

**Official Minutes of the  
Oak Park Board of Education District 97,  
260 Madison Street, Oak Park, Cook County, Illinois**

**Special Joint Meeting November 30, 2016**

This is a special joint board meeting of the Board of Education of Oak Park Elementary School District 97, the Board of Education of Oak Park and River Forest High School District 200, the Board of Trustees of the Village of Oak Park, and the Collaboration of Early Childhood Care and Education Governing Board.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

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COMMENT

Chris Donovan, an Oak Park resident speaking on the Governing Board report and dates of future topics, expressed concern about the safety of children. He suggested that Madison Street will be reduced to one lane which will add to congestion. He referred to the Madison Coalition and the Madison Street Road Diet and noted that there are no minutes for those meetings. He suggested that the Village wants to spend \$800,000,000 for the road diet but they have not asked for community support in quite some time. Donovan asked that as a joint board to look at this and reconsider the options. Donovan suggested that the Village Board indicated that no other boards have a say in how the Village spends their money.

**ROLL CALL**

ROLL CALL

President Gates called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Present: Gates, Felton, O'Connor, Spatz, Datta, Spurlock and Brisben  
Absent: None  
Also Present: Superintendent Dr. Carol Kelley, and Board Secretary Sheryl Marinier

Members of the District 200 Board in attendance: President Jeff Weissglass, Thomas Cofsky, Fred Arkin, Jennifer Cassell, Sara Dixon Spivy (arrived late), and Superintendent Dr. Joylynn Pruitt

Members of the Village Board in attendance: Colette Lueck, Clerk Teresa Powell, Mayor Anan Abu-Taleb. It was noted that the Village Board did not have a quorum.

Members of the Collaboration for Early Childhood Development Board in attendance: Chairperson Amy McCormack, Treasurer Gordon Hellwig, members, Laura Crawford, David Weindling, Penny Wallingford, and Executive Director Carolyn Newberry Schwartz

**REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

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THE AGENDA

Abu-Taleb made a motion to move item "F" Special Focus – Measuring our Progress: The Unified Early Childhood Database, up to the next item. Seconded by Felton and all approved.

**MEASURING OUR PROGRESS**

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Greg Sanders and Bob George from Chapin Hall reported the need to reach children as early as possible, noting that 700 neural connections are formed per second during the first few years of a child's life, and at 18 months, disparities in vocabulary can begin to appear. Additionally, they noted that there is a 90-100 percent chance of developmental delays when children experience six to seven risk factors, and a 70 percent chance of at-risk children not served in a high-quality early learning program being arrested for violent crimes by the age of 18, and by the age of 26, 39 percent are more likely to spend time in jail.

They explained that they noticed a disparity in the achievement between student groups in the schools, and shared that fragmentation in early childhood provides uneven and unconnected services to families.

They shared that 15 years ago, the early childhood programs were not related or connected. Now, the focus of their work is on the whole child to ensure better outcomes from birth to kindergarten. They are working hard to ensure that all of the community's entities are working well together with a laser focus on the at-risk children and their families.

It was reported that the Collaboration is trying to capture its progress in a voluntary database, serving 12 committees and hosting 66 active partners. They reported that 11 measurements have been identified to ensure the program's success.

George shared the need to establish a data model first and explained that it is difficult to gather all the data on each child and strategically link the data between different sources. He explained that the birth to three data includes home visiting, Ages and Stages screening, parenting resource programs and early interventions. The three to five year old testing includes publicly funded preschool intake data, GOLD assessment data, Ages and Stages questionnaire and early childhood special education. Additional data supplied by District 97 includes Kindergarten to Fourth grade KRT testing, parent questionnaire (Infosnap), enrollment (demographics), special education, attendance, standardized testing, DIBELS and MAP assessments.

It was explained that data systems are moving targets: as they mature, data collection mechanisms change, providers change and state and federal policies change. This requires a close working relationship with the people who provide the data. The Collaboration needs to have continuous conversations to improve data quality, and to empower everyone to use the data to inform program delivery.

It was reported that the database has been built and strong data agreements that allow the Collaboration access to the necessary data are in place. A reporting cycle has been developed that allows the Collaboration to report on all of the indicators and supply reports to all of the committees. Additionally, it was noted that the new opportunity from the Grand Victoria Foundation will allow the Collaboration to expand on the 11 outcomes.

Newberry Schwartz shared that the Collaboration is monitoring the number of slots available in the pre-kindergarten program. She noted that the State is reviewing the process, requiring the Collaboration to be vigilant to keep the slots they have. Concern was expressed that some families need a full-day program and this program is only offered for a half day. Interest was expressed in expanding the program to a full-day and housing all the slots in one building in Oak Park.

It was shared that the National Association for Young Children's Conference's general consensus is that Oak Park is way ahead, if not decades ahead regarding early childhood.

A large drop in the number of students qualifying for free and reduced lunches was noted within District 97. It was noted that there was a change in the procedure for signing children up for the free and reduced lunch program which caused a drop in the number of students qualifying for its program. It was suggested that this should go back to normal next year.

A representative from a private childcare program noted that her 78 charges are not included in the data. Newberry Schwartz will communicate with this program.

With the election coming up in April, the importance of new board members understanding what the Collaboration is and how it operates was expressed. It was suggested that the Collaboration

is a model of what partnerships really mean in Oak Park. The importance of having two board members from different cycles on the Collaboration board was noted.

#### ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

Member Spatz read the report prepared by Dr. Alicia Evans which noted that the transition from Therese O'Neill to Alicia Evans was successful. The additional funds were placed in the reserve fund, all entities have been paying their bills and the Collaboration has been paid.

It was noted that some private foundations have made an effort to change from physical agent to physical sponsor. Spatz suggested that the accountant be asked about this change, noting that the board members are the physical agent for the governing board, not the Collaboration.

#### COLLABORATION ANNUAL REPORT

Amy McCormack shared that the Collaboration for Early Childhood made significant progress toward establishing an integrated early childhood system of high quality services and programs within our community during 2015 - 2016. Their work is guided by twelve committees comprised of 195 volunteers that met 82 times over the past year. They continue to focus our work on five key areas:

##### 1. Developmental Screening and Referral System: Our Work to Ensure Early and Periodic Screenings for All Children in the Community

- The Collaboration expanded the reach of developmental screening work from 20 sites in 2015 to 30 sites in 2016. Included in the 30 sites are 16 child care centers and preschools, 11 family child care providers, 1 social service agency and 3 medical practices.
- All 30 providers implemented a formal developmental screening program using the web-based Ages and Stages Questionnaire-3 (ASQ-3) and Ages and Stages Questionnaire: Social Emotional, Second Edition (ASQ: SE-2).
- The Collaboration's Developmental Screening Coordinator provided up to six hours of technical support each month to the 10 new participating sites and up to two hours per month to the sites that participated in the program the prior year. The three medical practices each received 15 hours of technical support during the year to help ensure successful implementation.
- The participating early learning and medical programs achieved a 77 percent completion rate for the ASQ-3, with 1,508 out of a possible 1,913 children completing developmental screenings. The participating programs achieved a 72 percent completion rate for the ASQ: SE-2 (social and emotional screening), with 1,310 out of a possible 1,813 children completing social-emotional screenings.
- The Collaboration also provided 1,311 children with hearing vision screenings at 35 childcare and preschool sites in Oak Park and River Forest.
- The Collaboration's Development Screening Coordinator has worked closely with providers this year to ensure that they document follow-up referrals for children whose screenings indicate a need for extra support. The Collaboration is collecting data on how many children are referred to early intervention services, Early childhood special education, medical providers, or private therapists.

- The Collaboration offered five workshops to participating providers aimed at increasing their familiarity and comfort with referral processes to early intervention and early childhood special education services for children with identified needs.
- The Collaboration also hosts two educational meetings with pediatricians' practices to provide information and resources on making referrals to early childhood special education and supporting parents and children in building social and emotional resiliency in early childhood.

## 2. Parent Information and Support Programs

An integral component of the Collaboration's work is providing information, resources and supports to parents, so that they can make the best decisions about quality early care and services for their children.

- The Collaboration's contract with Parenthesis Family Center ended December 31, 2015. On that date, Parenthesis reported that 56 families were actively engaged in the Parents as Teachers Program and that they had sufficient funds to support their involvement. In addition, Parenthesis reported more than 900 contacts with parents of very young children through an array of activities. Of the 900 contacts, 490 consisted of information packets distributed at outreach activities and events.
- The Collaboration transitioned the contract to Easterseals and the Partnering with Parents program began in late January. Easterseals has established good working relationships with many providers across the Oak Park and River Forest community. The Oak Park Regional Housing Center has agreed to distribute brochures about the Partnering with Parents program to renters known to have very young children and to ask apartment building owners to place posters up in their common areas. Easterseals also worked with faith-based organizations, and met with District 97's social workers, psychologists and nurses to inform them about the home visiting program. Twenty-two families are currently involved in the program.
- Parenthesis retained the 56 families actively engaged in Parents as Teachers at the end of the Contract. This impacted the work plan for Easterseals. Easterseals' caseload was lower than anticipated when the contract was executed because Parenthesis families were not transitioned. The Collaboration also experienced a setback with data collection for the home visiting program. They were unable to secure a data sharing agreement with Parenthesis for the families they serve in home visiting program, including those who had been served under our contract with them. The Collaboration plans to work over the course of the next year to see if they can enact an information sharing agreement that is mutually beneficial.
- The Collaboration hired consultant, Jeanna Capito, to help them restructure our Parenting Resource Program. She facilitated eight focus groups, prepared, distributed and analyzed a survey completed by 444 parents/guardians to better understand the needs of families with very young children. She also conducted a community scan including key stakeholder interviews to ensure knowledge of the resources currently available and the development of a strategy to address unmet needs. The Collaboration has received her report and is beginning to implement key recommendations.

- The Collaboration published their 2016-2017 edition of the Early Childhood Resource Directory in January, 2016. By June 30, 2016 they had distributed more than 10,000 copies.
- On November 12, 2015, the Collaboration worked with several local sponsors, including Oak Park Public Library, River Forest Public Library, OPRF Community Foundation and the Book Table, to host a talk by Dr. Dana Suskind, M.D., author of *Thirty Million Words: Building A Child's Brain*. Despite inclement weather, the event was well-attended at a packed Holmes School auditorium.

### 3. Professional Development and Public Preschool Coordination

- At their 13th Annual Symposium on February 27, 2016, "Turning Obstacles into Opportunities: Navigating the Tough Stuff," the Collaboration hosted 365 early childhood professionals. At 28 workshops, they provided a variety of innovative methods and information on supporting every child's learning needs.
- Their Professional Development Coordinator provided a series of trainings on *Creative Curriculum*, a comprehensive research based program that promotes best practices in early learning settings and meets the criteria for use established by the Illinois State Board of Education. Ninety-four early learning professionals attended seven workshops focused on three content areas: Creative Arts, Science, and Mathematics.
- Our Professional Development Coordinator helped sixteen family childcare providers and three family childcare assistants apply for Illinois's new Family Child Care Credential, which was unveiled in July, 2016. The FCC is the first step that family child care providers need to complete to engage in Illinois's ExceleRate Quality Rating and Improvement System.
- The Collaboration also provided coaching and workshops to the faculty at two Preschool for All programs.
- The Collaboration promoted and supported use of a performance and growth report from Teaching Strategies GOLD that enabled teachers to observe incremental growth in individual children. They provided site-specific training and support to help staff use assessments and tailor instruction to meet individual children's needs.
- The Collaboration continued to support Roundtables for childcare directors (16 regular participants) and family childcare providers (15 regular participants). These bimonthly meetings provide two-hours of Gateways Registry-approved professional development credit.

### 4. Unified Early Childhood Database

- The Collaboration worked with Chapin Hall to issue two reports. The first report in September, 2015 identified progress targets for data collection and outcome indicators and the activities that would support progress. The second report issued in February, 2016 provided a second data point for the 11 outcome indicators incorporated in the contract.

- The Collaboration received data from District 97 to ensure that it has enough information to complete a solid longitudinal analysis of our work. Chapin Hall and the Collaboration recently reviewed and modified the data list of District 97.
- The Collaboration worked with Chapin Hall to ensure that Collaboration staff can now run reports directly from their CiviCRM database. This has provided them with more independence and timeliness in gathering information about the children enrolled in publicly-funded preschool programs.

It was reported that the Collaboration received an unqualified, clean audit, and it was able to return more than \$400,000 to the physical agents this year. It was noted that more than 90 percent of the money taken in is going toward services.

The board members were asked to spread the word about the work of the Collaboration as locating the children can be a challenge.

It was noted that District 97 will be seeking a referendum in April, 2017 and part of the good story of the District is its partnerships.

#### ISSUES, CONCERNS AND TOPICS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS

It was noted that the Erickson Institute partnership is still an option to be considered next year. The first round was not able to fill all the slots. This may require transferring some of the reserve funds, but worth considering.

It was suggested that the committee may want to consider presenting at the Joint School Board Conference in the fall. The application for presentations is due sometime in January. Additionally, the National Association for Young Children’s Conference may be another opportunity to share the data model.

Member Spatz shared that he has been selected to be on a forum in New Zealand, suggesting that we should be doing more networking outside of Oak Park.

Adam Sulzman and Jeff Weisglass left the meeting at 9:02 p.m.

#### ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to conduct, President Gates declared the meeting adjourned at 9:04 p.m.

The next regularly scheduled meeting of the Board will be held on Tuesday, December 6, 2016 beginning at 7:00 p.m. at the Administration building located at 260 Madison Street, Oak Park, Illinois.

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Board President

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Board Secretary