

**MINUTES
JOINT MEETING**

**Board of Trustees
Village of Oak Park**

**President and Board of Education
Oak Park Elementary School District #97**

**President and Board of Education
Oak Park-River Forest High
School District #200**

**President and Members
Collaboration for Early Childhood Care and Education**

**Oak Park and River Forest High School
Room 293
November 18, 2015**

Present

Village of Oak Park: Cara Pavlicek, Village Manager; Village President Anan Abu-Taleb; Trustees Peter Barber, Colette Lueck; Andrea Ott, Bob Tucker, Glenn Brewer, and Village Clerk Teresa Powell.

Elementary School District 97: Dr. Carol Kelly, Superintendent; James Gates, Board of Education President; Members, Amy Felton, Graham Brisben, Rupa Datta, Jim O'Connor, Bob Spatz, Holly Spurlock, and Board Secretary Sheryl Mariner.

High School District #200: Dr. Steven T. Isoye, Superintendent; Board of Education president Jeff Weissglass, members Fred Arkin, Jennifer Cassell, Thomas F. Cofsky, Dr. Jackie Moore, Sara Dixon Spivy, and Jeff Weissglass and Clerk of the Board Gail Kalmerton.

Collaboration for Early Childhood Care and Education: Amy Felton, President, Carolyn Newberry Schwartz, Executive Director; members Carollina Song, Ann Courter, David Weindling; and Founder Eric Gershenson.

Visitors: Diana Rosenbrock, David Boulanger, Shannon Ellison, Laura Crawford, Penny Williams Wolford, and David Sutment of the Collaboration Craig Williams and Maureen Meyer of Parenthesis,

Call to Order

At 7:07 p.m. the meeting was called to order.

Roll

Mayor Abu-Taleb called the meeting of the Village Board to order; Village Clerk Therese Powell called the roll, and a quorum was declared.

OPRFHS District #200 President Weissglass called District #200 meeting to order; Clerk Kalmerton called the roll, and a quorum declared.

Oak Park Elementary District 97 President James Gates called the District #97 meeting to order; Secretary Mariner called the roll, and a quorum declared.

Public Comments

Craig Williams from Parenthesis spoke about the successes of the partnership between the Collaboration and Parenthesis and about his concern that the relationship was closing and about the needs of the young mothers. As such, Parenthesis had aggressively raised funds and promised \$300,000 in cash reserves to ensure continued support. In 2 years, Parenthesis will evaluate its program and determine next steps. The present plan does not include a budget for the reporting to the Collaboration, as that costs between \$10,000 and \$15,000 monthly. However, Parenthesis has a research scientist available who is willing to work with the Collaboration at a cost between \$5,000 and \$10,000 a month. He requested a letter of cooperation from the organizations in attendance. While seeking additional funding in the next two years, Parenthesis will maintain its clients and add new.

Review and Approval of the Agenda

Ms. Felton, president of the Governing Board, welcomed everyone. A motion was made to approve the agenda as presented by Mr. Tucker; seconded Ms. Ott. A voice vote resulted in all ayes. Motion carried.

Governing Board Report

Future Meeting Dates and Planned Topics for Discussion

The next IGA Governing Board meetings are scheduled for February 24, 2016, and May 11, 2016. Agenda items will include a progress report and a financial update for both of these meetings. A draft budget will be presented at the February meeting. An end-of-the-year program report and the election of officers will occur at the May meeting.

Administrative Report

Mr. Spatz read the following report into the record:

“As the administrative District, upon receipt of the semi-annual invoices from the Collaboration for Early Childhood, typically by May 15 for the July 1 payment and November 15 payment, District 97 then invoices itself, District 200 and Village of Oak Park. Each entity deposits such invoiced amount into its segregated account at Community Bank. Representative District 97 works with Community Bank and is informs when all three payments are deposited, and then District 97 authorizes the transfer from the three individual accounts to the Collaboration account and notifies Carolyn Newberry Schwartz. For the 2015-16, the first payments have followed this process and we are awaiting the invoice for the January payment, which if not already in the mail, will be received in about a day or so. We also coordinate a date with the auditors to commence the FY 2015 audit. They will be undertaking that shortly.”

Collaboration Annual Report

Financial Audit

Mr. Weindling reported on the financial status of the Collaboration, reviewing the completed audit for the fiscal year 2015. All of the records were found to be in good order, nothing unusual was found, and the staff was well prepared and accessible. Some programs are restricted for specific purposes. The Collaboration will return the excess funds (\$77,000) to the public bodies in accordance with the process stated in the Intergovernmental agreement, i.e., determine the amount that would be retained by the Collaboration and the disposition of the extra funds. An increase in the accounts receivables had occurred because a date error (6/30/2014 should be 6/30/2015) was noted on the Fiscal Year Ending portion of the report.

The meeting was recessed due to the sounding of the fire alarm.

Mr. Weindling concluded by saying that the database is listed as an \$87,000 asset to the organization.

Report on Progress

Ms. Courter read the following progress report.

“In April 2013, the three jurisdictions gathered here tonight embarked upon a bold and innovative plan to invest in the development of the very youngest members of the community. The Village of Oak Park, D200, and D97 formed an intergovernmental board to oversee a contract with the Collaboration for Early Childhood to provide services to build a comprehensive, community-wide system of high -quality programs and services, and to collect data to build a picture of the needs of the youngest in the community and measure progress toward our goals. The three jurisdictions shared deep concerns about disparities in student achievement, and the impact of those disparities on the future of our community. New research on critical periods in brain development pointed a way to address this seemingly intractable issue. By choosing to invest public resources to support the physical, cognitive, and social-emotional development of our children during the critical first five years of life, the jurisdictions thoughtfully and carefully pursued a high rate of return on an investment of public funds, seeking lower special education costs, lower delinquency and crime, and a healthier citizenry in future years.

“If you had the opportunity to hear Dr. Dana Suskind last Thursday night at Holmes School talk about how critical early language environment is for all our children, you heard her great enthusiasm for our taking this approach.

“The Collaboration for Early Childhood is pleased and proud to update you on our progress on this contract tonight. The full details are in the report—I will simply mention a few of the highlights:

1) Early identification of developmental delays, coupled with effective intervention, allows children to maximize their learning potential. The American Academy of Pediatricians recommends that all children receive at least three developmental screenings between birth and age three. In our state, only around 28% of children receive a screening before kindergarten, and so many enter school with previously unidentified special needs that put them at risk for falling behind academically or socially. But in our community, the Collaboration has worked hard to establish a developmental screening program, led by

Shannon Ellison, and we have trained and supported staff at 27 child care centers, preschools, and family child care providers, and 3 medical practices, to conduct regular screenings for all their patients and students. The results have been impressive-- over 1000 children were screened for developmental issues, and those with concerns were referred for appropriate attention. We also provided hearing and vision testing at 36 child care and preschool sites in Oak Park and River Forest, for 1,327 children.

“We also hosted three educational meetings with pediatricians’ practices to provide information and resources, including ways to work with parents and care providers to address children’s challenging behaviors. The Collaboration also produced and distributed a directory of referral procedures and available local early intervention services for physicians and child care providers, to support them in screening and to help families obtain interventions early, when they will make the biggest difference in the lives of the children they serve.

(2) An important component of the Collaboration’s work is providing parents with information, resources, and supports, so that they can make the best decisions about quality early care for their children. We have revamped our website and expanded our use of social media to make a vibrant and useful resource for parents and the community of early learning providers.

“A research-based and evidence-informed home visiting program for families with children age prenatal to three years who confront multiple risks, is a key component of a comprehensive, coordinated system of early childhood supports. The long-term stability of this home visiting part of the system is crucial to the success of the jurisdictions’ groundbreaking investment.

“Over the past 2 years, the Collaboration’s staff worked closely with Parenthesis Family Center to expand home visiting and parenting support programs. As of October 31, 2015, 58 families were engaged in the jurisdiction-funded Parents as Teachers home visiting program. Despite the program growth and improvements in data collection and quality improvement activities obtained through extensive supports from Collaboration staff and from third parties provided through the Collaboration contract, the Collaboration determined in June 2015 that it needed to explore options for a different vendor due to Parenthesis’s ongoing operational and financial issues. On June 6, 2015, Parenthesis notified the Collaboration that Parenthesis would end its 2014-2015 fiscal year with grave financial difficulties. After careful review, the Collaboration’s Board determined that it was no longer confident that Parenthesis would be able to provide reliably the infrastructure and support needed for a contract of the magnitude of ours.

“We recognized that the home visiting program was a foundational piece of the system development for which the Collaboration had contracted with the jurisdictions. In July, the Collaboration notified Parenthesis and the IGA Governing Board of its concerns and that it was actively seeking a new vendor. The Collaboration terminated its contract with Parenthesis Family Center effective December 31, 2015.

“The Collaboration enthusiastically entered into a contract on October 19, 2015, with Easter Seals of Metropolitan Chicago to serve the families being served under the Collaboration’s terminated contract with Parenthesis, and to further expand service levels through its Partnering with Parents home-visiting program. Easter Seals Metropolitan Chicago has operated a wide range of programs in its Oak Park center on Madison Street since 1968, including medical rehabilitation, workforce development and military and

veteran services. Easter Seals Metropolitan Chicago's Head Start/Early Head Start services, based in Oak Park, will complement the addition of the Home Visiting Program. Easter Seals Metropolitan Chicago's development department is also located in Oak Park. Erikson Institute, another leader in early childhood education, also shares office space with Easter Seals in Oak Park for their Center for Children and Families. Easter Seals has provided home visiting services for more than 30 years and is recognized as a leader for these services in Illinois. Easter Seals has experience in coordinating outreach and services with other home visiting providers, as well as expertise with research, community collaboration, and a commitment to the use of data for quality improvement. Easter Seals is in the midst of hiring program staff, and the Collaboration will support their efforts to establish referral relationships over the next two months so that they are ready to engage families starting in January 2016.

“On November 4, Parenthesis notified the Collaboration that it had obtained significant private funding and intends to continue serving the 58 families they had engaged in home visiting services under the contract with the Collaboration, funded by the jurisdictions. This was unexpected. We are pleased that new funding is being committed to early childhood programs in our community. We celebrate Parenthesis's new success, and we will work with them to wind down the other aspects of the contract and encourage them to provide voluntarily data from their programs in order to contribute to the measurement of our progress in implementing an integrated system of high-quality programs. Collaboration partners across the Villages freely share data as part of their commitment to work toward developing this coordinated system of early childhood supports and measuring its impact.

“So, significant change is occurring in the home visiting landscape in Oak Park and River Forest that will greatly expand home visiting services to families with children birth to three. Hephzibah Children's Association will now offer Early Head Start for up to 12 children. The Collaboration will work with all three agencies: Parenthesis, Hephzibah, and Easter Seals, to develop a coordinated outreach and intake process through the work of the Home Visiting Task Force to ensure that families meeting risk criteria are placed in the program that best meets their needs. Coordinated intake is a strategy that other communities have utilized effectively, and we will use this approach in our publicly funded preschool outreach and enrollment as well.

“We will work with Easter Seals Metropolitan Chicago to expand the number of families actively engaged in the home visiting program, and ensure that programs funded through other local and federal sources are prioritized for enrollment so that the Contract funds are used wisely to expand upon existing programs.

“(3) Our work in building and implementing a unified early childhood database has been reported to the Intergovernmental Agreement Governing Board in May and September, and those reports were included in your board materials for tonight. We have worked to build a culture among our early childhood partners that supports data collection through dedicated staff time and use of data for continuous quality improvement and monitoring progress and impact. We will issue a second report on benchmarks in January 2016 and use the data to inform program strategies and practice.

“(4) Tonight, we will report in greater detail on our professional development for early care providers.

That effort has been headed by Diana Rosenbrock, who I am very pleased to introduce to you. Diana was a founder of the Collaboration in her role as chair of the Department of Education at Triton College. She has more than 40 years of experience in working in early childhood, training providers and developing the educational program for the early learning workforce. She participates in the Illinois Professional Development Advisory Council and steering Committee. Diana co-chaired the committee that created the Family Child Care Provider Credential, launched this past year. She was recently asked to co-chair the Qualifications and Pathways Sub -Committee of the Professional Development Advisory Council.”

Special Focus – The Early Childhood Workforce In Oak Park And River Forest: Increasing Program Quality And Promoting Professional Achievement

Ms. Rosenbrock reported on the professional achievements of the Collaboration this year, noting that the professional development programs are coordinated by Oak Park and River Forest early childhood professionals, the professional development committee and herself. Research demonstrates that successful classrooms have supported, and nurtured teachers and high-quality programs are associated with education and training of teachers.

Ms. Rosenbrock noted that the Oak Park River Forest Early Childhood Workforce consists of poorly compensated individuals with limited resources to pay for professional development and continuing education. They work in isolated settings with limited, or no access to professional development opportunities. Their schedules are dedicated to caring for children; their hours are long, and rarely include time for planning, individually or as a team. Additionally, they need support decoding the state’s Early Childhood System. She noted that the Collaboration is currently focused on Common Core, Illinois Gateway, and ExceleRate Illinois, and reported that there were no face-to-face training supported by the state of Illinois last year. The Collaboration aligns its work to the Early Childhood State Systems and requirements. It is an “approved Entity” with Gateways, the early learning accreditation agency for the Illinois Early Childhood Workforce, and all of the offered trainings are registry approved and align with state Professional Development Framework. ExceleRate Illinois encourages early learning providers to participate as it is the state’s continuous quality rating improvement system. The Collaboration offers coaching on quality improvement and how to effectively engage in ExceleRate. She noted that all of the trainings align with the professional requirements that staff need to enable their sites to advance along the continuum of quality criteria. Additionally, the Collaboration continues to offer career development advising early childhood staff in all types of programs around, credentials, degrees, and certificates, professional development; quality trainings (Gateways Registry approved). It offers an annual symposium and leadership coaching to center directors and family child care providers. Ten trainings have been offered this year, many of them in the evenings and on Saturday mornings to accommodate the worker’s needs. The trainings address the struggles and challenges, behavior issues, they offer guidance, and allow the workers to get familiar with and trust the state programs and systems. Seventy-one percent of the directors and 54 percent of the teachers have received more than the state requirements for professional development. Sixty-two percent of the teachers are receiving 20 hours or more of training, which is above the state standard of 15 percent. This places these teachers in the gold level of standards.

Ms. Rosenbrock has contributed significantly in the area of professional development for early childcare providers both locally and throughout the state. She will be scaling back her responsibilities with the Collaboration, but will stay engaged.

The Collaboration was acknowledged for sharing their detailed reports and for their success in this turbulent year. It was noted that their efforts are a model for the country.

CALL TO THE BOARD – ISSUES, CONCERNS, AND TOPICS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS

Interest was expressed in the following:

- 1) Seeing the first collaborative cohorts who entered the school system,
- 2) Extending the data sharing to include the high school and non-unit partner schools.
- 3) District 90 participation
- 4) How are the neediest of families being reached?
- 5) The developmental delay screening process
- 6) What progress has been made in the categories of vocabulary in the core curriculum? What are the challenges and what it will take to be successful?
- 7) Inroads with other taxing bodies.

The boards were reminded that this is a five-year contract that is only two years away from renewal, as such changes may need to be made to the Intergovernmental Agreement.

District 97 is working with District 90, District 200, and the Illinois Association of School Boards (IASB) to support a data equity bill. District 97 is also working with lobbyists on the wording of the bill. A second resolution exists that would allow local collaborations to build a birth-to-20-year-old longitudinal database.

While District 97, District 200, and the Collaboration submitted a presentation proposal to the Joint School Board Conference last year, it not selected to participate. An attempt will be made to do this again this next year.

The CLAIM committee met with Senator Harmon, and he requested additional information regarding the data sharing needs.

Adjournment

At 8:49 p.m., Mr. Cofsky moved to adjourn the meeting; seconded by Dr. Moore. A voice vote resulted in all ayes. Motion carried.

Jeff Weissglass
President

Sara Dixon Spivy
Secretary

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Submitted by Gail Kalmerton