District 97 exists and taxes in a vacuum.

The presentation notes that on a \$400,000 home the proposed increase would be "just" \$120. "Just" - the same BS you and the other five Oak Park taxing bodies trot out every year, except it all adds up. My annual tax increase has averaged nearly \$700 per year.

Between 2017 and 2019 your board increased the District 97 tax burden by \$21,600,000 (referendum, extra preventable windfall, accessing TIF money, taxing new properties). When is enough?

It was a pleasant surprise to see the village board acknowledge the impact of COVID and direct village staff to find savings such that it took a flat levy.

Why doesn't the District 97 board provide similar direction to the administration to find savings so that you can vote for a flat levy, having already gorged yourselves the past three years?

#### **Olivia Schifeling**

Please find cuts to make within the budget to make things work. I cannot take another tax increase. No matter how small.

#### **Mark Murphy**

It is my understanding that the District 97 board is going to vote on increasing the levy by the maximum allowable, as well as taxing on new properties.

My question to the board is - are you completely and utterly tone deaf and out of touch with reality????

In the midst of a worldwide pandemic where Oak Park residents have lost jobs, lost multiple sources of income and are in a real estate market where property taxes are draining home equity - and you want to RAISE YOUR TAX LEVY YET AGAIN?!?!?

You as a board have a responsibility to maintain the **proper** tax levy, not to just automatically raise it because the law says you can. You are acting irresponsibly and recklessly if you take this action. How about you look at trimming your exorbitant, bloated and obviously ineffective administration to find some savings.

#### **Mary Pikul**

I am writing to let you know that I am not in support of any tax levy increase.

The District 97 board is obligated to provide the best to the students of Oak Park.

But the increased taxes from this taxing body have a direct negative effect on the children of Oak Park. The high taxes that are already in place are causing heavy, heavy stress on families mentally. This mental stress on parents is trickling down to their children. Do not think for one minute that the children in these households do not pick up on the financial stress in the household!

You are, by increasing the tax burdens on families, directly and indirectly subjecting the children of Oak Park to stress.  
This affects their self-esteem.  
This affects their academic work.  
This affects their health.

The cost of living in Oak Park is so high that a person such as myself who has a Master's degree from Erikson Institute in child development, who is a public school teacher in a neighboring school district with over 15 years of teaching experience, who has 20 additional credit hours at the Graduate level -- is STRUGGLING to get by in Oak Park raising her child.

This District has grown so accustomed to large sums of money that it will find a way to use it - even if it's not for the best.  
As an educator, I see all too often, how this occurs.  
Unfortunately, the Board is not always privy to what is working and what is not working in the schools. LOOK closer.  
There are staff underworking.  
There are programs that aren't working.  
There are perks that have to go away.  
Start cutting.

Here is an example:  
My daughter attended Beye School and tested into the Gifted/Accelerated program. She received three years of accelerated math. It was good.  
However, this same gifted teacher who had an income (at the time) of approximately \$85,000 was also supposed to provide enrichment to her (and other students in Language Arts).  
In the 3 years, he must have met with her less than a dozen times.  
There was zero information given to parents.  
Despite my requests for explanation from the principal at the time, all I received was excuses.  
It fell on a holiday. There was a school assembly. The teacher didn't send them.  
In three years.  
I gave up because no one did anything about it. The principal did nothing. Nor did this teacher.  
Bottom line: He was not held accountable. Not by his principal. Not by the Board.  
But yet the District paid him -- \$85,000.

Money wasted.

Please feel free to contact me for follow up.  
I have additional similar stories of waste.

### **Clare McDermott**

I am concerned over the vote on raising the levy. Additional research is needed to identify which projects are not covered by the 2017 referendum and how much of the \$26 million will become reality for taxpayers. As a parent of District 97 students, I don't want to get "taxed" out of my home and no longer be able to afford the schools because the schools are asking for so much money. It's ironic and sad. The

timing of this vote feels especially painful considering the pandemic when many families are already suffering. Don't push out middle-class families in Oak Park!

Member Spurlock reported that the Finance Oversight and Review Committee (FORC) reviewed the recommendation and support the passing of the tax levy. She reminded the board that the collective bargaining agreement with the teachers' union does not expire until 2022. Until then, the teachers are guaranteed raises equal to the CPI.

Board comments included noting that the district is a good financial steward, but cuts could be considered. The board was reminded that policy requires the district to maintain fund balances above 25 percent.

Member Breymaier motioned that the public hearing adjourn. It was seconded by Spurlock. Roll call vote.

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

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Members Spurlock, Liebl, Moore and Vice President Kim read aloud the public comments that were emailed to the board prior to the start of the board meeting.

#### **Elizabeth Cook**

I'd like to thank the administration, the hybrid advisory committee, and the Board of Education for keeping parents informed about progress toward developing a hybrid model. After listening to the recording of the December 1 meeting, I came away with the impression that the administration still favors "option 2," which closely resembles the hybrid model that the Board rejected in October.

It appears that "option 1"--which, like option 2, offers the advantage of no mask-free time for lunch--is less favored because of the perceived need for classroom cleaning between the two learning groups.

I do understand that the State has required enhanced cleaning for schools to open. However, I would suggest that improved cleaning could be accomplished within the 2-hour window described in option 1.

In addition, I would invite the administration and the planning committee to review the latest science on cleaning surfaces as an attempt to mitigate the spread of Covid-19. In the aptly-titled article, "The Coronavirus Is Airborne Indoors. Why Are We Still Scrubbing Surfaces?" the New York Times discusses the phenomenon of "hygiene theater" that has become ubiquitous in our quest to stop the spread of this disease. <https://nyti.ms/3pEIS3T>

"In my opinion, a lot of time, energy and money is being wasted on surface disinfection and, more importantly, diverting attention and resources away from preventing airborne transmission," said Dr. Kevin P. Fennelly, a respiratory infection specialist with the United States National Institutes of Health.

In addition to the waste of time and money, excessive use of cleaning solvents presents environmental and health hazards. These substances are toxic to marine life when put down drains and can harm lungs when inhaled.

As is probably clear from my message, I strongly support hybrid option 1 over option 2. Both provide for instructional time without a lunch break, which I believe is absolutely the safest option. Masks and

distancing are the most effective tools we have to stop the spread of covid-19.

But option 1 and option 2 are worlds apart in terms of academic quality. For young children, consistent schedules are key. Being able to attend school 5 days a week will greatly enhance learning and the development personal relationships with teachers and peers, as compared to option 2. We all know what it is like for children to come back to school on the Monday after Thanksgiving break. Implementing option 2 would put teachers and students in that situation every single week.

In addition, as noted at the December 1 board meeting, young children cannot go for four hours without eating. Kids who have now been at home for nine months have come to expect frequent snack breaks. In fact, our current remote model fosters that. My sons' kindergarten and 2nd grade teachers tell children at 9:30 am every day to have a snack so that they are better able to focus later in the morning. It would simply not be possible for teachers to maintain an organized, engaged classroom of hungry learners for 4 hours each morning.

I would like to strongly urge the planning committee to promote option 1. This option offers the optimal balance of safety, learning, and socialization, especially for the youngest learners.

### **Katie and David Zapata**

Thank you for your efforts the past nine months regarding planning for our kids. I recognize that it has not been an easy task and that there are many competing priorities to juggle. I also am sorry for any personal attacks you have received from the community. I am grateful for the hours and hours you have spent thus far to keep our children, teachers, and staff safe.

For our family, we desperately need our three children to return to school as soon as possible. Our middle child is in second grade, is on the autism spectrum and has an IEP. Since March, he has regressed significantly; we believe he has regressed at least a full year if not more. Yes, he returned for in person school in October, for just ten half days before it was cancelled. He has a dedicated aide, who is only allowed to support him via zoom. This is not at all successful, so we have had to hire our own full time support person for him at great personal expense. While he previously thrived being at our neighborhood school with his sisters and friends, for the first time we are investigating therapeutic day schools. This is heartbreaking to us and as we see what other neighboring districts have done to support their special needs kids, we feel that the district has failed our son.

Our oldest daughter is in fourth grade and has a 504. She has ADHD and anxiety. She always loved school. Her anxiety is now off the charts and with outside resources we are working to support her newly developed depression. Her teacher and the school social worker have been great at offering what support they can over zoom. But she is facing a true mental health crisis.

Our youngest daughter is in kindergarten and is a neurotypical learner. It is hard to imagine a more enthusiastic or happy child than our youngest. She loved preschool more than anything and was so excited to start kindergarten. Now even SHE claims to "hate school", often tries to run away during the day, and cries multiple times a day. Her entire persona has changed since starting remote learning. The lack of social interaction is having a devastating effect on her learning and mental health. She has a wonderful teacher who is doing her best to support her via zoom.

Our family is in crisis. The only solution is to get our kids back to school in person as soon as possible. Sadly, we have lost faith that the district is committed to return to in person. How is the high school returning on January 19 when we have not prioritized our youngest and most vulnerable students in District 97? We are huge advocates of public school and we adore everyone at Mann, but now have

started to investigate private school options for the fall because we don't feel like we can count on District 97. We have even discussed moving out of this community that we love so much.

I am on disability and, despite having a compromised immune system, I support the return to school. For us, the benefits far outweigh the risks to our children's development and mental health.

We know that there are families experiencing worse situations than we are, who do not have the time or bandwidth to communicate with you. Please... for all District 97 families of special needs children, children with mental health issues, and our youngest students... please find a return to school as soon as possible.

### **Patrick Scanlan**

Why has employment remained at 100 percent? We approaching a year without students in school. The board and township needs to, and should have been looking at cost control as much as new committee forming, as taxes are raised again and again. Be accountable. Also, noted, word on the street is the union is pressuring those here to stay out of school. This is disrespects the word inclusive and is truly an outrage.

### **Nora Flynn**

Thank you to our District leadership and the Board of Education for your tireless efforts to create safe, strong and equitable learning experiences for our students during this pandemic. I am writing to offer genuine thanks and to ask the Board and leadership to continue to seize this opportunity to “stitch a new garment,” as Sonya Renee Taylor exhorts us.

When reviewing the proposed middle school daily schedules for a hybrid model, please carefully consider which professionals need to be on-site for specific duties, why and when. Consider why teachers need to be on-site 1) when teaching classes that are remote, and 2) after students have been dismissed from in-person learning for travel, lunch and asynchronous learning. If we are reimagining education, I would offer that a traditional "clock in/clock out" mentality that keeps teachers on-site at this time and calls every teacher into the building every day, without regard to their professional responsibility, 1) reinforces the old factory model that we are trying to reinvent, and 2) is particularly imprudent through a pandemic.

Please do not revert to old systems that measure productivity by counting bodies in a building and watching the clock. Consider that when teachers' specific duties require them to work on-site with students, they should be encouraged to leave the building after students have departed from the site and continue working from flexible, safe environments. This simple shift: 1) recognizes that teachers have been responsibly, professionally and successfully navigating teaching and learning from alternative spaces already, not relying on our physical building at all during this time and 2) mitigates exposure to the virus.

Working together while apart whenever possible continues to be best practice in this time. Encouraging teachers to work off-site when their mode of teaching or collaboration is remote allows more time for our school's learning spaces to be cleaned and decreases potential exposures to the virus at school. It also extends support to our teachers who are managing already-precarious childcare and eldercare situations as we face another transition in work conditions.

Thank you again for your leadership throughout this crisis. Thank you for considering how these simple adjustments will keep teachers safe and help them navigate another shift that impacts not only their class communities but their own families. Your advocacy will acknowledge that, in this challenging time especially, we should validate teachers' professionalism by not returning to a “clock in/clock out” model out of tradition. Simple shifts in how we manage new schedules can acknowledge that, with you, teachers

have been leading the way around the clock in reimagining how our students can learn and grow -- all beyond our buildings.

### **Elizabeth Newhart**

Recently, CPS sent out a thorough FAQ- The Facts on Reopening Schools. I have included an excerpt of two Q&As below. This is intended to demonstrate a strong example for District 97 to model in terms of how to 1) address common questions in a transparent, considerate and thoughtful manner 2) be solution-focused and provide answers that are forward-thinking, evidence-based and in the best interest of students. Also of note is the fact that CPS has a plan in place and has demonstrated strong leadership despite difficult decision making, unprecedented circumstances, and differing opinions.

Q1) "It is not safe to reopen schools until everyone is vaccinated.

While a vaccine will ultimately help bring us back to normal, keeping schools closed indefinitely is the worst option for students—especially our highest need populations. Schools across the world, throughout the country, and here in Chicago have successfully demonstrated that we can safely reopen classrooms with the right safety protocols in place. We have developed a comprehensive health and safety plan with our partners at the Chicago Department of Public Health, to ensure our schools are aligned to the best available public health guidance.

For example, the Chicago Archdiocese schools have been safely operating since the start of the school year, and CPS is following some of their best practices and going above and beyond what they are currently doing to keep their community safe.

Q2) I don't think we need to rush back to school. What is the harm of kids continuing to learn at home until we know it's safe and COVID-19 is eliminated?

This pandemic has deepened long-standing inequities and its impact on all of our children will linger for years. We have to talk honestly about how we can reopen schools safely this year.

Due to the immense burden placed on parents to support home-based learning, we have also seen attendance and enrollment plummet among Black and Latinx students because remote learning is not working for them.

Tens of thousands of families have told us that remote learning is not working for their children and it is our responsibility to offer an in-person option for our families."

### **Jamie LoPresti**

A plan to return to in-person learning is extremely important to many families in the district. I speak from the perspective of our youngest children and believe this should be worked on day and night until complete.

The leadership need a greater sense of urgency and to recognize who they are problem solving for in regards to in-person learning, those with a critical need for their child to be in school. Where is the clear articulation of how others are open and operating safely, and the assumption that our district would implement the same standard of protocols? If clear facts of safety measures that would be used are laid out, it will allow for an opt-in / opt-out opportunity, and give the board a smaller group of people to solve for and work with (those comfortable with the residual risk beyond proper safety controls).

It is obvious from the comment exchange that nearly half of the village is not aware that community programs and private schools have operated safely for months, in-person, or are not comfortable with the risk given the facts, which of course is their choice. There should be no need to debate whether we as a

community feel comfortable with the residual risk, as any in-person plan must have a robust e-learning plan to go with it.

At this point, an assumption of the risk inherent in the current COVID environment needs to be made to move forward with the development of an in-person plan. Focusing on parent's concerns about safety is certainly valid, but too much also undermines productive work toward a plan for those who accepted the risk months ago. If we are still giving just as much attention to those who say "I am concerned the kids won't wear their masks," than to those of us who have learned the kids are just as diligent, if not better than the adults at this through actual experience, then we will continue to go nowhere.

There is also a clear favor being shown to those who fear COVID health risk, over those who fear that their 1st grader's mental development is being permanently affected by putting them on devices that are designed to steal and manipulate their will. My own daughter is impossibly hooked on all of the distracting components of iPads, with little interest in the zoom classes. She is irritable when we take it away, but has no interest in using it for learning. Not to mention the isolation that these devices enable. iPad learning is not just a less-effective learning experience, it creates social, emotional, and developmental problems, as well as a complacent district board that misconstrues it with school. It is NOT.

Many children like my own, have done their part by wearing masks daily and following safety protocols starting with summer camp through to community programs like Hephzibah, who currently support their e-learning. They deserve better...

### **Chris Morgan**

In the past meeting I wrote to express frustration at the timelines for having a plan to return some children to in-person learning. While I am happy that timelines were adjusted in the last meeting, there is still not a plan that is public and it remains unclear if there really is a plan. For parents and the various support systems to plan themselves, we need to know what the plan from the district is with clear timelines, milestones, and details.

Again, to be clear in my goals, it is not that all children should return to school. We know that a vaccine rollout will take some time and that there are family situations where risk is higher. But a strong majority of parents want the option to have their children learning in-person and feel safe doing so even in the current situation and we owe it to those children to deliver the plan to return on Feb 1 and to make it public and transparent prior to the holidays so that we all can plan.

### **Rachel Fobes**

I am the parent of a second grader in District 97. At the last school board meeting, Dr. Kelley started off by telling us that there is "a plan" in the works. From what I've been tracking, this plan is the third attempt in a conversation that has been going on since July 3rd - more than five months ago.

District 97 - I hear you, you are working on it. I hear you, you want feedback from your stakeholders. I hear you, you are nervous about taking the next step. I hear you, it's an unprecedented situation.

But please - hear me - a plan is not a plan until decisions are made and there are concrete steps. A plan is not a plan until parents, teachers, students, administration are all given instructions on what to do next. A plan is not a plan until there is a start date and metrics that make sense for our community. A plan is not a plan with multiple options still on the table being discussed. A plan is defined as "an intention or decision about what one is going to do" I am asking you to tell us - what is our plan? What are you doing to implement this plan?

I am hopeful that these last five months can be put behind us and our district can catch up to others around us. And if you are tired of hearing my voice, I get it, I am tired of talking about this. But until I feel like our district has something concrete in place, until I see hope for my child to get off an iPad and into a classroom, I will continue to ask that you do the scary thing and take that step forward - for my family and for so many others. It is time for a plan.

**Evelina Henderson**

My question is;

How likely would it be for a healthy child with no underline health issues to catch COVID-19 at school? Also once a healthy child is tested positive, what is the percentage rate of a child dying from COVID-19?

**Cara Carmody**

I was not going to submit a comment to another board meeting but after the last one I felt compelled to. I understand, I think we all do, how extremely difficult this school year has been in numerous ways. At the beginning with so much unknown, it was reasonable to operate out of fear and anxiety. It was reasonable to put health and safety of students and teachers at the top priority of creating a return to school plan. Why it has taken over six months to create such a plan is completely unacceptable. What I am mostly concerned with is how the board and Superintendent have handled the entire situation and what or whom is holding them accountable for their jobs they pledged to perform.

District 97 has created a robust remote plan. I applaud you for this as it was not an easy endeavor. I applaud the teachers for working tirelessly to implement a remote learning plan and try to teach and reach all learners through a screen. The problem is, while you have created a plan for those students who need a remote option, you still, five months later have not provided an in person plan for those students who cannot learn remotely. While you continue to state you have a plan, we still have yet to see one. You know the old saying fool me once, shame on me, fool me twice, shame on you? This saying rings true. You have now twice created a plan and then taken it away. And you have done this with no transparency and no explanation. At the last board meeting you called out parents who questioned this by asking them to give you grace and understanding. You follow it up with a tweet about kindness. I wonder where the grace and understanding is to the families who are struggling on a daily basis because their kids are mentally and educationally falling apart. I wonder where the kindness is to those who are advocating for their children. Since when did District 97's message to those advocating for their children become you are a loud voice who shouldn't be heard?

We now have data from schools that have been open with hybrid plans since August, many in our own town. We have information from schools all over the country that are comparable to us in size and backgrounds. New York public school district comes to mind. Numerous articles are being published daily showing schools are not super spreaders, and how wearing masks and creating safe hybrid plans actually reduce community spread. But let's not forget the numerous articles coming out about the dangerous and negative effects not being in school has on children. This is why the experts in education and children's health are advocating for children to be in schools- Dr. Fauci, President elect Biden, Robert Redfield from the CDC, Dr. Ezike from IDPH, the AAP, ISBE, and Dr. Daniel Johnson, chief of staff of Pediatric Infectious Diseases at University of Chicago Medical Center. This is why schools all around us and all over the country are going back to school, even now- because they are listening to these experts. Not because they are negligent, but because they know how important it is to provide for all their students, especially the ones who are regressing and failing. This is why local doctors have taken time they don't have to help create safe hybrid plans because they know firsthand the importance of in person learning.

As someone who is working with numerous students in your district, many ones with IEPs I am disgusted by how you have treated me. As an educator part of my job is to advocate for my students.

When I have a second grader who cannot count by twos, a 3rd grader who forgot how to subtract with regrouping, a fourth grader who can't remember simple grammar, and so on, I am there to help them. Their parents are working outside of the home, some are single parents struggling to find time to assist them. Instead of treating me with respect and kindness, you and your staff have referred to me as a yoga mom, someone with white privilege, and someone with a loud voice. Where is the grace and understanding for me and my students? The students are the victims in all this, not you. They are the ones suffering greatly from no in person instruction. A student with ADD and ADHD cannot sit with an iPad all day and be expected to get work done.

I am tired of the passive aggressive comments. I am tired of you all operating from paralysis by analysis. You are losing students and families by the week. Enrollment is down by 350 students and counting. Teachers are being told not give lower than a C or an incomplete for this past semester no matter how the student has performed. I am not sure what is happening in this district or how it has even gotten to this, but please do your job, provide for these students who need an in person option. Produce an actual plan we can all see and agree on, and more importantly one that is attainable, otherwise this is all another giant waste of time.

### **Lisa Pelaquin**

Thank you all for your work well above and beyond what you signed up for to help our community. There are no easy answers to education during a global pandemic, and I really appreciate your thoughtful approach as you try to meet a wide range of needs. Thank you for this hard work. None of us can expect a perfect solution to this crisis, but we should all be appreciative of all you're doing on behalf of our kids. Thank you.

After the last board meeting, I have a few questions about the hybrid models being discussed and I would appreciate a response. Can you please provide more detail about what Live Streaming will look like for the children at home, the children in the building, and the teachers? I very much want to encourage the district to be flexible in their expectations for Live Streaming, so teachers can find the balance of how to engage kids in very different settings. Especially in primary classrooms, trying to have kids over zoom for seven hours watching other kids learn in person would be miserable for everyone.

Additionally, will the district encourage schools to work with families as much as they can to accommodate the schedules families have all had to creatively develop to deal with the pandemic? In order to support our kids learning at home, and to keep our full time jobs, we've joined up with two other families in a little pod. If we move into a hybrid model of school, keeping the pod together on the same hybrid schedule would help us continue to spread out responsibility for managing at home learning while balancing our jobs. I know schools cannot promise to accommodate every schedule, but if we know they are going to try, that would make it easier to consider the hybrid model.

Again, thank you board members for your leadership and hard work during these incredibly difficult times.

### **Kathleen and Bryce Martin**

We realize that these are unusual times and the current metrics are far from ideal, but we're still frustrated that both smaller and larger organizations in the area have made much greater progress thus far. As you know, both Hephzibah and The Park District have been successfully running FULL-day programs within your buildings for months, while larger organizations, like the Archdiocese of Chicago, have been operating their schools within a similar timeframe and also, with limited misfortune. Additionally, there are nearby institutions like The Children's School, that have even chosen to prioritize in-person learning for those who crave it most, Kindergartners through Second Graders.

These are just a few examples of local organizations that created and executed a plan both swiftly and safely. Some of them were forced to adjust their approach along the way, but they all began with a solid goal and detailed strategy. We look forward to finally hearing your version of that tonight.

### **Adam Yaws**

I write as a concerned District 97 parent, homeowner, and taxpayer here in Oak Park. First and foremost, it is extremely disappointing that we have fallen so far behind our peer districts around Chicagoland, Illinois, and the world in bringing our children a leading education and finalizing a plan for return to in-person learning. It is quite evident that Dr. Kelley is more interested in searching for a job outside District 97 than leading our district through a difficult time. Multiple sources have confirmed that she refused to meet with the teachers union over the summer about plans for remote and hybrid, a fact that was made evident during the unprofessional and disorganized board meetings at the end of the summer where it became clear there were no plans. Dr. Kelley released a wholly unworkable plan in October, wasted another 60 days until the board meeting in early December and needs to waste a further 60 days to push us out to February. To call this unacceptable is generous. Abhorrent and a dereliction of duty is a more apt description.

We live in Oak Park for a leading school district and it is apparent District 97 is no longer in that position. Look at the "targeted" populations in Brooks following onto the previously targeted populations in Julian. While Dr. Kelley can't lead us to a return to hybrid or in-person learning, she is also failing to lead the district and improve the results of our most vulnerable students. Unacceptable by any measure.

In the meeting notes tonight, I see that the district is asking for another maximum tax levy increase. That is beyond tone deaf. District 97 has 46 percent more administrative staff than the average school district in IL all the while failing our most vulnerable students and failing to develop a return to school plan. What exactly do all these overweight administrative positions do? Perhaps we look at cost savings there and eliminate the waste in those positions by not filling open positions or furloughs / reductions. To ask the community to pony up \*MORE\* money when we are all paying far more for private tutors, extra childcare, or have seen our positions eliminated and our salaries reduced is unacceptable.

My ask tonight is twofold: vote down the levy increase and have the district find cost savings and eliminate open positions like your peers in District 200 did. Complete the hybrid / in-person plan BEFORE we leave on winter break on December 23.

Finally I leave you with this Martin Luther King quote: **“A genuine leader is not a searcher for consensus but a molder of consensus.”** It is time for Dr. Kelley and District 97 to LEAD.

### **Jana & Jon McMahon**

We are a family who has a kindergartner and 2nd grader in the district. We have tuned into all the board meetings and tracked progress since the beginning of the pandemic. We understand this is a situation no one was prepared for or had a guide book of how to handle. It had been discouraging to see talk of a plan but little action.

Both of us are community/essential workers and have continued to work outside of the home throughout the pandemic. We have creatively devised ways to keep people safe and do our jobs. It is unclear why this cannot be accomplished at District 97. Where has the innovative and "can do" attitude in our community gone? Are we going to just leave our children to bear the future burden of our unwillingness to act for their sake?

The data does not support the fear and lack of a plan, even Dr. Fauci thinks children should be back in the classroom. We now have plenty of examples of schools that have been successfully teaching children

in person. We need to build a solid plan together that makes families feel confident in bringing their students back. We urge that the plan not have a "one size fits all" approach as the needs of our youngest learners are very different and should include more in person and hands on learning.

The equity gap in our community is growing as people who are discouraged and can afford to are leaving for private schools, moving or hiring tutors. Let us not put any of our students behind and continue to uphold this pillar of District 97.

We look forward to hearing the strong, innovative plan this community puts together and are happy to partner in implementing and making it happen for the good of our students. Let us not forget that is who we are ultimately serving and who seem to be lost in all the discord. Let us get them back to the classroom!

### **Chris Pros**

I am a design technology teacher at Brooks. I wanted to take a moment to write and share a sincere thank you to the school board, the superintendent advisory panel, our unions, and our administration for the work they have done during this unprecedented time.

In the evenings I work as a Project Lead The Way Master Teacher. I train teachers across the country in STEM education. The stories I have heard about other teachers' experiences this year have made me very thankful to be working for district 97. Schools opening and shutting down multiple times. Staff members quarantining for weeks at a time. Schedules shifting multiple times a week. Entire classes of students removed from school. Grade periods ending with so much lost educational time that not enough data is available to accurately measure student success or growth. For so many teachers that I train this has sadly become a lost year in regards to educational outcomes. While I know the situation in Oak Park is not perfect, I almost felt guilty sharing with them that our students are still working through the design process, still learning 3D modeling, coding, and building solutions to problems.

I realize you all have taken a lot of heat from many stakeholders during this process. Parents are rightfully frustrated that we are closing in on a year out of the school building. As a parent of three young children that frustration is very real to me also. We as parents worry about the negative effects of our kids not seeing peers. We worry about trying to work while taking care of children who would normally be in school. We worry when our students get frustrated in this remote environment, we worry about excessive screen time. We worry that our 800 square foot apartment will never be clean again. Added to this are the worldly stresses that seem all around us and the plethora of contradictory information we are bombarded with on a daily basis. All parents have had to make unique and unconventional decisions to best serve our families during this time. Yet I do believe that despite everything, we can agree that there really is no perfect solution to this situation, and having heard of the realities of what some of the hastily created alternatives are, I'm thankful for your prudent approach to reopening our schools, and the stability we had as teachers this fall.

As we hopefully come close to finalizing our plan for returning to school I am thankful that safety remains paramount. I am comforted knowing that data and not emotions ultimately informs our decisions. That transparent, accessible, expert approved metrics are being relied upon to guide and decide our reopening. I'm thankful that this and other safety measures are included in our framework. I hope that when we are able to transition to a hybrid approach we continue to be creative in finding ways to mitigate the risk of exposure by spreading out to maximize the space, minimizing groups in buildings, having the support of parents and administrators to encourage use of masks, hand sanitizer, etc.

In conclusion, this time of year is usually a good time of reflection for many. I want to say thank you to all the leaders who have worked so tirelessly with the hefty weight of this on their shoulders. Thank

teachers for always showing up for our kids. Thank you to parents for your patience and your support, and thank you students for trying something new, even though it is hard. I love bragging about the projects you have created so far this year.

### **LeeAnn Reinfurth**

I am a mother of ten year-old twin daughters at Lincoln elementary. I have been very vocal in my requests to return students to the classroom. I have sent so many emails that I was able to conduct a one on one zoom with Ms. Kelley. Her response to all my questions regarding her leadership and response to opening schools was beyond disappointing. I continued to ask her for concrete numbers of what had been done to date, how many students have withdrew from District 97, etc. I was given no answers. There children need to be in the classroom. Just as parents who want a virtual option parents also DESERVE the option for in person instruction. The learning gap these children will suffer along with social and emotional stunting may follow them a lifetime. Over 1800 public schools have opened in Illinois and COUNTLESS private schools. Schools all over the United States are back in person in either a hybrid or five day a week capacity. District 97 needs to put the hard work in and figure this out not only for the sake of our children but also for the working parents you are literally crippling that cannot work virtually. We have had to find places for our kids to go that are not only costly but opening us and our children up to more exposure than if they were in a school setting. Why a task force wasn't formed till October is ridiculous! Why surveys asking our opinion were not sent over the summer is ridiculous. We should have started the year hybrid as we were told was an option over the summer. There has been very little follow through with a return to school plan other than the worst hybrid plan ever we were given and was immediately shut down. I am still shocked how that plan was ever put to paper and disseminated to the District 97 population as the outrage was huge. I truly worry WHO and what the mentally is that is making the decisions for the children of District 97 and MY CHILDREN!

I am imploring you Ms. Kelly and the Board to OPEN SCHOOLS after the holiday break!!!! The parents spoke in the survey and 55 percent want to be back. That means "we win". No more excuses and do right by these children and GET THEM IN THE CLASSROOM.

Ms. Kelley just as I insisted in our call I am again going to challenge you to do HARD THINGS and get the children in the classroom where they belong. The ramifications of this continuing will not only affect our children, our livelihood but also the future of our village.

### **Kate Odom**

While it is encouraging that there have been many opportunities for community feedback, teacher listening sessions, advisory panels and the like, I am disheartened that there is yet to be an actual plan for in-person learning released. I know there are options, I even hear there is a plan being discussed with a select set of stakeholders; however, the STUDENTS, parents, and childcare providers (maybe also teachers and staff) have nothing solid from which to make our own plans. We hear a date of February 1st for students back in schools, yet this is not confirmed. How are we to support our children in this transition and adjust ourselves if we don't know what happens on February 1st (or if this will be the third 'gotcha' moment)?

I understand a petition with over 300 signatures after three days of distribution was shared with you, urging you to declare an actual, confirmed, defined, plan with an implementation date and metrics that are determined by the recommendation of the specialized physicians in our community. I know the physicians on the Superintendent's Advisory Panel is recommending the in-person learning hybrid to incorporate the MOST amount of in-person learning and imploring the leadership to follow in the footsteps of countless other schools doing this safely. I also know that Senator Harmon's office has been in contact with you and it was confirmed that there has been a failure to produce and implement a plan to

return to in-person learning. This level of attention and plea does not seem to be met with the same level of concern and desperation with which it is being communicated.

I hope tonight's meeting brings clarity. I wish even more that we (students, families, school personnel, and childcare providers) have a plan before the holiday break.

**Sarah (Gullette) Seelye / Johnson Family**

I am the parent of two children, an 11 year-old daughter in 5th grade and a five year-old son in kindergarten, both of whom are in the Spanish Immersion program at Lincoln Elementary.

My daughter has dyslexia and ADHD, which makes learning a challenge for her under the best of circumstances. Since remote learning began in March of 2020, she has struggled to keep up with her peers and has lost much of the academic progress she made over the last two years while working 1:1 with a private tutor who specializes in her specific set of disabilities. Although I continually expressed my concern at her lack of progress and struggles with her teachers and the revolving door of "leadership" at Lincoln year after year, her clear need for specialized services was ignored. It was not until I hired an educational advocate to help me navigate the system for requesting an evaluation and understanding our rights, that she was finally granted an IEP mid-way through her 3rd grade year.

At its core, remote learning is an inherently one dimensional learning format, and it is very difficult for my child to learn under these circumstances. Naturally, this has caused my daughter continual distress and has greatly affected her mental health and wellbeing. Her confidence is beaten down, the teachers are unable to provide her with the accommodations she is entitled to through her IEP and in spite of our efforts to support her learning, She is continuing to fall further and further behind.

My son started kindergarten this fall and to say that it is difficult to keep a five year-old boy engaged on Zoom calls throughout the course of a seven hour school day would be a gross understatement. He finds it difficult to connect with a teacher and classmates he has never met, and the constant pressure to perform and complete a surprisingly heavy course load given his age and the current circumstances has affected his mental health immensely. He was enrolled at a local private school for their e-learning support program and while sitting at a table with two of his classmates, they became confused as to how they could be sitting in person together yet also see each other on the Zoom screen. This group of kids came to the conclusion that there are ghost versions of themselves out in the Zoom world and since then he vehemently refuses to allow the Zoom camera turned on during the school day. The last couple of months I have seen him change from a funny, joyful, creative and happy go lucky kid to an anxious, depressed and combative child. He is awoken nearly every night by recurring nightmares and has become so attached to my physical presence that it is a battle for me to simply leave the house to go to the grocery store without him. I have spoken with his pediatrician and a child psychologist who both say that he is exhibiting classic signs of trauma.

I have been in near constant communication with his teachers, school administrators and the current co-interim principal at Lincoln regarding his struggle. His teachers and I have had at least four separate Zoom calls to discuss ways to help him, we have tried adjusting his schedule in a variety of ways to ease the burden and pressure on him, I have discussed the situation at length with Ms. Gordon, Mr. Childress and other school administrators. Because of his refusal to get on a Zoom call, it is nearly impossible to seek the professional help of a therapist for him, yet every day I continue to try new things to provide him with the support he needs.

I am a working parent and my partner works outside the home, so not only am I attempting to oversee the remote learning for both my kids throughout the day (which is \*not\* btw, set up for the kids to handle without near constant supervision, especially for the younger kiddos), but I am also attempting to do my

job. As the primary breadwinner for my family, I do not have the ability to "opt out" as so many working women have been forced to do during this pandemic. Adding further stress to our family is the fact that my grandfather who helped raise me, is alone in a hospital dying of Covid-19.

A few days ago I was contacted by a District 97 social worker, whom I thought was reaching out to me in order to provide some resources or support for my struggling son. During the course of our conversation, it became clear that he was not contacting me to offer some much needed assistance, but was actually evaluating whether or not my children were the victims of parental neglect.

I would like to let that statement sink in for a moment. I am a working mom who has been in social isolation with my two children for nearly 9 months, I am a local business owner struggling to keep afloat, I am an active member of the Lincoln PTO, I have a daughter with special needs and a five year-old boy who is experiencing trauma, I have a family member dying alone in a hospital of Covid-19. I have been in constant communication and asked for help, resources, guidance and understanding from my child's teachers and administrators. And in response, someone at Lincoln and the district office thought the best route to take was to find a way to direct blame, responsibility and shame on me. They have chosen to prioritize Zoom attendance and academic progress over the emotional wellbeing of a five year-old boy in kindergarten.

In response, I choose to share this very personal story during the public comment portion of the District 97 Board of Education meeting because my pleas for understanding and compassion for my children to our school and district have gone unanswered, time and time again. I know for a FACT that I am not the only parent struggling to keep her family afloat. I know for a FACT that my son is not the only child experiencing trauma due to the pandemic that makes it difficult if not impossible to actively participate in the classroom. I know for a FACT, that all of our children are hurting right now in some way, and for some inexplicable reason, Dr. Kelley and the Board of Education at District 97 continue to choose to overlook the populations who are most vulnerable and in need of support.

Oak Park has always prided itself on being an inclusive and progressive community. Part of being inclusive and progressive is our ability to speak our truth without fear of unwarranted and unfair repercussions. Here is my truth, I am not okay, my children are not okay and it's okay to admit that. But that DOES NOT make me a neglectful parent. I have lived in fear the last 5 days about what might happen next to me or to my kids and that is not right.

To the Board of Education and Superintendent Kelley, I ask you, what is progressive and inclusive about your approach to our children? How do you plan to implement policies and protocols that provide reprieve to those of us who are struggling? I sincerely hope it is not by terrorizing the parents and children in our schools with blame and shameful insinuations. Our children deserve better, and so does our community.

## **SPECIAL REPORT**

### **DISTRICT 97 RETURN TO SCHOOL PLAN UPDATE**

The administrative team presented their recommendations for a revised hybrid learning plan for the remainder of the 2020-21 school year. Dr. Kelley explained that administration originally planned to share the draft plan in January, but after hearing from many stakeholders over the past two weeks who asked that the district commit to a plan prior to winter break, decided to present the draft this evening.

Dr. Kelley explained that the recommended schedules were developed based on stakeholder feedback, recommendations from the Superintendent Advisory Panel, consultation with several community medical experts, and extensive research on schedules/best practices being utilized in other school districts,

including recently-adopted hybrid plans for Oak Park and River Forest High School District 200 and River Forest School District 90.

- **By the end of the week, families will be sent a commitment form due no later than Wednesday, January 6, 2021.** The district will ask families to commit to either hybrid learning or full-time remote learning for the duration of Trimester 2, which ends March 12, 2021. If the district does not receive a student’s form, they will automatically be placed in full-time remote learning.
- **The district will share an FAQ regarding the hybrid plan.** Administration is also working to update our Framework for Reopening Schools based on the new hybrid schedules.
- **School safety teams are meeting to develop school-level plans to operationalize our safety protocols and procedures.** More information will be shared with staff and families in January.
- **Administration will continue to monitor COVID-19 metrics in our region and provide updates about our plans to return.** Administration is currently planning a phased return, beginning with our special programs on January 12, 2021 at the earliest. The is to begin transitioning grade levels back on site over several days, beginning February 1, 2021 if it is safe to do so.

Administration expressed appreciation for everyone’s patience, understanding and support as the team worked to update the hybrid learning plan over the last two months.

Dr. Kelley thanked the staff for all of their efforts during the pandemic. She shared examples of staff members who have been going above and beyond noting, food pickup, and library book pickups that have been scheduled on a regular basis. Every middle school student is reading STAMPED and working on the anti-racism curricula. Nurses are offering opportunities for wellness check-ins. Prior to the adaptive pause, the student services department began providing on-site learning for students in the district’s multi-needs program.

Several professionals were asked to share their expertise with the board.

The board discussed the recommendation and instructed the administration team to move forward with the plan as presented.

Board comments included interest in hearing more about the childcare providers and the students who are using those services. Dr. Kelley assured the board that administration will work with the providers regarding this need.

#### **ACTION ITEMS**

ACTION ITEMS

##### **4.1.1 APPROVAL OF MINUTES FOR THE DECEMBER 1, 2020 BOARD MEETING**

Moore moved, seconded by Breymaier, that the Board of Education, District 97, approve the minutes from the December 1, 2020 board meeting as presented.

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

Nays: None

Absent: Broy

Motion passed.

##### **4.2.1 APPROVAL OF THE CONSENT AGENDA**

Breymaier moved, seconded by Liebl, that the Board of Education, District 97, accept the consent agenda as presented.

- 4.2.1 Bill List
- 4.2.2 Personnel
- 4.2.3 Approval of Disposal of Property
- 4.2.4 Adoption of Policy
  - 4.2.4.1 Policy 6:280 (Grading and Promotion)
  - 4.2.4.2 Policy 7:50 (School Admission and Student Transfers To and From Non District Schools)
  - 4.2.4.3 Policy 7:345 (Use of Educational Technologies; Student Data Privacy and Security)

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

**4.3.1 APPROVAL OF DEPOSITORIES AND SIGNATORIES**

Kearney moved, seconded by Breymaier, that the Board of Education, District 97, approve the depositories and signatories as presented.

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

**4.3.2 APPROVAL OF FOOD SERVICE AND REGISTRATION FEES**

Moore moved, seconded by Kearney, that the Board of Education, District 97, approve the 2021-2022 food service and registration fees as presented.

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

**4.3.3 APPROVAL OF BUDGET AUTHORITY**

Breymaier moved, seconded by Kearney, that the Board of Education, District 97, authorizes the Superintendent of Schools to commence the preparation of the 2021-2022 budget in accordance with the proposed timeline as presented.

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

**4.3.4 APPROVAL OF THE TAX LEVY**

Kearney moved, seconded by Breymaier, that the Board of Education, District 97, approve the attached Certificate of Levy and associated resolutions providing for adoption of the 2020 levy.

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

**4.3.5 APPROVAL OF THE SUMMER SCHOOL PLANS**

Kearney moved, seconded by Breymaier, that the Board of Education, District 97, approve the 2020 summer programming as presented on December 1, 2020, not to exceed \$166,997.

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

Nays: None

Absent: Broy

Motion passed.

**4.3.6 APPROVAL OF HYBRID LEARNING SPACE – AUDIO MICROPHONE PURCHASE**

Liebl moved, seconded by Moore, that the Board of Education, District 97, approve the purchase of classroom microphones to support the learning environment in the hybrid model as the solution was shared during the December 1, 2020 board meeting and memo included in the December 15, 2020 board packet, at a cost not to exceed \$30,000.

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

Nays: None

Absent: Broy

Motion passed.

ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS

**ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS**

**BID RECOMMENDATION**

Peter Kuhn from Bulley and Andrews shared the scope of capital improvements slated for spring and summer 2021. He reported that bid openings were held for the Beye School construction last week, and one package will need to be rebid. The items were reviewed by FAC last night and the committee’s recommendation was submitted to the board for consideration. Kuhn reported that the bids are currently about \$81,000 under the board’s approved budget for the 2021 improvements. This item will return to the board for action during the January 12, 2021 board meeting.

BOARD ASSIGNMENTS

**BOARD ASSIGNMENTS**

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

**FACILITIES ADVISORY COMMITTEE (FAC)**

FAC met last night. A summary of the committee’s recommendations was shared with the board. The board was reminded that Chairperson Paul May resigned from the committee.

**COMMITTEE FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT (CCE)**

It was reported that CCE has not met, but they are open to holding a meeting if the board would like them to help with communications regarding the return to school hybrid plan. It was noted that the committee is looking for direction.

**FINANCE OVERSIGHT AND REVIEW COMMITTEE (FORC)**

It was noted that FORC may want to talk about the abatement before it comes back to the board.

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

Leaders who continually show up and support the District 97 families were acknowledged for their efforts.

IGOV

IGOV is scheduled to meet this coming Saturday.

**CLOSING ITEMS**

**BOARD REMARKS**

CLOSING ITEMS

Members of the administrative team were acknowledged for their work on the proposed levy, and the back to school plan.

Member Moore explained that she voted against the summer programming because she would like spending to be more intentional, and see a balance between “wants” and “needs”.

**AGENDA MAINTENANCE**

The draft agendas for the January 12, 2021 meeting was reviewed and revisions were recommended.

**ADJOURNMENT**

ADJOURNMENT

Liebl moved, seconded by Moore that the meeting be adjourned. The motion was approved by voice roll call. There being no further business to conduct, Vice President Kim declared the meeting adjourned at 10:48 p.m.

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

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