



Oak Park Elementary School District 97

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TO: Members of the Board of Education

CC: Dr. Ushma Shah, Superintendent
Dr. Sheila Johnson, Assistant Superintendent

FROM: Dr. Eboney Lofton, Chief Learning Innovation Officer

DATE: August 8, 2023

RE: Brooks and Julian Middle Schools-8th Grade Washington D.C. Field Trip

Purpose

In alignment with District 97 Board Policy 6:240 (*Field Trips*) and its related Administrative Procedure, and on behalf of Brooks Middle School principal, April Capuder, and Julian Middle School interim principal, William Lee, a Level 2 (overnight) field trip request will be submitted for eighth grade students. In continuing to build inclusive district systems, we are also working to uphold the charge of our District 97 Board Policy 7:12 (*Ensuring Racial and Educational Equity*).

Background

District 97 requests that the Board of Education approve an overnight field trip request for eight grade students attending Brooks and Julian middle schools to travel to Washington D.C. from March 16, 2024-March 19, 2024. A collaborative team of district leaders, school leaders and middle school parent volunteers identified the non-profit organization, [CloseUp Foundation](#), to facilitate the student learning experience and coordinate travel logistics (transportation, lodging) last school year. Based on stakeholder feedback the district will continue to leverage this partnership.

The learning experience is designed to provide students the opportunity to discuss historic events through historical site visits; engage with peers on discussing pressing issues through a mock Congress; and deepen understanding of our legislative process via a congressional gallery visit and a facilitated visit to the Smithsonian museum - specifically the National Museum of African American History and Culture. This year the team will vet the proposal with Individual and Societies department chairpersons to continue to ensure curricular alignment with eighth grade standards.

Approval

The administration is requesting that the Board of Education approve this field trip under Consent Agenda at its August 8, 2023 board meeting.

Next steps

Area of Work	Details	Key Dates
Legal contract and insurance liability review.	The Close Up Foundation will provide the district with a draft contract, terms and conditions, liability release, and certificate of insurance. Once received, the documents will be reviewed by legal counsel. It is our hope that these documents will be ready for approval during the August 8th Board meeting.	August 8, 2023
Communication to parents	<p>Following Board approval, communication to families will commence. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a save the date notification to 8th grade families as soon as possible after the board approval • notification of an informational meeting with the CloseUp Foundation during the week of September 5th • provision of an avenue for families to indicate interest and the need for financial assistance on the CloseUp registration portal 	Communication will begin on August 10, 2023 pending contract approval
Equitable access and funding.	Previous fundraising efforts have provided financial support to students for whom the cost of the annual DC trip was a barrier. For students who qualify for free/reduced lunch, ISBE has been contacted to consider reallocation of existing Title I federal funds that are intended to increase access. Unfortunately, Title I funds can not be leveraged for this purpose. We will continue to explore other avenues to ensure that every child who would like to participate in the field trip can do so.	Ongoing