

**Special Joint Board of Education Meeting**  
Second Floor Library  
Oak Park and River Forest High School  
Wednesday, November 20, 2013

A special meeting of the Board of Education of the Oak Park and River Forest High School was held on November 20, 2013 in the Board Room of the high school.

**Call to Order**

President Phelan called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. A roll call indicated the following members were present: Thomas F. Cofsky, Dr. Steven Gevinson, Dr. Ralph H. Lee, Dr. Jackie Moore, Sharon Patchak Layman, John Phelan, and Jeff Weissglass. Also in attendance was Steven T. Isoye, Superintendent, and Gail Kalmerton, Executive Assistant/Clerk of the Board.

Village of Oak Park President Abu-Taleb called the meeting of the Village Board to order; Village Clerk Therese Powell called the roll, and a quorum was declared. Present were: Cara Pavlicek, Village Manager; Village President Anan Abu-Taleb; Trustees Peter Barber, Ray Johnson; Colette Lueck; Adam Salzman, and Bob Tucker, and Village Clerk Teresa Powell.

Oak Park Elementary District 97 President Bob Spatz called the District #97 meeting to order; Secretary Mariner called the roll and a quorum was declared. Present were: Dr. Albert Roberts, Superintendent; Board of Education President; members, Amy Felton, Jim O'Connor, Denise Sacks, Peter Traczyk, Graham Brisben, and Board Secretary Sheryl Mariner.

Collaboration for Early Childhood Care and Education (CEC): Carolyn Newberry Schwartz, Executive Director; President Carollina Song; Members Ann Courter, David Weindling and Founder Eric Gershenson, Debbie McCann,

**Review/Approval of the Agenda**

The agenda was reviewed and it was unanimously agreed upon by all participants.

**Governing Board Report**

Mr. Barber reported the following:

- 1) At the first CEC Governing Board meeting in September, Mr. Barber was elected president, Mr. Weissglass was elected vice president, and Ms. Felton was elected secretary.
- 2) The following items were agreed to at that meeting:
  - a. The chair of the Governing Board will be responsible for having the minutes taken of the meeting.
  - b. Agenda items for the February 5 meeting will include membership expansion possibilities and the budget.

- c. Agenda items for the May 7 meeting have yet to be determined.
  - d. The Governing Board's meeting minutes will be posted on the CEC's website.
- 3) District 97 is the financial administrator of the CEC board. More money was collected than needed at this point; thus, the next bill may be less than anticipated.
  - 4) Therese O'Neill, Treasurer for District 97 and financial administrator for the Governing Board, set up three separate checking accounts. Invoicing will be done in November and May and payments will be due to the CEC by January and July. A single transfer will be made to the CEC from the three accounts.

## **CEC Annual**

Ms. Song reported on the activities of the CEC. One year **Report** ago, Nobel Laureate Dr. James Heckman spoke at Unity Temple on public investment in the youngest children. President Obama is now focusing on early childhood and more research is surfacing that children must be supported before the age of two. She then introduced members of the CEC Team present: Treasurer David Weindling, Founder Eric Gershenson, Data Committee chairperson Debbie McCann, Vice Chairperson Ann Courter, and Executive Director Carolyn Newberry Schwartz

Ms. Song reported on the CEC's 2014 Symposium, its signature event, which supplies high quality, low cost continuing educational opportunities for early childhood providers, including centers in Oak Park and River Forest, and family home-based child providers, as they provide the bulk of infant care in Oak Park. Professional development focuses on social/emotional learning, which provides the foundation for academic success that leads to positive life-long learning.

Ms. Song reported that the CEC published its 20<sup>th</sup> edition of CEC Directory; 10,000 were distributed free-of-charge to the community and made available on line. The Parent Information and Support Committee publishes "What and Help Me Grow" which helps parents understand developmental milestones in children from birth to age five. The Collaboration's favorite word is "leverage." The Professional Development Coordinator Diana Rosenbrock cochairs the state's Family Childcare Providers Credential Development Committee and Ms. Schwartz participates in the Consortium for Community System Development led by the Illinois Action for Children as part of the Race to the Top Early Challenge Grant, which helps to develop policy regionally. This visionary leadership has catapulted this community to the forefront of the national conversation addressing the critical importance relative to the early childhood years.

Mr. Weindling reported that the budget was straightforward. Sasseti, a local company, conducted the audit and reported that there were no issues to note or of concern. The information was well gathered, straightforward, free of problems, and the staff was cooperative. While its scope did not include auditing internal controls, it did state that the ones in place were good for the number of CEC staff. Because funds from three grants were received after the audit, the auditors instructed the CEC to add that \$80,000 to its revenue.

Mr. Weindling reported that the monies from all of the jurisdictions were received. The CEC also receives monetary support from individual contributions, foundational grants, and organizational donations. The CEC is committed to raising funds from all sectors and that adjustments will be made to the budget for release of the restricted reserve to finalize the process of recording this budget line.

Mr. Gershenson reported on the progress of the home visiting and support programs. Positive responses to the RPF in June were received from four, high quality entities. A team of highly qualified people reviewed the submissions and conducted an intensive analysis of all four proposals. While the decision was difficult because of the strength of applicants, Parenthesis Family Center of Oak Park and River Forest was selected. He acknowledged those from Parenthesis in attendance at the meeting: Kathy Kern, Executive Director, Stephanie Kiesling, Board of Director's President; and Wendy Giardina, Board Director.

He shared information on the Birth to Three Institute Program, and explained that this agreement is designed to mesh with the agreement between the CEC and the other jurisdictions. The scope of services, performance standards, and benchmarks demonstrates the focus of the agreement. Mr. Gershenson shared that home visits will begin in February and a program for parents of young children will be developed. Its goals over a three-year period will include: improve maternal and newborn health, reduce child injury, abuse, neglect, and mistreatment, improve school readiness and achievement, reduce domestic violence, increase family economic self-sufficiency, and improve coordination of referrals to community services. Because of everyone's efforts and support, Oak Park is viewed as the pace-setting community by the state's Office of Early Childhood.

Ms. McCann thanked the three boards for their vision for this community. She explained that the charge of the Measurement and Evaluation Committee was to determine how to utilize the available data on visiting program, eligibility screenings, quality of childcare, and early childhood to tell the story of what the CEC is able to do in this community. The CEC cannot do this alone. It looked for a partner to help with this endeavor by providing insight on data needed to establish baselines and measure progress. A request for information (RFI) was sent to 58 possible entities and 10 responses were received. The CEC was delighted that Chapin Hall, a center for early childhood research based in Hyde Park, was interested. Chapin Hall is a national expert and focuses on social science research to benefit children, families, and communities. Its experience in this subject area will help determine: 1) how can the data be linked together, 2) what data is relevant, 3) what data needs improvement, and 4) what has social science legitimacy. The contract, which defines a joint board presentation on how the outcomes are measured, is currently being executed.

Ms. Courter reported that the physicians' network held a bi-annual meeting, which shared a presentation on media in a multi-screen world and on how to raise healthy children. With the support of the jurisdictions, the CEC will hire a developmental screening network coordinator to oversee the screening

efforts in both communities at physician offices, childcare centers, and home visits. She was excited about the boost for developmental screening so children can receive assistance early and can develop to their full potential.

Mr. Phelan noted that the CEC is at the forefront of his mind. A recent report on extracurricular activities, both athletic and non-athletic, showed that students who are engaged at school have higher GPAs, lower disciplinary experience, and better attendance. He thought there was a correlation, but not a causal connection and questioned whether their behavior was better because they were engaged in activities or because of their background before the age of five.

Ms. Schwartz noted that the contracts give milestones and include getting the home-visit program operational, parent engagement, and identifying and utilizing the database in a meaningful way as detailed in Exhibit B of the contract with Chaplin. In year one, all the current data and statistical reports will be used to determine who has been served, what is known about them, and then other sources will be accessed. In year two, data will be aligned and connected. In year three, new data will be sought from various assessments of the data streams in order to generate regular reports. At this time, a baseline year has not been established. New dollars will allow the CEC to expand its services, not just supplant its services. Identifying where data can be collected has been challenging. Districts 97 and 90 did a retrospective look based on children with IEP and third party data streams continue. The state will not give more information. Chaplin Hill will look at the current data quality and determine where it can be made more structured. Chapin Hill has a breadth of compilation and is excited to have conversations with school districts about gaining longevity data. A lead researcher who lives in Evanston, is trying to link children in multiple databases, and sees possibilities for other research in the future.

Mr. Abu-Taleb grateful to the CEC for the work it has accomplished. He asked: 1) What would success look like? and 2) Where was District 90 in this process? Ms. Newberry Schwartz stated the CEC was currently working with childcare centers in River Forest and that expanding resources would be discussed at the February 5. Success from the data perspective will be to have all the data in one place for the first time in order to understand the benchmarks. Currently, the CEC does not have real-time data as to how many children are even in the community or how many children were born in the community. Interagency data sharing agreements are being considered and once children are in school they will have an ISBE number which will make it easier to follow them.

Mr. Weissglass noted that The Community Foundation at hired STRIVE, a national organization based in Cincinnati. It has done cradle to career studies focusing on data driven programs and out-of-school programs in the continuum of learning. The three jurisdictions, the CEC, and other organizations were present at the initial meeting two weeks ago. In terms of the overall picture, the work being done is foundational to broader community collaboration in helping children.

In 2009, the CEC created a strategic plan, which formed its basis for activities. Ms. Newberry Schwartz felt the strategies identified then were still correct. Alignment with the state and baseline data is necessary in order for targets to be set.

**Issues, Concerns, and Topics for Future Agendas** A Joint Board Meeting will be held in November 2014. Future topics were requested and identified:

- Data triangulation and what that means
- The quantitative data and stories
- Family issues and benchmarks for improving the quality of life for the parents.

**Public Comment** Kathy Kern, executive director of Parenthesis, stated that this was a historical moment and she thanked everyone for their faith in the ability of Parenthesis to deliver services.

OPRFHS received appreciation for hosting the meeting.

**Adjournment** At 8:18 p.m., Dr. Lee moved to adjourn the Special Board Meeting; seconded by Mr. Weissglass. A voice vote resulted in all ayes. Motion carried.

Dr. Jackie Moore  
Secretary

Gail Kalmerton  
Clerk of the Board