



# Oak Park Elementary School District 97

260 W, Madison ▪ Oak Park ▪ Illinois ▪ 60302 ▪ ph: 708.524.3000 ▪ fax: 708.524.3019 ▪ [www.op97.org](http://www.op97.org)

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TO: Dr. Carol E. Kelley, Superintendent of Schools  
Board of Education

FROM: Dr. Alicia Evans, Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations

RE: Cast/Bravo Narrative

DATE: January 23, 2018

## ***General Information***

Last year, the administration explored cost cutting options with the Board. One of those options included the elimination of Cast and Bravo positions. When the information reached the community, there was an immediate response to keep Cast and Bravo staff and continue to support performing arts at both schools. The Board of Education discussed the matter at a special Board meeting on May 3, 2017. During that meeting, it was decided that the positions would be retained for two years (2017-2018 and 2018-2019) and the programming would remain the same. The two year time frame would provide Cast and Bravo enough time to support their own activities and staff.

## **BRAVO**

BRAVO! is the award-winning, nationally recognized Performing Arts program at Brooks Middle School. BRAVO! seeks to provide a wide range of performing arts activities that give students an opportunity to discover their own talents, challenge their imaginations, and work responsibly together in a safe environment of encouragement and artistic instruction.

The BRAVO! program includes full scale theatrical productions, stage crew, and dance studio in conjunction with a coordination of other performing arts after school activities designed to allow all Brooks students a diverse opportunity for involvement in the arts through drama, voice, dance, stage crew and other forms of artistic instruction.

## **CAST**

CAST is the performing arts program at Percy Julian Middle School in Oak Park, IL. For over 30 years, CAST has taught, mentored and empowered children in a safe environment. CAST offers your child a place to learn new skills, meet new people and have fun!

Under the guidance of professional artists, performance art is used to teach, mentor and empower students. CAST serves as a kind of laboratory for the arts. Apprentices are not passive recipients of information. They learn by doing. Apprentices make their own decisions. And, with the assistance of professional mentors, they learn all that they need to do excellent work.

CAST offers curricular and co-curricular opportunities during the school year and two performing arts camps for 3rd through 8th grade students during the summer. CAST provides a range of arts and humanities activities that give student apprentices a chance to discover their own talents, to stretch their imaginations, and to work responsibly together. The CAST program includes full scale theatrical productions, a speech team, performing arts related after school activities, a communication curriculum, and a resource for faculty and other educational opportunities.

### ***District's Obligations to CAST/BRAVO***

Currently, D97 supports all the processing of financial activity for both Cast and Bravo through dedicated accounts housed within the D97 general ledger. Specifically, D97 staff processes all deposits and program expenditures through D97 bank accounts. D97 also provides Cast and Bravo with credit cards, for which are reimbursed by Cast/Bravo. D97 employs four Cast/Bravo employees for which the District is not reimbursed.

Facility usage is provided to Cast/Bravo free of charge in most instances. Other programs, such as band or orchestra must schedule the auditorium around Cast and Bravo performances and rehearsals. Saturday building usage is not always reserved by Cast/Bravo. Therefore, activities are occurring in the building without the knowledge of the buildings and grounds staff.

Cast and Bravo have been asked to inform the administration about construction activities. In the past, building improvements have been made without proper authorization or oversight. This was in issue during inspections, since the work is not in compliance.

### ***Decisions for the Board***

On May 3, 2017, Dr. Kelley asked the Board to consider the establishment of an Ad Hoc committee to consider the following;

- 1) Currently the teachers who teach during the day and provide enrichment after school receive a stipend for their afterschool work. Do we want the stipend process to continue?
- 2) Currently the principals evaluate the teachers who work during the day. If the performing arts director is not working during the day, he/she is not being evaluated. Do we want the process to continue?
- 3) Consider conversations on business tasks that might be combined and other business functions, like 5013C status. The Board expressed interest in seeing the full picture. Both the CAST and BRAVO boards offered to share information.

### ***Cast/Bravo Update***

District administrators met with Cast and Bravo leadership on November 30, 2017. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss any progress made towards the groups becoming autonomous. Both groups indicated that no progress had been made regarding their 501c3 status. Additionally, the group had not made any changes to the structure of their programming. Student data information will be provided to the Board at a later date.