



# Oak Park Elementary School District 97

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**TO: Members, Board of Education  
Dr. Albert Roberts, Superintendent**

**FROM: Chris Jasculca**

**RE: Strategic Plan Update**

**DATE: December 13, 2011**

District 97 is currently in the final year of its five-year strategic plan, which was adopted by the Board of Education on August 22, 2007. The plan supports the district's mission to guarantee that each student achieves optimal intellectual growth while developing socially, emotionally, and physically through a system distinguished by:

- Exemplary instruction focused on each student
- Commitment to the needs of a diverse population
- Meaningful partnerships with families and the community
- Celebrations of the power of art, music, and language
- Confident students challenged to be educational risk-takers

This update on the strategic plan contains the following information:

- Recap of the plan's seven strategies
- Events, activities and accomplishments to date for the 2011-2012 school year that were tied to the strategic plan/specific strategies, as well as the goals set forth in the update presented to the board on June 28, 2011

In addition to being part of the board packet for this meeting, the report will be made available to the general public on the home page and strategic plan page on the district's Web site. These pages can be accessed via the following links:

- Home page – <http://www.op97.org/>.
- Strategic plan page – <http://www.op97.org/about/Strategic-Plan.cfm>

## **Strategies**

- Strategy I – We will ensure the highest academic achievement for each student.
- Strategy II – We will make each student the active agent of his/her educational experience.
- Strategy III – We will establish a culture of inclusion that respects and promotes diversity.
- Strategy IV – We will ensure learning experiences that develop the whole child to accomplish our mission and objectives.

- Strategy V – We will guarantee that all necessary resources, including financial, will be available and aligned with our mission and objectives.
- Strategy VI – We will ensure the highest caliber staff who will lead the district in its mission and objectives.
- Strategy VII – We will constructively communicate internally and externally.

### **Events, Activities and Accomplishments from 2010-2011**

Below are the events, activities and accomplishments to date for the 2011-2012 school year that were tied to the strategic plan and the goals set forth in the update presented to the board on June 28, 2011. The strategy/strategies they correspond with are in parentheses.

- Administered the new kindergarten readiness screening developed by the Early Childhood Achievement Task Force to all incoming kindergarten students between August 2 and August 15. (Strategy I)
- The guidelines and identification procedures for the Gifted/Talented and Differentiation (GTD) program for kindergarten through fifth grade were refined and implemented at all elementary schools. (Strategy I)
- Created and implemented a Sixth Grade Language Arts GTD pilot program at both middle schools. (Strategy I)
- Added an Algebra class for sixth grade students at both middle schools. (Strategy I)
- The district is rolling out the new Treasures reading series at all eight elementary schools, which includes a shift to a balanced literacy model. (Strategy I)
- The brochure featuring information about curriculum expectations that was developed by the kindergarten teachers is being used for grade level planning and to communicate with parents/guardians and the general public. (Strategy I)
- Redefined one of the middle school assistant principal positions at Brooks and Julian to better meet the needs of students and parents/guardians. (Strategies I and II)
- Used the Kindergarten Readiness Test (KRT) and Ages and Stages data to make instructional decisions for kindergarten students on day one of instruction. The data is also being used to direct the work being done by the Early Childhood Data Subcommittee. (Strategy I, II, and IV)
- Rolled out the new iPad Kindergarten Initiative district wide. All kindergarten teachers are being trained to use the device and its educational applications to accelerate learning experiences for students. (Strategy I, II, and IV)
- Every school is implementing building-based action plans that will guide their RtI efforts throughout the school year. (Strategies I, II, III and IV)
- Implemented a Fast ForWord pilot program at Beye, Hatch and Holmes during the summer of 2011. While the program was carried out in less than ideal conditions (included a 21-day break in the middle of the use of the product for many students), the data collected showed positive results that included:

- Eighty-six students in grades one through eight had pre-test and post-test scores.
- The average number of days students participated in the program was 46.
- Approximately 78 percent of the students who were signed up for the program participated in it on the required days.
- Approximately 91 percent of the students who were signed up for the program completed the assigned exercises on the required days.
- There was a statistically significant difference between the pre-test scores and post-test scores across the group of participants.
- Approximately 71 percent of the students who participated in the program showed gains.

Continued to study and assess the program during the fall of 2011 to determine the possible benefits of purchasing and implementing it district wide. (Strategies I, II and IV)

- The district's literacy support specialists and elementary school principals participated in reading support training on November 1 and 15. The goals of the training were to aid in the roll out of the new reading series, develop a better understanding of the balanced literacy framework, and delve deeper into the "coaching model." (Strategy I, II, and IV)
- Implementing the second year of the technology plan. (Strategies I, II, V and VII) Our accomplishments to date include:
  - Integrated use of Google Apps into middle school instruction.
  - Integrated use of iPods, SMART Response VE interactive system and SMART Notebook collaborative learning software that help teachers keep students engaged and provide them immediately with data they can use to instantly evaluate comprehension and adapt lessons accordingly.
  - All technology integrationists are Google and SMART certified, and are currently working with a group of teachers on a year-long professional development program to get them certified in SMART technology.
  - Approximately five to eight carts of Netbooks (26 machines per cart) have been deployed at every school.
  - A variety of professional development opportunities have been offered to staff, including training sessions on the use of SMART Notebook, SMART Response and iPods.
  - District 97 is in the process of becoming a Google certified training center.
- During the summer of 2011, the special education department offered 10 workshops on a variety of topics, including inclusion, co-teaching and autism. (Strategies I, III, IV)
- The November 2011 Institute Day focused on enhancing the culture and climate in the workplace. Dave Weber, noted author of the best-selling book "Sticks and Stones Exposed: The Power of Our Words," delivered the keynote address. The topics covered included internal culture and atmosphere, communication, team building and strategic focus. Weber's presentation, which specifically focuses on individuals who work in a school or educational setting, was a complement to the work undertaken by the district's administrative leadership team and members of the OPTA during a two-day training workshop held this summer. All staff participated in the session. (Strategies I, III, VI, VII)
- Ten seventh and eighth grade students (five from each middle school) participated in the Civic Weekend leadership program. (Strategy II)

- Gwendolyn Brooks Middle School earned the status of National School of Distinction from the Schools Fight Hunger program. (Strategies II and IV)
- Implemented a co-teaching model at Brooks. (Strategy III)
- Created administrative team charged with reviewing special programs that offer students support after school. (Strategy III)
- On November 5, 2011, approximately 30 people attended the Parent and Teachers Talking Together workshop hosted by the special education department, which provided parents/guardians and school personnel with the opportunity to discuss their aspirations for children and offer suggestions for improving the district's special education services. (Strategies III and VII)
- Modified the FLES program so that students in kindergarten through second grade receive 20 minutes of instruction, four times a week. (Strategy IV)
- Added a section of French at both middle schools. (Strategy IV)
- World language teachers are revising the curriculum based on the standards and best practices for language instruction. (Strategies IV and VI)
- Updated the five-year capital plan, which will carry us through the summer of 2016. (Strategy V)
- Establishing a furniture committee that will identify classroom standards based on the district-wide furniture assessment. The first phase of work is scheduled for summer 2012. (Strategy V)
- Establishing a copier committee to determine "best practices" for print production that align with our technology plan. Implementation of the print plan/best practices is scheduled for the 2013-14 school year. (Strategy V)
- Produced and published an RFP to hire a landscape architect to help continue the ongoing dialogue about the district's schoolyard project with individual school communities, prepare the necessary specifications for the project and coordinate the construction work. Work at the schools that were designated priority one rankings will begin in the summer of 2012. (Strategy V)
- District had an unqualified audit for 2011-2012, which means its financial statements are materially correct and are in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles. (Strategy V)
- The district's five-year projections highlight that, even with the infusion of additional funding from the successful passage of the referendum, careful monitoring of spending and sound fiscal management are required to ensure our financial stability through June 30, 2018. With this in mind, there has been a line added under expenditures in the Education Fund starting in FY2014 that is called Referendum Commitments. This line represents the board's commitment to reduce expenses by 1.25 percent on an annual basis starting in 2013. (Strategy V)
- Built an addition and secured entrance at Lincoln. (Strategy V)
- Built a secured entrance at Longfellow. (Strategy V)

- Established the Committee for Legislative Action, Intervention and Monitoring (Strategies V and VII), which is a standing board committee that is charged with:
  - Annually receiving direction for a legislative agenda from the board regarding school policy and finance issues at the state level, and, as the board deems appropriate, at the county and/or federal level.
  - Strengthening connections and participation with lobbying groups, especially those with whom the district currently has formal relationships, such as ED-RED and IASB.
  - Identifying, partnering and leveraging organizations aligned with one or more items of the district's legislative agenda.
  - Generating informational materials to identify the impact of state, county, or federal legislative issues on District 97.
  - Engaging Oak Park's legislative delegation to keep them informed of the ways current and proposed legislation, policies and practices impact District 97.
  - Seeking board approval to amend the committee's scope, procedures, practices, and guiding principles.
- All District 97 teachers participated in professional development related to the Common Core State Standards. (Strategy VI)
- Launched district's redesigned family of Web sites in August 2011. The new sites feature an upgraded online calendar, searchable staff directory, interactive district map, teacher Web pages and staff intranet site. (Strategy VII)
- Launched district's new Twitter account in August 2011. (Strategy VII)
- Number of families using the digital backpack increased by nearly 60. (Strategy VII)
- Proactive outreach to the media has generated nearly 30 positive stories about the district, our schools, our staff and our students since August 2011. (Strategy VII)
- Superintendent Roberts is participating in a series of community chats to share his goals for our schools and answer questions about a wide range of district-related topics (finances, student achievement, facilities, etc.). (Strategy VII)
- Outreach efforts about the vacant seat on the board resulted in 14 viable candidates applying for the position. (Strategy VII)
- Currently working on the creation of a mobile application so members of the general public who use mobile devices to access information about the district and its schools can do so more easily. (Strategy VII)
- Supported efforts to maintain positive staff morale by giving every employee a District 97 water bottle at the start of the school year as a welcome back/thank you gift. (Strategy VII)