



Oak Park Elementary School District 97

Date: May 22, 2018

To: Board of Education

From: Dr. Carol Kelley, Superintendent

Re: 2017-2018 Professional Learning Opportunities for D97 Staff

During the next scheduled Learning Session for the District 97 Board of Education, the administration will share how our approved 2017-2018 budget has advanced exemplary **professional learning opportunities** for D97 staff. These investments have supported our desire to fulfill the district vision outlined in the [Vision97 4ALL Plan](#), which was approved by the Board of Education in July 2015. That vision says:

At District 97, we strive to create a positive learning environment for all students that is equitable, inclusive and focused on the whole child.

Our vision is built upon the following core beliefs:

- With consistent, effective teaching, all students can learn at high levels.
- With strong, courageous leaders and sound organizational practices, good teaching and successful schools can thrive.

In addition to our vision, we have articulated four aspirational Goals for student achievement, and a set of Measures (or indicators) of student progress for each Goal. The following Goals address the academic, behavioral and social-emotional development of our students:

- A known, nurtured and celebrated LEARNER
- An empowered and passionate SCHOLAR
- A confident and persistent ACHIEVER
- A creative CRITICAL THINKER AND GLOBAL CITIZEN

Our professional practices lay the groundwork for carrying out our Vision Plan. The role of the central office includes ensuring that all our schools possess the following conditions for learning: equity in resources, course access and supports. We also must ensure our teachers are well-prepared and -supported, which includes providing professional development and capacity-building assistance that shows them clearly how to support all students.

For more than two years, we have been addressing the “potential areas” needing immediate attention to promote deeper learning experiences for D97 students. Identified by our staff, these areas include:

- Providing quality curriculum materials and resources for staff.

- Increasing access and opportunities for advanced learning opportunities for students.
- Providing professional collaboration opportunities for staff.

With BOE support, we began reorganizing the District 97 central office team to improve teaching and learning, which will boost student achievement.

One proposal involved creating a position of Academic Curriculum Specialist for each content area (Literacy, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies) beginning in 2017-2018. However, as we continued developing our Vision Plan, we moved to a non-permanent model for curriculum support. Where it would have cost \$340K annually to hire four academic teaching specialists, we have found other ways to provide our schools and teachers with more hands-on support and guidance. The report below describes these professional learning opportunities and outlines the locally funded costs of \$387K. As the staff's capacity strengthens over the course of our Vision Plan, the costs of these investments will decline.

Pillar 1: Equitable Access to Rigorous, Responsive Instruction

"All students have an innate desire for engagement, challenge, developing strengths, belonging and feeling valued." (Jackson, 2011)

We're committed to giving all students access to challenging, engaging instruction that reflects their prior knowledge, learning styles and cultural background. In support of the teaching, leadership and organizational practices outlined on page 13 of **Vision97 4ALL**, we provided the following professional opportunities to our staff during 2017-2018:

Third-Grade Advanced Opportunities in Math (\$79,300)

We provided strategic professional learning to support what we knew would be both a mindshift and a pedagogical shift for teachers as they adapt to a new math program. In addition to frequent coaching and support from D97 administrators and instructional coaches, we delivered the following professional learning experiences:

Dr. Yvette Jackson, author of "The Pedagogy of Confidence," facilitated 16 total hours of professional learning with third-grade teachers and instructional coaches centered on the High Operational Practices™ that she has developed:

- Identifying and activating student strengths
- Building relationships
- Eliciting high performance
- Providing enrichment
- Integrating prerequisites for academic learning
- Situating learning in the lives of students
- Amplifying student voice

The sessions – based on Dr. Jackson's expertise with inspiring high intellectual performances in every child – focused on building the strengths of participating teachers and coaches to actualize our vision by integrating and applying those High Operational Practices into daily practices. Specifically, principals, third-grade teachers and instructional coaches engaged in:

- Investigating the innate potential research upon which the Pedagogy of Confidence is constructed. including the science related to “gifted education”: intellectual/cognitive science, neuroscience and developmental;
- Understanding the factors that inhibit the innate potential of every child for high intellectual performance and academic achievement;
- Examining the cognitive theory of mediating learning to reduce the impact of inhibiting factors – including identifying students’ learning strengths and using these strengths and their cultural frames of reference to build underdeveloped skills (cognitive, emotional, social); and
- Exploring, reflecting on and applying in their classrooms the High Operational Practices and related learning and teaching strategies for engaging, demonstrating and assessing high levels of thinking, learning and literacy.

In addition to our work with Dr. Jackson, we contracted with Lisa Westman to provide shoulder-to-shoulder assistance with differentiation for third-grade teachers and GTD teachers. This included modeling lessons, debriefing with teachers and attending grade-level meetings. Ms. Westman also supported the third-grade team with developing and implementing the enrichment math units that enhance the Eureka curriculum for modules 3-7.

All the work described above supports D97’s vision and aligns with the following professional practices we strive to implement and improve in our classrooms every day:

- Teachers will assist students to direct their own learning and work with other students on cognitively demanding and culturally and socially relevant real-world tasks that require students to discuss, question, explore, research, make decisions and communicate findings.
- To ensure students’ continuous growth and development, teachers will organize instruction around standards and communicate clear expectations so that students understand what they will know and do.
- Teachers will gather evidence to assess their impact on student learning and will adjust instruction and intervention accordingly.
- During grade-level meetings, teachers will share student work and collaboratively analyze assessment data and instructional practices.

One measure of success for our third-grade advanced learning opportunities in our math pilot involved seeing two of our third-grade teachers featured in a video on differentiation created by the Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) of Alexandria, VA. Lisa Westman had recommended Mann's Veronica White and Holmes' Michelle Anderson to ASCD after they and students were filmed during a regular math lesson and the teachers were interviewed about their classroom practices. (For pictures of the crews at [Mann](#) and at [Holmes](#), please click on the links.)

Implementation of K-2 Reading Units of Study, RUOS (\$134K)

During the 2017-2018 school year, Lisa Vahey has worked with our K-2 classroom teachers to support and build our internal capacity to implement the curricular and instructional shifts necessary to advance our vision practices. In particular:

- Teachers will assist students to direct their own learning and work with other students on cognitively demanding and culturally and socially relevant real-world tasks that require students to discuss, question, explore, research, make decisions and communicate findings.
- To ensure students' continuous growth and development, teachers will organize instruction around standards and communicate clear expectations so that students understand what they will know and do.

Incorporating Computational Thinking into 6-8 Math and Science Instruction (\$109,000)

We contracted with Dr. Kathy Hayden from the University of California, San Marcos, to support computational thinking for the 6-8 math and science departments at the middle schools. Dr. Hayden worked directly with the teachers throughout the school year to enhance the rigor of our International Baccalaureate (IB) units and develop daily lessons that incorporate computational thinking. The teacher-developed lessons not only support D97's vision work but also promote the [ISTE \(International Society for Technology in Education\) standard](#) of the empowered learner.



Leveraging Inclusive Service-Delivery Models to Support Students with Disabilities *(federally funded via IDEA Grant)*

To learn more about inclusive service-delivery models, D97 participated in free monthly trainings by the Gust Foundation and received supplemental grant-funded training from the Consortium for Educational Change.

The Gust Foundation's offerings involved:

OBJECTIVES OF THE TRAINING

- To learn about the norms and practices of inclusive schools.
- To learn about specific needs of diverse learners, including those with individualized education plans (IEPs).
- To study ability and disability from “the inside out” (for example, exploring first-person accounts and soliciting advice and input from those with identified needs).
- To explore a range of instructional supports, teaching strategies and classroom management tools.
- To expand active and collaborative learning structures that can be used in inclusive classrooms K-12.
- To examine and explore multiple ways to differentiate instruction (such as changing the environment or adapting lesson formats).
- To study different ways to collaborate, share roles and pass acquired knowledge to others in your school.

FEATURES OF THE TRAINING

- Collaborative work with national consultants in inclusive education
- Opportunities to collaborate and network with those from other Chicago Public Schools
- Regular discussion of “what is working” and “what needs work”
- Film clips of successful inclusive classrooms and schools

- Stories and examples from successful inclusive classrooms and schools
- Autobiographies and stories of those with disabilities
- A resource table with books and materials related to each day's topic
- Website and technology resources for inclusive classrooms
- Modeling of a range of active learning structures appropriate for use in K-12 classrooms
- Opportunities to participate in further training tailored to individual school needs
- Follow-up support once or twice monthly from an inclusion facilitator in selected schools

SESSIONS

Session	Date	Topics	Recommended Reading
1	9/12/17	Inclusive Schools <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • understanding a rationale for inclusive education • exploring best practices • reviewing illustrations and examples 	<i>Love This Kid</i> : chapter 2
2	10/2/17	Understanding Students <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • rejecting the deficit model • building on strengths • examining tools for advocacy and self-advocacy 	<i>Love This Kid</i> : chapters 1 and 3
3	11/6/17	The Responsive Classroom <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • introducing joy and novelty • using a range of collaborative structures • using active learning to differentiate instruction 	<i>Joyful Learning</i> <i>From Tutor Scripts to Talking Sticks</i> <i>From Text Maps to Memory Caps</i>
4	1/25/18	Strategies and Supports <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • using tools to help some, most or all in the inclusive classroom (for example, video modeling or visuals, augmentative and alternative communication, community-building activities, sensory tools) 	<i>From Tutor Scripts to Talking Sticks</i> <i>From Text Maps to Memory Caps</i> <i>Love This Kid</i> : chapters 7 and 11
5	2/22/18	Strategies and Supports (continued) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • using tools to help some, most or all in the inclusive classroom (for example, video modeling or visuals, augmentative and alternative communication, community-building activities, sensory tools) 	<i>From Tutor Scripts to Talking Sticks</i> <i>From Text Maps to Memory Caps</i> <i>Love This Kid</i> : chapters 7 and 11

6	3/20/18	Collaboration <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● planning for inclusive education ● teaming strategies ● exporting learning 	<i>Love This Kid:</i> chapter 12
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The Consortium for Educational Change also provided professional learning around co-teaching that involved half-day instructor-led training and personalized coaching sessions throughout the year.

Pillar 3: Effective Teachers, Leaders and Staff for Every Student, for Every School

“An organization is only as good as its culture – and building that culture is not only a role for HR, it’s every manager’s and employee’s responsibility.” – Unknown

Teachers, leadership and staff engage in year-round evidence-based cycles of inquiry with clear standards of professional practice and accountability by articulating clear goals, and actively engaging in planning, guiding and assessing instruction and student learning. Further, our teachers, leaders and staff receive timely, focused support and intervention through coaching, mentoring, peer support and targeted training.

In support of the teaching, leadership and organizational practices outlined on page 13 of **Vision97 4ALL**, we provided the following professional opportunities to our staff during the 2017-2018 school year:

National Equity Project (federally funded via Title II Grant)

For the past three years, D97 has been deeply committed to examining how we practice our beliefs and creating systems that provide access and opportunities for all students. Our equity goal will be realized when we eliminate student demographics as the predictors of outcomes.

The National Equity Project (NEP) offered a professional learning opportunity to help our school and teacher leaders design and facilitate faculty, grade-level/departmental, district-level meetings that:

- Ensure equally high outcomes for all participants in our educational system;
- Remove the predictability of success or failure that currently correlates with any social or cultural factor;
- Interrupt inequitable practices, examine biases and create inclusive multicultural school environments for adults and children; and
- Discover and cultivate the unique gifts, talents and interests that every student possesses.

NEP provided additional professional learning experiences including:

Intro to Leading for Equity Learning Session, a three-hour session (held 10/6/17) for all non-instructional staff and administrators to reflect on each staff member’s role in supporting the district’s equity commitment.

Intro to Leading for Equity Learning Session, a full-day session (held 1/26/18) for all instructional staff and administrators to build a shared understanding of the district's equity commitment and key equity frameworks.

Designing and Facilitating Meetings for Equity, a two-day learning session (held 2/1-2/18) for district administrators, principals, instructional coaches, IB coordinators, teacher mentor, middle school culture/climate coach, and diversity council members to build a shared understanding regarding the conditions necessary to confront issues related to equity and how to design and facilitate meetings in which participants will be motivated to engage in this work.

FAR (Formative Assessment for Results) Training (\$18,000)

To foster the mindset and behaviors of collective efficacy, all our principals provide teacher teams with scheduled, uninterrupted time to examine student learning data. We encourage and equip teachers to use these grade-level and department meetings to share student work and collaboratively analyze assessment data and their instructional practices. We include this investment in our budget in order to equip team leaders to facilitate this work.

We also use these funds to train new team leaders in essential leadership skills and instill a foundation of shared purpose, values, norms, protocols and accountability for the team process.

(Note: Since teacher leaders apply annually, we must provide continuing education every year. However, as we bring more of this training in-house, the annual expense for outside consultants will decline.)

Pillar 4: Data-informed Continuous Improvement

"Professional expertise is not just about having the evidence or being aware of it. It's also about knowing how to judge the evidence and knowing what to do with it." – Michael Fullan

Our schools will carry out well-established organizational procedures and will develop a culture of evidence-based, collaborative inquiry to support continuous improvement of teaching, learning and leadership.

In support of the teaching, leadership and organizational practices outlined on page 13 of **Vision97 4ALL**, we provided the following professional opportunities to our staff during the 2017-2018 year:

Building Leadership Team Training (School-Level Improvement Plans) (\$46,500)

Having a written vision plan is the first step toward realizing the desired outcomes for student learning. However, without disciplined implementation across our schools, we will not live up to the promises we made to our families and community.

Thus, during the 2017-2018 school year, we have provided professional learning opportunities to build the capacity of building principals and building leadership teams so they could align their school improvement plans (SIP) to the district's SY18 action plan. These teams have helped our district move the lever of equity for all students by creating

confident, persistent achievers; known, nurtured and celebrated learners; critical thinkers and global citizens; and empowered and passionate scholars.

The training included the following components:

- Orientation, capacity-building and technical support for developing Annual School Action Plans (summer/fall 2017).
- Yearlong intensive training and support for principals, assistant principals, and district-level and school-based leaders (every six weeks on site; one hour monthly virtual coaching/support per principal).
- End-of-year review and planning for next school year (April-May 2018).

This investment enables the district to fulfill our commitment to continuously improve our teaching, leadership and organizational practices that, when implemented consistently, will sharpen our instructional effectiveness and in turn allow us to create a positive learning environment for all students that is equitable, inclusive and focused on the whole child.