



Oak Park Elementary School District 97

Institute Day Welcome

August 2022





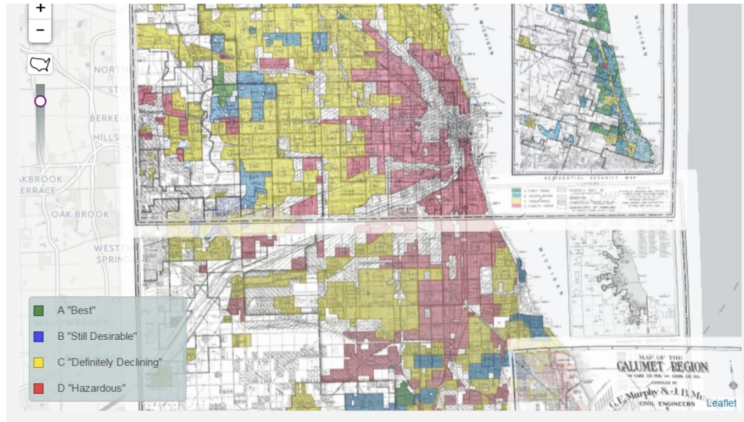
Why I'm excited to
be here with you

We are in a community with equity history.

New Redlining Maps Show Chicago Housing Discrimination

By [Natalie Moore](#)

Oct. 28, 2016, 1:47 p.m. CT



The color coded maps produced by the federal Home Owners' Loan Corporation produced between 1935 and 1940 show Chicago's black neighborhoods drenched in red, illustrating how the federal government sanctioned disinvestment in black neighborhoods and urban centers. Mapping Inequality / Screenshot by WBEZ

Oak Park is known for explicitly naming racial equity values and taking institutionalized action to reflect them.

**Actions
reflect
beliefs.**

We have big vision partners.

The Village of Oak Park

“Climate change affects us all, but it does not affect us all equally. **Environmental justice is only possible if income, race, ethnicity, and place of residence does not determine the burden people face from climate change.** The vulnerability assessment identifies climate hazards and vulnerable populations in the Village to identify where the greatest need for support exists.”

Park District of Oak Park

“We strive for excellence in serving the well-being and recreation needs of **our diverse community** through a **collaborative, innovative, and sustainable approach.**”

Oak Park Public Library

“**Choosing to be anti-racist touches everything we do.** It’s also why we have an anti-racism strategic plan.”

Oak Park Township

The Community Mental Health Board shall provide leadership to develop a comprehensive array of community based services, which are cost-effective, systematically evaluated, and **responsive to evolving community needs.**

District 200

Oak Park and River Forest High School will become an **ever-improving model of equity and excellence** that will enable all students to achieve their full potential.



We are a good match.

The Courier-News

\$1.00 | WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 25, 2012 | COURIERNEWSONLINE.COM | A CHICAGO SUN-TIMES publication

MEGA MONEY MIX UP!
SPORTS EDITION
OFFER OF CHANCE ONLY

Play to win!
UNSCRAMBLE TODAY'S SPORTS WORD ON PAGE 14. DETAILS INSIDE.

A conversation with U46's new chief of equity and social justice, Page 6

Ushma Shah on

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

JANINA W. MILES/
FOR SUN-TIMES MEDIA



January, 2012: "Ushma Shah invoked universal design in her debut before School District U46 Board of Education...It's also the idea behind Shah's controversial position..."

6 | COURIERNEWSONLINE.COM | WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 25, 2012

Local News

Designing equity

U46's chief of equity and social justice speaks about the new position

BY EMILY MCFARLAN
emcfarlan@couriernews.com

ELGIN — Ushma Shah invoked universal design in her debut before the School District U46 Board of Education at Monday's regular school board meeting.

That's the architectural idea that designing a building to be accessible for people with disabilities — with the widest and most inclusive vision — really makes it better for everyone who uses it, Shah said. Curt cuts aren't just used by people in wheelchairs, she pointed out, but also by people pushing strollers or carts.

It's also the idea behind Shah's controversial position, created this summer, as the Elgin school district's chief of equity and social justice.

"These ideas are beginning to be translated into the field of teaching and learning. Instead of taking a one-size-fits-all approach, universal design for learning asks, 'How can we design curriculum and classroom experiences that are as effective and inclusive as possible?'" she said.

"When we do this in the design of our curriculum and how we design our classroom instruction, then we will serve the needs of more students and we'll see better results for everyone."

Monday night, Shah called her role a "mission," a part of the reflective conversation about how to close the achievement gaps between white and mostly Hispanic and black students.

That's not a position unique to U46, she told The Courier-News in an interview Tuesday. Similar positions are "beginning to pop up" in school districts in Highland Park and Easton, she said.

But it is one that has brought some controversy to Illinois' second-largest school district, which cre-



Ushma Shah, Elgin School District U46's chief of equity and social justice, makes a presentation during Monday's board of education meeting in Elgin. (EMILY MCFARLAN FOR THE NEWS)

ated the position with a six-figure annual salary even as it has made some tough budget cuts. Those come as the state has retroced or fallen behind in its payments to the district in the past few years.

Setting priorities

Creating the position of the chief of equity and social justice was the "next step" after making the elimination of achievement gaps a priority for the school district, U46 Superintendent Jose Torrea said in a written statement when Shah was hired in July.

That priority was set in Destination 2015, approved by the school board in December 2010. Destination

2015 is a five-year accountability plan to spell out a mission, vision, values and goals for the school district, as well as specific academic benchmarks and targets for its students.

One of those targets is to bring down the achievement gap on ACT scores to 21 points by 2015. That gap was 4 points in 2010, according to Destination 2015.

Closing those gaps is one of the goals ("Improve student and staff performance and eliminate achievement gaps") and beliefs ("We believe that race and culture exert a powerful influence on learning; we will close the racial/ethnic achievement gap through our behaviors and

practices.") of Destination 2015. And it is written into the accountability plan's mission: "U46 will be a great place for all students to learn, all teachers to teach, and all employees to work. All means all."

Torrea also was appointed to the U.S. Department of Education's Equity and Excellence Commission last February.

"We don't have as many in our country examples of district-wide opening — where the sheer commitment to equity is operationalized far and wide across the organization. In order to do this, we need to have a bold, integrated and systemic approach to closing the achievement

gap," Shah said. "Destination 2015 holds us accountable to be one of the districts that shows how to do this work of closing the achievement gap to scale."

She has convened four work groups to focus on transitions to and from alternative programs, drop-out prevention, teen parents and access to the district's academy programs. That's part of creating "Multiple Pathways to Graduation" to meet the needs of students who are not succeeding within existing structures, she said.

She also wants to recruit and strategically support students who are black in the district's dual-language programs, because research shows black students in similar programs "significantly out-perform their peers," she said. And she wants to embed "culturally responsive practices" into its behavior and academic interventions.

"It's not about coming in and saying, 'Here's what we need to do,' and 'Here's what has worked in other places,'" Shah said. "The answers need to come from this time and place, with awareness of research and knowledge of local data."

Shah came to U46 from the Chicago Public Schools. She previously worked as a consultant, coaching instructional leadership teams at schools that are on academic probation.

She earned her bachelor's degree in educational studies and anthropology from Knox College in Galesburg; her master's degree in education, curriculum and instruction from the University of Illinois at Chicago; and her doctorate from Harvard University.

She hadn't planned to go into education, Shah said. But Knox's



Quick Launch SY22-23 District Priority Work Streams

SY22-23 District 97 Priority Work Streams



Be curious.

Co-create our
District 97 culture



Be safe and healthy.

Collaborate for safe and
supportive schools



Be a learning designer.

Innovate for
student-owned learning



Be Curious.

What we need to ask ourselves...

What is our culture, what do we want it to be & how might we co-create to bridge the gap?

How might we commit to being a radically inclusive and participatory school district?

The kinds of things we need to do as a district team...

Develop shared agreements & protocols

Connect with each other; learn to debate with integrity

Center the most impacted communities

Create smart two-way engagement

Be Safe and Healthy.

School Physical and
Virtual Safety

Baseline District Safety
Expectations

Incident Response and
Communication Plan

COVID Mitigation

Cross-functional
Planning Team

Student Mental Health
& Well-being

Universal PBIS Tier I
Fidelity

Targeted Restorative
Response Team

*Collaboration with key Oak
Park agency partners to
leverage expertise and
efficiency for optimum
service to the community*



Be a Learning Designer.

PreK-2 Teaching & Learning

Every early learning student in love with literacy and able to read/write/speak/listen at grade level by 3rd grade.

Grades 3-5 Teaching & Learning

Every 3rd- 5th grade student with their own ELA and math standards learning map (planned backwards from 6th grade standards)

Middle School Teaching & Learning

Every 6th-8th grade student with their own standards learning map (planned backwards from 9th grade standards)

We already know a lot about how to create dynamic core instruction that motivates student ownership. Let's take it off the page!

- *Collective Teacher Efficacy (Effect size: 1.57!)*
- *Danielson Framework for Teaching (FFT)*
- *Universal Design for Learning (UDL)*

*Collective
EMPLOYEE
Efficacy in
District 97!*

We have the entrepreneurial vision to create new & innovative family and community partnerships that extend standards mastery learning



What matters right now.

Affirm

...each other.

Prioritize

...our students' access to us.

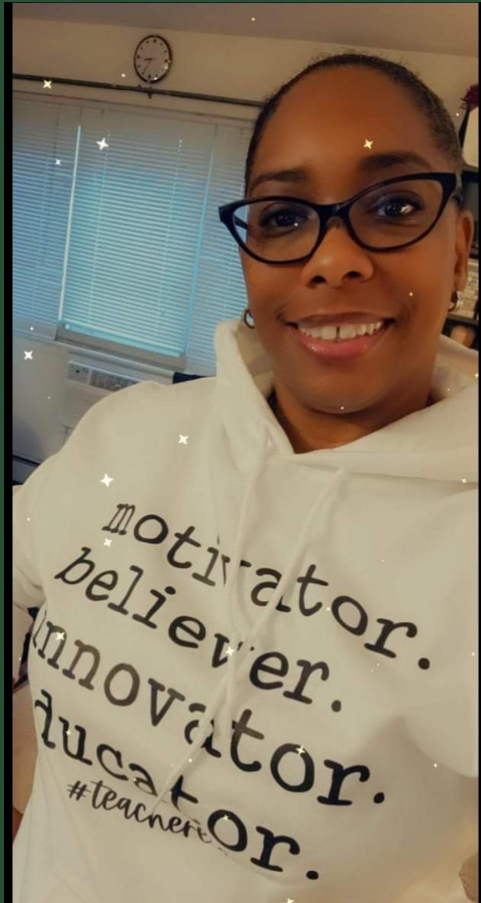
Model

...a participatory approach.

Practice

... high-fidelity use of our
resources.





Great public schools are the engines of a vibrant participatory democracy.

That starts with **you**.
Motivators, believers,
innovators & educators!



Renita Banks, Teacher, Beye Elementary School



Here's to the opportunity
for us to **serve together**
in District 97!

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