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May 17, 2011

Dr. Albert Roberts, Superintendent

Peter Barber, President

Members, Board of Education

Oak Park Elementary School District 97

970 Madison Street

Oak Park, Illinois 60302

Dear Dr. Roberts, President Barber and Members of the Board of Education:

Enclosed please find materials in support of the request by the Collaboration for Early Childhood Care and Education that District 97 renew its two year commitment to provide \$50,000 per annum in support of its partnership with the Collaboration. This includes \$35,000 for coordination of outreach, recruitment, program development and assessment efforts for all programs offering publicly funded preschool in Oak Park, and \$15,000 in general operating support.

Since 2002, District 97 has played an essential leadership role in the development and growth of the Collaboration. Its continued support is crucial to advancing the gains made over the years, especially the past two years, in developing a strong infrastructure for high quality early learning experiences and services for Oak Park's youngest residents. District 97's investments in the Collaboration are grounded in research that demonstrates extraordinary returns on investments in high

quality early learning programs and support to families with very young children. The findings include:

- A review of 19 published studies of early care and education programs found that high quality early learning programs reduce the need for special education with cost savings ranging from six percent to as much as 48 percent, depending on the programs and the students; and reduce grade retention rates by 9.25%-21%. (Belfield, C.R. 2004. *Early Childhood Education: How important are the cost savings to the school system?* New York: Columbia University, Teachers College. Retrieved on May 17, 2010 from <http://www.plan4preschool.org/documents/ny-cost-saving.pdf>)
- In its Brief “ *Pay Now or Pay Much More Later*”, Fight Crime, Invest in Kids-Illinois reports on studies that show that children *left out of* New Jersey’s pre-kindergarten program were twice as likely to be held back by second grade. (April, 2011)
- At-risk children without quality pre-kindergarten are 70% more likely to commit violent crimes. (Reynolds, A. J., Temple, J. A., Robertson, D. L., & Mann, E. A. (2001). Long- term effects of an early childhood intervention on educational achievement and juvenile arrests.)

The Collaboration’s request to District 97 for funding the coordination of the Publicly Funded Preschools is somewhat reduced due to the significant strides in this strategic area

over the past 2 years. However, the realization of a comprehensive, integrated early childhood system that fully meets the needs of all of Oak Park’s youngest children and their families has been slowed due to the State’s ongoing fiscal crisis and the redirection of foundation money to policy and

advocacy work. The Collaboration plans to work with all local policy makers and community leaders over the next year to explore ways for Oak Park jurisdictions to increase their investments in our youngest children and to make good on the Village's commitment to providing all of its residents, especially its children, equal opportunity for success, and on District 97's vision "to ensure the highest academic achievement for each student."

I am pleased to present the enclosed summary of the Collaboration's work over the past two years, and plans for 2011-2013. I look forward to meeting with you on May 24.

Best regards,

Carolyn Newberry Schwartz

Executive Director

Summary Report to District 97

Publicly Funded Preschool Coordination

In June 2009, the District 97 Board made a strategic investment to substantially improve the prospects for Oak Park's most vulnerable children. It provided \$40,000.00 per year over the past two years to the Collaboration to establish outreach and referral strategies to increase the participation of hard to reach children in the publicly funded preschool programs, and to increase the quality of programs through technical assistance.

Over the two-year period, the following progress has been made.

1. Systems have been established and outreach activities implemented to increase the likelihood that Oak Park's most vulnerable children are enrolled in the four publicly funded preschool programs. The efforts described below have resulted in 47 children, who otherwise would not have enrolled, matriculating in the programs for the current academic year.

- A referral and communication loop was established with 31 agencies to increase referrals and participation of children from hard to reach families to coordinate a "single point of entry" into the publicly funded preschool programs. Outreach was expanded to include canvassing Oak Park neighborhoods and apartment buildings, visiting grocery stores, beauty and nail salons, attending community events, visiting WIC offices and health clinics to facilitate participation in the program by families who are difficult to engage in services, and facilitate their enrollment into the programs.
- Protocols have been established and agreements reached for all programs to hold open "slots" beyond the first day of school to assure openings for children from hard to engage families. These children are often shut out of programs due to early enrollment of motivated families.
- Collaboration with District 97 resulted in the inclusion of a question about preschool experience on the kindergarten registration form for 2011-2012 that will enable District 97 and the Collaboration to track the number of children qualifying for free or reduced price lunch who participated in the programs. This will enable us to better gauge the effectiveness of outreach and recruitment

strategies.

2. The Collaboration established a Publicly Funded Preschool Task Force comprised of the directors of the four programs in Oak Park and the Early Childhood Education coordinator from District 97. This effort fostered the development of a shared learning community and facilitated the adoption of the same screening tools, criteria for enrollment, and assessment tools across programs. This helps to assure that the most at-risk children are enrolled in the programs. It also provides consistency of data in measuring program impact, and supports informed decisions about curriculum development and staff training to promote high quality programs.

- The three Preschool for All programs and the Head Start program agreed to common risk criteria and rating scales for risk factors, and adopted a common screening tool the Early Screening Inventory –Revised (ESI-R) to help establish solid baseline data for assessment purposes. This also enabled the group to review prospective students needs to assure appropriate placement.
- The three Preschool for All programs, Head Start, and District 97's Early Childhood Special Education program agreed to use the same assessment tool tied to the Illinois Early Learning Standards, Teaching Strategies GOLD Assessment System (TSG)[™]. The Collaboration provided orientations and training to 44 different staff members to support the implementation of TSG[™]. Technical assistance and trouble shooting was also provided on and off-site.
- The Collaboration provided ongoing technical support for curriculum development and improvement at each site and professional development through 12 different

trainings.

3. The Collaboration began work on developing a Publicly Funded Preschool Information System in April 2010.

- The Collaboration was able to leverage District 97's support to secure a \$20,000, 2-year grant from the Oak Park Township to support the development of a database to house the demographic and risk data of the children participating in the 4 publicly funded preschool programs, as well as the assessment data and the outreach and recruitment data.
- Interagency data sharing agreements were drafted with the support of significant pro bono legal services from Proskauer Rose.
- Three administrators from District 97 participate in the Database Committee to assure a seamless transfer of data between the organizations and allow a longitudinal study of the impact of the programs over the course of the children's school career. Two members of the Collaboration participate in District 97's Early Childhood Achievement Task Force to further align the work of the early childhood community and District 97.

Plans for 2011-2013

The Collaboration plans to advance the work of the Publicly Funded Preschool Coordination in the following ways.

1. Continue to strengthen the single point of entry for hard to engage families by refining outreach and follow-up strategies within Oak Park and with preschool and service providers in adjoining communities to ensure that the hardest to reach families are engaged in preschool programs.

2. Identify ways for staff (in addition to the directors) from the publicly funded preschool programs to meet regularly to strengthen a shared learning community and continue improving curriculum and instruction across programs.
3. Continue the implementation and expanded use of TSG.
4. Define and implement improved strategies for transitioning children into kindergarten.
5. Launch the Publicly Funded Preschool Information System and effectively use the data to inform program improvement strategies for the preschool programs and share learning with District 97 to support the development of its kindergarten program.
6. Play a leading role in establishing broadly understood expectations throughout Oak Park for incoming kindergartners in all developmental domains. Support and promote the work of District 97's Early Childhood Achievement Task Force.

Collaboration Accomplishments 2011-2013

With District 97's support for general operations, the Collaboration made progress in the implementation of its strategic plan. The following are highlights over the past two years.

- More than 1,300 children received hearing and vision screenings each year.
- The development of a referral and communication process for pediatricians and family practice physicians to use for children who may have developmental delays -- a key step to increasing screenings and rates of referral by physicians in local practices.
- Increased professional development activities at 12 targeted child care centers and preschool sites. Program offerings

include a 12 workshop series for each of two years focused on developmentally appropriate practice; supporting the creation of professional development plans at 12 sites and providing professional development advising. The Collaboration also provided mentoring and technical guidance to seven full-day, full year child care centers to support their participation in the Illinois Quality Rating System to achieve a star level score to raise their child care reimbursement rates from the State.

- Hosted the two largest Symposiums in our history. *We Can Work it Out: Promoting Social Emotional Competence in Young Children* was held this past February with over 400 people attending. *Raising Ready Readers: Early Childhood Literacy* was held in February 2010 with more than 350 people attending.
- Published the 2010 Early Childhood Resource Directory
- Launched a new web site in January 2011. Take a peek at www.collab4kids.org.
- Established our office at Oak Park Village Hall.
- Inaugurated an individual giving campaign raising more than \$50,000 annually.

Plans for 2011-2013

Priority work over the next two years will focus on establishing the preeminent importance of investment in Oak Park's youngest children as a smart policy prescription for wise use of scarce funds, and the best way for Oak Park to make a meaningful commitment to its vision of affording all of its children an opportunity for success. Specific activities beyond the ones for the Publicly Funded Preschool Project and Database outlined above include:

1. Professional development training in developmentally appropriate practice will continue into fiscal year 2013, as will professional development advising and mentoring to agencies participating in the Quality Rating System. The Collaboration will also explore ways to continue to connect providers to State quality improvement and professional development programs and systems in order to leverage more resources into Oak Park.
2. The Symposium will continue to be a signature annual event of the Collaboration.
3. The Collaboration will work to expand its efforts on Parent Information and Support, especially in the areas of developmental screening, and child development benchmarks to assure that children with developmental delays get the services they need.
4. The Collaboration will continue to provide hearing and vision screenings to all children enrolled in preschool in Oak Park as part of our core commitment to assuring that children receive the services and support they need to develop to their full potential.
5. The Collaboration will continue to play meaningful roles in community wide initiatives like combating childhood obesity, engaging in public health initiatives, and participating in jurisdictional committees as requested to promote the interests of Oak Park's youngest children.
6. The Collaboration will publish the 2012 edition of the Early Childhood Resource Directory and improve its web capacity so that the Directory will be searchable online.
7. The Collaboration will partner with Parenthesis and other family support agencies to identify ways to increase home visiting programs for at-risk families.

Report on Expenditures of District 97
 Publicly Funded Preschool Grant
 FY 2010 and FY 2011 (projected)

Description	TOTAL FY 2010	DISTRICT 97 FY 2010	TOTAL FY 2011 (Projected)
INCOME			
District 97	40,000	40,000	40,290
Oak Park Township (1)	1,017		7427
Collaboration General Operating (2)	9,297		15,915
TOTAL INCOME	\$50,314	\$40,000	\$63,632
EXPENSES			
Executive Director and Administrative Assist.	8,939	0	12,095
Preschool Coordinator (4)	33,702	33,702	39,987
Outreach Worker (5)	2,000	2,000	2,000
Database Consultants (6)	0	0	1,950

Data Entry Clerk (7)	0	0	1,900
Program Materials (8)	2,219	2,219	2,400
Printing (9)	286	286	200
Computer Equipment and software (10)	1,017	0	800
Training (Teaching Strategies Gold) (11)	1,503	1,503	0
Operating Expenses (12)	648	0	2,300
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$50,314	\$39,710	\$63,632
Net Revenue (13)	0	290	0

Notes:

1. **The Township has granted the Collaboration a 2-year grant of \$20,000 through December 2011 to support the development of a database for the Public Preschool Programs in Oak Park. Revenue and expenditures shown in this document are for the Collaboration's fiscal years 2010 -2011 that follow a July-June calendar.**
2. **Collaboration general operating funds support the work of public preschool coordination not covered by grants from District 97 and the Oak Park Township.**
3. **Executive Director and administrative assistant costs reflect the time spent supporting the work of coordinating the public preschools, and the Database project.**
4. **The Public Preschool Coordinator is the person responsible for**

- leading and implementing all aspects of the project.
5. The outreach worker is the “on the ground” contact with many families. She canvasses apartment buildings, distributes flyers, visits grocery stores, beauty salons, the WIC office, and other places where the hard to reach families may frequent.
 6. Database consultants are covered by funds from the Township grant. They include an Information Specialist, and legal consultation to support interagency information sharing agreements. The Collaboration secured extensive in-kind expert consultation for legal and technical aspects of the development of the project.
 7. The Data entry clerk is responsible of all data entry into the database. This position will be filled in June 2011.
 8. Program materials cover the subscription costs for Teaching Strategies GOLD Assessment System, a GOLD Assessment System reference book for each site, and archival costs for student data, curriculum and training materials.
 9. Printing covers costs for promotional materials for the Preschool for All Programs.
 10. Computer equipment and software covers the costs of purchases of a desktop computer and software to support the development of the Public Preschool Information System. A laptop was purchased in fiscal year 2011 to support the implementation of the GOLD Assessment System. (Two of the Preschool for All sites lacked convenient access to a computer impacting the extent of the use of the assessment tool.)
 11. The Preschool Coordinator attended an intensive training program for the Teaching Strategies GOLD Assessment system in order to train and support the faculty at all publicly funded preschool sites in Oak Park.
 12. Operating costs include the Project’s share of rent, insurance, web development and maintenance, and telecommunications costs. During FY 2010 the Preschool Coordinator was housed at District 97. Rent and telecommunications costs were not charged to the program.
 13. The \$290 of unspent District 97 funds in fiscal year 2010 were carried over to fiscal year 2011 and supported the operations of the program during that fiscal year.

FY 2012 and FY 2013 Publicly Funded Preschool (PFP) Budget

Description	FY 2012 Public Preschool Budget	<i>FY 2012 District 97 Request</i>	FY 2013 Public Preschool Budget
INCOME			
District 97	35,000	35,000	35,000
Oak Park Township (1)	10,000		10,000
Collaboration General Operating (2)	16,335		14,259
TOTAL INCOME	\$61,835	\$35,000	\$59,759
EXPENSES			
Executive Director and Administrative Assistant (3)	12,900	0	13,200
Preschool Coordinator (4)	29,180	29,000	29,909
Outreach Worker (5)	3,000	3,000	3,000
Database Consultants (6)	7550	0	5,000

Data Entry Clerk (7)	3,200	0	3,200
Program Materials (8)	3,200	2,800	3,200
Printing (9)	450	200	450
Operating Expenses (10)	2,355	0	2,500
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$61,835	\$35,000	59,759

Notes:

1. The Township has granted the Collaboration a 2-year grant of \$20,000 through December 2011 to support the development of a database for the Public Preschool Programs in Oak Park. The Collaboration will seek a renewal of the funding for the following 2 calendar years.
2. Collaboration general operating funds support the work of public preschool coordination not covered by grants from District 97 and the Oak Park Township.
3. Executive Director and administrative assistant costs reflect the time spent supporting the work of coordinating the public preschools, and the Database project.
4. The Public Preschool Coordinator is the person responsible for leading and implementing all aspects of the project.
5. The Outreach Worker is the “on the ground” contact with many families. She canvasses apartment buildings, distributes flyers, visits grocery stores, beauty salons, the WIC office, and other places where the hard to reach families may frequent. We are increasing the number of hours budgeted for outreach work because we believe that the effort needs to be intensified to support the engagement of the hardest to reach families and assure their enrollment in the programs.
6. Database consultants are covered by funds from the Township grant. They include an Information Specialist, and legal consultation to support interagency information sharing

agreements.

- 7. The Data entry clerk is responsible of all data entry into the database.**
- 8. Program materials cover the subscription costs for Teaching Strategies GOLD, archival costs for student data, curriculum and training materials.**
- 9. Printing covers costs for promotional materials for the Preschool for All Programs.**

Operating costs include the Project's share of rent, insurance, web development and maintenance, and telecommunications costs.