



Oak Park Elementary School District 97

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TO: The Board of Education
Dr. Carol Kelley, Superintendent
FROM: Helen Wei
SUBJECT: Adoption of Units of Study for K-5 ELA Instruction
DATE: March 10, 2016

In her 100-Day Report, Dr. Carol Kelley recognized the great need for an immediate adoption of a K-5 written curriculum that includes:

- A framework that has interdisciplinary connections across all content, and is culturally responsive, relevant and authentic
- Scope and sequence that builds upon concepts or a theme across grades
- Formative assessments aligned to the standards

Following conversations with Dr. Kelley and elementary school principals, as well as feedback from a number of teachers, I propose that the district adopt Lucy Calkins' *Units of Study* for Reading and Writing (Teachers College Reading and Writing Project).

Units of Study implements a workshop model of teaching reading and writing, which uses a "gradual release of responsibility" model of teaching, offering direct instruction through a mini-lesson, demonstration of the skill, guided practice, and independent practice—all with constant feedback and support from the teacher, as well as peers. For more information on how *Units of Study* and the Teachers College Reading and Writing Project have positively impacted student learning in schools, please go to: readingandwritingproject.org/news/results-in-schools. In addition, there are classroom teachers in the district that have implemented *Units of Study* in their classrooms this year. I would be happy to invite teachers and administrators to share their insights on their implementation with Board members, if the Board so desires.

Adoption of the *Units of Study* would address the aforementioned concerns and would provide teachers with a written curriculum aligned to the ELA Common Core State Standards. During a recent Education Council meeting, K-5 teachers overwhelmingly called attention to the immediate need for a written curriculum and appropriate supporting instructional materials. Providing teachers with these resources would allow them to focus on planning well-designed lessons that personalize instruction according to student needs, leading to improved outcomes for all students.

Units of Study provides teachers with 5-6 week units in reading and writing, performance assessments, learning progressions, rubrics, checklists, and exemplars of student work. Lesson from *Units of Study* would encompass the various components of a Balanced Literacy Framework, and along with the K-5 ELA Resource Guides (for Close Reading) developed this year, would create a strong ELA Curriculum for District 97.

Budgetary Impact: \$144,168.12 (please see three attachments)*

District goals aligned with request: Goal Area 2: Build Collaborative Expertise (Create consistency around formative and summative assessments)

*Recognizing that this cost would exceed \$100,000, I worked with Therese O'Neill to complete a CAPEX form.