



## *District 200 Board Candidate Responses to Collaboration Survey, 2017*

*Candidates were asked two questions:*

1. *What are your views on the role of the D97 board in achieving the goal of assuring access to affordable, high quality early childhood care and education and support to parents for all families?*
2. *If elected, would achieving the vision of an integrated and high-quality early childhood system as outlined in the one-page overview attached to this email be a priority for you as a policy maker? If yes, then what steps would you propose to further this plan as a priority? If no, then what items do you view as higher priorities and why?*

### **Matt Baron**

1. The D200 Board's role in achieving that goal is just as I have in my role on the library board the past four years. In addition to backing financial support, I strongly advocate board members taking an active crucial efforts to assure access to affordable, high-quality early childhood care, as well as the education and support to parents for all families.

I am a big believer in the urgent need to put more action on the equity front—it's one of my campaign planks. An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure, to be sure, and the research that you cite underscores that truth in terms of helping equip and empower all students to attain their potential. Too much of public policy is reactive, and I applaud

2. Yes. I would respectfully encourage the Collaboration to expand its communications to include more case studies/testimonials of successful instances where the organization has had a profoundly positive impact on individuals and families. Perhaps I am communication on the Collaboration website, for example. Not everyone you serve will be comfortable with having their stories told—but surely some will. After the Collaboration receives permission from individuals and families (given the sensitive nature of such personal stories), this ability to reach “those who are already “in the know” about the

### **Tom Cofsky**

1. As a member of the D200 Board of Education, we adopted a strategic plan that calls for Holistic Community Education. Part of the continuum starts with high quality early childhood (and parent) programs. I strongly believe that investing in early childhood is a critical part of our efforts to reduce and ultimately eliminate the current gaps that exist and grow as students approach high school. At OPRFHS, our efforts must be aimed at eliminating the barriers that result in inequity. These barriers present themselves at the very young years when initial vocabularies are formed. I believe strongly that the most effective way to solve any problem is to attack the root causes, and I see early childhood support as a critical way of addressing this. I am greatly appreciative of the Vision and Leadership of those who started the Collaboration, and I believe that OPRFHS and other taxing bodies will benefit from their shared contribution.

### **Tom Cofsky cont.**

2. If re-elected, I would continue to be a strong supporter of the Collaboration and its efforts to establish an integrated, high-quality early childhood system. I believe this organization uses each dollar as if it were its last, and I fully support the use of data to drive action. The challenge remains in identifying those needing help. I would strongly encourage OPRFHS to continue its support, and even look at greater levels of support. I would continue to encourage the Collaboration to reach out to River Forest to try for full participation of both communities, as both have needs and can benefit.

### **Craig Iseli**

1. The role of the District 200 Board in achieving the goal of assuring access to affordable, high quality early childhood care, parent information and support, and development screening is primarily a supporting role as a member of the community. This role however is part of larger approach that should have significant positive impact on individual b o t h s t u d e n t s a n d c o m m u n i t y l o were the District 200 Board or its board members can have impact on these efforts.

- Support continued funding and participation with the Collaboration through the existing intergovernmental agreement. The Collaboration is making great progress in helping local day care facilities and other partners improve the quality of care through its efforts involving education, professional development, and networking across the community. Further, the Collaboration is able to provide early childhood screening which identifies problems early and provides critical data to understand how to better address issues. These screenings also establish a key baseline for District 97 as students enter the Oak Park school system.
- Advocate for the Collaboration throughout the school community. Examples include,
  - § Articulating the value of the Collaboration for Early Childhood to the community. Early Childhood research clearly shows that early childhood care is a critical element in a systematic approach to removing some of the barriers that are at the root of our achievement gap and make many of the equity challenges we struggle with at OPRF more difficult.
  - § Communicating with parents of high school student about the services that the Collaboration provides through access to various parent organizations. One of the most difficult challenges is getting services to the people who need them. While high school parents are probably not the direct audience, the more everyone in the community understands the work the Collaboration and the supports it offers, the more we can break down the barriers that prevent people from asking for help, understanding it is available, and feeling safe in asking for it.
  - § Providing access to District resources for the purposes of shared learning or shared facilities use when possible to support things like screening and other professional development needs.

2. Yes, I am very supportive of the vision outlined in this diagram of an integrated h i g h q u a l i t y e a childhood system. I would further this as a priority. In addition to my points above about advocacy I would add the following.

- I am particularly hopeful that we get broader data sharing agreements in place that allows us to create a more integrated picture in the school community. This would allow us to connect and align programming. I think these connections would lead to opportunities to reduce equity barriers in time.
- I would like to explore alignment of related strategies across Early Childhood, District 97, District 90, District 200 (and potentially the Parks Districts). I understand this is at a very early stage, but as we are able to track progress based on positive impacts made during early childhood we will learn more about implications and other points of high influence.

**Doug Springer**

1. This is a goal all School Districts as well as all community agencies should have in mind. We require a higher level of collaboration and cooperation among all of our local taxing bodies to share resources where resources are needed. I understand it is proven that early education is key to success in the future and this only leads to stronger communities and better futures for all. We need to start thinking of, talking about and hopefully enacting ways to create partnerships and share certain resources across our taxing bodies in the best interest of the community and the taxpayers. I hope to be a leader in this charge if elected to the Board.

2. If elected, or even as a community member, I would like to know how success is defined and what the metrics of the 5 year service contract are telling us. By taking a data driven approach and matching it with successful or not so successful outcomes, we can then adjust programs, determine best next steps and go forward with goal setting. I think an integrated and high-quality early childhood system is a vision of betterment. Without having the data presented and discussed I cannot tell you where on the list of priorities this would land as a D200 Board Member.

**Jeff Weissglass**

1. I was on the Board of the Collaboration before running for the District 200 Board and advocated strongly for the District to invest in the Collaboration Board, I served on the IGA Governing Board overseeing that investment, including serving as President of the IGA during my third year. I am proud to be part of what we believe to be the first and perhaps only place in the country where local government is funding a comprehensive effort to address early childhood needs. On the D200 Board, I was also proud to be part of the unanimous adoption of a strategic plan calling for holistic community education, including a commitment to promote, support, and participate in a continuum of integrated high-quality educational programs from birth to post-secondary education. I believe this is a critical part of educating Oak Park partner.

2. This is absolutely a priority, as described above. The day to day work of supporting children age zero to five and their families is of course the responsibility of the Collaboration under the contract for services. Continuing to fund the work and serving as thinking partners through the IGA Governing Board are critical ways that I see the high school helping to support the Collaboration's work. OPRF Board members to the work is also critical term. Continuing to link the data efforts of the Collaboration with the data efforts of the elementary schools and high school can also create a mutually beneficial partnership that will help sustain the commitment across the community.