

Official Minutes of the  
Oak Park Board of Education District 97  
260 Madison Street, Oak Park  
February 21, 2023 Regular Meeting

This meeting was held in-person and virtually using Livestream. Board members met in person along with Administration.

President Kim called the meeting to order at 6:06 p.m.

Present: Kim, Moore, Ross Dribin, Kearney, Spurlock, Hurd Johnson

Absent: Kinhal

Also Present: Superintendent Dr. Ushma Shah, Associate Superintendent of Education Dr. Felicia Starks Turner, Chief Academic and Accountability Officer Dr. Ebony Lofton, Director of Human Resources Dr. Margo Schmitt, Senior Director of Technology Michael Arensdorff, Senior Director of Equity Dr. Carrie Kamm, Senior Director of Buildings & Grounds Jeanne Keane, Senior Director of Finance Patrick King, Communications Coordinator Rebecca Bald, and Lonya Boose Board Secretary.

ROLL CALL

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Spurlock moved, seconded by Ross Dribin that the Board move into executive session for the purpose of Appointment, Employment, Compensation, Discipline, Performance, or Dismissal of Specific Employees, Collective Negotiating and Litigation.5 ILCS 120/2(C)(1)(2)(11) at 6:08 p.m.

EXECUTIVE  
SESSION

**OPEN SESSION**

President Kim motioned that the Board move into Open Session at 7:10 p.m. All present members of the Board were in agreement. The Board convened in Open Session at 7:14 p.m.

OPEN  
SESSION

**3. PUBLIC COMMENT**

Hi, my name is Susan Raphael and I am a parent of twin 6th Graders at Julian and a 9th Grader at OPRF- I am currently the Julian PTO Co- president and this is my 3rd year on the Julian PTO Board. I was not planning on being here tonight and had to quickly write these comments today after finding out the shocking news from a friend that all the D97 cultural coach positions were to be eliminated in D97 including our beloved climate coach - Katie Trathan. Our PTO Board has not had the time to write an official statement, thus the comments I have to say are mine alone.

PUBLIC  
COMMENT

If you are to talk about what works at Julian, our past and current Climate Coaches have to be in discussion. Pre- Covid and even during Covid, Ms. Harris led circles where the Julian community came together with different groups both in person and virtually. Our current climate coach- Ms. Trathan has been pivotal to the Julian community. Wherever a family comes up to me with a concern, she is the one who I refer them to since she truly cares and is there to respond to serious issues impacting our families. One of these essential issues, is the unique needs and concerns of our LGBTQ+ families and the bullying, slurs and other negative behaviors these families deal with and struggle with at Julian. The voice for these families is Katie Trathan who takes the time to listen to these concerns and be their voice. Just ask the

families who have worked with her. Often, I ask a family are you working with Katie and yes is the answer with positive remarks as someone who truly cares. She is the point person for lifting students, taking her time to support students individually, helping them deal with the challenges they are going through, even walking with them from classroom to classroom and being there for them throughout the day. This is especially the case for the unique need of our transgender students that confront challenges that we can only imagine.

I am guessing D97 admin has no idea on how positive an impact and how important a person Katie has been for so many Julian families who need an advocate.

Ms. Trathan has also pushed for recess equipment and looking into a GaGa Ball Court for our school which would tremendously impact an otherwise uninspiring recess time where most kids have nothing to do, especially the active ones who needs to run around and do something during recess.

PTO has actively worked with Ms. Trathan to support monthly cultural assemblies at Julian that are engaging and interesting to our students. She is in charge of our school store and from what I can tell actively works to find new merchandise and items that would be of interest to our students. This winter Julian PTO decided to offer free PTO lunch which Dominoes or Starship to free and reduced families and Katie was the one we asked to promote it to increase access. She reached out to PTO when a fire struck a Julian family to see what she could do to help. She demonstrates the importance of the Culture Coach position to Julian Middle School especially during these times.

As a PTO leader and as a parent, I truly understand the need to reorganize and revitalize our middle schools and I was excited to read about the new assistant superintendent position for the middle school, but I question D97s decision to remove a person and position that is truly working, supports families and promotes a positive culture at our school. It is essential to realize how important a cultural coach is for our schools, and especially our middle schools because of the unique challenges of adolescent youth and how different this is from other positions. We don't just need top administrators, but we need caring people on the ground who are approachable and work to create safe spaces for our students and serve as an asset for future change.

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#### **4. #D97Joy Culture and Celebration Update**

#D97JOY

##### **State Representative Visits Brooks Middle School**

(Joining for this presentation include: Brooks M. S. Principal Capuder & Tyra Banks Teacher Assistant)

On February 10, 2023, State Representative LaShawn Ford visited Brooks Middle School. Ford, who has represented the 8<sup>th</sup> district since 2007, is also Chair of the House Democratic Task Force and recipient of the 2018 Nelson Mandela Award in recognition of his service and contributions towards fighting for peace and justice on the West Side of Chicago where he grew up.

State Representative Ford stood before a group of 7<sup>th</sup> grade students as they had been hard at work studying for the United States Constitution. Ford was able to discuss how government is set up, at both the Local, State and Federal Levels. There was also some student debate. This visit both sparked and energized students to be self-advocates, learn your voice, all while aiming to achieve your highest potential.

Complete presentation including Q&A with Principal Capuder and teacher assistant Tyra Banks whose phone call set this visit in motion can be viewed by going to the district 97 YouTube channel and watching the livestream of the board of education meeting.

## **Black History Month Celebrations Continue in District 97**

(Joining for this presentation: Lonya Boose & Rebecca Bald)

You might have noticed in the past two “Weekly Wrap-ups”, a section on Black History Month along with a message and opportunity for reflection with Dr. Shah using Let’s Talk. In the February 10, 2023 Wrap-up, American Fiber Artist Bisa Butler was highlighted. Butler has created a new genre of artistry using quilting. An age-old technique that has historical ties, this artist work has elevated quilting into what’s now being called Fine Arts.

On February 17, Dr. Shah highlighted the concept of (BASL) Black American Sign Language. You might have caught a glimpse of the halftime show of the Superbowl. Sign language interpreter Justina Miles went viral for her high energy signing of this performance. BASL transforms the American Sign Language technique, by adding two-handed signing, and as the video shared puts it, with a little “SASS”.

These Black History Month Highlights can be found by viewing the districts Weekly Wrap-ups.

### **Celebrations Around the District Include...**

- African American Author visits at both Lincoln and Longfellow Elementary Schools
- Student Art Projects at Brooks Middle School, student created fiber arts sculpture and the study of Jean Michel Basquiat at Hatch Elementary.
- Libraries and Classrooms across the district serving as “windows and mirrors” for all our students. Reminding students of experience, history and its importance.
- Parents stopping by classrooms to read to students, as such with Mr. Sassetties third-grade class.
- Black Excellence programming at Lincoln Elementary. And, performances featuring Kuumba Kids at both Lincoln and Longfellow.
- Historical artifacts and displays across our 10 schools providing multicultural reflections from both our local library and staff personal collections.
- Performances from student choirs and bands.
- And, most importantly, student driven engagement, sharing of written poems and stories that highlight and celebrate African American Culture.

This is just a small-scale view into the ongoing celebrations and programs that continue to happen across District 97 as we continue Black History Month.

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## **5.DISTRICT PRIORITY UPDATE**

PRIORITY  
UPDATE

Dr. Shah and the Director of Analytics and Research, Anna Colaner presented to the Board of Education and community a presentation entitled, “Are We Asking the Right Questions”, An explanatory presentation about Human-Centered Design and Our District 97 Evaluation Strategy.

You can find details of this presentation by viewing the livestream of the board of education meeting on the district 97 YouTube Channel.

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## **6. ACTION ITEMS**

ACTION ITEMS

### **6.1 APPROVAL OF THE CONSENT AGENDA**

#### **Consent Motion**

Spurlock moved, seconded by Moore that the Board of Education of Oak Park Elementary School District 97 moves to approve the consent agenda as presented.

- 6.1.1 Approval of Minutes from the February 7, 2023 Board Meeting
- 6.1.2 Bill List
- 6.1.3 Personnel
- 6.1.4 Approval : eRate (2.7.23)

Ayes: Kim, Kearney, Ross Dribin, Moore, Hurd Johnson, Spurlock

Nays: None

Absent: Kinhal

Motion passed.

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## **6.2. DISCUSSION/ACTION**

### **6.2.1 Approval: Summer (Phase Two) Construction Bids (2.7.23)**

(Presented by Jeanne Keane)

Spurlock moved, seconded by Kearney that the Board of Education of Oak Park Elementary School District 97 moves to approve the Summer 2023 Phase 2 Construction Bids in the amount of \$1,917,845 as presented on February 7, 2023

Ayes: Kim, Kearney, Ross Dribin, Moore, Hurd Johnson, Spurlock

Nays: None

Absent: Kinhal

Motion passed.

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### **6.2.2 Approval: Tax Levy Abatement (2.7.23)**

(Presented by Patrick King)

Moore moved, seconded by Ross Dribin that the Board of Education of Oak Park Elementary School District 97 moves to approve the attached Resolution Abating Levy Adjustment created by Public Act 102-0519 (2022 Tax Year) in the amount of \$981,650.

Ayes: Kim, Kearney, Ross Dribin, Moore, Hurd Johnson, Spurlock

Nays: None

Absent: Kinhal

Motion passed.

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### **6.2.3 Approval: Audit Presentation and Findings (2.7.23)**

(Presented by Patrick King & Audit Firm, Baker Tilly Virchow Krause, LLP)

Spurlock moved, seconded by Kearney that the Board of Education, of Oak Park Elementary School District 97, moves to approve the June 30, 2022 financial statement audit reports as presented and prepared by the auditing firm of Baker Tilly Virchow Krause, LLP.

Ayes: Kim, Kearney, Ross Dribin, Moore, Hurd Johnson, Spurlock

Nays: None

Absent: Kinhal  
Motion passed.

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## **7. ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS**

### **7.1 SY24 Food Service Agreement (action 3.14.23)**

(Presented by Patrick King)

#### Summary

At its May 15, 2007 meeting, the Board of Education of Oak Park District 97 entered into an intergovernmental agreement with Oak Park River Forest (OPRF) High School for the provision “of cafeteria service and school meals for students attending its school facilities for the 2007-08 through 2011-12 school years”. Similarly, Oak Park River Forest High School has presented extensions of this intergovernmental agreement in subsequent school years. The proposal from OPRF for the 2023-2024 school year is to extend the contract for one year with a .05/meal increase for the middle schools. There no increase for the elementary schools. Below are all the meal price changes:

Type	FY23	FY24	Difference
Breakfast	\$1.00	\$1.00	+.00
K-5 Student Lunch	\$1.75	\$1.75	+.00
6-8 Student Lunch	\$1.95	\$2.00	+.05

The Oak Park community has been the recipient of an intergovernmental agreement that minimizes the cost of lunch service to its children while providing a quality, healthy and nutritious meal efficiently daily for the past fifteen years. Administration is currently researching the viability of other food service options beyond school year 2024 as part of D97’s sustainability initiatives. In the meantime, we are recommending a one-year renewal with Oak Park River Forest (OPRF) High School while those sustainability options are explored.

#### Motion

Administration is seeking a motion to extend the intergovernmental agreement with OPRF for food services for FY2024 per the attached.

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### **7.2 SY24 Food Service and Student Registration Fees (action 3.14.23)**

(Presented by Patrick King)

On an annual basis, the administration reviews and determines whether lunch and/or registration fees should be increased. The fees are based upon many factors including, year of last increase, any District registration expense increase, cost of food, any ISBE mandates regarding food prices, and comparable fees at surrounding school districts.

The 2022-2023 (current) registration fee schedule is as follows:

- Early Childhood Program -The \$29.00 Student Fee covers Instructional Materials.

- Grades K-5 - The \$180 Student Fee includes: \$77.00 for Instructional Materials; \$83.00 for Before/After School & Lunch Supervision; and \$20.00 for Technology.
- Middle School - The \$225 Student Fee includes: \$20.00 Activity Fee; \$78.00 for Instructional Materials;
- \$107.00 for Before/After School & Lunch Supervision; and \$20.00 for Technology.

### **Registration Fee Recommendation**

The recommended 2023-2024 registration fee schedule is as follows:

- Early Childhood Program -The \$29.00 Student Fee covers Instructional Materials.
- Grades K-5 - The \$180 Student Fee includes: \$77.00 for Instructional Materials; \$83.00 for Before/After School & Lunch Supervision; and \$20.00 for Technology.
- Middle School - The \$225 Student Fee includes: \$20.00 Activity Fee; \$78.00 for Instructional Materials; \$107.00 for Before/After School & Lunch Supervision; and \$20.00 for Technology.

**It is recommended that the 2023-2024 registration fees remain unchanged.**

The USDA determines a targeted paid lunch price each school year as part of the National School Lunch program requirements. A school district is required to perform a paid lunch equity calculation if their paid lunch prices are below the threshold set by the USDA for the applicable school year (\$3.31 for 2022-2023). The calculation essentially determines a weighted average of meal prices and has various requirements for increasing food prices, which includes a 2% rate increase plus the Consumer Price Index (4.04%) for 2022-2023. However, there is a cap of \$0.10 per meal on how much ISBE can require a district to increase prices per the federal guidelines.

The historical food service fee schedule has been as follows:

- Elementary - The food program pricing is as follows: Breakfast \$1.75; Lunch \$2.80; and Milk \$.45 per carton. One carton of milk is included with each breakfast and lunch.
- Middle School -The food program pricing is as follows: Breakfast \$1.75; Lunch \$3.00; and Milk \$.45 per carton. One carton of milk is included with each breakfast and lunch.
- Adult- \$3.25

### **Food Service Price Recommendation**

The recommended 2023-2024 food service prices are as follows:

- Elementary - The food program pricing is as follows: Breakfast \$1.75; Lunch \$2.90; and Milk \$.45 per carton. One carton of milk is included with each breakfast and lunch.
- Middle School - The food program pricing is as follows: Breakfast \$1.75; Lunch \$3.10; and Milk \$.45 per carton. One carton of milk is included with each breakfast and lunch.
- Adult - \$3.25

Administration is recommending a \$.10 per meal increase for lunch for the 2023-2024 school year for the following reasons:

- The National School Lunch Program paid lunch equity requirements noted above require D97 to raise prices \$.10 at a minimum based on the results of the calculation.
- D97's food service provider (OPRF High School) raised meal prices \$.02 for school year 2023 and have proposed an increase of \$.05 for school year 2024.
- D97 participated in a food price survey of nearly 60 other school districts in Illinois. The average elementary price was \$3.16 and average middle school price was \$3.25. D97 is still below these averages even with the price increase.
- It has been several years since D97 raised food prices and these incremental increases will be necessary to keep up with rising inflation.

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## **8. BOARD ASSIGNMENTS**

No report-out for board assignments. More information to come as provided.

BOARD  
ASSIGNMENTS

## **9. CONCLUDING ITEMS**

### 9.1 Board Remarks

- OPRF is planning for an upcoming student job fair.
- We recently met with the OPRF Sustainability club. We discussed how to collaborate our efforts around sustainability. Next steps include timeline within district 97 for continuous engagement of students. We also have importance in starting these efforts at the middle schools.

CONCLUDING  
ITEMS

## **8. ADJOURNMENT**

All Six present members of the Board were in agreement that the meeting be adjourned. There being no further business to conduct, President Kim declared the meeting adjourned by voice vote at 9:20 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

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Board President

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Board Secretary