

Dear Fellow Beye Families

We think it's urgent to bring to your attention what we've learned about the resource reallocation plan Dr. Shah brought before the Board of Education at last week's D97 [board meeting](#) (minutes 27-50). Dr. Shah's plan was presented in very broad strokes, and to anyone present or watching, the real ramifications were not evident. In short, what Dr. Shah's plan means that schools with smaller enrollment will lose specialist staff positions. What this means for Beye is that we will lose specialized staff that our students need to thrive, while other schools will maintain those specialist positions. As it stands now, Beye will no longer have an enrichment specialist in SY24/25, while larger schools will. Currently, Mr. Bulger, Beye's enrichment specialist, sees every Beye student from first through fifth grade for Critical Thinking Skills, and also offers math and other enrichment opportunities to many of our students. We believe his role positively impacts and encourages students to be empowered problem solvers, no matter what their MAP score might be.

These proposed changes to District staffing will negatively impact our students and other D97 students, affecting the entire community, and we want to ensure that the Beye community is aware of what these changes entail and has a chance to voice any concerns to the school board and Dr. Shah. Please note that this is separate from the conversations about class size changes taking place around the district. We are aware of these, but expect their impact on Beye to be minimal (some class sizes may go from 19 students to 20), and feel the reallocation of out of classroom teachers is much more concerning.

If you would like to share your thoughts on these plans, please attend the next D97 board meeting on Tuesday, May 14th, at 7 pm and/or send a letter to Superintendent Shah and the Board of Education detailing how these proposed changes will impact your child(ren) and family. Here is the letter a group of board members have sent to Superintendent Shah and the Board of Education.

Dear Dr. Shah and members of the District 97 Board of Education,

We are writing to address serious concerns we have regarding the reallocation of resources plan presented to the board by Dr. Shah on April 23rd.

We believe that using student enrollment as the only data point to determine funding of specialist positions at the elementary schools will create significant inequities at a school-wide and district-wide level, counter to the expressed intentions of the school district and will of the community.

In the presentation, Dr. Shah references the use of each school's Logic Models as frameworks for progress. The purpose of the Logic Model (or School Improvement Plan) is to recognize what is working, and identify opportunities for improvement. We believe our Logic Model indicates the enrichment curriculum is working. Beye has many strengths and we believe the

current enrichment specialist model is one of them. Students love the push-in model of the Critical Thinking Skills curriculum and anecdotally, we know it makes them feel empowered to reach their ultimate potential. For the past two years, CTS has been part of the curriculum for every student. We had been moving forward with equity in this direction. This seems like a serious step back. Claiming to rely on the Logic Model to guide change while removing strengths in our support staff and curriculum, seems shortsighted at best, if not disingenuous.

By removing specialists in one district school while maintaining those positions at other schools, the District is creating inequities, again both at the school level and at a district-wide level. At Beye, we would like to maintain the ability to push students to reach their learning potential and lift students who might otherwise fall behind. We understand that classroom teachers will continue to offer instructional differentiation, but by removing the opportunity for students to receive enrichment from a specialist, this adds to the classroom teacher's workload and draws the teacher's focus away from other students.

At a district-wide level, our concerns go even deeper. Why should a student's neighborhood determine whether or not they go to a school with an enrichment specialist? This creates division and exclusivity and could lead to "desirable" and "undesirable" elementary schools and therefore neighborhoods, as parents jockey to live in the attendance area of schools large enough to offer all the services that every child deserves. This may also further impact enrollment numbers. This entire proposal seems counter to the ethos of the Oak Park community.

We have the utmost faith in Principal Sullivan's leadership and are confident in her ability to plan for the success of all students at Beye as well as to maintain a work environment where all staff feel supported to meet challenges and thrive. When teachers thrive, students thrive. However, by removing resources from Beye, while maintaining them at other schools, Beye students are left feeling as though they aren't worthy of the full support of the school district.

We hope that you take these points into consideration when moving forward with resource allocation decisions for next year.

Respectfully,

Molly Greenwood-Whalen, President, Beye School PTO
Michele Jurewicz, Vice-President, Beye School PTO
Kate Boonstra, Director, Beye School PTO
Casey Goldberg, Director, Beye School PTO
Tawny Lane, Director, Beye School PTO
Audrey Wojtonik, Director, Beye School PTO