



To: Village of Oak Park Board of Trustees
Oak Park River Forest High School District 200 Board Members
Oak Park Elementary School District 97 Board Members

From: Greg Johnson, Superintendent, Oak Park River Forest High School District 200
Kevin Jackson, Village Manager, Village of Oak Park
Ushma Shah, Superintendent, Oak Park Elementary School District 97

Cc: Danielle Walker, Village Chief Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Officer

Date: September 30, 2022

Purpose

This memo and [FAQ document](#) are intended to generate thoughtful collaboration between our agencies, all of which are charged to serve the youth who reside within the Village of Oak Park. While the three of us are relatively new leaders of our respective organizations, we recognize the urgent need for community dialogue about the intersection of schools and safety. In initiating this work, we want to name our shared interest in ensuring the safety of our schools, on the one hand, and explicitly disrupting the school to prison pipeline, on the other. There is a need to restore relationships between our agencies. We believe this can be accomplished by evolving our notion of what it means to work together to ensure safety and racial equity at the same time. It is for this reason that Village Manager Jackson has asked that the new Chief Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Officer be included in the early design stages of this effort.

Background

We have come together in recent months to get to know each other as new leaders and to consider how we might renew and strengthen the partnership between the agencies we represent. This has taken place through the kind of listening and understanding that builds relationships.

Although we have not embarked on the work of framing our mission nor the exact nature of the kind of collaboration we envision, we are inspired by the work, tools and training of the “I Love U Guys” Foundation, an organization which focuses on school and community safety. Their mission statement reads:

“to restore and protect the joy of youth through educational programs and positive actions in collaboration with families, schools, communities, organizations, and government entities.”

We hope that our work will reflect this mission—keeping the focus on reestablishing joy in our students and working to provide learning environments that are free from fear, intimidation and violence. This will create an educational climate that fosters inclusion and acceptance for every student. The evolution of current practices won't happen overnight, but through continued collaboration, it will happen.

Our Guiding Values and Beliefs

- The physical and emotional safety of our students and staff is our highest priority every day.
- A comprehensive approach to school safety includes our entire community and is rooted in a shared interest in creating safe and supportive learning environments for all students.
- Collaboration with Oak Park agency partners will leverage expertise and efficiency for optimum service and support in maintaining safe and healthy school communities.
- Ensuring open communication and formally defining the relationship between our school districts and the Oak Park Police Department is one way we can proactively work to maintain safe and supportive schools
- School safety and emergency preparedness planning must be holistic, systems-based, strategic, youth-centered and anchored in racial justice.

A Place to Begin

With this memo, we jointly bring forward an intergovernmental agreement (IGA) for consideration by all three boards. State law (reflected in the Juvenile Court Act) requires a reciprocal reporting agreement between the school districts and law enforcement regarding criminal offenses. This agreement would be the first step to establishing positive relationships and consistent communication between officers, school staff and administration, students, and their caregivers. This collaborative approach helps to increase awareness, access to resources, and promotes school-based emergency planning.

- District 97, District 200, and the Village of Oak Park have mutually determined that, aside from the legal requirements, it would be in the best interest of the safety and welfare of students and employees of the school districts, and the greater community, to have a reciprocal reporting system between the school districts and the police department regarding communication, reporting and relations with law enforcement.
- This IGA does not in any way promote law enforcement presence in District 97 schools and District 200, but rather ensures that appropriate procedures are in place for those circumstances in which cooperation between the agencies becomes necessary.

- The purpose of this IGA between the district and police department is to memorialize the parties' obligations under the law and establish parameters with respect to sharing of information and interactions between district staff and the police department.

Key Provisions within the IGA

- Ensures compliance with the district's and the police department's legal obligations, concerning the sharing of information between the two agencies.
- Designates which individuals, both within the district and the police department, may be privy to shared information.
- Establishes clear limitations on and procedures for the handling of criminal activity and police matters within the school building, to the extent such is necessary.
- Ensures compliance with the requirement under state law that a law enforcement officer serve on the District 97 and District 200 threat assessment teams.

Next Steps

The table below outlines the next steps we propose to take in order to bring the proposed IGA forward for review by all three bodies and to secure the safety of our schools.

| Date | Action | Leader(s) To Be Present to Support |
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| October 11, 2022 | Ushma Shah, Superintendent, to bring IGA forward at District 97 regular board meeting - for discussion only | Greg Johnson, Superintendent Oak Park River Forest High School District 200 Kevin Jackson, Village Manager Village of Oak Park |
| October 13, 2022 | Greg Johnson, Superintendent, to bring IGA forward at District 200 committee meeting - for discussion only | Ushma Shah, Superintendent Oak Park Elementary School District 97 Kevin Jackson, Village Manager Village of Oak Park |
| October 17, 2022 | Kevin Jackson, Village Manager, to bring forward at Village of Oak Park regular board meeting - for discussion only | Greg Johnson, Superintendent Oak Park River Forest High School District 200 Ushma Shah, Superintendent Oak Park Elementary School District 97 |
| October 25, 2022 | Ushma Shah, Superintendent, to bring IGA forward at District 97 regular board meeting - for approval | Greg Johnson, Superintendent Oak Park River Forest High School District 200 Kevin Jackson, Village Manager Village of Oak Park |
| October 27, 2022 | Greg Johnson, | Ushma Shah, Superintendent |

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| | Superintendent, to bring IGA forward at District 200 regular board meeting - for approval | Oak Park Elementary School District 97 Kevin Jackson, Village Manager Village of Oak Park |
| November 7, 2022 | Kevin Jackson, Village Manager, to bring forward at Village of Oak Park regular board meeting - for approval | Greg Johnson, Superintendent Oak Park River Forest High School District 200 Ushma Shah, Superintendent Oak Park Elementary School District 97 |