

# Evolving Our Partnership:

Oak Park's tri-agency effort to balance community calls for school safety and racial equity

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COMMUNITY UPDATE - FALL 2023



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# AGENDA

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- **Background on the IGA between the Village of Oak Park and Districts 97 and 200**
  - Timeline
  - Our Guiding Values and Beliefs
  - Key Provisions of the IGA
- **Implementing the IGA**
  - Community Outreach
  - Law Enforcement Presence in Schools
  - Positive Outcomes
- **Moving Forward**



# Background on the IGA



# TIMELINE

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## Summer 2022

Leaders from the village, the Oak Park Police Department, and districts 97 and 200 begin meeting to consider how they might renew and strengthen the partnership between their agencies.

## November 2022

IGA approved by the village board and school boards from districts 97 and 200.

## September/October 2022

All three agencies collaborate to develop IGA and present information to the elected boards.

## December 2022 - Present

Tri-agency work group meets monthly to discuss, plan and review IGA implementation, and strengthen collaboration around school safety.



# BACKGROUND

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- In Fall 2022, the Village of Oak Park partnered with District 97 and District 200 to develop an **intergovernmental agreement (IGA)** that satisfies the need to adhere to state law while providing a safe, equitable learning environment for all students.
- The IGA was the first step to establishing **positive relationships** and **consistent communication** between officers, school staff and administration, students, and their caregivers. This **collaborative approach** helps to increase awareness, access to resources, and promotes school-based emergency planning.



# OUR GUIDING VALUES AND BELIEFS

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We are inspired by the work, tools and training of the **“I Love U Guys” Foundation**, an organization that focuses on school and community safety. Their mission is:

**“To restore and protect the joy of youth through educational programs and positive actions in collaboration with families, schools, communities, organizations and government entities.”**



# OUR GUIDING VALUES AND BELIEFS

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- The **physical and emotional safety** of our students and staff is our highest priority every day.
- A **comprehensive approach to school safety** includes our entire community and is rooted in a **shared interest** in creating safe and supportive learning environments for all students.
- Collaboration with Oak Park agency partners will **leverage expertise and efficiency** for optimum service and support in maintaining safe and healthy school communities.



# OUR GUIDING VALUES AND BELIEFS

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- **Ensuring open communication and formally defining the relationship** between our school districts and the Oak Park Police Department is one way we can proactively work to maintain **safe and supportive schools**.
- School safety and emergency preparedness planning must be **holistic, systems-based, strategic, youth-centered and anchored in racial justice**.





# EQUITY LENS

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The creation of **the new IGA was guided by the racial equity considerations** brought forth by community members. The new IGA was carefully constructed to reflect these considerations.

Furthermore, the Village's new chief diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) officer participated in the initial development of the IGA to provide guidance on racial equity considerations, and is a regular participant in monthly tri-agency meetings.



# KEY PROVISIONS OF THE IGA

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- **Ensures compliance** with the district's and the police department's legal obligations, concerning the sharing of information between the two agencies.
- **Designates** which individuals, both within the district and the police department, may be privy to shared information.
- **Establishes clear limitations** on and procedures for the handling of criminal activity and police matters within the school building, to the extent such is necessary.
- **Ensures compliance** with the requirement under state law that a law enforcement officer serve on the school districts' threat assessment teams.



# Implementing the IGA



# COMMUNITY OUTREACH



**Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) between the Village of Oak Park, Oak Park and River Forest High School District 200, and Oak Park Elementary School District 97**  
*Frequently Asked Questions*

**Purpose of IGA**  
**Why did you create this new IGA?**  
The physical and emotional safety of students and staff is the highest priority for our schools. There is a need to restore relationships between our agencies, and this IGA is a first step to establishing positive relationships and consistent communication among police officers, school staff and administration, students, and their caregivers. This collaboration will enhance the safety of our schools and promote school-based emergency planning.

**What exactly does the agreement specify?**  
Key provisions include the following:

- The districts will provide the police chief with a list of administrators and their phone numbers. The list will identify the particular types of problems for which particular administrators are to be contacted.
- The police chief will provide the districts with the names and titles of a primary contact and two back-up contacts, who will have the primary responsibility for implementing the IGA on behalf of the police department.
- The police chief will select at least one threat assessment team representative from the police department to serve on each district's threat assessment team, as required by the School Safety Drill Act.

**When does the IGA go into effect, and how long is the term of the agreement?**  
The IGA goes into effect on the date that the last entity approves the document. There is no end date; the agreement will remain in effect unless one of the parties takes action to end it.

**Where can I read the IGA?**  
The IGA will be posted on the Village, District 200, and District 97 websites once the agreement has been adopted by all three governing partners.

*October 2022; updated December 2022*

Agencies shared IGAs via their websites, and collaborated on an FAQ document, media coverage and OP/FYI insert to **raise awareness** of the purpose and implications of the IGA in Oak Park schools.

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**Intergovernmental agreements reflect shared commitment to school safety and racial equity**

The Village of Oak Park partnered with District 97 and District 200 this fall to develop an intergovernmental agreement (IGA) that satisfies the need to adhere to state law while providing a safe, equitable learning environment for all students.

Village Manager Kevin Jackson, District 97 Superintendent Ushma Shah and District 200 Superintendent Greg Johnson led the tri-agency effort to balance calls for schools safety and racial equity by formally defining the relationship between the schools and local police.

**Key provisions of the IGA include:**

- **Ensuring compliance** with the district's and the police department's legal obligations, concerning the sharing of information between the agencies;
- **Designating which individuals**, both within the districts and the police department, may be privy to shared information;
- **Establishing clear limitations** on and procedures for the handling of criminal activity and police matters within the school buildings, to the extent such is necessary; and
- **Ensuring compliance** with the requirement under state law that a law enforcement officer serve on the District 97 and District 200 threat assessment teams.

While the IGA is required by existing law, and statutes referenced in the IGA are non-negotiable legal requirements, neither agreement extends law enforcement involvement in Oak Park schools beyond what is required by law and/or expectations outlined in existing school board policy.

The three agencies took part in a robust

IGA development process over the course of several months. After discussing the IGA with all three boards in October, the lead administrators for the three bodies met to compile, theme, and respond to more than 50 questions received by their governing boards. The questions and answers are available here: [bit.ly/3UVVQzI](https://bit.ly/3UVVQzI).

To ensure both school safety and racial equity, agency leaders collaborated with equity leads from each of the three agencies, along with the chief of police, to ensure the agreement aligned to shared values and beliefs, namely, that school safety and emergency preparedness planning must be holistic, systems-based, strategic, youth-centered and anchored in racial justice.

As all three agencies begin to implement the IGA, successful implementation will require a commitment to continuous learning and improvement in order to create a more equitable school system.

After each incident of contacting the police, schools will conduct an after-action review to ensure that all district policies and procedures were followed with fidelity and that schools are upholding their commitment to minimizing the role of law enforcement in our schools. Data, including student demographics, will be reviewed internally on an annual basis.

Per the IGA, the two school districts and the village will also meet annually to review the goals and objectives of the agreement and ensure that all parties are upholding their roles and responsibilities as outlined.

To view the IGA between the village and District 97, visit <https://bit.ly/3BHfYRZ>  
To view the IGA between the village and District 200, visit <http://bit.ly/3jiOqm2>

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## Oak Park joins schools in joint safety protocol agreement

**The agreement sets security standards across School Districts 200 and 97**

By **STACEY SHERIDAN**  
*Staff Reporter*

Oak Park's village board unanimously approved an intergovernmental agreement to codify security and safety standards across public schools located in Oak Park. Securing the village board's approval was the IGA's final hurdle before implementation; the governing boards of Districts 200 and 97 both approved the agreement prior to the village board's Nov. 29 meeting.

The agreement impacts all students in the public school system, from kindergarten through senior year of high school. And like the two other boards, the village board's approval did not come without some concern and some concession. Namely, how police officers would treat 18-year-old students in situations where police interviews are deemed necessary.

The IGA does not reinstate school resource officers in schools, but rather opens up the flow of communication between the schools and the Oak Park Police Department. However, under such circumstances as a student having witnessed a crime taking place in school or a student being suspected of committing a crime on school property, police can interview students under prescribed circumstances.

"We will make arrangements to interview any juvenile in the presence of their parent," said Police Chief Shatonya Johnson. "There is no need to interview a juvenile immediately. We will make arrangements to pause any type of interview, interrogation until a parent is available unless the parent says you can interview [the student] in the presence of a school official."

In a school setting, however, Trustee Cory Wesley felt uneasy that the IGA does not specifically allow the right of having a guardian, parent or school official present with an 18-year-old high school senior in the event of a police interview or interrogation.

The IGA does not specify different treatment of 18-year-olds, meaning they will be treated the same as younger students while in school, but it was only after much discussion that a mutual understanding of that was reached.

Seniors in high school range in age up to 18, an age which makes them adults in the eyes of the law. Unlike their younger counterparts, 18-year-olds can legally be interviewed or interrogated by police without a parent or guardian present.

"It's a legal kind of adulthood, but to me, it's kind of a gray area since they're high school students," said Wesley.

"Would those individuals be Mirandized in the context of a school setting if they were to be interviewed or interrogated?"

Under the IGA, yes, they would. People of all ages have the right to be Mirandized, the police chief explained, but juveniles get an explanation of what the Miranda rights afford and in the presence of a parent or guardian.

"Not if they're 18," said Johnson. "That's the same that would happen on the street."

Wesley admitted he had "a bit of a problem with that" occurring in Oak Park and River Forest High School.

"Are the kids in high school being taught that there is a magical change that happens once they turn 18 but they're still in school?" Wesley asked. "I'm sure they don't think of themselves as adults, but they are now legally being treated that way."

OPRF students are not being formally taught the legal differences between an adult and a minor but a school counselor or dean would provide that information to the student, according to a D200 representative.

Should a police officer have to interview or interrogate a student, regardless of age, the school does have the obligation under the IGA to inform the parents or guardian of that student.

"We are guests in their building, so we are going to operate under this IGA under their policies, their values," said Johnson.

Ultimately, however, the chief was able to ease Wesley's discomfort, telling him that police would stop or postpone the interrogation or interview of 18-year-old students should parents or guardians tell the school to have police do so.

Wesley voted in favor of the IGA, as did the rest of the village board.



# LAW ENFORCEMENT IN OAK PARK SCHOOLS

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This IGA does not in any way **promote law enforcement presence** in District 97 schools and District 200, but rather **ensures that appropriate procedures** are in place for those circumstances in which cooperation between the agencies becomes necessary.



# LAW ENFORCEMENT IN OAK PARK SCHOOLS

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## Incidents

Schools will call 911 immediately if there is a **safety concern**, such as:

- Threat of violence
- Weapons on site
- Medical emergencies
- Fires, or other issues related to building safety

## Safety Drills and Planning

Law enforcement support from the Oak Park Police Department is an integral part of our school districts' emergency response protocols.

Per state law, police are on site during school **lockdown drills** to observe and assist in evaluating the effectiveness of the drills.

Additionally, police will be on site to attend **threat assessment team meetings**.

## Education and Prevention Events/Programs

Using our **racial equity lens**, we are considering what our evolving partnership should look like in our schools. For example:

*How do we engage in new practices with the police department that are grounded in our commitment to racial justice?*

*What does police presence look like outside of incidents and drills?*



# POSITIVE OUTCOMES OF IGA WORK



- Repairing of relationships following removal of school resource officers (SROs) in 2020
- Monthly meetings between leadership of village, District 97 and District 200
- Weekly tri-agency safety team meetings
- Threat assessment teams
- Increased alignment in school safety/ emergency response protocols



# Moving Forward





# AREAS OF OPPORTUNITY/FUTURE PLANNING

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- Continued tri-agency meetings
- Ongoing review of IGA implementation
- Guidelines/protocols for law enforcement presence in Oak Park schools
- Emergency preparedness
- Clear and Present Danger reporting protocols
- Community engagement

