

LEAGUE of WOMEN VOTERS™ OAK PARK / RIVER FOREST



**Oak Park District 97 Board of Education
February 9, 2010**

Kathleen Sheehan, Observer

Board Members present: Barber, Clauser, Gates, Harton, Reddy, Spatz, and Traczyk

Also Present: Superintendent Collins, Secretary Marinier

Due to the inclement weather, the Board agreed to truncate the agenda and postpone the policies discussion. The primary presentation of this meeting was the Technology Plan Review, presented by Kevin Anderson, Assistant Superintendent of Teaching and Learning

Technology Plan Review: Employing 21st Century Learning

The technology review presentation was organized into two parts: Part I, the philosophy guiding the District to where it wants to be as a 21st Century learning environment; and Part II, a presentation the on steps District 97 has taken in the past 10 years to stay current regarding technology equipment and infrastructure, as well as the recommended tools needed to make the changes detailed in Part I, and the costs involved. Part II will be presented at the March 23rd board meeting.

Part I.

Assistant Superintendent Anderson began by pointing out that different types of competencies are going to be needed by the students in the 21st Century, competencies which include, among other things, digital citizenship. It is imperative that the District asks itself what it is doing to purposefully and intentionally provide students with these skills. Children today are showing that they are “wired differently” (i.e. they see things differently, think quickly, are not inclined to sit as long) which implies that a different type of instruction is needed. Now, according to Superintendent Anderson, is the “perfect time” for District 97, for a technological transformation, as there will be a significant staff turnover in the coming year, and new staff will be accustomed to the technology. Anderson points out that it is already outdated to say the District is “preparing” for the 21st Century, considering it is already 10% gone. However, everything the District does moving forward should be designed to address the capacity of different learning styles.

A brief video was shown asking the simple question, “What are the tools?” In response, we can see that: where there were chalkboards, there are now smartboards; where there were journals, there are blogs; and students who once

worked alone are now collaborating in groups. The video concluded with a student saying, “Don’t prepare us for your world. Prepare us for ours.”

Twenty-first Century learning skills will need to prepare students for possibly 3 to 5 careers, unlike the narrow single career path of the past. In addition to being able to read, write and do math, students will need to communicate, collaborate, elaborate and innovate. They will have to demonstrate “digital citizenship” – that is, they will have to use technology appropriately in terms of etiquette, responsibility, access, and security.

The tech vision for District 97 needs to seek to change the environment, not just add “stuff.” In order to achieve the philosophical goals, the District must pursue professional development, the development of a system that promotes safe collaboration and a sound infrastructure supported by consistent funding. The question becomes one of whether or not the District is going to commit to simply modifying or to transforming the learning environment. From the District 97 “digital leaders” featured in the videos, it became clear that in a 21st Century learning environment, teachers see themselves as *facilitators* of access to knowledge, not *holders* of knowledge. Technology can be seen as an equalizer from which everyone can benefit. It represents the access that offers students a greater chance to be an agent of their learning.

The Board responded favorably to this thorough technology presentation, but had a few questions, such as how does this tie into evaluations and how does this change assessment? These and other questions, particularly those regarding the financial end of the equation, will be responded to during the Part II presentation at the Board meeting on March 23rd.

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