

Oak Park River Forest League of Women Voters Eyewitness Report

Observed by: Diana Shea

Date: Oct 19, 2018 Meeting Length: 3 h 23 minutes

Meeting Name: District 97 Board of Education

D97 Board Begins Analysis on Transportation (Busing) Expense

What did the Board decide?

- The D97 Board approved a salary increase of 2.1% for Superintendent Kelley (in line with performance based review for 2017-2018 school year) for the 2018-2019 school year, retroactive as of July 1.
- The D97 Board agreed to support the Village of Oak Park's application for a transportation grant from the state, which was a requirement of the grant ([see memo](#)).
- D97 has recommended increasing pay for substitute teachers and substitute teaching assistants in order to attract a larger pool of qualified candidates amid a national shortage of the same ([see memo](#)). The Board expressed an interest in increasing the rates and exploring other possible solutions to the shortage problem. The Board approved an increase to \$110 for Substitute Teachers, with discretion for it to be as high as \$115/day. The D97 Board requested more information from the administration before approving pay rate changes for the Substitute Teaching Assistants.

What else did the Board discuss or refer to committee?

- The D97 Board heard [a presentation](#) on the 5 year projection of year end balances under several different tax levy scenarios by the Asst Superintendent of Finance and Operations (Starck-King). The D97 Board asked Starck-King to review partial abatement scenarios for the tax levy. Last year, the district inadvertently received \$2.5M in extra taxes ([see Chicago Tribune story](#)). If the D97 Board abates the entire amount, then the district might have to make cuts in a few (?) years to keep education promises (e.g., class size) and/or go back to another bond issuance in 2024 or so.
- The D97 Board discussed possible goals for itself to achieve the school year. Board Member Bob Spatz agreed to put a survey together for the board to prioritize options and discuss at a later date.
- The D97 Board heard a presentation by Dr. Cam on the proposed [Culture and Climate handbook](#) for which the primary audience is staff. The handbook covers

topics related to trauma-informed care, restorative practices and creating positive learning environments for all of our students.

- Board Member Bob Spatz presented a plan to evaluate the district's transportation expenses (use of buses). The Board will need to make a recommendation to the district in the spring 2019 to rebid the existing contract or not. This fall, the D97 Board will rank priorities to drive this decision and will collect data from the community in the form of a survey.

Unexpected Votes, Events, Testimony or Items to Watch for in the Future

- Transportation analysis throughout the year
- Climate and Culture Handbook throughout the year
- Tax Levy decision over the next several meetings
- Board President Holly Spurlock reported that the Oak Park Park District is in ongoing discussion about building a recreation center and has asked if D97 would like to make a capital contribution.

Any other comments or observations