

LEAGUE of WOMEN VOTERS™ OAK PARK / RIVER FOREST



Oak Park District 97 Board of Education July 15, 2008

Denise Sacks, Observer

The public portion of the Board meeting began at 7:35pm. All of the board members, Superintendent Collins, and several other administrators were present.

The two major topics of the meeting were the annual Special Education report and a report on ongoing technology projects and possible technology upgrades.

Director of Special Services, Steve Castle, gave an extensive report of the work of the special education department over the past year, as well as his expectations for the coming year. In the 2007-2008 school year, 16.9% of the district's students were receiving special education services. This percentage has been declining over the past four years. This year the department worked on educating teachers about the new Individual Education Plan format, implementing the Response to Intervention/Problem Solving approach at four of the schools, consistency throughout the special education program, disproportionality of African American students in special education, and reviewing the parent/guardian survey. Mr. Castle identified the many areas he expects the department to focus on in the coming year including: implementing the Strategic Plan, disproportionality, early childhood screening, RtI/Problem Solving approach, development of a staff workload plan, increasing the number of Saturday workshops, improving student transitions, improving staff evaluation, working cooperatively with SEA (parent group), and, as always, improving communication.

Assistant Superintendent for Teaching and Learning, Dr. Kevin Anderson, and the new District Technology Administrator, Cao Mac, updated the board on summer technology projects across the district. All of the projects will be completed by the start of the school year. Dr. Anderson and Mr. Mac also brought a proposal to the board to increase the technology budget significantly in order to put a fiber system in place and improve our technology infrastructure. They project that the budget would be about \$1,750,000 in 08-09, about \$750,000 more than last year. Currently, the district is suffering from technology problems including shut downs and slow downs of various systems, an inadequate backup system, and an inability to transfer data from building to building in an efficient manner. Installing a fiber system, routers, and other upgrades to the infrastructure would solve many of the current problems in the system and allow for more long range technology planning. It was also proposed that enough money be budgeted for computer replacement on a five-year rotation. The board will consider the technology portion of the budget in the context of the entire proposed budget at its next meeting, August 26th.

The public meeting adjourned at 10:45pm.