

## Oak Park River Forest League of Women Voters Eyewitness Report

Observed by: Ameri Klafeta

Date: January 23, 2018

Meeting Length: 3 hours

Meeting Name: District 97 Board of Education

### **D97 Administration Seeks Funding for Co-Teaching Program and Additional Student Supports**

What did the Board decide?

- The Board appointed April Capuder principal at Brooks at a salary of \$124,052. She was previously serving as interim principal.
- The Board approved **new pay rates** for several categories of employees, including substitute teachers, playground supervisors, custodial substitutes and lunchroom workers.

What else did the Board discuss or refer to committee?

- The Board held a learning session on **co-teaching pilot programs** at Whittier and Brooks. The program pairs a general education teacher and a special education teacher in the same classroom. It offers several benefits, including integration of students, introducing special education students to the general education classroom, differentiation instruction for all students and supports such as the use of visuals that benefit all students. The barriers to this program are that it requires additional staff, true partnerships between teachers and space and time for common planning. The administration will analyze the efficacy of this program once winter benchmark data is available. The administration would like to expand the program to add more grades at Whittier and Brooks, and add a Julian feeder school. **The cost projection is \$425,645,30** for 5.0 FTE for the next school year. These costs would then be ongoing.
- The Board held a learning session on the **master schedule**. A master schedule has been implemented in schools to create blocks of time that are consistent across grades. For example, all first grades would have math at the same time. It promotes core instruction for all, consistent allocation of time and a cohesive structure for everyone to move between. It also permits students at similar levels to be grouped together across classes. The master schedule was implemented at the elementary level for 2017-2018 and will be implemented for the middle schools in 2019-2020. **The cost projection is**

**\$2.5 million over two years** to add 14 FTEs for multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS), to purchase reading and math interventions for tier 2 and tier 3 students, professional development, and enrichment materials. These costs would be ongoing.

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

- The Board heard comments from parents regarding potential loss of funding for the BRAVO and CAST programs. There was concern that a memorandum prepared by the administration inaccurately stated that the CAST program agreed that it would ultimately move toward independence.
- A member of the ad hoc gifted and talented committee commented that he would like the committee to continue, as it did not reach consensus on substantive recommendations. The committee also twice requested an independent, outside evaluation, but the District did not respond. He also stated that a memorandum provided to the Board regarding the program was not shared with the committee and contained inaccuracies regarding the committee's work.