

**Official Minutes of the
Oak Park Board of Education District 97
260 Madison Street, Oak Park, Cook County, Illinois
December 15, 2017 Meeting**

President Spurlock called the meeting to order at 11:02 a.m.

ROLL CALL

Present: Spatz, Spurlock, Liebl, Broy, and Breymaier
Absent: O'Connor and Datta
Also Present: Superintendent Dr. Carol Kelley, Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations Dr. Alicia Evans, Assistant Superintendent for HR Laurie Campbell, Chief Academic and Accountability Officer Dr. Amy Warke, Senior Director of Special Services Ebony Lofton, Senior Director of Policy, Procedures and Communication Chris Jасulca, Senior Director of Administrative Services Dr. Felicia Starks Turner, Senior Director of Equity Dr. Carrie Kamm, Senior Director of Technology Michael Arensdorff, Director of Organizational Learning Emily Fenske, and Board Secretary Sheryl Marinier

PUBLIC COMMENT

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Susan Raphael, an Oak Park resident and Irving parent, expressed interest in why the district is pushing universal scheduling and what the consequences have been for classrooms. She asked about what has been lost and what has been added, and suggested that it takes away from teacher's autonomy.

She expressed interest as to why her fourth grader continues to lose out on innovative programs and asked why the new gifted model was not implemented in all grades since it was indicated that the current program was not working. She questioned why the new writing program was not implemented in fourth grade this year.

Raphael went on to ask why the PTOs are being asked to fund programs that were previously funded by the district, such as the reading A to Z program.

Raphael encouraged the Board to continue to maintain the policy that they presented last year on PARCC and asked if there has been any decision on this year's policy for opt outs?

She expressed concern about the PE waiver being problematic, especially at those schools that only have PE once a week. She suggested that the district spend the money for additional PE, noting that she would rather see the money spent on PE than increased technology, especially during the winter. She asked why different schools get different times allotted to PE. She suggested that PE is important, noting that teachers often use break time more with iPads than exercise. She asked the Board to think about what can be taken out of the budget to support PE.

Dr. Kelley explained that the district is using its resources to be inclusive, by offering opportunities for Special Education students to be included when possible. She shared that there will be a special report shared with the Board on Master Scheduling in January or February, and noted that universal scheduling is intended to ensure consistency, help with efficiency, and focuses on student learning.

Dr. Kelley explained that the GTD program was rolled out the way it was because the incoming third graders had not yet been able to skip up. Because of this, the district needed the older children to cycle out.

Regarding writing, Dr. Kelley explained that the district is still implementing K-5 writing throughout the schools. She will check to see what is happening at Irving in this area. She noted that reading is only being rolled out to K-2 this year. She shared that some schools are piloting the program, but the official launch plan has not been presented yet.

Dr. Kelley acknowledged that physical education is a course that is taught by certified teachers. There are standards that kids must know how to do. The district has PEA guidelines for when students are not in a PE class. PEA is facilitated by a classroom teacher and not certified PE teachers. The current program is based on the current staffing and master schedule.

Dr. Kelley explained that the current GTD program is a point of confusion. She explained that the past practice in math should not have been considered part of the gifted program. She explained that the district currently has an Ad Hoc committee working on the GTD program. The committee is finalizing their recommendation to the Board on how to move forward with services. She expressed the need to separate out how the district provides services to all students in math, and

will need to be rolled out a little at a time. She expressed the need to strengthen the core first, noting that a report is scheduled at the end of January or early February, 2018.

Elizabeth Mcvey, an Oak Park resident, expressed concern about education in general and how PE, or the lack of PE will impact the test scores. She expressed concern about the kids with attention issues, IEPs and 504 plans if PE is taken away. She referenced research that supports the need to physical activity.

SPECIAL REPORTS

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PE WAIVER UPDATE

Dr. Kelley reported that the approval of the PE Waiver request has been received from the state. This gives the district time to provide PE as defined by the State. She noted that SB1947 requires PE be offered less than daily, but none of the elementary schools are offering PE three days a week or more. She expressed the need to consider the additional resources that would be needed and the cost associated with them. She noted the recent survey completed by staff that indicates their support of the math curriculum. With that in mind, Dr. Kelley would not feel comfortable allocating dollars for the extra resources that would be needed to support a full PE program.

Elementary Principals and Noah Wisa, the PE department chairperson were invited to address the Board. John Hodge and Sarah Mendez were not in attendance, but supplied their statements in writing.

Noah Wisa expressed concern that the PE offerings have dropped to only three days a week, however; he noted that increasing the offerings would be extremely difficult, and additional staff would be needed. He suggested that any solution to the problem would cost the district money. Wisa offered to help with the pursuit of a solution and indicated that he would not want to see other programs suffer because of the increased PE offerings. He expressed concern that art and music might have to take a hit to allocate space for PE.

Wisa indicated that two classes could be held in the gym at one time, although the added number of students moving around could increase the number of injuries and safety issues. He noted that the lunch rooms may not be an alternative space for PE as they are already being used for special classes. He noted the possibility of using recess as PE time, but suggested that the gym is already used for recess when the weather is bad. In reference to PE being held outdoors, Wisa supported the idea as long as PEA is not being held outdoors at the same time.

Principal Dolezal, expressed concern about the need for space for increased services. She suggested that the resources could be better used by supporting the vision and the core curriculum. She believes in the need for additional PE, but feels that the district needs to address other areas before this.

Principal Ellwanger expressed appreciation for the process and having the opportunity to address the Board. He suggested that increasing PE is one of many priorities that face the district. He expressed the need to involve all staff and families in the decision making process. He expressed support for the teachers and what is needed out of PEA time, noting that more is needed now than was asked for in the past. He shared that the Beye students are outside for recess (PEA time) today and when they cannot go outside, they participate in Yoga, etc. in the classroom to provide physical activity. Ellwanger suggested that the Board take the time to make the decision a community wide effort.

Board comments including suggesting that the district consider reaching out to the Park District to inquire if they have any certified staff members who could consider a partnership with the district during recess or PEA time. The Board was reminded that the PE Waiver is just a formality. The district has not cut services over the last 20 years, and is not cutting back now. Teachers are more aware of what PEA needs to be. It was suggested that if a school has a certified PE instructor but does not have ample space, the class will be less effective. It was suggested that the district might consider enhancing the quality of PEA for a lot less money than expending the PE program. It was suggested that the Board not expand the PE program during the 2018-2019 school year as the district is currently in negotiations with the OPTA which may provide opportunities that the Board may not be aware of at this time. It was suggested that the district share the PE offerings with the parents to help them understand the types of physical activity being offered to the children. Interest was expressed in hearing from experts in the field who have no connection to the district. Concern was expressed regarding the use of recess for PE, noting that children need down time, and kids who shine in PE should be able to share that with their peers just like those who are good in math or reading.

It was suggested that the Board continue this discussion as part of the Master Schedule discussion scheduled in January/February and make a decision on the direction when the full Board is present.

SUMMER PROGRAMMING

Amy Warke and Helen Wei came to the table and shared the updated recommendation for the 2018 summer program. They recommended Reading/Writing Workshop and Math Enrichment half-day programs with optional fee-based wraparound services with the Park District of Oak Park (fee-based, with scholarships available) for students in Kindergarten – fourth grades, and Project-based learning in ELA and Math half-day programs with optional wraparound services with Summer Empowerment (Deacon Samuels/Oak Park Township) or the Park District of Oak Park (fee-based, with scholarships available for fifth through eighth graders).

This plan would build on the prior K-2 programming and extend the reading/writing program to eighth graders. The program would be open to about 160 students who are recommended for the program because they are not currently at grade level. Administration plans to work with a consultant to address the needs here in Oak Park.

John Williams from the Township explained that there is no cost for participation in the Township’s offerings, and Deacon Samuels explained that he plans to talk to ISBE about supplying food services for the children.

The location of the program has not been confirmed, however; Julian Middle School is being considered because it can support all the programming (morning and afternoon), allowing students to remain at one location throughout the day.

Once the Board approves the program, the next step will be to recruit staff and finalize the details. It was noted that the staffing needs will need to be shared with the OPTA Roles Committee. Two coordinators will be needed and the cost of the full program is not expected to exceed \$125,000. It was noted that the number of teachers will depend on the quantity of students, suggesting that a ratio of one teacher to every 10 students would be desirable. Warke explained that she has met with the high school and is working to provide a bridge to their curriculum for the eighth graders. She noted that there will be criteria for the teachers chosen to participate and they will be offered learning experiences prior to the program.

Teachers will have individualized data on each student’s needs, and will be able to show the math skills being addressed in each of the units and how projects are aligned.

Board comments included interest in asking the Park District to extend their camp for the rest of the summer, as the Township ends their program the week after July 4, 2018. Interest was expressed in ways to update parents on project based learning, and seeing a more defined budget that identifies the amount spent of consultants, teacher professional development, etc.

The Board was asked to take action on the plan during their December 19, 2017 meeting in order for the planning team to begin making necessary arrangements.

AMENDMENT TO THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE VILLAGE OF OAK PARK AND DISTRICT 97 REGARDING FIBER

It was noted that the amendment to the IGA does not change the total cost associated with the fiber project, it just stipulates that the district will pay for the project and the Village will pay their share directly to the district.

ACTION ITEMS

ACTION ITEMS

3.1

PERSONNEL ACTION

Spatz moved, seconded by Broy, that the Board of Education, District 97, approve the personnel action as presented.

Board members were disheartened to accept Dr. Evans’ resignation noting that she is an amazing Chief Financial Officer. They thanked Evans for her help in stabilizing the organization.

- Ayes: Spatz, Broy, Liebl, Breymaier, and Spurlock
 - Nays: None
 - Absent: O’Connor and Datta
- Motion passed.

BOARD ASSIGNMENTS

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SUPERINTENDENT’S EVALUATION AND GOAL

Dr. Kelley shared the vision document and expressed the need for clarity of the vision and goals based on the specific role of the organization. She expressed the need for people to know what to do and understand the plan. She suggested that the Ad Leadership team be invited to participate in the 260 review of the plan.

SUPERINTENDENT'S EVALUATION AND GOAL (Continued)

Dr. Kelley reported that legally accommodations need to be made for students with 504 plans and IEPs. She reported that Michele Capio and Felicia Starks Turner are currently holding student focus groups to ensure that accommodations are being made for students when surveys are being completed.

Board comments included concern about the validity of answers of students who do not understand the survey questions.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to conduct, President Spurlock declared the meeting adjourned at 1:00 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

Board President

Board Secretary