



Oak Park Elementary School District 97

970 Madison ▪ Oak Park ▪ Illinois ▪ 60302 ▪ ph: 708.524.3000 ▪ fax: 708.524.3019 ▪ www.op97.org

TO: Members, Board of Education
FROM: Dr. Carol Kelley, Superintendent
SUBJECT: Superintendent's Strategic Communications SY17 Plan
DATE: June 14, 2016

Type of Report: Proposal

Preview of purpose and content of report:

The Board of Education is being asked to approve the proposal to support D97's superintendent's communications efforts (which will have an emphasis on strong two-way communications with all stakeholders in order to support the work of the district).

Budgetary Impact: \$22,000

District goals aligned with report: Goal Area 3 (Engage with Families and Communities)

In the 100-Day Report to the Board of Education on December 1, 2015, I presented what I heard through my meetings with educators, students, families, and Oak Park residents. My report highlighted various strengths as well as key areas to enhance.

One of the key areas to enhance, as presented in my report, was creating a clear vision with a sustainable focus. Some of the comments heard during my initial listening tour included:

- ***“Unify the district with a common vision. Have structures in place to implement that vision.”***
- ***“Being innovative, yet **staying focused on designated goals**. We tend to focus on too much and at times don't accomplish our 'untended' goals.”***
- ***“To **clearly define and articulate the goals** for this year and future years, which will help staff understand focus for the school year. In the past, we have always seemed to implement too many things at one time and stretched staff out among the many goals/initiatives without clearly defined goals/AIM. This will help staff understand where we are going and why decisions were made (because they either support the goals or action is not taken because it does not align to the goals/focus).”***
- ***“...In the past, we have had myriad short and long-term goals, which have resulted in us doing a lot of things on a scale from mediocre to relatively well. We have also **gotten into the habit of taking on projects/responsibilities that fall outside of our annual goals, which is a practice that has hurt/limited our effectiveness as a district**. I think we need to focus on a small number of big picture goals each year and not stray from them or add any unless it is totally necessary.”***
- ***“... **getting the schools all moving in the same direction**...we have done this at the middle schools with the IB authorization. There is still work to be done.”***
- ***“Being able to **have more commonality across the schools**. I know it is important for each school to have their own identify, but I think it is important [to be] ... more... consistent across the district (for all of the schools).”***

Thus, on March 15th, we sought and D97's Board of Education approved a proposal from M2 Communications to support the district's efforts to establish a clear, shared vision with focused strategic priorities to strengthen the district's instructional core.

Since then, the focus of our work has supported efforts in engaging a representative mix of stakeholders to help shape a vision, identify key focus areas to address, and communicate our efforts to the community as we begin to put our “vision plan” into action. To date, M2 Communications has conducted over 16 community conversations (speaking to roughly 300 stakeholders) and facilitated several advisory panel meetings.

Over the course of these community conversations, we have heard a rally call for strong communications that fits outside of our already very solid set of communications channels (which include regular updates of information). The request we heard includes more opportunities for two-way communications from the superintendent, communications that directly engage and inform the community simultaneously. A specific example of what this would look like includes the addition of forums I plan to conduct on June 15th and 16th to get feedback from the community on the draft vision planning document.

I have requested M2 Communications to put together a proposal to support my two-way engagement efforts for the upcoming school year (please see attached). In response to my request, M2 Communications has designed approach which would leverage the communications channels currently in place while allowing me to share key messages to inform and build understanding and trust with the community.

Please let me know if you have any questions and/or need any additional information.