

**MISSION STATEMENT:** The mission statement is the expression of the district's identity, purpose, and means of action.

The mission of Oak Park Elementary School District 97, the educational prism through which students realize meaning and purpose in their lives, is to guarantee that each student achieves optimal intellectual growth while developing socially, emotionally, and physically through a system distinguished by:

- exemplary instruction focused on each student
- commitment to the needs of a diverse population
- meaningful partnerships with families and the community
- celebrations of the power of art, music, and language
- confident students challenged to be educational risk-takers

**BELIEFS:** Belief statements express our community's fundamental values.

We believe that:

- every person deserves respect
- each person's intrinsic value is non-negotiable
- a legitimate community provides for its most vulnerable members
- a commitment to diversity is the essence of a strong community
- honesty and openness create trusting relationships
- a lasting community is built only when individuals serve the common good
- beauty and its expressions are vital to the human spirit
- every person can move to a higher level of physical, mental, and spiritual growth
- a vibrant community understands its past and determines its future
- all conflicts can be resolved peacefully
- how we educate our children will have an impact beyond our imagination
- we are all different, and we are all one
- every voice needs to be heard

**OBJECTIVES:** Objectives express our goals in fulfilling our mission.

- Each student will exceed all academic requirements.
- Each child will discover, develop, and confidently express his/her unique genius.
- Each child will be individually and socially responsible as an active contributor to his/her community.
- Each child will be a good decision-maker in the full spectrum of his/her life's experiences.

**PARAMETERS:** Parameters are self-imposed boundaries.

- Every decision we make will be made in the best interest of the child.
- Sound fiscal management will not be compromised.
- We will provide all our staff members with the wherewithal to succeed and hold each one accountable for exemplary performance.
- We will make the best use of technology in instruction and operations.
- We will honor and embrace the dignity and worth of each person.
- We will practice participatory decision-making throughout the district.
- The safety and health of staff and students will not be compromised.

**STRATEGIES:** Strategies articulate bold initiatives through which we will achieve our mission.

**General clarification that the district will comply with state and federal regulations and legal requirements**

**STRATEGY I. We will ensure the highest academic achievement for each student.**

**SPECIFIC END RESULTS**

- 1 Increase the numbers of students entering first grade who have the skill sets needed to succeed in school by establishing an all-day Kindergarten for all children.
- 2 Implement a positive behavior intervention program across the district.
- 3 Adapt instruction to meet the needs of different academic abilities and learning styles.
- 4 Redefine the role of the current GTD teachers to meet the needs of students with different academic needs and learning styles.
- 5 Increase middle school instruction time in core subjects (science, math, social studies, language arts) to no less than 50-60 minutes per day on average.
- 6 Ensure elementary school instruction time in core subjects (science, math, social studies, language arts) is not less than 50-60 minutes per day on average.
- 7 Implement professional development programs designed to improve student achievement.
- 8 Replace the current teacher evaluation model with a professional growth model focused on practices that promote student achievement.
- 9 Establish an Office of Parent Ombudsman at the district office.
- 10 Develop a program to promote a positive classroom and school environment where children feel safe and welcome, i.e. which promotes psychological safety of all students.
- 11 Determine whether to continue, discontinue, or modify academic programs based on data.
- 12 Increase the number of District 97 students in each disaggregated subgroup entering high school taking at least three honors courses.

**STRATEGY II. We will make each student the active agent of his/her educational experience.**

**SPECIFIC END RESULTS**

- 1 Expand peer mediation programs to all schools and all age levels.
- 2 Adopt decision making practices that incorporate all staff's professional input.
- 3 Provide a variety of instructional grouping options in every school.
- 4 Establish multi-age, multi-year advisories in the middle schools.
- 5 Increase collaboration among specialists, support staff, and classroom teachers.
- 6 Implement integrated, project-based learning and assessment practices at all grade levels in all schools.
- 7 Establish a language arts program that includes authentic literary experiences.

- 8 Institute a conferencing structure where all students actively participate in setting specific goals with teachers and parents.
- 9 Implement a process for students and teachers to compile and utilize portfolios that document the progress and development of the student over time.
- 10 Implement student self-reflections and self-evaluations in all curricular areas at all grade levels.
- 11 Institute community-service learning programs at all schools.
- 12 Foster classroom cultures that encourage student choice and voice throughout the day.

**STRATEGY III. We will establish a culture of inclusion that respects and promotes diversity.**

**SPECIFIC END RESULTS**

- 1 Establish an environment that celebrates differences.
- 2 Create a diversity leadership network.
- 3 Establish district-wide diversity goals.
- 4 Substantially increase use of the Multicultural Resource Center.

**Clarification: That increased use of the Multicultural Center is accomplished through highlighting to all its relevance to the district's mission and beliefs and through developing it to best serve the needs of our students, teachers, staff, and community in understanding, discussing, and addressing issues of a multicultural education and a multicultural community.**

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- 6 Develop a highly qualified staff that reflects broad diversity with an emphasis on the demographics of the district.
- 7 Reflect broad diversity throughout the curriculum.
- 8 Provide diversity training for all students.
- 9 Maximize interaction between special education and general education.
- 10 Ensure that identification of students with special needs is fair and equitable.
- 11 Bring all D97 facilities into compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act.
- 12 Actively engage parents and guardians in their students' educational program.
- 13 Offer individualized support to potential and current special education students and their families through an advocacy program.
- 14 Offer parents and students individualized support, as needed, through mentoring programs.
- 15 Provide full day kindergarten at all elementary schools in the district.
- 16 Provide a full day pre-school option within the district for all children.

**STRATEGY IV. We will ensure learning experiences that develop the whole child to accomplish our mission and objectives.**

**SPECIFIC END RESULTS**

- 1 Increase interdisciplinary projects (involving media specialists, classroom, music, art, and PE teachers) to at least three per year in all D97 classrooms.
- 2 Incorporate multiple intelligences practices into the curriculum.
- 3 Increase the number of non-traditional class configurations across the district (e.g. multi-age, looping, world language immersion).
- 4 Integrate progressive education philosophy into learning activities (e.g. through experiential learning, teacher as guide, student collaboration, and opportunities for choice).
- 5 Provide a wide variety of after-school enrichment programs at all schools.
- 6 Minimize routine homework in favor of providing enrichment opportunities on an as-needed basis.
- 7 Increase multidisciplinary projects (taught by individual classroom teachers) to at least 3 per year in all D97 classrooms.
- 8 Provide each child with the models and techniques through which to develop self-discipline.
- 9 Expand age-appropriate opportunities for all students to participate in art, music, drama, dance, World Languages, and physical education activities.

**STRATEGY V. We will guarantee that all necessary resources, including financial, will be available and aligned with our mission and objectives.**

**SPECIFIC END RESULTS**

- 1 Pass an operating tax referendum.
- 2 Demonstrate operating efficiencies to the community.
- 3 Ensure collaboration with all local taxing agencies regarding resources.
- 4 Establish efficient and safe facility utilization guidelines.
- 5 Ensure necessary and sufficient staffing levels.
- 6 Ensure 99% uptime for every day technology needs.

**STRATEGY VI. We will ensure the highest caliber staff who will lead the district in its mission and objectives.**

**SPECIFIC END RESULTS**

- 1 Create professional development goals and opportunities for all district employees based on the needs, desires, experiences, and goals of the district, school, and individual.
- 2 Increase the diversity of D97 employees to reflect the diversity of the community.
- 3 Ensure the human resource process facilitates the recruitment of high-caliber staff.
- 4 Ensure that the human resource process facilitates the hiring of high-caliber staff.
- 5 Maintain a high-caliber staff, at each school and across the district, that is well balanced in terms of subject matter expertise, differentiation of instruction, racial and ethnic diversity, experience, leadership skills, energy, and creativity.
- 6 Enroll all new-to-the-district teachers in a mentoring/support system.
- 7 Enroll all new hires in orientation/training sessions.
- 8 Ensure that staff evaluations are effectively conducted to facilitate the retention of high-caliber staff.
- 9 Implement a formal district-wide leadership model that emphasizes collaboration over bureaucracy.

**STRATEGY VII. We will constructively communicate internally and externally.**

**SPECIFIC END RESULTS**

- 1 Ensure effective and timely communication by all employees.
- 2 Improve intercultural communication skills of teachers, principals, and administrators.
- 3 Reduce communication overload experiences by the Board of Education and D97 staff.
- 4 Reduce packet-fatigue for parents.
- 5 Create a vibrant, current, consistent and easily navigated web presence throughout the district.
- 6 Ensure current, cohesive and extensible technological systems and support for communication across the district.
- 7 Adopt a participatory approach to decision-making and management.
- 8 Implement a staff morale improvement plan for all the employees of D97.
- 9 Communicate the value of a strong D97 to taxpayers and other key stakeholder groups (Park District, legislators, press, etc.) via a structured and achievable public relations campaign plan and process.