

Board of Education Meeting Recap

The Township High School District 211 Board of Education met on Thursday, January 21, 2016, in the Anne Koller Board Meeting Room at the G.A. McElroy Administration Center. The following is a recap of important items that were acted upon at the meeting.

Military Recognition

The Board of Education honored Private Second Class **Zaia Dinkha**, a 2015 James B. Conant High School graduate who is now serving in the United States Army Reserve. Private Second Class Dinkha led the audience in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Presentation: Business Incubator Program

This school year, the Business Incubator program is running for the first time in each of the District's five high schools. This course allows students interested in entrepreneurship to learn about the process through the creation of a potentially viable business. Local entrepreneurs are intensely involved in the course as more than 20 community members become either coaches or mentors for each school. These coaches and mentors bring the real world into the classroom as the teams of students design businesses that have the chance of being awarded start-up money at the end of the school year.

The Board viewed a presentation by Schaumburg High School Business Education Teacher **Joe Carey**, Fremd High School Business Education Department Chair **Chad Jonas**, Hoffman Estates High School Business Education Teacher **Tom Magan**, and Palatine High School Business Education Department Chair **Cliff Watanuki**. The presentation featured exciting steps District 211 teachers have taken to partner with the community to provide a truly unique experience for the District 211 Business Incubator students.

Approval of Minutes

The Board of Education approved the minutes from its regular meeting on [December 10, 2015](#), as well as special meetings on [December 2, 2015](#), [December 7, 2015](#), and [January 5, 2016](#).

Curriculum Committee Report

Curriculum committees have three opportunities each school year to discuss and recommend curriculum changes to the Board of Education. The winter round of curriculum meetings have a focus on textbook approvals to be in alignment with the development of the upcoming year's budget.

The Winter Curriculum round included the recommendation for new courses within the interactive and information technology cluster. The two newest approved courses for the coming year include Networking Administration and Security and also Web Design and Development. Several new courses were proposed for preliminary consideration, including AP Seminar (which will initially serve as the curriculum for the Gifted Program) and a special education reading course designed to develop decoding skills. The continuous focus to define and articulate career pathway course sequences serves to create new courses, improve existing courses and better integrate the connections among courses so that more students' educational plans efficiently serve their exploration of college majors and careers.

The Board of Education received the Winter Curriculum Committee Report and approved the recommendations as presented. A complete copy of the report can be viewed [here](#).

Placement Testing of Incoming Freshmen

The Board received information on this year's placement testing. On December 5, 2015, placement tests were administered to 2,708 of the anticipated 2,895 incoming freshmen. An additional 89 students attended a make-up test session on December 12, 2015. Of the 100 students who were not tested, 28 of the students were withheld from testing per their Individualized Educational Plan (IEP). Students who were unable to attend either the initial or make-up testing will be scheduled for an individual make-up session. Results of the Explore test, together with recommendations of junior high school teachers, will be used to place students in courses for the 2016-2017 school year.

The success of the testing program and subsequent placement process is the result of a coordinated effort involving District 211 transportation, student services, and technology services staff, as well as staff at the junior high schools.

Transportation Services Report

High School District 211 operates one of the largest school-owned transportation fleets in Illinois, with approximately 160 school buses and 40 vans in operation during both school days and weekends. Approximately 10,200 students are

transported on regular school days through transportation services provided for regular education, special education, and charter services for athletic, activity and vocational education worksites. Of the students transported, approximately 450 are special education students who receive door-to-door service due to some type of exceptionality. Up to 130 buses may be deployed and transporting students on any given day.

The Board of Education received a transportation services report, providing an overview of the District Transportation Department's safety and training procedures, maintenance procedures and equipment replacement, and financial management.

High School District 211 upholds high standards for preparing drivers who will be transporting student to ensure that safety remains the primary goal of the transportation department. Annual training occurs with all transportation employees to ensure that drivers receive the most current safety information and are well-informed of safety procedures and protocols. Drivers also receive additional specific training relative to their routine assignments.

An in-depth evaluation is conducted of the skills of each newly hired driver that includes a driving test. Newly licensed drivers receive approximately 20 hours of bus driver training prior to transporting students. All 20 hours of training is conducted in a one-on-one setting to assure that new drivers are fully prepared to transport students safely. This exceeds Illinois State Board of Education expectations, which lists the training requirement for new employees as meeting the state requirements with an eight-hour initial training course or a two-hour refresher course for drivers currently within one year of license expiration and sufficient onsite training with the new employer.

In order to safely transport special education students, additional training is provided to staff members to assure that all accommodations in a student's Individualized Education Plan are adhered to properly. Individual training is given to bus aides and one-to-one student aides in regard to the individual needs of each student and evacuation plans for each route and each student on the route. Bus drivers and aides assisting in the transportation of students who require additional support also attend yearly training offered by the Northwest Suburban Special Education Organization (NSSEO).

Should an emergency situation arise, as a result of the District having its own buses and trained drivers, the necessary drivers and buses can be deployed in a short time span. Because buses are easily accessible at each of the five high school buildings during the school day, quick response times are available and have proven to be critical in emergency situations that occur during the school day. Some examples would include buses utilized to provide shelter for students during building evacuations in extreme weather conditions and evacuating students away from the building. The District's ability to respond in severe

weather situations is enhanced by maintaining its own fleet. As a part of the District's cold weather procedures, District buses are able to transport student walkers when safely and legally permissible, provide back-up vehicles for student overflow in times of inclement weather, and provide back-up vehicles in the instance of mechanical issues. The District's transportation department plays a critical role in protecting the safety of our students in several emergency and non-emergency situations.

A complete copy of the report is available [here](#).

Student Fee Waivers and Low-Income Students

The Board of Education received information on student fee waivers and low-income students, including free and reduced-price meal eligibility, the District 211 fee waiver policy, and student fees.

High School District 211 participates in the National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs that allow qualifying students to receive free or reduced-price meals during the school day. Students may qualify for free meals if they are a foster child, homeless or migrant student, recipient of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) or Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), or if their household meets income eligibility guidelines established by the United States Department of Agriculture. Reduced rate meals are available for those households meeting criteria for established income and household size. Reduced breakfast is available for 30¢ and lunch is 40¢.

A student with a household income at or below 130% of the poverty level is eligible for free meals, and those with income between 131% to 185% of the poverty level are eligible for reduced-price meals. For example, for the current 2016 fiscal year, a family of four must have a gross income of less than \$31,525 annually to qualify for free meals, or \$44,863 annually to qualify for reduced-price meals. All households are mailed applications for meal benefits each July and are required to submit a new application each school year to determine the approved level for meal benefits. Households also may automatically qualify for free meal benefits through a direct certification process that occurs between the Department of Human Services and the Illinois State Board of Education. Students who are directly certified have been verified as participants in the SNAP, TANF, or Medicaid programs, or are foster children receiving governmental funding.

The number of students eligible for meal benefits in District 211 has increased by 159% over the past 10 years. The prevalence of low-income students is growing annually in District 211. For the first time this year, the District has experienced a slight decrease in eligibility that can be primarily attributed to a change in eligibility requirements.

For the 2014-2015 school year, Medicaid eligibility was a qualifying factor for free meals, but it is no longer a determining factor for the 2015-2016 school year. While all of the District's schools have experienced growing trends of free or reduced eligible students over the past decade, the dispersion of low-income students is not consistent from school to school. Current data shows that the number of students eligible for free or reduced price meals in our schools range from a low of approximately 16% to a high of 50%. District-wide, 34.8% of the enrollment population qualifies for free or reduced-price meals, including two schools, Palatine and Hoffman Estates High Schools, where 50% of the student population is eligible.

Per Board Policy JN, student fees will be waived for services based on a student's eligibility for free or reduced-price meals provided under the National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs. Student fees are described as any monetary charge collected as a prerequisite for the student's participation in any curricular or extracurricular program. Eligibility for free or reduced-price meals is the sole criterion for such waiver of fees.

Student fees in District 211 have remained constant in most areas over the past several years, with the exception of food service breakfast and lunch prices, which have been increased according to guidelines established in the Healthy Hunger Free Kid's Act of 2010. Student fees are separated into two groups: curricular or extracurricular school fees and elective fees for items or activities not required within the school.

Each year, the District reviews student fees and brings a recommendation to the Board on rates for the upcoming school year. The District has experienced a significant increase in the number of students eligible for free or reduced-price meals and fee waivers in recent years. In addition, the District's current financial position allows the stability to maintain student fees at their current level. Student fees have not been increased in the District since 2007. In ensuing years the District will continue to monitor the revenue impact of student user fees on the overall budget, and will advance recommendations that will not create an adverse effect on students or the District's financial position.

Additional information on student fee waivers and low-income students is available [here](#).

Student User Fees for 2016-2017

The Board of Education established student fees for the 2016-2017 school year. This is the 10th consecutive year that District 211 fees, with the exception of school lunch prices, have not increased.

The textbook/instructional supply fee for the 2016-2017 school year will remain \$160.00.

The driver education behind-the-wheel fee for 2016-2017 will remain \$350.00.

The student parking user fee will remain \$65.00 per semester for 2016-2017.

The bus transportation fee for next year for students whose residence is within 1.5 miles of school will remain \$170.00 and is due in full by July 1, 2016. There is no bus transportation fee for those students who reside beyond 1.5 miles from school. A late registration fee of \$35.00 will be added to all payments received after July 1, 2016.

The Board approved fees for Summer School 2016. Summer School fees will remain \$140 per semester for credit courses, and fees for non-credit athletic and activity camps will remain \$70 per session. The cost for invitation programs for incoming freshmen and sophomores will remain \$30. The fee for competitive varsity baseball and softball will remain \$175 for the summer. Transportation fees will be \$35 per semester. The Driver Education fee will be \$350 for behind the wheel, and for those students enrolled in classroom only, a \$70 fee will be assessed.

The price for the standard breakfast will remain \$1.45 per meal for students. The price for students who qualify for reduced-price meals will remain 30¢ per breakfast and 40¢ per lunch (including milk). The Board approved standard lunch price points at \$2.35, \$2.50, \$2.65, and \$2.90 per meal (including milk) for students.

Additional information on school breakfast and lunch prices is available [here](#).

Secondary School Cooperative Risk Management Program (SSCRMP)

The Board of Education received information on the District's involvement with Secondary School Cooperative Risk Management Program, a risk-sharing insurance pool comprised of School Districts 211, 207 (Maine Township), 214 (Wheeling and Elk Grove Townships), and 225 (Northfield Township). The pool provides comprehensive insurance coverage at a lower cost than school districts could obtain individually.

For 2016, SSCRMP will maintain a self-insured retention (shared deductible) of \$1,000,000 for liability claims and a \$250,000 self-insured retention for property claims. SSCRMP continues to successfully manage claims, member equity, and excess loss reserves. Each member district is responsible for paying the initial \$1,000 deductible for its own boiler machinery claims; \$5,000 deductible for errors/omissions; and, \$100,000 for crime claims. Workers' compensation

coverage with SSCRMP has a July 1 renewal date and provides for a \$350,000 deductible for individual claims. SSCRMP loss-fund reserves are used to pay claims within the self-insured retention for property or liability claims. A separate loss-fund is maintained for workers' compensation claims.

For the 2016 policy year, SSCRMP has maintained its level of coverage in all categories, with an increase in crime coverage that provides coverage through a social media endorsement. Overall, including additional crime coverage, the annual renewal cost for High School District 211 will decrease by 9% from 2015.

Based on the loss funding appropriation, property, and specific liability losses allocated to District 211, the 2016 member contributions for the District will be \$753,708. This is a 9% decrease from the 2015 allocation of \$828,449. For the 2016 renewal rates, funds have been allocated in the 2015-2016 budget.

Additional information on SSCRMP is available [here](#).

ACT for the Class of 2017

The Illinois State Board of Education (I.S.B.E.) has previously required and funded the ACT college admissions examination to be taken by every junior in the state. Following a request for proposals, the I.S.B.E. recently announced that ACT will be replaced by the SAT as the assessment of college readiness that will be used in the State of Illinois. At this time, no definitive information has been released regarding whether the I.S.B.E. will pay for the administration of the SAT to all juniors. From the information now available, it is likely that the I.S.B.E. will provide the SAT to all juniors in the Class of 2018 next year during the 2016-2017 school year. However, for current juniors in the Class of 2017, it is not clear and seems unlikely that the I.S.B.E. will pay for the SAT to be administered.

As brought forth at the previous Board of Education meeting, it is in the best interests of the District 211 juniors to have every opportunity to enter the post-secondary education of their choice by taking a college admissions exam. The ACT is a common college readiness exam widely accepted by colleges and universities across the nation and is typically the prevalent test in Illinois and throughout the Midwest. District 211 teachers in English, mathematics, and science are familiar with the expectations of the ACT, and afterschool help sessions are provided for our students to assist them in preparing for the ACT.

In order for students who are currently juniors in the Class of 2017 to have the opportunity to take a college admissions examination, the ACT can be offered to every junior, independent of the I.S.B.E.'s course of action. District 211 has been coordinating potential administration dates with the company that provides the ACT in order to provide the ACT on April 19, 2016. To administer the ACT examination without the writing subtest for all juniors in District 211 would cost \$39.50 per student for a total of \$120,000. The use of TIF funds released via an

early disbursement from the Village of Palatine would be used to pay for this expenditure.

The Board of Education authorized the superintendent to purchase the ACT exam for administration to 11th graders in the Class of 2017.

Community Engagement and Strategic Planning

At its November 12, 2015 meeting, the Board of Education authorized the superintendent to enter into an agreement with Unicom•Arc to provide professional services to District 211 to conduct a community engagement and strategic planning initiative.

A Facilitating Team of approximately 25 individuals has been assembled that will serve to coordinate the operations of the community engagement process. The Facilitating Team will plan and monitor the implementation of the engagement process, provide input for publicity plans, and offer suggestions for ways to provide effective information and discussion opportunities during the community-wide engagement sessions that will be used to generate and solicit input from all community members.

The Community Engagement Sessions will be held on the following dates and locations:

February 1 – Fremd High School
February 2 – Schaumburg High School

March 14 – Palatine High School
March 15 – Conant High School

April 4 – Hoffman Estates High School
April 5 – Palatine High School

May 2 – Conant High School
May 3 – Fremd High School

The Board of Education approved a charge statement that sets the direction for the Facilitating Team in its work to gather information from the community:

Believing that the successful development of a five-year strategic plan requires extensive community input, the Board of Education authorizes the Superintendent to form a Facilitating Team of community and staff members for the purpose of gathering comprehensive input reflective of the community-at-large. The information gathered through the community engagement process will

be presented to the Board of Education and will serve as guiding information in formulating the District's five-year strategic plan.

As a guideline for fulfilling the charge, the Board recommends that the Superintendent shall utilize the Facilitating Team to involve itself with community members to accomplish the following:

1. Gather current and accurate information that reflects a broad base of community perceptions and priorities relating to District 211;
2. Familiarize community stakeholders with the current programs, services, resources, finances and facilities of the District;
3. Communicate to the District 211 community the District's accomplishments and challenges while instilling a deeper understanding of the role, objectives and needs of the District;
4. Build an ongoing process for strengthening communication and collaborative efforts with the community that will serve the District in the future;
5. Gather input regarding the community's priorities for the curricular initiatives needed to ensure a continued high level of student achievement and readiness for the future;
6. Gather input regarding the community's priorities for improving healthy social relations and wellness among students; and
7. Consider the resources necessary to develop or sustain effective programs designed to accomplish these objectives in the intermediate and long term.

All findings gathered as part of the community engagement process through the Facilitating Team will be informative in nature and will be shared with the Superintendent for presentation to the Board of Education. Following delivery of this report, final decisions regarding the strategic plan and direction will be made by the Board of Education with assistance from the administration and drawing upon full access to the information gathered through the community engagement process. The information brought forth and used by the Board of Education within the strategic plan shall be guided by the following principles: student-centered; instructionally sound; fiscally responsible; and fair and equitable.

Additional information on Community Engagement and Strategic Planning is available [here](#).

Bid for Consideration – Buses

The Board of Education [awarded the business for buses](#) for the transportation department to the lowest responsible bidder, Midwest Transit Equipment, in the amount of \$718,101.

Bids for Consideration – 2016-2017 Life Safety Construction and Roof Repair at Hoffman Estates High School

The Board of Education awarded the business for roof repair to the lowest responsible bidder, G.E. Riddiford Company, Inc., for \$1,017,702; and for life safety work to the lowest responsible bidder, Dimensional Enterprises, Inc., for \$1,005,879.

Additional bid information is available [here](#).

Establish Time, Place, and Date of Regular Board of Education Meetings

The Board of Education approved the following schedule of regular Board meetings to begin at 7:30 p.m. in the G.A. McElroy Administration Center: Thursday, July 21, 2016; Thursday, August 18, 2016; Thursday, September 22, 2016; Thursday, October 20, 2016; Thursday, November 10, 2016; Thursday, December 8, 2016; Thursday, January 19, 2017; Thursday, February 16, 2017; Thursday, March 16, 2017; Thursday, April 6, 2017; Thursday, April 27, 2017; Thursday, May 11, 2017; Thursday, May 25, 2017; and Thursday, June 15, 2017.

Potential Topics for Future Discussion

The Board of Education agreed to include a discussion on gender-specific facilities on its agenda for the February 11, 2016 regular Board meeting.

Next Board of Education Meeting

The next scheduled regular Board of Education meeting will be held on Thursday, February 11, 2016, beginning at 7:30 p.m. in the Anne Koller Board Meeting Room at the G.A. McElroy Administration Center.