



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
AS A RESULT OF THE
SMALL GROUP WORK ACTIVITY
SESSION #4
MAY 2, 2016 • CONANT HIGH SCHOOL
MAY 3, 2016 • FREMD HIGH SCHOOL

TASK #1: FACILITIES: STRENGTHS • CONCERNS • FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

- **Strengths:** *Discuss with members of your group what you feel are the strengths of High School District 211 facilities. What are you proud of?*
- **Concerns:** *What are the greatest concerns about District 211 facilities expressed by members of your group?*
- **Future Opportunities:** *What does your group think might be future opportunities for facility improvements in District 211?*

TASK #2: WHAT FINANCIAL INFORMATION, IF ANY, WOULD YOU LIKE TO RECEIVE FROM DISTRICT 211? HOW OFTEN WOULD YOU LIKE TO RECEIVE THIS INFORMATION? HOW OR WHERE WOULD YOU LIKE TO RECEIVE IT?

- **What Financial Information:** *Discuss with your group what financial information, if any, you would like to receive from District 211.*
- **How Often:** *How often would you like to receive information about District 211 finances?*
- **How or Where?:** *How or where would your group like to receive financial information from District 211?*

TASK #3: WHAT WOULD YOU IDENTIFY AS THE TOP FINANCIAL PRIORITIES FOR DISTRICT 211?

- **Top Financial Priorities:** *Given the current state of District 211 financial standing and pending economic and legislative uncertainties, discuss with your group and list what you think the top financial priorities should be for District 211.*

OTHER SUGGESTIONS

What other suggestions would your group like to provide to the Facilitating Team as we move forward with this community engagement program? Please list your suggestions in the space provided.

Approximately 140 participants attended the final *211 of Tomorrow* community engagement sessions on May 2 & 3, 2016.

The CES-4 presentation addressed District 211 finances and facilities. Participants heard information about the current financial state of the district from the District 211 Controller & Treasurer Barbara Peterson. Attendees learned about the distribution of revenue sources, district expenditures, operational costs per pupil as well as information about the health of the District 211 financial reserves. The facilities portion of the presentation was then presented by Lauren Hummel, Chief Operating Officer. Basic facilities information and facility improvement categories were shared followed by the specific time line for the Five-Year Improvement Plan. *211 of Tomorrow* participants heard about completed projects such as the Palatine High School Athletic Field Renovations, Business Incubator Classroom as well as Schaumburg High School Media Center Renovations. Ms. Hummel also presented information about future facility projects as well as future facility planning considerations. To conclude the presentation, Superintendent Dr. Daniel Cates explained the Five-Year Financial Approach which includes: debt free, planned savings-future facility improvements, safeguard against state legislation, continue to identify budget efficiencies and levy to support needs and provide stability. Dr. Cates then explained the tax levy and how the community's property tax bill is impacted by District 211. Participants learned of District 211's flat tax levy for 2015 and that taxes paid to District 211 will not increase because the District is asking for additional tax funds. In addition, as a result of diligent fiscal management, District 211 will be debt free by 2019. Finally, Dr. Cates explained the impact that financial uncertainties including state funding reform, property tax freeze, and state pension costs shift to districts will have on the school district. Participants learned that if current proposed state funding reforms are adopted, District 211 will lose approximately \$8 million, and the community as a whole would lose approximately \$30 million, including Elementary Districts 15 and 54. To view the presentation, click [here](#).

Following the presentation, participants worked in 20 small groups total between the two nights to complete the three tasks listed above. Following is a summary of the responses from the groups as well as a small number of individual responses.

TASK #1: FACILITIES: STRENGTHS • CONCERNS • FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

211 of Tomorrow participants listed a number of strengths, concerns, and future opportunities for improvement for District facilities.

STRENGTHS

By far, the most identified strength of the District 211 facilities were the various updates and improvements completed. Specific updates listed included "improvements that are student centered", "improved entrance – preventing parents/anyone from entering the building" as well as multiple comments on the pools and media center. Another positive commonly listed was the well-maintained facilities. *211 of Tomorrow* groups recognized the cleanliness and efforts of the custodial staff in maintaining safe, well-kept schools. Other comments such as "technical infrastructure (internet/wireless)", "in-house maintenance/food staff & transportation" and "Higgins Education Center" were also listed as facility strengths.

CONCERNS

While groups shared varied items of concern, the most frequently mentioned concern was the continued need for facility improvements. A commonly mentioned area of need was the locker rooms and bathroom facilities. Feedback regarding costs was also indicated as a concern by multiple groups. One group commented, "Age + infrastructure costs" while another said "building updates/upkeep will fall behind w/lack of funding."

Two other concerns emerged from the *211 of Tomorrow* small group feedback. Participants indicated concern over the parking lots including drop-off and traffic patterns, student drivers as well as a need for expansion. Limited space was also listed as a concern in respect to available space for activities/sports. One group said, “Space for athletics is limited although [the] number of athletic teams has increased.”

FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES

211 of Tomorrow participants shared many facility opportunities to be considered by the District. The most frequently listed suggestion was building a field house to house student activities and to alleviate scheduling issues. Participants also indicated a high interest in addressing the locker rooms and bathrooms. Various other facility opportunities were shared such as “improve learning environment – more adaptable-change desk weight, tables instead of desks – movement toward teamwork,” auditoriums, and space for technology-based programs.

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WHAT FINANCIAL INFORMATION?

Four main categories emerged from the small group responses regarding the type of financial information the participants would like to receive:

- User Friendly Budget Information
- State Funding Changes
- Cost per Student
- Major Upcoming Projects/Expenditures

HOW OFTEN?

The majority of the small groups indicated an interest in receiving financial communications annually. Several groups also indicated a quarterly communication would be desirable. Additionally, multiple groups expressed a desire for information when circumstances dictate a need such as for a new/large project and pending legislative issues. Some groups suggested communications align with the tax bill timing.

HOW OR WHERE?

Three preferred methods of delivery were indicated by *211 of Tomorrow* participants. In order of preference:

1. District and/or School Websites
2. Email Communications
3. US Mail

TASK #3: WHAT WOULD YOU IDENTIFY AS THE TOP FINANCIAL PRIORITIES FOR DISTRICT 211?

211 of Tomorrow participants listed various financial priorities across the small groups; however, the following four themes were identified from the responses (in order of priority):

1. Maintain Budget and Reserves
2. Maintain Quality Educational and Co-Curricular Programs
- tie 3. Hire and Retain Quality Educators
3. Remain Debt-free

OTHER SUGGESTIONS

Small groups or individuals provided other suggestions for District 211 administration to consider. Some ideas included “blackbox theater – versatile for a lot of programs,” “replace turf on Schaumburg HS stadium”, and “Communicate to people that the value of their home and our community is directly tied to the exceptional educational standards of D211 and therefore our property taxes are an important and integral part of the exceptional education.” One group asked if there is a plan for the vacant D211 property on Summit, while another group commented on access to technology devices such as 3D printers, internet and tools.

**For a complete listing of all responses
see the CES-4 Verbatim Response Documents for May 2 and 3 found at
<http://adc.d211.org/communityengagement/>**