

**Official Minutes of the  
Oak Park Board of Education District 97,  
260 Madison Street, Oak Park, Cook County, Illinois  
Meeting December 20, 2016**

President Gates called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

Present: Gates, O'Connor, Spatz, Spurlock, Felton, Brisben, and Datta (6:31 p.m.)  
Absent: None  
Also Present: Superintendent Dr. Carol Kelley, Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations  
Dr. Alicia Evans, Assistant Superintendent of HR Laurie Campbell, Chief Academic and  
Accountability Officer Dr. Amy Warke, Senior Director of Special Services Mike  
Padavic, Senior Director of Policy, Procedures and Communication Chris Jasculca, Sr.  
Director of Administrative Services Dr. Felicia Starks Turner, Senior Director of  
Technology Michael Arensdorff, Director of Curriculum and Instruction Carrie Kamm,  
and Board Secretary Sheryl Marinier

ROLL CALL

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Brisben moved, seconded by Spatz, that the Board of Education move into Executive Session at 6:30 p.m. to discuss (Appointment, Employment, Compensation, Discipline, Performance or Dismissal of Specific Employees or Legal Counsel for the District 5 ILCS 120/2(C)(1), Possible Litigation 5 ILCS 120/2(C)(11), Setting of a price for Sale or Lease of Property 5 ILCS 120/2(C)(6). Roll call vote.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Ayes: Brisben, Spatz, Felton, O'Connor, Spurlock, and Gates  
Nays: None  
Absent at time of vote: Datta  
Motion passed.

**OPEN SESSION**

O'Connor moved, seconded by Felton, that the Board of Education move into Open Session at 6:54 p.m. All members of the Board were in agreement. The meeting reconvened at 7:04 p.m.

OPEN SESSION

**PRESENTATION – PARK DISTRICT OF OAK PARK**

Paul Aeschleman, President of the Park District of Oak Park, came to the table. He explained that two years ago, the Park District, District 97 and other entities, jointly developed the soccer fields at the middle schools and were awarded the Best of the Best for Intergovernmental collaboration. Aeschlman presented the Board with a trophy recognizing the joint effort.

PRESENTATION –  
PARK DISTRICT  
OF OAK PARK

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

Caroline Nikolakakis, an Oak Park resident with one child at Lincoln School, and a teacher at Hatch School, expressed admiration for the Board of Education but explained that she was confused when trying to understand decisions being made. She shared that she has a genuine interest in participating, and thanked the Board for recognizing that climate control in the classrooms is important, noting that the current units are loud and distracting. She questioned some of the statements made regarding reductions during a recent discussion on the referendum. She wanted to know if the recommendations were a proposal or planned reductions. She suggested that a \$1,000,000 in staffing reductions would be a concern. She suggested that the discussion on equity was good, but expressed concern about the impact it might have on programming, and asked how those decisions would be made. She asked about Fast Forward and explained that she is interested in the total cost from start to end and questioned if the District has stopped using this program.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Yoko Terretta, an Oak Park resident with children at Hatch School, shared that the referendum document was engaging and she made reference to the belt-tightening section of the report. She asked why the focus of the reductions was solely on staffing. She expressed confusion on how reducing staff would help the teacher/student ratio. She questioned why these decisions are being made now and if professional learning staff is included in the decision. She noted that Hatch School has a great reading/writing program with a coach for the teachers. She expressed interest in the operational expense models, and expressed interest in knowing where she could find more information on these options and noted that the document are hard to find.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT** (Continued)

Member Brisben shared that the Board is working on developing a Web page that will include the most current version of the Referendum PowerPoint and he shared that, in the future, a committee will be hosting community meetings to explain the details of the referendum.

## **REPORTS**

REPORTS

### **SUMMER SCHOOL AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SUMMER 2017**

Amy Warke, Helen Wei came to the table with Tajalli Horval, Senior Vice President of Galileo.

Warke reported that administration reviewed the Prep for Success program and determined what the program should accomplish in order to be considered successful. She noted that all students should be challenged and engaged. All should have access to programs and supports to prepare them for success in high school. The program should support every student, encouraging them to be critical thinkers and ready to contribute to their community. Additionally, every student should be ready to contribute to their community and each student should be known for whom they are and their unique needs should be met.

The team explained that Prep for Success is a half-day Kindergarten – eighth grade program for student who are “at promise”, identified as needing extra support outside of the classroom. The team questioned if they wanted to replicate what students are doing every day or expand the possibilities by innovation and different instructional methods. They approached the Oak Park Education Foundation and asked them to consider a partnership, possibly using their programs for the fifth through eighth graders; unfortunately, the Foundation was not able to support this request.

The team explained that they considered the need to ensure the identification process to provide access to students equitably. They considered how to ensure that students who are invited have access to the program (due to transportation and childcare issue). To meet this need, the team recommended providing extended learning opportunities that provide students with a full-day of engagement and before and after childcare.

They reported that last year, 552 students were invited to Prep for Success. Of those, 269 students enrolled and began the program, but only 182 actually finished the program with 75 percent attendance or more. Therefore, the need to create more incentives for the students to attend on a daily basis was identified. The team also recognized the need to increase communication with the families through the program.

Warke reported that an all-day program in-district would cost about \$469,000. With that in mind, the team introduced Galileo, a for-profit program that is staffed by highly qualified teachers who are passionate for helping students learn.

The 2017 program would serve 268 incoming Kindergarten through eighth graders selected by the District. Two core programs would be run for four weeks each. Each program would run from 9:00 a.m. through 3:00 p.m. daily, with childcare being provided from 6:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m. daily. Each day, student would go through three rotations of art, science and outdoors. Four unique themes and curriculum (Medieval Adventure, Galileo Makers, Amusement Parks and African Safari) would be offered. Additionally, a daily news update will be sent home to families.

Each week, student would do a deep dive into one major. Majors offered this summer include;

- Chefology
- Inventor’s Workshop
- Go-kart builders
- Catapult builders
- Mystery room
- YouTube Producers
- Digital Design for the Web

Each student would complete four majors during the program.

Wei reported that data indicates that students learn more when taught in an innovative way. Dr. Kelley shared that research indicates that it is helpful to disrupt the standard learning patterns to support learning. Students do not know that they are actually learning, because they are so engaged. It was reported that the District could personalize the process for each student’s needs, using social workers to help design a comprehensive plan for each student.

SUMMER SCHOOL AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SUMMER 2017 (Continued)

Dr. Kelley reported that she hosted a community conversation on the District’s goals on December 14, 2016. During that meeting, the group discussed ways that the District can continue to engage with them. Dr. Kelley shared her thoughts about how the District can help each student in Oak Park to obtain their personal goals. Everyone in the meeting was excited and many offered to support the process.

Because students would be able to attend one to four weeks of the program, it would be difficult at this time to determine the ratio of students who will receive scholarships and those who will be expected to pay to attend.

Confusion was expressed about what was asked of the Oak Park Education Foundation when they were asked to partner in a summer program. Conversation continued and it was suggested that there had been a miscommunication with the Foundation. It was noted that the Foundation is one of the crown jewels of the community and their efforts should be reconsidered.

It was noted that the Prep for Success costs for last year were \$103,000. The annual cost for Galileo would be \$258,600 for 226 children in a full-day (6 hours) four week program that includes lunch.

Board comments included interest in hearing about additional research to support this learning process and implementation of the program. Concern was expressed about the cost of the program, however the need for a full-day program and spending additional money to support it were also identified. It was suggested that the approval be delayed until the Board can review a contract. Concern was expressed about Galileo being a for-profit organization, noting that the Board likes to see the money reinvented. It was suggested that the chosen program needs to be sustainable for decades. Concern was expressed that this program might take away from the Foundation’s Base Camp and then could cut funding for school year programs.

It was agreed that member Spurlock and Datta will reach out to the Oak Park Education Foundation to clarify any misunderstandings. In the meantime, the contract with Galileo will be completed and included in the January 10, 2017 Board packet.

**ACTION ITEMS**

**2.1.1 APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM THE DECEMBER 6, 2016 BOARD MEETING**

Spatz moved, seconded by Brisben, that the Board of Education of Oak Park District 97, approve the minutes from the December 6, 2016 Board meeting. Roll call vote.

Ayes: Spatz, Brisben, Felton, Gates, O’Connor, Datta, and Spurlock

Nays: None

Motion passed.

**2.2 APPROVAL OF THE CONSENT AGENDA**

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

2.2.1 Approval of Bill List

2.2.2 Approval of Personnel

Ayes: Gates, Datta, Felton, Spatz, Brisben, Spurlock, and O’Connor

Nays: None

Motion passed.

**2.3.1 APPROVAL OF DEPOSITORY AND SIGNATURES**

Gates moved, seconded by Brisben, that the Board of Education of Oak Park District 97, approve the depositories and signatories as presented. Roll call vote.

Ayes: Gates, Brisben, Felton, Spatz, O’Connor, Datta, and Spurlock

Nays: None

Motion passed.

**2.3.2 APPROVAL OF ILLINOIS ENERGY CONSORTIUM AGREEMENT**

Datta moved, seconded by Spatz, that the Board of Education of Oak Park District 97, approve the agreement and resolution with Illinois Energy Consortium as presented. Roll call vote.

Ayes: Datta, Spatz, Felton, O’Connor, Brisben, Gates, and Spurlock

Nays: None

Motion passed.

**2.3.3 APPROVAL OF DONATION FROM OAK PARK EDUCATION FOUNDATION**

Gates moved, seconded by Datta, that the Board of Education of Oak Park District 97, approve the donation of a permanent outside mural at Brooks Middle School. Roll call vote.

Ayes: Gates, Datta, Felton, Spatz, O’Connor, Brisben, and Spurlock  
Nays: None  
Motion passed.

**2.3.4 APPROVAL OF LEAP INNOVATION**

This item was tabled until January 10, 2017.

**2.3.5 APPROVAL OF COMMITTEE FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT CHARGE**

Spurlock moved, seconded by Spatz, that the Board of Education of Oak Park District 97, adopt the Committee for Community Engagement (CCE) charge.

It was agreed that the second, third and fourth sentences of the composition would be struck. President Gates will send a clean copy of this charge to the Board members.

It was noted that this is not the committee that will be engaging. This committee will be the committee designing the plan.

Member Spurlock was acknowledged for her work on this along with President Gates. It was noted that this is an exciting opportunity for the Board to work with the community.

Roll call vote.  
Ayes: Spurlock, Spatz, O’Connor, Brisben, Gates, Datta, and Felton  
Nays: None  
Motion passed.

REFERENDUM  
DISCUSSION

**REFERENDUM DISCUSSION**

It was noted that the Board is on schedule to consider a motion and approval of the referendum wording on January 10, 2017, as they decided to run two separate referendums, one for additional funding for the operating expenses and one to sell 20-year capital infrastructure bonds. It was noted that the impact to taxpayers on the second would be almost non-existent as the 1999 bonds that funded the middle schools are ready to mature.

Although it creates more complexity to feature two separate questions on the ballot, the Board’s rationale for doing so included the following reasons: greater transparency, the “ask” represents the minimum necessary to comply with District 97 fiscal policies and ISBE (Illinois State Board of Education) guidelines while meeting the needs of the district’s surging student enrollment. It also allows for no co-mingling of funds.

Sample wording for the referendum questions were shared. It was agreed that they should not identify individual schools and should state that repairs are needed to ensure the safety and functionality of the buildings. Interest was expressed in seeing the wording include more specifics.

It was noted that the question relating to the operating expenses would appear first on the ballot.

**2.36 APPROVAL OF RESOLUTION TO PREPARE REFERENDA BALLOT LANGUAGE**

Spatz moved, seconded by Brisben, that the Board of Education of Oak Park District 97, accept the resolution to prepare referenda ballot language.

**RESOLUTION TO PREPARE REFERENDA BALLOT LANGUAGE**

**Whereas** the District 97 Board of Education approved a resolution on March 15, 2016 announcing its intent to run a referendum on April 4, 2017; and

**Whereas**, while the official announcement was made in March, the Board has been proactively planning for and openly talking about this issue since the District’s most recent referendum in 2011; and

**Whereas** the Board and administration, with the assistance of the Board’s citizen-led Finance Oversight and Review Committee and Facilities Advisory Committee, have been publicly discussing, studying and assessing possible referendum options and sizes for the past nine months in an effort to identify a solution that will enable the District to meet the needs of its students, while also mitigating the burden on taxpayers; and

**Whereas**, while the District has managed its money carefully over the past five years, the continued decline of the state’s financial status and lower than expected revenues have had a debilitating impact on the District’s fund balance, which is projected to be under the 25 percent level at the end of fiscal year 2017 and in the negative during the 2018-2019 school year; and

**Whereas** these challenging economic factors, a historic surge in student enrollment and a steadfast commitment to education have led the Board to determine that an increase in excess of what Cook County allows under the tax caps is necessary for advancing the District’s vision of creating a positive learning environment for all District 97 students that is equitable, inclusive and focused on the whole child; and

**Whereas** the Board has also identified a critical need for capital investment in the physical infrastructure of the District’s eight elementary schools in order to enhance the long-term sustainability and viability of the buildings, the newest of which is 60 years old, while also providing children with access to a safe, nurturing, innovative space in which to learn, grow and achieve;

**Now, Therefore, Be it Resolved** by the District 97 Board of Education that it supports placing two referenda on the ballot on April 4, 2017 that would call for a one percent limiting rate increase totaling approximately \$13 million and a \$57,500,000 capital bond issue, and is requesting that the administration work with the District’s internal and external financial and legal experts to prepare the resolutions and ballot language to this effect that the Board will vote on during its meeting on January 10, 2017; and

**Be It Further Resolved** that the Board is committed to engaging in an open, honest, transparent dialogue with the community about topics related to the referenda that include, but are not limited to, why the District is pursuing the referenda, as well as what the District will do if the referenda either pass or do not pass; and

**Be It Further Resolved** that, the Board will help the District determine if it needs to create new or modify existing policies and procedures to further promote transparency around the allocation and expenditure of referendum dollars, and will also contribute to the development and implementation of a plan for keeping the community updated about the work being undertaken and progress being made in conjunction with any referenda-related promises and recommendations.

Roll call vote.

Ayes: Spatz, Brisben, Gates, Datta, Felton, O’Connor, and Spurlock

Nays: None

Motion passed.

**SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT**

**SUPERINTENDENT’S  
REPORT**

Dr. Kelley reported that the District was just accepted into the LEAP program. This item will return to the Board for approval on the January 10, 2017.

Dr. Kelley shared that she will be reporting on her goals during future Superintendent’s Reports. She shared the two main goals with various actions, and noted that the key terms will soon be available on the Let’s Talk vehicle for ideas for Cab-Vaat. She reported that Cab-Vaat met with NEP (National Equity Program) last week and looked at universal goals. They selected one goal to be used as an example. That activity will be turn keyed with the rest of the staff at the upcoming institute day.

She reported that the desegregated data will be unpacked and evaluated after winter recess.

Dr. Kelley reported that the final organizational audit completed by Atlantic Research Partners has been shared with Board.

She noted that the Back Office survey has been sent out to staff, with a deadline of this Friday. The public results will be shared with administrators so supervisors can plan their goals around them.

Dr. Kelley included copies of the administrator’s goals and progress in the Board packet.

Dr. Kelley met with Dr. Warke and Emily Fenske today to identify dates to meet with SIT teams and progress monitoring meetings.

Member Spurlock shared that a 15 to 30 minute session can be scheduled to help the Board understand the Superintendent’s Evaluation rubric. She asked the Board members to submit questions about the tool to her that can be sent to the rubric’s creator. Discussion took place as to whether this discussion would be in open or closed session.

## **BOARD ASSIGNMENTS**

### **STANDING BOARD COMMITTEE LIAISON REPORT FOLLOW UP**

None

**BOARD  
ASSIGNMENTS**

### **INTERGOVERNMENTAL AND LIAISON REPORT FOLLOW UP**

The Citizens Council liaison report will be sent to the Board in the near future.

The Calendar committee report has been included in the Board packet.

### **REFERENDUM DISCUSSION**

It was noted that the timeline and dates with details will be reported on January 10, 2017. Additionally, an updated file will be sent to the Board. Interest was expressed in revisiting what the Board can and cannot do regarding the referendum moving forward.

## **ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS**

### **BUDGET AUTHORITY ADOPTION**

Alicia Evans came to the table. She reported that annually the Board is required to take action to adopt a proposed financial calendar and to designate a person to prepare the budget for the next year. This item will return to the Board for action on January 10, 2017.

**ADMINISTRATIVE  
ITEMS**

It was suggested that something be added to the last meeting in April to review the District's financial direction should the referendum fail.

### **ORGANIZATIONAL AUDIT FOR OAK PARK DISTRICT 97**

This item was highlighted in the Superintendent's report. Dr. Kelley will present a recommendation on revisions to central office in the near future. No action will be necessary on January 10, 2017.

### **ADMINISTRATIVE UPDATE ON UNITS OF STUDY WRITING AND RECOMMENDATION FOR SY17 READING**

Amy Warke, Helen Wei, came to the table with teachers Caroline Nikolakakis and Martha Polly. They reported on how the team has been reviewing curriculum that aligns with the District's goals and vision.

It was reported that the writing program currently being used by the District is research based and is doing a great job of engaging the students. The program is student friendly and pushes them from their strengths.

Wei reported that teachers were surveyed and asked how administration could serve them better. They expressed needs with;

- Student engagement
- Volume of writing
- Building writing stamina
- Structured mini-lessons, with targeted writing strategies
- Celebrations

Challenges that teachers would like more support on included;

- More time to read and plan lessons
- More instructional time in their weekly schedules to teach writing
- Effective use of writing workshop time, to provide quality feedback during conferences
- Strategies to further support struggling students

Short-term meeting

- Creating opportunities to look at student work to help guide instruction
- Improving conferring and small group instruction
- Scheduling future professional learning sessions so that they are more accessible to teachers
- Offering professional learning sessions in grade bands (K-2 and 3-5) for more targeted
- Posting videos of after-school professional learning sessions for teachers, as well as related session materials

ADMINISTRATIVE UPDATE ON UNITS OF STUDY WRITING AND RECOMMENDATION FOR SY17  
READING (Continued)

Long-term

- Scope and sequence adjustments for 2017-2018, in conjunction with the ongoing Kindergarten -fifth ELA written curriculum work
- District 97 example videos of mini-lessons and conferences to share internally
- Report card revisions
- Growth of in-house expertise (principals, instructional coaches, and teacher leaders)
- Support to our instructional coaches
- Peer observations and demonstration classrooms as job-embedded professional learning opportunities
- Instructional time maximization in master schedules

Recommendations for next year

- They proposed that the District make the following purchases to continue to strengthen the literacy instruction within a balanced literacy framework for the 2017-2018 school year;
  - Reading Units of Study
  - Benchmark assessments system and district wide, classroom Libraries Supplementation

Board comments included interest in communications to the parents. A video clip that explains what the students are learning was suggested. A discrepancy in the purchase recommendation was identified.

This program will be piloted at Hatch School this year and a classroom inventory will be completed across the district before this item returns to the Board for any further action.

DONATION – LINCOLN PTO

Evans reported that the Lincoln PTO would like to donate money to the school for the purchase of blinds, storage boxes and two buddy benches. This item will return to the Board for action on January 10, 2017.

**CONCLUDING ITEMS**

**BOARD REMARKS**

The maintenance team was acknowledged for their excellent job of maintaining the buildings during the cold weather.

Vice President Felton and member Spatz attended the December 14, 2016 community meeting hosted by Dr. Kelley.

A session to update Board candidates on the referendum was suggested. The session would be led by members Spatz and Brisben. It was suggested that a Doodle be sent to the candidates with possible dates for this session. It was noted that a forum is scheduled for candidates on January 11, 2017, so this meeting should occur sometime after January 17, 2017.

**BOARD RESPONSE TO PUBLIC COMMENT**

Dr. Kelley will visit Hatch School and chat with Ms. Nicolakakis in person.

**BOARD MEETING AGENDA FOR FUTURE MEETINGS**

The draft agenda for the January 10, 2017 Board meeting was reviewed and modifications were recommended.

**PARKING LOT**

It was agreed that Vice President Felton and member Datta will review the draft Parking Lot and Long-Term Calendar and share their direction for moving forward

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to conduct, President Gates declared the meeting adjourned at 10:35 p.m.

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Board President

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

CONCLUDING  
ITEMS

ADJOURNMENT