

Intergovernmental agreements reflect shared commitment to school safety and racial equity

The Village of Oak Park partnered with District 97 and District 200 this fall to develop an intergovernmental agreement (IGA) that satisfies the need to adhere to state law while providing a safe, equitable learning environment for all students.

Village Manager Kevin Jackson, District 97 Superintendent Ushma Shah and District 200 Superintendent Greg Johnson led the tri-agency effort to balance calls for schools safety and racial equity by formally defining the relationship between the schools and local police.

Key provisions of the IGA include:

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

While the IGA is required by existing law, and statutes referenced in the IGA are non-negotiable legal requirements, neither agreement extends law enforcement involvement in Oak Park schools beyond what is required by law and/or expectations outlined in existing school board policy.

The three agencies took part in a robust

IGA development process over the course of several months. After discussing the IGA with all three boards in October, the lead administrators for the three bodies met to compile, theme, and respond to more than 50 questions received by their governing boards. The questions and answers are available here: bit.ly/3UvVQzi.

To ensure both school safety and racial equity, agency leaders collaborated with equity leads from each of the three agencies, along with the chief of police, to ensure the agreement aligned to shared values and beliefs, namely, that school safety and emergency preparedness planning must be holistic, systems-based, strategic, youth-centered and anchored in racial justice.

As all three agencies begin to implement the IGA, successful implementation will require a commitment to continuous learning and improvement in order to create a more equitable school system.

After each incident of contacting the police, schools will conduct an after-action review to ensure that all district policies and procedures were followed with fidelity and that schools are upholding their commitment to minimizing the role of law enforcement in our schools. Data, including student demographics, will be reviewed internally on an annual basis.

Per the IGA, the two school districts and the village will also meet annually to review the goals and objectives of the agreement and ensure that all parties are upholding their roles and responsibilities as outlined.

To view the IGA between the village and District 97, visit <https://bit.ly/3BHfyRZ>
To view the IGA between the village and District 200, visit <http://bit.ly/3jiOqm2>