



**Oak Park District 97 Board of Education
May 11, 2010**

Denise Sacks, Observer

The meeting began at 7:03 p.m. Superintendent Collins and all Board members were present except for Jim Gates.

Therese O'Neill, Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations, reported on several financial matters that will be voted on at the next meeting. She reported that the health insurance rates would be increasing by 6% for next year and the dental and life insurance rates would not be increasing at all. This is less of an increase than many other districts are facing. She also reported that the costs for custodial supplies and paper would be lower for next year. Director of Building and Grounds Norman Lane decided to put the custodial supplies out as a number of separate bids for different types of supplies rather than as one aggregate bid. This has resulted in a lower total cost. The lower cost for paper is at least in part due to reduced paper usage across the District.

Dr. Kevin Anderson, Assistant Superintendent of Teaching and Learning, presented data on student performance and behavior for the first two trimesters for students in grades 3-8. While each school is making good progress on average for each grade level, when the data is broken down into different subgroups of students, the low income and African American students, on average, are making progress but are not catching up with the other groups. Several Board members expressed frustration that this has been the case for years and that something must be done to change this pattern. The Board discussed the importance of early education and grades k-2. It also discussed the need to assess the intervention programs being used at each school to find out if any of the additional efforts that are being made during the school day and in the before-school and after-school programs are actually having any measurable effects for the students involved. The School Board expressed interest in holding a study session to discuss these issues at greater length.

Dr. Anderson also reported that the progress testing system (the PA Series) that the District has been using for the past three years is being discontinued. After discussions with principals and teachers, the administration is recommending that the District purchase the Measures for Academic Performance system for progress monitoring. It differs from the PA series in several ways. A major difference is that it is an adaptive test that is taken on a computer. This means that each student will begin the test and, depending on the student's answers, the program will select the next questions. One of the benefits of this type of system is that students will be tested at their level. Currently, students take one of three tests for their grade level. Another change will be that this system will allow the District to begin testing students in the middle of second grade instead of waiting until third grade. A third difference is that this system will include a Language Arts test in addition to the Reading and Math tests. The Language Arts portion will be phased in after the teachers and students become comfortable with the new system. There has been concern about the Language Arts skills of the District's students and the Administration and Board are hopeful that adding this assessment will assist in improving that aspect of the

curriculum and emphasize its importance.

The Board discussed the establishment of a committee for Collaborative Communication that would provide oversight and recommendations to the Board on its communication with the community. This discussion will continue at next Board meeting. The Board also intends to set a time to establish a referendum plan at its next meeting. The Board has not yet formally voted to seek a referendum.

The next regular meeting will be on Tuesday, May 25, at 7:00 p.m. at Julian Middle School. THERE WILL BE NO MEETING ON JUNE 8. There will be a short meeting on Monday, June 14, and a regular meeting on Tuesday, June 22.

(www.op97.org)