

S A F E T Y • A C H I E V E M E N T • D I V E R S I T Y

OAK

PARK

PUBLIC

SCHOOL

DISTRICT

97

OAK PARK, ILLINOIS



OUR MISSION IS TO EDUCATE EVERY CHILD TO BE AN *academically successful student*, A **SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE CITIZEN**, AND A *life-long learner*...BY TEACHING THE NECESSARY *knowledge and skills*, AND THE APPRECIATION OF *cultural diversity*, WITHIN SCHOOLS THAT FOSTER **EXCELLENCE**, *mutual respect*, **CREATIVITY**, AND THE **JOY** OF *learning*, WITH AN **EFFECTIVE, CARING, INNOVATIVE** STAFF, IN **PARTNERSHIP** WITH *home AND community*.

Enrollment: 5,035

Student/Teacher ratio: 16 to 1

Average class size:
K-5: 21 6-8: 26

Per pupil expenditure:
\$9,612

Teacher training:
65% Master's degree or higher

FACTS

Oak Park School District 97 offers:

- 🍏 *A Culture of Achievement learning environment that is safe, engaging, and challenging for each student*
- 🍏 *A strong school/home partnership*
- 🍏 *A highly qualified, innovative, collaborative staff*
- 🍏 *A learning community that values and celebrates diversity*

Essential, Transdisciplinary Qualities

In addition to the state learning goals and district standards for each grade, we have identified six qualities we believe every District 97 student should possess and demonstrate in and out of the classroom. They are:

- 🍏 knowledgeable person
- 🍏 socially responsible citizen
- 🍏 quality producer
- 🍏 effective communicator
- 🍏 collaborative worker
- 🍏 critical thinker

These qualities are characterized as *essential and transdisciplinary*: **essential** because they are descriptive of the well-educated student and fundamental to life-long learning, and **transdisciplinary** because they must extend across the curriculum and beyond the classroom.

OAK PARK, A VIBRANT AND EXCITING RESIDENTIAL COMMUNITY LOCATED JUST TEN MILES WEST OF DOWNTOWN CHICAGO, PROVIDES ITS RESIDENTS WITH THE ADVANTAGES OF A LARGE METROPOLITAN CENTER AND THE BENEFITS OF SUBURBAN LIFE. ITS SCHOOLS HAVE BEEN A SOURCE OF GREAT PRIDE SINCE JOSEPH KETTLESTRINGS ESTABLISHED CENTRAL SCHOOL IN 1855. OAK PARKERS ARE FAMILY-CENTERED, ISSUE-ORIENTED, AND GLOBALLY AWARE. THEY ARE COMMITTED TO ADDRESSING TOUGH PROBLEMS AND TO FINDING SOLUTIONS. NOWHERE IS THIS MORE EVIDENT THAN IN THEIR DEMAND AND SUPPORT FOR THE FINEST EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS AND SERVICES AVAILABLE.



OAK PARK:

MORE THAN A PLACE TO
LIVE AND LEARN—A WAY OF
LIVING, A WAY OF LEARNING.

Oak Park Offers:

- 🍏 A beautifully restored historic district
- 🍏 Easy access to the Chicago Loop by expressway or public transportation
- 🍏 An abundance of social services, shopping, restaurants, and entertainment
- 🍏 A vibrant arts and cultural community

Some Famous Oak Parkers:

- 🍏 JANE HAMILTON, *writer*
- 🍏 ERNEST HEMINGWAY, *writer*
- 🍏 DR. JAMES HERRICK, *founder, Chicago Heart Association*
- 🍏 DR. PERCY JULIAN, *scientist*
- 🍏 DR. JOSEPH KERWIN, *astronaut*
- 🍏 RAY KROC, *founder, McDonalds*
- 🍏 JOHN LAMONTAINE, *musician*
- 🍏 PRENTICE H. MARSHALL, *US District Court Judge*
- 🍏 CAROL WARNER SHIELDS, *writer*
- 🍏 CHARLES SIMIC, *poet*
- 🍏 MARJORIE JUDITH VINCENT, *1994 Miss America Winner*
- 🍏 FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT, *architect*



COMMUNITY

INSTRUCTIONAL SETTING

Culture of Safety:

We believe that in order for students to achieve optimum learning, they must first feel safe and secure. We maintain an environment that mandates zero tolerance for weapons of any kind. We maintain schools free of all forms of intimidation, bullying, and harassment. We help every child to feel accepted and secure so that learning is the focus of each day.



Culture of Achievement:

We are committed to creating a learning environment in which:

- all students value, seek, and achieve academic success
- all families prepare their children to learn and participate regularly in their children's educational experience
- all educators set clear, high expectations for all students and devise strategies to help each student meet these expectations
- all community members affirm, respect, and value learning and achievement for all students
- all board members set policies and provide necessary resources to support the Culture of Achievement

Culture of Diversity:

Oak Park is a diverse community, and so too are its schools. This diversity brings a richness to the schools and community that provides innumerable learning opportunities for us all. Multicultural education has long been integral to the family, community, and academic life of Oak Park. Every effort is made in our schools and classrooms to build greater understanding of and appreciation for the strength in our diversity.

Classroom Setting:

K-5 Classrooms: Early elementary classes are heterogeneous and self-contained, with some mixed-age grouping, looping, and team teaching. Interdisciplinary teaching through thematic units is emphasized.

6-8 Classrooms: Middle level students are organized in teams. Advisory programs, block scheduling, and a variety of electives and exploratory classes are offered in a middle school setting.

Special Services: The Department of Student Services offers comprehensive programs and services to students with special needs. Whenever possible, students are taught in a regular classroom in their neighborhood school. Teams of psychologists, social workers, nurses, and speech/language specialists work with the classroom teacher to provide individual diagnostic evaluation of a student's intellectual, academic, social, and emotional functioning when indicated.

Facility Improvements: Driving through Oak Park, one cannot miss our two new, state of the art middle schools, which opened in August 2002. Fully equipped to meet the social, emotional, and academic needs of young adolescents, our middle schools provide our students and community with competition-sized gymnasiums, and performing arts, fitness and cultural centers. Less obvious but equally impressive, all eight elementary schools were renovated during 2001-2002 to make them more welcoming, more secure, more accessible, and more instructionally appropriate for our younger learners. Each new learning space affirms that our schools are exciting places in which to be, to learn, to grow, to excel.

OAK PARK PUBLIC SCHOOL

DISTRICT 97 OFFERS A

COMPREHENSIVE

CURRICULUM DESIGNED

TO *challenge every student*

AT EVERY AGE AND AT

every ability level.



Art: Students receive hands-on instruction in a variety of art mediums. The history of art and art appreciation is emphasized.

Mathematics: District 97's program stresses understanding mathematical ideas and applying skills to solve problems. Several strands of instruction are emphasized, including number patterns and computation, estimation and measurement, geometry, algebra, data, and chance.



Music: The music program includes instruction in rhythm, melody, harmony, texture, and form. Students also receive instruction in music history and learn about the works of famous musicians throughout time.

Physical Education/Health: Daily instruction in physical education is a State of Illinois mandate for all students. The district's physical education program develops the unity of mind and body through cognitive and psycho-motor activities. The health wellness curriculum helps students develop understandings and attitudes to achieve and maintain healthful living.



Reading: The District 97 reading program is a balance between developing word analysis and comprehension skills and instilling a life-long love of reading through the study of outstanding children's literature.

Science: Science instruction emphasizes opportunities for questioning, discovering, and hands-on application of important concepts. An inquiry-based approach helps students develop knowledge and scientific thinking in the physical, earth, and life sciences.

Social Studies: The social studies program helps students understand themselves and the world around them, and instills the knowledge and skills necessary for responsible and global citizenship. Emphasis is given to activities that engage students in inquiry and problem solving about significant human issues. Geography and history are major areas of study.

Technology: Instructional technology is an integral component of teaching and learning in District 97. Gaining valuable skills for research and discovery, students have a variety of opportunities to explore the world of the Internet and use technology to enhance their learning.

World Language: Spanish is offered in all elementary schools as a part of the regular instructional day. At the middle schools, instruction in Spanish and French is offered as a part of the exploratory/elective program.

Writing: Beginning in kindergarten, District 97 students are taught to learn that they are unique with interesting and important things to say. Writing is taught as a process of pre-writing, drafting, revising, and editing. Journal writing, peer editing, and portfolio development are emphasized. Handwriting is taught by the ball and stick method.

Art Start: A school/ business partnership sponsored by the Oak Park Education Foundation and the Oak Park Area Arts Council in which local visual and performing artists work in a variety of mediums with primary age students.

Ethnic Festival: An annual district-wide celebration that captures our commitment to and appreciation for our cultural diversity.

Global Village: A school/business partnership sponsored by the Oak Park Education Foundation that brings area scientists into classrooms to engage students in inquiry-based science experiences.

Student Competitions, Festivals and Events: A variety of competitions and events are offered district-wide, including District 97 Choral Festival, Instrumental Music Festival, Speech and Drama Festival, Writing Talent Search, Reading Olympics and Junior Math Olympiad. These activities are designed to challenge students to extend and refine their knowledge and skills, to discover new knowledge and areas of interest, and to celebrate ongoing classroom learning. They connect students with a community of learners and help us to achieve our mission.

Student Conferences: The Young Authors Conference, Young Scientists Conference, Young Film Makers Studio, and Young Artists Conference bring experts and students together for hands-on learning.

Tribute to Excellence: An annual ceremony that celebrates the academic, athletic, and citizenship achievements of our students.

SPECIAL EVENTS



Early Admission to Kindergarten is an option for children who will not be five years old before September 1st but who meet specific criteria indicating their school readiness.

English as a Second Language is offered to students who need assistance in learning to speak the English language and in understanding American culture.

Extracurricular and Co-Curricular Activities provide students with an array of opportunities to develop and enjoy special interests.

Fine Arts BRAVO! and CAST are performing arts programs that provide opportunities for middle level students to explore and participate in all areas of performing arts.

Instrumental Music is offered in grades four through eight. Interested students receive instruction in band and orchestra and participate in musical performances throughout the year.

Pre-Kindergarten Partnership is a program designed for children who require additional developmental experiences prior to entering kindergarten.

Summer School is a tuition-based program that offers challenge and enrichment opportunities for students. Additional non-tuition based summer programs may be required for students not meeting district standards.

PROGRAM EXTRAS

W

We recognize that the success of the Oak Park Public Schools is dependent on a strong parent/community/school partnership. Here in Oak Park, we have that, and more!

Active PTOs in every school go beyond raising much needed funds for school programs—they provide parent education workshops, art and cultural programs, and the expertise needed on a multitude of committees that move us forward. Parent and community volunteers work right along with teachers and administrators to tackle the tough issues facing school districts these days. We're proud to say that many of our volunteers have been honored with the state's prestigious **Those Who Excel Award**.

School Leadership Teams at each school, consisting of teachers, parents and principal, collaborate to identify particular school needs, develop priority goals, and promote new ideas for school improvement.

The Oak Park Education Foundation is a not-for-profit organization of community members. Committed to bringing innovative enrichment programs to District 97 students, the Foundation has sponsored innovative programs such as the award-winning **Global Village** and **Art Start**.

Important partnerships with Oak Park River Forest Township, Hephzibah, Youth Network Council, the Village of Oak Park, and Oak Park River Forest High School provide a variety of support and learning opportunities for our students.

Board of Education: The Board of Education is a seven-member team responsible for establishing educational goals and setting district policy with the guidance of the superintendent and support staff of the district. The board meets on the second and fourth Wednesday of each month. Time is set aside at the beginning of each meeting for public comment and communication. Participation is encouraged and appreciated.

An award-winning district, with award-winning staff, and award-winning students

One measure of a district's success is how well its students perform on standardized tests. Each year, Oak Park Public School District 97 students in grades 2–8 take the nationally normed Stanford 9 Achievement Test. Students in grades 3, 5 and 8 take the state-mandated Illinois Student Achievement Test. Students also participate in a state-mandated assessment which measures student performance at specific grade levels related to state goals and standards.

Our students shine in local academic competitions and events including the Speech and Drama Festival, the **Math Olympiad**, the Science Olympiad, Gwendolyn Brooks Poetry Contest, Oak Park River Forest Reading Competition, Optimist Club Youth Appreciation Awards, and **Village of Oak Park Human Relations Awards**. In addition our students perform extraordinarily well and are consistently honored in **state, national and international competitions** such as International Mathematics Olympiad, Junior Web Awards, MathCounts Competition, **Yes, I Can Awards**, National French Contest, National News Bowl Competition, National Social Studies Olympiad, **Illinois Council of Teachers of Mathematics Competition**, Illinois Junior Science Competition, Illinois Mathematics League Competition, Illinois Student Technology Conference, Midwest Talent Search, **Illinois Music Education Awards**, and Presidential Awards.

Oak Park River Forest High School's **tradition of excellence** reflects the continuing success of District 97 students who enroll there after completing their early education in the Oak Park Public Schools.

District 97 has already been dedicated to the provisions described in the **Leave No Child Behind legislation** of 2002—assuring **academic success for all students**, maintaining safe and orderly schools, employing **highly qualified teachers**, using best teaching practices, encouraging parental involvement, offering **efficient and effective support programs**. We'll stay on top of this legislation and work with our students, parents, staff, community, and state officials for full compliance with this new law.

With over 700 team members, District 97 is the **second largest employer** in Oak Park.

We are committed to recruiting and retaining the finest teaching and support service staff available. A **mentoring program** is in place to help new teachers acclimate to our goals and objectives. Professional growth is stimulated by a variety of opportunities and activities provided throughout the year.

Our own **University 97** offers graduate level courses on best teaching practices.

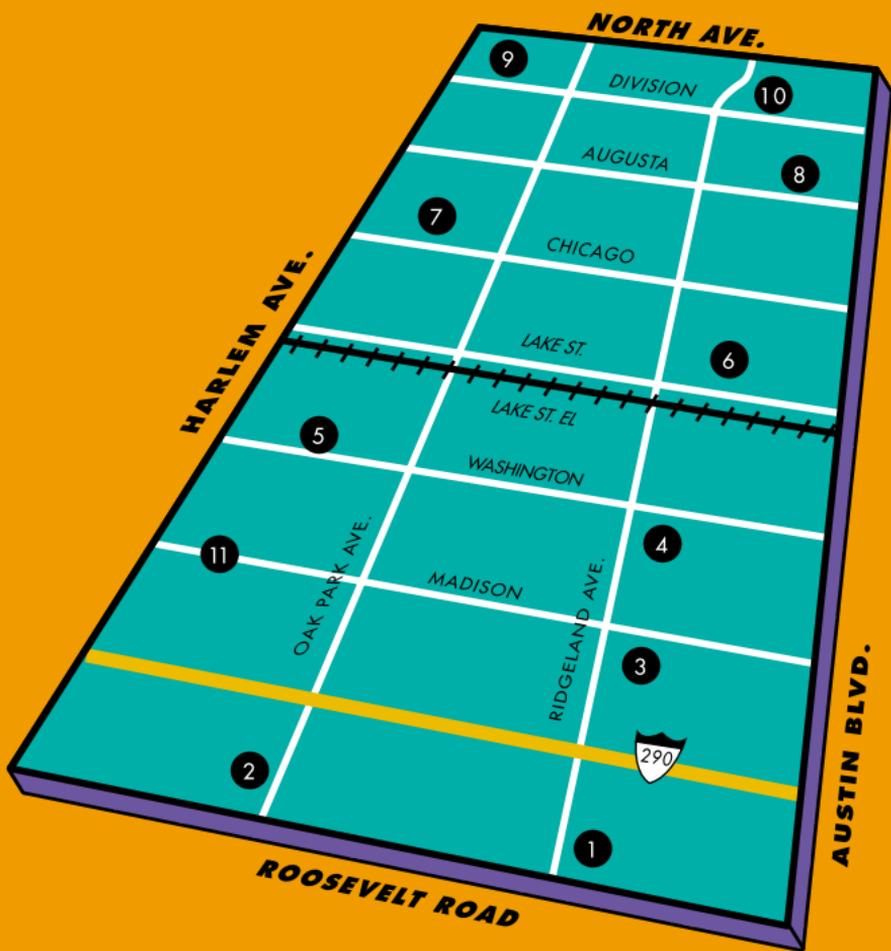
Education Council, representing all professional staff stakeholders, has an important voice in setting the direction for the district.

A strong teachers' association, administrative leadership team, and support staff organizations work collaboratively to carry out the district's mission in the classroom.

Individual staff members have been recognized by **Who's Who in America's Teachers**, the Illinois State Board of Education's **Those Who Excel Awards Program**, the **Golden Apple Foundation**, the **Kohl Foundation**, and the **Presidential Awards Program for Excellence in Teaching in Science and Mathematics**.

They have also been honored with awards from the International Global School Net Foundation, **National Council of Teachers of Mathematics**, Classroom Connect Internet Educator of the Year, and **Illinois State Middle Level Principal of the Year**.

Our **award-winning District 97** has also been recognized with such honors as **Exemplary Use of Technology Awards**, Family Support Awards, Golden Web Awards, **Illinois Bright Red Apple Awards**, National School Public Relations Awards, **Top 100 Communities for the Arts Award**, and **APEX Publications Awards**.



- 1** Irving School 1125 S. Cuyler, 708-524-3090
- 2** Lincoln School 1111 S. Grove, 708-524-3110
- 3** Longfellow School 715 Highland, 708-524-3060
- 4** Julian School 416 S. Ridgeland, 708-524-3040
- 5** Brooks School 325 S. Kenilworth, 708-524-3050
- 6** Beye School 230 N. Cuyler, 708-524-3070
- 7** Holmes School 508 N. Kenilworth, 708-524-3100
- 8** Whittier School 715 N. Harvey, 708-524-3080
- 9** Mann School 921 N. Kenilworth, 708-524-3085
- 10** Hatch School 1000 N. Ridgeland, 708-524-3095
- 11** District 97 Administration Building,
970 W. Madison, 708-524-3000

For more information, contact:

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Visit our award-winning website at www.op97.org

This brochure can be made available on audiotape. Contact the District's ADA Coordinator at 708.524.3000 for accommodation. Special thanks to the Village of Oak Park and the Oak Park Visitor's Center for photo contributions.