



## **Informational Memo - 2015 Summer Institute**

TO: School Board

FROM: Maureen Miller, *Director of Technology*  
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April 28, 2015

### **Overview & Background**

Traditionally, the Winnetka Summer Institute is an optional, biennial event sponsored by the Winnetka Public School Foundation. The purpose of Summer Institute is to provide an opportunity for staff to enhance the way in which we understand and work with students. As an outcome of WEA negotiations, an additional two Institute days were added to the teachers' work year. Summer Institute participation will include all teachers this June.

### **Description of Initiative**

The 2015 Summer Institute will take place on Friday, June 5, 2015 and continue on Monday, June 8, 2015. Planning for the Summer Institute began in January 2015 with the following committee members:

Joanna Amaral  
Susan Antman  
Kate Blaker  
Stephanie Conran  
Louisa Erickson  
Kathy McDonough  
Maureen Chertow Miller  
Daniel Ryan

The focus this year is on "Design Thinking" and what experiential education looks like in the 21st Century. This is directly tied to the revised, strategic *ambitious opportunities* that were presented to the School Board in January 2015.

Grant Lichtman has been confirmed as our guest innovator for the two day event. Mr. Lichtman speaks, writes, and works with fellow educators to build capacity and comfort with innovation in response to a rapidly changing world. He works with school and community teams in both public and private schools, helping them to develop their imagination of schools of the future, and their places in that future.

“The world is changing at a remarkable rate. By some estimates the sum of human knowledge will double every year by 2020. That is a staggering fact, particularly for schools, because we are in the knowledge business. Schools have only recently started to recognize this; we are in the early phases of what will likely be the largest shift in school-based education in at least 150 years. With massively greater global connectivity through rapidly evolving technologies, the very definition of what a school “is” and “does” is in the early stages of what many feel will be a transformational mutation in the next decade.”

-Grant Lichtman ([Grant Lichtman Bio](#))

### **Guiding Questions for Summer Institute**

- What are other schools around the country doing to implement a set of learning objectives that they believe will best prepare our students for their futures in a rapidly changing world?
- What are the conditions of great learning that can and should drive the development of our programs?
- How might we capture and catapult some of the drivers of early childhood and elementary education (student creativity, cross-disciplinary themes, experimentation, risk-taking) into later grade curricula?
- How might we effectively structure time and space during the school day to promote a more dynamic evolution of curriculum and learning?
- What elements of Common Core help us to amplify the learning objectives we value most in a 21st century mindset?
- How can teachers, as "educator-leaders", effectively create, implement, and assess innovative programs?

### **Outcomes for Summer Institute**

After spending two days with Mr. Lichtman, teachers will come away with a thorough understanding and application of the “[Design Thinking](#)” principles. One of the key skills

to prepare students for future careers is the ability to think critically and problem solve, “Design Thinking” provides a framework for teaching these skills.

The Winnetka Public Schools District 36 Strategic Plan is being revised to incorporate several ambitious opportunities. These opportunities will include student voice and choice through personalized learning, STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Math), flexible learning spaces, and personalized learning for adults. All of these require us to stretch our thinking and build prototypes for what these opportunities might look like in the near future.

Teachers will be tasked to use the “Design Thinking” framework to think differently about their instruction. They will use the framework to prototype ways of shifting time and/or space to allow the incorporation of more 21st Century Learning experiences that align with our Progressive traditions.

Middle School teachers will focus on content area or school based activities, possibly taking on the task of embedding activities highlighting social justice and global citizenship. Prototypes generated for elementary schools may include grade level experiences common to all students as well as activities that are scalable and sustainable for all schools such as flexible learning spaces or STEAM. Groups will leave for the summer with tangible pilot opportunities with action steps for the 2015-2016 school year. The plans will be monitored and reviewed throughout the year.

### **Next Steps**

The Summer Institute planning committee will continue to finalize the activities, schedule and communications. Future meeting dates include:

- April 30
- May 14
- May 28

Activities and keynotes will be recorded during Summer Institute and posted to the internet for future reference and reflection. After the Summer Institute, evaluations will be provided to staff so that we may continue to inform our professional learning activities and meet the needs of all of our adult learners.

The District will continue to provide updates to the School Board regarding this event. We also want to reiterate our appreciation to the Winnetka Public Schools Foundation for their continued support of high-quality professional learning.