



TOWNSHIP HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT 211

**COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROGRAM
REPORTS**

SPRING 2016



Findings

High School District 211

FOCUS GROUP FEEDBACK

INTRODUCTION

Township High School District 211 utilized a trained facilitator from UNICOM•ARC to conduct several focus groups to gather input from a variety of constituent groups representative of the community. A total of 14 listening sessions, including well over 200 participants, were conducted in late January 2016. These group discussions have been conducted in advance of a community wide survey and a large public engagement program that the District will conduct during the months of February, March, April, and May. The purpose of this engagement process will be to engage representatives of the full community in identifying strategies that will improve the work of the District and its efforts to support the academic, social and emotional growth of its students. Participants included a wide variety of individuals that make up the school community including citizens at large, municipal officials, parents, students, business owners, members of the District 211 staff, and several groups representative of the resident immigrant population.

Perceptions of the Community and of Township High School District 211

- Responses indicated that the community offers a great place to live, work and raise a family.
- Participants found a sense of connection and optimism in their larger community where people enjoyed living, value their property and were provided a full and supportive range of city services
- Most participants were very happy with the performance of the District and agreed that a strong school system protected the value of their homes.
- The population of District 211 was thought to becoming more diverse with significant growth in the numbers of Latino, Polish and Indian families moving into the area. By and large, participants viewed this diversity as positive, offering students an enriching educational experience in knowing those of various nationalities and cultures.
- A concern was expressed among some members of the community that local taxes were increasing and having an impact on families throughout the area.
- Some participants thought that parents and community members were, at times, complacent in their support of the District, remaining silent on controversial issues that were being brought forward by small minority groups.

The Strengths of Township High School District 211 — *What do we do well?*

- Participants thought the District to be well respected, innovative, academically strong, and financially sound.
- Teachers and administrators are held in high esteem and found to be caring and nurturing in their work with students. Most participants agreed that staff members would do “whatever is necessary” to encourage a student’s success.
- Areas of strength included:
 - Tutorial programs for students that may need extra help
 - The use of technology as an integral part of the instructional process
 - A strong and successful program for special needs students, various gifted, magnet and advanced credit programs
 - A rigorous curriculum
 - A strong summer school program
 - Safe and orderly schools.
- Each group, without exception, was appreciative of the way the District responded to the needs of all students.
- The Higgins Educational Center and Project Excel programs were mentioned frequently as outstanding examples of how the District attempts to build success for all students.

Challenges Facing Township High School District 211 — *What don’t we do well?*

- The growth in diversity will require the District’s sustained attention.
- The external pressures being placed on the District by the State of Illinois were a concern. Some worried that the State might seek remedy of its economic troubles by placing more mandates on school districts like District 211.
- Greater emphasis and awareness should be given to those students who are not college bound or less academically strong. Participants had some concern for the District’s response to those students who fall into the middle of achievement groupings.
- The diversity of staff members does not reflect the diversity among students. More minority staff members would be of benefit to the District as it embraces the wide-ranging diversity among its student population.
- Keeping all parents involved in their student’s education was of common interest
- Allowing staff time to meet the emotional and social needs of students. This was a general concern among teachers and administrators.
- Student group concerns should be noted. Students were well aware of the fact that, although they felt fortunate to have iPads, not all students had access to the Internet at home. Students felt this to be unfair.
- Students expressed concern in regard to the lack of recognition, outside of major sports, given to students for their various achievements.
- Students felt concern that female students were not being “encouraged” into STEM type programs equal to that of young male students.

Academic Preparation of Students as They Graduate from District 211

- Consistent discussion among groups focused on the need for graduates to have strong social skills upon entering college or pursuing work or a vocational career.
- Of importance were proficiencies in what most described as “life skills” ... that being creativity, cooperation, collaboration, perseverance and problem solving.
- Also discussed was the need for strong proficiency in speaking and writing skills upon graduation from District 211.
- Participants indicated a need for students to have “hands-on type experiences” before graduation (internships).
- A desire for the students to develop a deep understanding of technology and software, some ability to speak a second language and what was described as financial literacy was expressed.

Suggesting Improvements to the Educational Program in District 211

- There was little opinion among participants as to how they might suggest the District set upon improvement strategies as most that responded to this set of questions were pleased with efforts being made by the District toward improvement.
- The fact the District had arranged for these focus groups and was interested in listening to input from community members was a common point of appreciation.
- When probed regarding start-stop times, technology integration, etc., few if any concerns were heard.
- There were suggestions for improvement among the Latino, Indian, and Polish participants who took part in these focus groups. Most noted that more active interest by the District needed to be made to “include” various nationalities into the full life of the school community.
- Often these participants, and those in the community that they represent, found some difficulty in accessing the school system. Factors illustrated their concern include:
 - A language barrier exists between a predominately English speaking District 211 and those whose first language is not English.
 - Few interpreters are available and often-printed materials sent home were not in their native language.
 - Many new to this country (and to District 211) just didn’t understand how the school system works. Rather than advocating for better communication, they often surrender to the background.

The Financial Health of Township High School District 211

- Generally speaking, those who participated in these focus group sessions found the District to be financially stable using tax dollars both efficiently and effectively.
- Some participants thought the tax base had been increasing and to that end, put a fair amount of difficulty on some families in the local school community.
- A general feeling among participants, was that the District had sufficient funds and that it put those funds toward reaching out to all students with various programs that supported success.

- The “spend to ensure student success” sentiment was clearly expressed by both the teacher and administrator participants.
- One group thought the District was managed effectively, with good credit ratings, an established reserve fund and a professional, credentialed staff attending to the financial matters of the school system.
- Participants felt the District to be financially stable and in a good position to fulfill its mission.
- Some felt that if the District failed at anything in terms of the current financial condition, it was the lack of effective communications in educating the full community about financial interests and obligations of the school system.
- By and large, however, participants felt that District 211 provided a high quality education, contributed to stable property values and acted in the best interests of students and the community with regard to its financial responsibilities.
- Some participants suggested that District 211 has a larger than necessary reserve fund, a lack of Board understanding of the budget process and salaries and benefits that are not in line with comparable school systems.
- Some felt the District offers less than full transparency with the community about budgeting and finances. Participants in this group had concerns regarding possible legislation to return a portion of the teacher pension program to local districts. Should that happen, the group suggested significant and negative ramifications to the District and the community of taxpayers. To a large degree, participants in this group felt the District should reduce its reserves and control its spending in order to return a portion of its levy back to taxpayers.

Describe the Condition of the High School Facilities

- Participants felt the school facilities to be in excellent condition.
- Building maintenance and repair programs were seen as very effective.
- Some comments were heard about the fact that buildings were ageing, and to that end failed to provide space that met with today’s educational standards.
- A few comments were heard regarding the lack of field space for student sports and activities.
- Students felt too much attention was paid to “football” and other sport activities at the detriment of other facility needs.
- Overall, the condition of the school buildings was of little concern to those who participated in these focus group sessions.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SESSIONS

INTRODUCTION

The following **211 of Tomorrow Findings** express the general agreement of **The 211 of Tomorrow** participants regarding what they believe to be key points of celebration and overarching challenges for District 211.

Areas to Celebrate

211 of Tomorrow participants collaborated in small groups to brainstorm a list of key areas of **celebration** regarding the School District's performance. The items below were the most mentioned across the tables.

- **High level of overall satisfaction** with the District in key areas including curriculum, extra-curricular activities, teacher and staff quality and finances.
- The **college or work force readiness** through programs and academic tracks
- The maintenance and improvements in the **facilities** is a point of celebration.
- The **high graduation rate** is a strength for District 211.

Challenges to be Addressed

211 of Tomorrow participants also collaborated to brainstorm key **challenges** or **hurdles to address** to improve the overall performance of District 211. The items below were the most mentioned across the tables.

- **Funding and potential financial issues** were noted as an area of concern for the future.
- Participants highlighted a desire for the District to make sure **social-emotional wellness** is addressed for students.
- The **impact of technology** on student focus was identified as a challenge.
- Participants expressed concern about students' ability to achieve balance in light of increasing academic demands.
- Participants stated a need to support the homeless population.

The District 211 Graduate

211 of Tomorrow participants identified desired characteristics and qualities of future District 211 graduates.

- Strong socio-emotional skills
- Confident
- Prepared for college and career
- Technology ready
- Critical Thinkers
- Aware of physical and mental wellness

1. Academic Programming

The 211 of Tomorrow participants suggested that the school district explore various programs and learning opportunities to continue to enhance the students' future readiness.

- 1A. Career Exploration** – Provide opportunities to explore various careers, coursework and/or interests within the curriculum to assist in identifying potential career paths before high school graduation.
- 1B. Career Exposure** – Establish programs and opportunities such as internships and career fairs to expose students to career possibilities.
- 1C. Expand Selection Timeline** – Provide student education of and opportunities to change direction of their identified path as they move through high school.
- 1D. Broad Course Selection** – Broaden the course opportunities within the curricular scope and sequence.
- 1E. Life Skills** – Provide opportunities for students to build life skills such as work ethic, communication, time management, problem solving, organization and collaboration.

2. Student Involvement & Wellness

The 211 of Tomorrow participants identified priorities for student involvement.

- 2A. Extra-curricular Activities** – Continue to provide varied opportunities to maximize student participation in extra-curricular activities.
- 2B. Flexibility Across Sports/Activities** – Allow for flexibility when students participate in multiple sports/activities.
- 2C. Student Balance** – Explore ways to support students in balancing academics and activities.
- 2D. Internships** – Increase awareness as well as expand internship options.
- 2E. Socio-emotional Wellness Supports** – Continue to provide programs and resources to support students' socio-emotional wellness.
- 2F. Resource Access** – Ensure that students are aware of and have access to counselors and resources when needed. Ensure that the ratio of students to counselors is sufficient.
- 2G. Student Awareness** – Build student awareness of personal wellness and progress.
- 2H. Individual Student Wellness Plan** – Continue to develop this tool keeping in mind the management, timeline for student decisions, and maintenance.
- 2I. Communication of Wellness Plans** – Develop a cooperative relationship between parents, students and the schools to effectively build and maintain communication. Potential communication vehicles to be considered may be parent meetings and technology based tools.

3. Facilities

Participants identified aspects of the facilities to be considered for improvements

- 3A. Facilities Improvements** – Continue to complete and integrate facilities improvements that are student centered.
- 3B. Parking Lot Logistics** – Explore ways to improve traffic patterns as well as drop-off/pick-up procedures taking into consideration the impact of student drivers on the traffic flow.
- 3C. Space for Sports/Activities** – Determine if sufficient space is available to house the varied sports/activities that take place in the facilities. Explore ways to address any issues as needed.
- 3D. Field House** – Consider and investigate the potential benefits and challenges of a new field house/s.

4. Financial Considerations

The 211 of Tomorrow participants provided feedback regarding financial communications and priorities.

- 4A. Type of Financial Information** – Provide communications in a user friendly manner regarding budget information, state funding changes, cost per student and major upcoming projects/expenditures.
- 4B. Location of Information** – Share financial information by website, email and US mail.
- 4C. Future Planning** – While District 211 has a strong financial history, participants recognized the need for continued fiscally sound decision-making in the face of changing State revenues and policies as well as changing demographics.
- 4D. Student Programs** – Invest in educational and co-curricular programming to support student involvement and success.
- 4E. Teacher Quality and Support** – Allocate funds to recruit and retain quality teachers.

THE
200
OF TOMORROW

The logo consists of the text 'THE' in a bold, sans-serif font at the top. Below it is a large '200' where the two zeros are stylized as graduation caps. At the bottom is the text 'OF TOMORROW' in a bold, sans-serif font. The entire logo is rendered in a dark red color.

FOCUS GROUP SUMMARY



TOWNSHIP HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT 211

SUMMARY OF FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS

JANUARY, 2016

INTRODUCTION

Township High School District 211 utilized a trained facilitator from UNICOM•ARC to conduct several focus groups to gather input from a variety of constituent groups representative of the community. A total of 14 listening sessions, including well over 200 participants, were conducted in late January 2016. These group discussions have been conducted in advance of a community wide survey and a large public engagement program that the District will conduct during the months of February, March, April, and May. The purpose of this engagement process will be to engage representatives of the full community in identifying strategies that will improve the work of the District and its efforts to support the academic, social and emotional growth of its students. Participants included a wide variety of individuals that make up the school community including citizens at large, municipal officials, parents, students, business owners, members of the District 211 staff, and several groups representative of the resident immigrant population.

This summary is not a verbatim account of these discussions, but rather a review of conversations that were documented by the focus group facilitator.

DISCUSSION GUIDE

In coordination with District administrators, UNICOM•ARC developed a discussion guide to be used during each group session. The following is in summary of that discussion guide.

- If you were talking to someone planning to move to this area, how would you describe the community? And if they asked about public education — what would you say? How would you describe District 211 to someone new to the area?

- When thinking about public education here in District 211, what do you see as its strengths? What might you consider the District’s major challenges going forward? (Probe) What are you concerned about as you consider the District’s future? What challenge, in your opinion is most critical and must be looked at as a priority issue?
- Let’s think about academic preparation of students here in District 211. What skills must a successful graduate in 2020 possess? (Probe) What skills, aptitudes, and preparation are most important for students graduating from District 211 in the next 5 years? What future demands will be placed on students as they graduate and take on a career or attend college?
- Do you have any specific ideas or suggestions for improving the educational program in District 211? (Probe for impressions about starting time — meaning a later starting time might be good for students and about the integration of technology into the curriculum).
- Let me ask you about the District’s long-term financial health. Do you think that District 211 has more than enough funds available to meet its academic obligations, sufficient funding, or less than sufficient funding?
- How would you describe the condition of District 211’s facilities? (Probe) Do you have any area of concerns with respect to school facilities? Do the school buildings meet the changing dynamics of teaching and learning?

DISCUSSION SUMMARY

Perceptions of the Community and of Township High School District 211

Most participants gave very positive comments to how they viewed the quality of life found in areas that are within the attendance boundary of the Township High School District. Most comments suggested that the community offered a great place to live, work and raise a family. Participants found a sense of connection and optimism in their larger community where people enjoyed living, value their property and were provided a full and supportive range of city services.

For the most part, participants found District 211 as “unequaled” in the Chicagoland area. Most were very happy with the performance of the District and agreed that a strong school system protected the value of their homes. Families often move into the area in order to have their children attend schools within the elementary and high school districts. The population of District 211 was thought to becoming more diverse with significant growth in the numbers of Latino, Polish and Indian families moving into the area. By and large, participants viewed this diversity as positive, offering students an enriching educational experience in knowing those of various nationalities and cultures.

Participants agreed that there existed a concern among some members of the community that local taxes were increasing and having an impact on families throughout the area. Some thought that parents and community members were at times, complacent in their support of the District, remaining silent on controversial issues that were being brought forward by small minority groups.

The Strengths of Township High School District 211 — *What do we do well?*

Participants thought the District to be well respected, innovative, academically strong, and financially sound. Teachers and administrators are held in high esteem and found to be caring and nurturing in their work with students. Most participants agreed that staff members would do “whatever is necessary” to encourage a student’s success.

Areas of strength included, tutorial programs for students that may need extra help, the use of technology as an integral part of the instructional process, a strong and successful program for special needs students, various gifted, magnet and advanced credit programs, a rigorous curriculum, a strong summer school program and, importantly, safe and orderly schools. Each group, without exception, was appreciative of the way the District responded to the needs of all students.

The Higgins Educational Center and Project Excel programs were mentioned frequently as outstanding examples of how the District attempts to build success for all students.

Challenges Facing Township High School District 211 — *What don’t we do well?*

There seemed to be a wide variety of comments when asked what challenges faced District 211 now and into the near future. Most, however, responded that the growth in diversity was a continuing issue that would require the District’s sustained attention. Likewise there was common discussion with regard to external pressures being placed on the District by the State of Illinois. Some worried that the State might seek remedy of its economic troubles by placing more mandates on school districts like District 211.

Other comments that were shared with some commonality included:

- That greater emphasis and awareness be given to those students who are not college bound or less academically strong. Participants had some concern for the District’s response to those students who fall into the middle of achievement groupings.
- The diversity of staff members does not reflect the diversity among students. More minority staff members would be of benefit to the District as it embraces the wide-ranging diversity among its student population.
- Keeping all parents involved in their student’s education was of common interest
- Allowing staff time to meet the emotional and social needs of students. This was a general concern among teachers and administrators.

In addition, there were discussions among the student group that should be noted. Students were well aware of the fact that, although they felt fortunate to have iPads, not all students had access to the Internet at home. Students felt this to be unfair.

In addition, there was some discussion around the lack of recognition, outside of major sports, given to students for their various achievements. And, several students felt concern that female students were not being “encouraged” into STEM type programs equal to that of young male students.

Academic Preparation of Students as They Graduate from District 211

Each group was asked questions related to the preparation of students as they graduate from high school. Consistent discussion among groups focused on the need for graduates to have strong social skills upon entering college or pursuing work or a vocational career. Of importance were proficiencies in what most described as “life skills” ... that being creativity, cooperation, collaboration, perseverance and problem solving. Also discussed was the need for strong proficiency in speaking and writing skills upon graduation from District 211.

Some common discussion among participants centered on the need for students to have “hands-on type experiences” before graduation (internships). Likewise, a rather deep understanding of technology and software’s, some ability to speak a second language and what was described as financial literacy were somewhat common among responses.

Suggesting Improvements to the Educational Program in District 211

There was little opinion among participants as to how they might suggest the District set upon improvement strategies. For the most part, those that responded to this set of questions were pleased with efforts being made by the District toward improvement. The fact the District had arranged for these focus groups and was interested in listening to input from community members was a common point of appreciation. When probed regarding start-stop times, technology integration, etc., few if any concerns were heard.

There were suggestions for improvement among the Latino, Indian, and Polish participants who took part in these focus groups. Most noted that more active interest by the District needed to be made to “include” various nationalities into the full life of the school community. Often these participants, and those in the community that they represent, found some difficulty in accessing the school system. Two factors illustrated their concern. First, a language barrier exists between a predominately English speaking District 211 and those whose first language is not English. Few interpreters are available and often-printed materials sent home were not in their native language. A second issue was the simple fact that many new to this country (and to District 211) just didn’t understand how the school system works. Rather than advocating for better

communication, they often surrender to the background. It's safe to say that many feel "disenfranchised" by the school system.

The Financial Health of Township High School District 211

Generally speaking, those who participated in these focus group sessions found the District to be financially stable using tax dollars both efficiently and effectively. As mentioned previously, some thought the tax base had been increasing and to that end, put a fair amount of difficulty on some families in the local school community. A general feeling among participants, however, was that the District had sufficient funds and that it put those funds toward reaching out to all students with various programs that supported success. This "spend to ensure student success" sentiment was clearly expressed by both the teacher and administrator participants.

Two groups in particular spent considerable time in discussion of the finances of the District.

One group thought the District was managed effectively, with good credit ratings, an established reserve fund and a professional, credentialed staff attending to the financial matters of the school system. They felt the District to be financially stable and in a good position to fulfill its mission. Some felt that if the District failed at anything in terms of the current financial condition, it was the lack of effective communications in educating the full community about financial interests and obligations of the school system. By and large, however, participants felt that District 211 provided a high quality education, contributed to stable property values and acted in the best interests of students and the community with regard to its financial responsibilities.

A second group of citizens took a different view of District finances suggesting a larger than necessary reserve fund, a lack of Board understanding of the budget process and salaries and benefits that are not in line with comparable school systems. In addition, they felt the District offers less than full transparency with the community about budgeting and finances. Participants in this group had concerns regarding possible legislation to return a portion of the teacher pension program to local districts. Should that happen, the group suggested significant and negative ramifications to the District and the community of taxpayers. To a large degree, participants in this group felt the District should reduce its reserves and control its spending in order to return a portion of its levy back to taxpayers.

Describe the Condition of the High School Facilities

Without exception, participants felt the school facilities to be in excellent condition. Building maintenance and repair programs were seen as very effective. Some comments were heard about the fact that buildings were ageing, and to that end failed to provide space that met with today's educational standards. A few comments were heard regarding the lack of field space for student sports and activities. Students felt too much attention was paid to "football" and other sport activities at the detriment of other facility needs. Overall, the condition of the school buildings was of little concern to those who participated in these focus group sessions.

CONCLUSIONS

In summary, below are suggestions that found common priority among participants as translated by the focus group facilitator. These priorities will be weighed against survey results and provide some additional direction to the larger public engagement sessions.

- A. Township High School District 211 has an excellent reputation and is viewed as unequal in the larger Chicagoland area.
- B. Academic rigor was a consistent theme throughout these discussions and strength was noted in programs such as special education, advanced credit programs, summer school, the Higgins Educational Center, Project Excel programs, and in the maintenance of safe and orderly schools.
- C. The cost of living in the area, including housing and property tax expenses, are recognized as significant factors that may influence people's decisions to reside within the community.
- D. A rapidly changing demographic (both social-economic and racial minorities) throughout the community is placing additional demands on the District.
- E. Future initiatives will need to be considerate of the time needed to nurture the academic, emotional and social needs of students who attend a District 211 high school.
- F. The need to focus more attention on students who are less inclined to attend college and/or those that fall into the middle of the academic range of ability.
- G. The District is strong financially yet the need exists to more effectively communicate with and educate the community about school finances.
- H. Be watchful of ageing school facilities and plan accordingly to maintain buildings that meet today's educational standards.
- I. Life skills including communication (writing and speaking), collaboration, critical thinking, problem solving, and a strong work ethic are required proficiencies of all District 211 graduates.
- J. External influences particularly at the State level may threaten the District's stability.

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SURVEY - PHONE/ONLINE
OVERVIEW OF DATA



**Township High School District 211
Community Survey
May/June 2016**

Overview of Data - Phone Survey and Online Survey
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In May 2016, UNICOM•ARC conducted a telephone survey of registered voter households in Township High School District 211. The purpose of the survey was to better understand area residents' perceptions of and priorities for the District.

Five hundred (500) phone interviews were completed. Phone Survey Data is weighted to reflect a percentage of 25/75 parent/non-parent households. This Overview of Data provides overall results of every question included in the survey.

	Phone Survey	Online Survey*
Total Surveys	500	1,589*
Parent	227	991*
Non-Parent	273	578*
Other, Don't Know		13
Male	250	533*
Female	250	1,022*

**Not all participants responded to these/all questions*

Q1		%	Online %
Students are often given the grades A, B, C, D or F to score the quality of their academic work. Suppose all public schools across the State of Illinois were graded in the same way. What grade would you give the public schools in the State of Illinois? - A, B, C, D, or F?	A	11.4%	6.2%
	B	25.7%	34.4%
	C	34.5%	38.2%
	D	10.6%	8.6%
	Fail	5.1%	1.9%
	other, don't know	12.8%	10.1%

Q2		%	Online %
What about your local high school district - Township High School District 211. What grade would you give District 211? - A, B, C, D, or F?	A	38.3%	40.5%
	B	38.5%	41.3%
	C	11.3%	10.9%
	D	3.8%	2.8%
	Fail	1.4%	1.4%
	other, don't know	6.6%	2.6%

Q3		%	Online %
When comparing the quality of education provided by District 211 to neighboring school districts, would you say that the quality of schools in District 211 to be much lower, somewhat lower, about the same, somewhat higher, or much higher?	much lower	1.5%	1.9%
	somewhat lower	7.2%	9.4%
	about the same	29.1%	23.7%
	somewhat higher	32.3%	38.8%
	much higher	22.9%	20.8%
	other, don't know	7.0%	4.6%

Q4		%	Online %
When thinking about the financial condition of District 211, do you think that the District has more than adequate funding to maintain the current level of staff and educational programs, does it have just enough funding, or would you say that the District is in need of additional funding to maintain its current staff and educational programs?	more than adequate funding	29.5%	32.4%
	just enough funding	37.8%	36.7%
	not adequate funding	19.4%	13.6%
	other, don't know	13.4%	16.4%

Q5. Next are some statements that some people might make about District 211. For each, indicate if you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree when thinking about the District 211.

PHONE SURVEY	<i>strongly agree</i>	total agree	total disagree	other, don't know
Families move into this area because of the reputation of District 211	49.2%	82.9%	11.7%	5.4%
District 211 spends tax dollars efficiently	16.9%	61.9%	23.4%	14.7%
We get excellent value in education for the taxes we pay to District 211	32.4%	75.4%	20.0%	4.6%
I trust the Board of Education to make good decisions about the District's overall direction	23.2%	68.6%	25.6%	5.8%
Schools should try to involve all students in athletics or after school activities	52.7%	81.1%	16.2%	2.7%
The growing diversity of various ethnicities is a huge challenge for District 211	22.3%	53.8%	39.9%	6.3%
The quality of District 211 is the most important factor that affects my property value	34.4%	75.7%	18.6%	5.6%
District 211 has been very effective in communicating with area residents	34.2%	69.7%	23.4%	7.0%

ONLINE RESPONSES	<i>strongly agree</i>	total agree	total disagree	other, don't know
Families move into this area because of the reputation of District 211	47.7%	88.5%	7.0%	3.9%
District 211 spends tax dollars efficiently	20.9%	63.2%	22.9%	13.1%
We get excellent value in education for the taxes we pay to District 211	32.9%	75.3%	19.5%	4.1%
I trust the Board of Education to make good decisions about the District's overall direction	17.6%	61.0%	32.7%	4.9%
Schools should try to involve all students in athletics or after school activities	50.0%	84.3%	13.1%	1.6%
The growing diversity of various ethnicities is a huge challenge for District 211	23.9%	59.9%	32.6%	6.4%
The quality of District 211 is the most important factor that affects my property value	25.8%	69.8%	19.7%	9.5%
District 211 has been very effective in communicating with area residents	24.8%	68.5%	22.7%	7.9%

Q6. For each of the following, please rate the job performance of District 211 as excellent, good, not so good or poor.

PHONE SURVEY	<i>excellent</i>	<i>excellent/ good</i>	<i>fair</i>	<i>not so good/ poor</i>	<i>other, don't know</i>
Maintaining effective District leadership	15.9%	59.3%	24.1%	7.5%	9.1%
Recruiting and retaining a high quality teaching staff	23.4%	72.4%	14.4%	5.1%	8.1%
Preparing students for success following high school graduation	25.5%	67.7%	18.0%	7.6%	6.7%
Keeping up-to-date with instructional technology	27.8%	75.3%	11.7%	3.2%	9.9%
Developing and implementing an effective strategic plan	12.9%	55.4%	24.2%	4.9%	15.5%
Providing safe and secure schools	30.2%	80.1%	12.6%	4.0%	3.3%
Attending to the needs of an ethnically diverse student population	17.0%	62.6%	20.6%	5.5%	11.4%
Providing frequent, meaningful feedback about student performance	17.3%	54.1%	23.4%	7.6%	14.8%
Keeping up with the repair and maintenance of school buildings	30.0%	76.9%	12.3%	2.4%	8.4%
Encouraging residents to participate in the District's decision-making process	14.0%	42.6%	30.4%	21.2%	5.8%
Managing District finances	9.1%	46.4%	26.7%	12.7%	14.2%

ONLINE RESPONSES	<i>excellent</i>	<i>excellent/ good</i>
Maintaining effective District leadership	23.3%	72.6%
Recruiting and retaining a high quality teaching staff	29.5%	80.3%
Preparing students for success following high school graduation	31.8%	77.8%
Keeping up-to-date with instructional technology	40.5%	87.9%
Developing and implementing an effective strategic plan	22.4%	67.8%
Providing safe and secure schools	38.5%	83.9%
Attending to the needs of an ethnically diverse student population	23.6%	71.9%
Providing frequent, meaningful feedback about student performance	22.3%	69.0%
Keeping up with the repair and maintenance of school buildings	37.7%	85.0%
Encouraging residents to participate in the District's decision-making process	30.1%	69.1%
Managing District finances	22.5%	62.5%

Q7		%	Online %
Recently, district residents have been attending a series of open, citizen-led Community Engagement meetings called "The 211 of Tomorrow" where they have been studying issues to provide input for a new strategic plan for District 211. Would you say that you are very aware, somewhat aware, not very aware or not at all aware of these meetings?	very aware	13.8%	51.2%
	somewhat aware	20.2%	26.7%
	not very aware	13.3%	9.6%
	not at all aware	51.7%	9.7%
	other, don't know	.9%	2.0%

Q 8 - The following is a list of issues being studied by "The 211 of Tomorrow" community engagement initiative. Please rate each using a 7-point scale. If you think the issue is a high priority, rate it a 7. If you think it a low priority, rate it a 1. Of course you can choose any rating between 7 and 1.

PHONE SURVEY	<i>top priority (7)</i>	<i>high priority (5-7)</i>	4	<i>low priority (1-3)</i>	<i>other, don't know</i>
Strengthen career programs for non-college bound students	30.6%	77.9%	9.6%	6.6%	5.9%
Increase ethnic diversity among the teaching and administrative staff	16.2%	57.6%	15.5%	19.5%	7.4%
Provide opportunity for all students to gain college credits before they graduate from a District 211 high school	38.4%	78.6%	9.9%	8.7%	2.7%
Address social and emotional needs of students	30.0%	74.2%	12.0%	9.3%	4.5%
Communicate with transparency regarding the District's finances	33.8%	73.4%	8.8%	13.3%	4.6%
Solicit and respond to community input in decision making	22.2%	68.2%	15.7%	11.9%	4.2%
Attend to the District's aging school buildings	15.6%	70.1%	16.5%	10.3%	3.1%
Focus attention on the life skills that students need to be successful adults	42.1%	80.7%	9.9%	6.7%	2.7%
Align courses in high school to a student's career interest	33.5%	79.6%	10.3%	6.5%	3.5%
Partner with local businesses for high school summer internships	28.2%	68.9%	10.8%	12.8%	7.4%

ONLINE SURVEY	<i>top priority (7)</i>	<i>high priority (5-7)</i>	4	<i>low priority (1-3)</i>
Strengthen career programs for non-college bound students	34.4%	73.3%	10.6%	13.6%
Increase ethnic diversity among the teaching and administrative staff	12.1%	39.6%	19.1%	38.5%
Provide opportunity for all students to gain college credits before they graduate from a District 211 high school	25.1%	62.2%	16.4%	18.9%
Address social and emotional needs of students	35.6%	74.3%	9.9%	13.4%
Communicate with transparency regarding the District's finances	36.1%	73.3%	12.3%	11.8%
Solicit and respond to community input in decision making	24.3%	70.5%	14.8%	12.4%
Attend to the District's aging school buildings	17.7%	65.1%	15.1%	17.0%
Focus attention on the life skills that students need to be successful adults	48.2%	82.1%	6.1%	9.3%
Align courses in high school to a student's career interest	30.6%	72.1%	12.3%	13.1%
Partner with local businesses for high school summer internships	34.5%	74.1%	11.1%	11.8%

Q9		%	Online %
And thinking about the school district as a whole, what would you say is the biggest challenge facing District 211?	finances	23.2%	5.7%
	aging school buildings	.5%	2.4%
	diversity, an increase in various nationalities	10.2%	6.0%
	student achievement	10.6%	14.3%
	hiring and retaining quality educators	4.1%	6.8%
	safety and security	4.6%	4.9%
	high property taxes on residents	2.0%	13.5%
	keeping up with technology/integrating technology into curriculum	1.5%	4.8%
	the State of Illinois	1.7%	24.5%
	other (specify)	19.9%	11.0%
	don't know, refused	21.6%	----

Q10		%	Online %
Some local governments offer video recordings of board or council meetings. How often have you watched this type of video recording - would you say very often, often, not very often or never?	very often	1.1%	2.6%
	often	3.1%	8.1%
	not very often	14.7%	24.8%
	never	80.7%	60.5%
	other, don't know	.3%	2.9%

Q11 - PHONE SURVEY -		%
How likely would you be to watch a video recording of District 211 Board of Education meetings - very likely, likely, not very likely or not at all likely?	very likely	11.2%
	likely	29.8%
	not very likely	32.0%
	not all likely	26.4%
	other, don't know	0.6%

Q11 - ONLINE ONLY		%
How likely would you be to watch a video recording of District 211 Board of Education meetings - very likely, likely, not very likely or not at all likely?	very likely	11.8%
	likely	32.5%
	not very likely	31.9%
	not all likely	18.2%
	other, don't know	2.0%

Q12. The following is a list of improvements District 211 is considering to strengthen its curriculum. For each, indicate if you think it very important, moderately important, not very important or not at all important.

PHONE SURVEY	<i>very important</i>	total important	total not important	other, don't know
Place a greater emphasis on science, technology, engineering, and math programs	69.9%	95.9%	3.0%	1.1%
Expand the use of instructional technology in all subject areas	55.3%	91.4%	6.6%	2.0%
Focus more attention on students who are not performing at grade level	65.3%	93.9%	4.9%	1.2%
Expand programs that offer social and emotional support for students	55.1%	86.0%	12.8%	1.2%
Strengthen programs for ethnic minority students	35.1%	76.3%	20.7%	3.0%
Place more emphasis on students who may choose a career over college	49.2%	88.2%	9.9%	1.9%

ONLINE SURVEY	<i>very important</i>	total important	total not important
Place a greater emphasis on science, technology, engineering, and math programs	49.7%	87.4%	10.2%
Expand the use of instructional technology in all subject areas	38.3%	78.7%	18.0%
Focus more attention on students who are not performing at grade level	44.5%	87.1%	9.9%
Expand programs that offer social and emotional support for students	41.8%	80.6%	16.0%
Strengthen programs for ethnic minority students	21.6%	60.2%	34.0%
Place more emphasis on students who may choose a career over college	35.0%	78.3%	18.0%

Q13		%	Online %
Generally speaking, how well informed are you about District 211. Would you say that you are very informed, somewhat informed, not very informed or not at all informed?	very informed	17.5%	32.0%
	somewhat informed	49.1%	55.6%
	not very informed	23.3%	9.6%
	not at all informed	9.5%	1.4%
	other, don't know	.6%	0.3%

Q14		%	Online %
There are a number of ways that you might want to receive information about District 211. What would you say is your primary source of information about the District?	The Daily Herald	14.4%	11.6%
	family and friends	9.1%	7.6%
	Superintendent's newsletter	3.0%	12.9%
	Principal's newsletter	3.9%	22.6%
	From classroom teacher or staff member	4.1%	10.9%
	District website	8.4%	15.8%
	By attending school event	.8%	2.6%
	social media like Facebook or Twitter	4.9%	4.4%
	students	2.1%	4.4%
	other (specify)	39.9%	5.7%
don't know, refused	9.4%	---	

Q15		%	Online %
Are there any children in your household who currently attend a District 211 high school?	yes	25.0%	62.0%
	no	75.0%	36.1%
	other, don't know	.0%	0.8%

Q16		%	Online %
What high school does your child (children) attend?	Conant	15.0%	17.0%
	Fremd	24.7%	29.7%
	Hoffman Estates	14.5%	13.2%
	Palatine	21.6%	19.0%
	Schaumburg	15.4%	19.8%
	District 211 Academy North	1.8%	0.1%
	Higgins Education Center	.4%	0.6%
	other, don't know	6.6%	0.3%

Q17		%	Online %
Would you know what high school attendance area you live closest to?	Conant	21.4%	14.9%
	Fremd	16.2%	20.1%
	Hoffman Estates	8.1%	9.5%
	Palatine	17.7%	23.0%
	Schaumburg	23.2%	16.3%
	other, don't know	13.3%	14.2%

Q18		%	Online %
How long have you lived within District 211 boundaries?	0-2 yrs	6.6%	6.4%
	3-5 yrs	7.0%	6.4%
	6-10 yrs	11.4%	11.2%
	11-20 yrs	30.7%	36.7%
	more than 20 yrs	40.3%	30.6%
	other, don't know	4.1%	7.0%

Q19		%	Online %
In which of the following age groups are you?	18-34	13.4%	9.6%
	35-49	34.8%	45.2%
	50-64	32.3%	34.0%
	65-74	10.6%	2.6%
	75+	8.1%	0.4%
	other, don't know Prefer not to answer	.8%	6.2%

Q20		%	Online %
What was the last grade or year of school you completed?	high school	13.6%	8.4%
	some college	18.6%	10.9%
	college	41.0%	32.5%
	post-graduate	25.6%	43.5%
	other, don't know	1.2%	2.4%

Q21		%	Online %
How often do you use social media - daily, weekly, maybe once a month or less, or never?	daily	63.5%	67.7%
	weekly	15.3%	14.9%
	once a month or less	8.4%	6.4%
	never	12.6%	8.0%
	other, don't know	.3%	1.2%

Q22		%	Online %
How often do you visit the District's website for information and updates about District 211?	few times/week	4.5%	16.8%
	once a week	9.1%	15.7%
	once every couple of weeks	12.3%	21.6%
	once a month	19.6%	27.2%
	never	51.6%	13.2%
	other, don't know	3.0%	3.8%

Q23		%	Online %
Gender	male	49.9%	33.3%
	female	50.1%	63.9%
	other, don't know	.0%	---

THE
200
OF TOMORROW



CES EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
DOCUMENTS



DISTRICT 211
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROGRAM
A Planning Process

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SESSION (CES) #1

Monday, February 1, 2016

Fremd High School

Tuesday, February 2, 2016

Schaumburg High School



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
AS A RESULT OF THE
SMALL GROUP WORK ACTIVITY
SESSION #1

FEBRUARY 1, 2016 • FREMD HIGH SCHOOL
FEBRUARY 2, 2016 • SCHAUMBURG HIGH SCHOOL

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Community Engagement is a citizen-facilitated process designed to build two-way communication between the community at-large and the school district in order to provide feedback for the Board of Education. The Community Engagement Sessions offer a platform for both sharing information and gathering the community's input regarding targeted strategic topic areas. Each Session includes an informational presentation followed by a collaborative small group work time.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SESSION #1

Over 400 participants attended and signed the participant list during the first *211 of Tomorrow* community engagement sessions on February 1 & 2, 2016. However, the total number of attendees and participants was known to be greater given some community members, the facilitating Team members, some Board of Education members, and some District administrators did not sign the participant sheet.

The facilitating co-chairs rotated duties at each of the *211 of Tomorrow* sessions, and launched the community engagement project sharing the team's commitment to facilitating a positive conversation and collaborative process. Superintendent Dr. Daniel Cates presented information about District 211 — "The State of the District." The presentation is available [here](#). Then, Co-Chairs took turns introducing the small group work activities and participants collaborated in a total of 58 small groups between the two nights to complete the three tasks listed above. The following information is a summary of the responses from the groups as well as a small number of individual responses.

TASK #1: CELEBRATE • SURPRISE • CONCERN

CELEBRATE

Take some time to discuss with members of your group about what High School District 211 is doing right — what are we proud of?

GREATEST SURPRISE

Based on the information provided in the presentation, what were the greatest surprises among your group members?

GREATEST CONCERN

What concerns your group the most?

TASK #2: WHAT SHOULD A DISTRICT 211 GRADUATE LOOK LIKE?

Take 15 minutes to discuss with members of your group what you think a District 211 graduate should look like in the year 2021.

- What skills should they have?
- What health and wellness factors are important?
- What technology skills should they have?
- What kind of jobs should we prepare them for?

TASK #3: STRATEGIC TOPIC AREAS - QUESTIONS • ISSUES • OPPORTUNITIES

There are three strategic topic areas scheduled to be examined in the upcoming Community Engagement workshop series. To make those sessions most relevant to you, we need you to tell us the key **questions, issues and opportunities** that should be addressed in each of these sessions.

TASK #1: CELEBRATE • SURPRISE • CONCERN

CELEBRATE

Participants at the first *211 of Tomorrow* community engagement session identified several items they believe are sources of pride for District 211. Groups shared a high level of overall satisfaction with the District in key areas including curriculum, extracurricular activities, teacher and District staff quality, and finances. Groups recorded phrases like the following to indicate pride in District 211: “Wide offering of classes & programs;” “Sports/clubs=variety makes it impossible not to find something to connect with;” “Proud of teachers-genuine care of students;” “Strong academics, well-educated graduates;” “Supportive/caring environment;” “Student-centered decision-making”, and “District is cost-effective.”

Above anything else, comments related to the **curriculum** of District 211 schools were noted as a point of celebration from 29 of 58 groups. Groups listed items such as the quality programming, academic rigor, and variety of curriculum.

Participants also celebrated the **extracurricular opportunities** provided to students through sports, activities, and clubs. Many comments were included regarding the number of options available as well as the variety of opportunities offered. Groups listed programs such as music, arts, sports, and clubs among the offerings for District 211 students.

Another source of pride listed by participants was **the quality of the teachers and District 211 staff**. Fourteen groups and one individual listed this aspect of the school district as a celebration. One group noted, “Teacher/student relationships” while another celebrated that “Teachers are well educated/supportive of students.”

GREATEST SURPRISE

Without question, the high number of **homeless students** surprised a significant number of groups as well as a number of individual respondents. Further, 28 of 58 groups and five individuals indicated the District's increasing levels of poverty, as indicated by the **free/reduced lunch program** or the federal meal program as their

greatest surprise along with 22 of 58 tables also listing the **changing demographics** as a surprise.

While not a majority, a smaller group of tables noted the **cost per student** as a surprise. One group commented, “Cost per pupil so low and great resources!” while another said, “Huge cost to educate.”

GREATEST CONCERN

The top area of concern focused on **the impact of state funding**. Several groups, 20 of 58 total tables, expressed concern about the impact the state budget crisis will have on the school district. One group identified the concern for the “Anticipation of less help from the state;” while another group noted, “Economics of state & impact local education and trickle down on electives ‘extras’.”

The second most mentioned area of concern were topics associated with **social-emotional wellness** such as preparation for emotional issues of students today, the concern regarding the challenges students face due to the “pressure of course work, extracurricular, etc.” Groups mentioned balance, intensity, and stress levels associated with academics and sports/clubs as concerns.

Issues related to **technology** were also commonly listed as an area of concern. Groups listed items such as “Technology distraction-poor focus skills” as well as issues specifically related to iPads.

TASK #2: WHAT SHOULD A DISTRICT 211 GRADUATE LOOK LIKE?

Participants at the community engagement sessions listed various skills, health and wellness factors, and technology skills that District 211 students should have upon graduation. First and foremost, participants overwhelmingly identified topics associated with **social-emotional well-being**. Fifty-four groups and four individual respondents said social-emotional skills such as self-confidence, learning to work collaboratively in team environment, social skills, personal responsibility as it relates to their character, and being well-rounded are important for graduates of District 211. One group said students “need to learn how to pick themselves up after a loss and keep moving forward to the next challenge” while another group noted “Independence-self advocate” as an important characteristic.

Comments related to **career skills** were listed by 32 of 58 tables as well as by two individuals. Participants indicated a desire for both college and vocational options while in high school to prepare students for their futures. One group noted, “Graduates that do not have college plans should be prepared for the work force” while another said “Skills that are able to provide the students with options in the job market.”

Technology skills and related comments also were listed by a high number of groups, 34 out of 58 as well as one individual, as important for District 211 graduates. From software/applications and innovative thinking/development to basic computer skills, participants felt these types of skills are necessary for students’ futures.

Aspects related to **communication skills** were also identified as important. Communication with others through verbal interactions, presentations, and written

communications were all listed as part of this recommended skillset. Some groups specifically identified “face-to-face” interactions while one individual response noted “In a global society-students need to work well in collaborative setting & not just by themselves.”

TASK #3: STRATEGIC TOPIC AREAS - QUESTIONS • ISSUES • OPPORTUNITIES

ACADEMIC PROGRAMMING

Many of the comments listed by the various groups related to academic programming focused on aspects related to **career preparation and internships**. Participants communicated their interest in further development of vocational skills such as manufacturing skills, industrial skills as well as internships for students providing the opportunity to explore career options before they leave high school. Other ideas expressed a desire for more information about current resources & programs like “college career pathways” and “Harper’s Promise.”

Participants repeatedly mentioned topics related to **life skills**. Several groups identified personal finances as a topic to address with one group saying, “How to live on your own, insurance.”

Another area of interest for the community engagement session on academic programming is **college preparation**. Items such as financial aid, raising college awareness earlier as well as preparing students for the academic expectations they will face were mentioned.

STUDENT INVOLVEMENT & WELLNESS

As previously expressed by many groups, **social emotional skills** are of particular interest to the participants. Groups again stated their interest or asked questions about social-emotional skills and learning. One group said, “Many high school students suffer from depression. How can we teach kids to cope?” while another said, “Make sure we are able to keep offering support for social-emotional needs.”

As noted in the celebrations, the opportunities for student involvement are numerous in District 211. When thinking of items related to student involvement, several groups included questions or comments related to **intramurals and/or clubs** for this topic area. A number of groups indicated an interest in more opportunities for “no cut” or “less demanding” activities. One group questioned, “How to reach [the students] who are not getting involved? There are clubs can/should be added.”

FINANCES & FACILITIES

Participants noted the strength of the District 211 financial landscape as a positive. The most frequently asked question regarding finances was how **changes in state funding** may impact the financial health of the school district. One group asked, “Given future state cutbacks, how do we prepare to maintain quality with less money?” Groups also were interested in transparency of the District’s budget.

Groups noted the quality facilities and how well they are cared for while also wondering about **future capital investments and improvements**. Some groups mentioned various athletic fields and facilities need attention, while a number of groups also suggested investigating a fieldhouse. Groups also wondered what types of plans are in place for future facility improvements.

TASK #3: OTHER SUGGESTIONS

At the end of the workshop, participants were asked to share additional suggestions for the *211 of Tomorrow* community engagement program. The groups offered varied suggestions for the Facilitating Team. Ideas related to topics such as additional opportunities to celebrate student success, class rank, solutions for homeless families, and additional vocational programs were listed.

**For a complete listing of all responses,
see the CES-1 Verbatim Response Documents for February 1 and 2 found at
<http://adc.d211.org/communityengagement/>**



DISTRICT 211
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROGRAM
A Planning Process

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SESSION (CES) #2

Monday, March 14, 2016

Palatine High School

Tuesday, March 15, 2016

James B. Conant High School



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
AS A RESULT OF THE
SMALL GROUP WORK ACTIVITY
SESSION #2

MARCH 14, 2016 • PALATINE HIGH SCHOOL
MARCH 15, 2016 • JAMES B. CONANT HIGH SCHOOL

TASK #1: COLLEGE MAJOR AND CAREER EXPLORATIONS – POSITIVES, CONCERNS, SUGGESTIONS

What if every student was able to identify and explore a college major or career pathway while in high school?

- *Discuss the positives if every student was able to identify and explore a college major or career pathway while in high school.*
- *Discuss any concerns if every student was able to identify and explore a college major or career pathway while in high school.*
- *Discuss suggestions for helping students identify and explore a college major or career pathway while in high school.*

TASK #2: LIFE SKILLS

Businesses and industry continually stress the importance of life skills, work place skills, soft skills, etc. that are critical for success in the work place and life in general. Brainstorm with your table a list of those skills.

- *Take 15 minutes to discuss the top life skills, workplace skills, soft skills, etc. students should be practicing while in high school. If you have time, star the top five most important skills.*

TASK #3: GRADING – POSITIVES, CONCERNS, SUGGESTIONS

Grading is an important form of communication between the teacher, student, parent, college and future employer. Though high schools issue more than a semester grade per course (mid-term, quarter, final exam, etc.), only the final semester grade is considered the official grade and marked on a transcript for colleges and future employers to see as the student grants permission.

- *Discuss the positive attributes about to grading.*
- *Discuss the concerns about grading.*
- *Discuss suggestions for communicating grades most effectively.*

TASK #4: ONE-TO-ONE DEVICES – POSITIVES, CONCERNS, SUGGESTIONS

Each District 211 student has an individual iPad device and has the ability to bring that device home for educational use. Both teachers and students report the capacity for enhanced learning opportunities associated with access to an individual device.

- *Discuss the benefits regarding every student having an individual electronic device. (consider both at home and at school use)*
- *Discuss the concerns regarding every student having an individual electronic device. (consider both at home and at school use)*
- *Discuss suggestions regarding every student having an individual electronic device. (consider both at home and at school use)*

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.

More than 200 participants attended the second *211 of Tomorrow* community engagement sessions on March 14 & 15, 2016. However, Facilitating Team members, Board of Education members and some District administrators are not asked to sign-

Associate Superintendent Dr. Lisa Small presented information about Academic Programming in District 211. To view the presentation, visit the Community Engagement website at [http://adc.d211.org/community engagement](http://adc.d211.org/community%20engagement), or click [here](#). Then, participants worked in 31 small groups total between the two nights to complete the four tasks listed above. Following is a summary of the responses from the groups as well as a small number of individual responses.

TASK #1: COLLEGE MAJOR AND CAREER EXPLORATIONS – POSITIVES, CONCERNS, SUGGESTIONS

211 of Tomorrow participants listed a number of positives, concerns, and suggestions in regard to the possibility that every student be able to identify an explore a college major or career pathway while in high school.

POSITIVES

A majority of the small groups felt the opportunity to explore potential careers, coursework, and/or interests was a positive aspect of college major and career explorations. One group mentioned “exploring something they love & have an interest [in]” while another group felt a positive is the “chance to explore without peer pressure.” Equally important to the *211 of Tomorrow* participants was the opportunity to assist students in honing in on a major or career path sooner. Small Group comments included that the program provides “goals & vision of where student is going” as well as “could help clarify future career and classes meaningful.” Another frequent topic included by participants focused on financial implications. Several groups listed “save money” and comments related to reduced college tuition as a positive aspect of these opportunities.

CONCERNS

The most frequently mentioned concerns were related to the ideas of identifying paths too soon. Comments in this category related to selecting a path then “realizing it’s not really for you,” students might feel “stuck,” or freshman age students are too young to be able to accurately make selections for their future career paths. One group commented, “Impossible task to expect students to know what they want to do.” Another group listed the concern “narrowing interest too soon making career choices at 14 & many college students change majors.”

The second most mentioned category for concerns related to options. Small groups made comments related to the limited options as well as that the program “may impact ability to take elective courses-especially if college bound-will art and music courses suffer?” Another concern included in this category was that the pathway may limit students’ ability to explore courses outside of the path that “may still be beneficial to career.”

Other frequently mentioned concerns listed related to the idea of too much pressure, schedule implications and a need to address the whole child beyond academics.

TASK #3: GRADING – POSITIVES, CONCERNS, SUGGESTIONS

211 of Tomorrow participants listed a number of positives, concerns, and suggestions in regard to grading.

POSITIVES

Two main categories of positives were listed by the small groups. First, participants felt that grades serve as motivation for students. The “incentive to complete coursework/homework” as well as “helps motivate students to perform” were listed as positives for grading. Another positive aspect of grading listed by *211 of Tomorrow* participants was the feedback provided by grades. One group commented that grades offer “communication – let you know where you stand” while another said that a positive of grades is the “sense of pride/feedback.”

Other comments were varied. Infinite Campus was identified by a number of groups as a positive. Ideas such as “quick, easy & quantifiable way to compare students” and “preparation/or career where you are graded on your work performance” were also included.

CONCERNS

The most mentioned concerns related to consistency. Concerns related to the grading scales were most frequently listed as well as differences between teachers in terms of grading and course content were included.

The idea that learning is more important than grading also was mentioned as a concern by multiple groups. One group included, “learning to learn and not a grade” as a concern. Another concern listed by multiple groups was that not all teachers keep updated grades in a timely manner.

SUGGESTIONS

Several groups suggested that communication between teachers and parents, as well as between teachers and students, be a focus. Among the comments were, “If teacher comes across a challenge with student, notify parent” and “walk parents through grade book (don’t assume they know).” *211 of Tomorrow* participants also suggested that more detailed comments accompany grades on mid-terms and report cards, as well as timely grade reporting to students and online.

TASK #4: ONE-TO-ONE DEVICES – POSITIVES, CONCERNS, SUGGESTIONS

211 of Tomorrow participants listed a number of positives, concerns, and suggestions in regard to One-to-One Devices.

POSITIVES

Without question, the largest positives listed by *211 of Tomorrow* participants related to the idea of access. Comments included in this category were access to: teacher materials, educational material, technology, useful sites & programs, Internet, quick access to information, and assignments. Also identified as a positive in terms of access was that one-to-one devices “equal [the] playing field for those without personal devices” and “everyone has the same opportunity.” Another frequently listed positive for one-to-one devices was the impact on learning. Participants felt that the devices assist in “learning technology” and “allows for online learning.” Participants also liked the idea that students have less to carry. Small groups commented that there are a lot less books.

TASK #4: ONE-TO-ONE DEVICES – POSITIVES, CONCERNS, SUGGESTIONS (CONT.)

CONCERNS

By far, distraction was the most frequently mentioned concern for one-to-one devices. Participants expressed concerns that games, social media, and other non-academic items are being utilized by students and disrupting learning. Another commonly mentioned concern was that not all students have access to Wi-Fi. One group commented, “Homes do not all have Internet at home.” Various other items were listed as concerns such as “classroom management – new challenges” and “more training needed for teachers on how to use effectively, not just for the sake of using it.” Some groups questioned why some sites are blocked and not others.

SUGGESTIONS

A common suggestion from *211 of Tomorrow* participants related to restricting access. Several groups suggested that access be restricted to academic content. Another repeated suggestion related to consistency of devices for K-12. Other common suggestions related to parent education on device use and parents’ role in a one-to-one device.

OTHER SUGGESTIONS

Participants were asked about other suggestions to be considered for this community engagement program. Varied responses were included from the groups. Some suggestions listed were offering more summer school courses, more interaction with the Superintendent & Associate Superintendent, and “Figure out a way to motivate students who are so concerned about grades (get them to learn the material rather than just if it’s for a grade.)”

**For a complete listing of all responses,
see the CES-2 Verbatim Response Documents for March 14 and 15 found at
http://adc.d211.org/community_engagement**



DISTRICT 211
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROGRAM
A Planning Process

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SESSION (CES) #3

Monday, April 4, 2016
Hoffman Estates High School

Tuesday, April 5, 2016
Palatine High School



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
AS A RESULT OF THE
SMALL GROUP WORK ACTIVITY
SESSION #3

APRIL 4, 2016 • HOFFMAN ESTATES HIGH SCHOOL
APRIL 5, 2016 • PALATINE HIGH SCHOOL

TASK #1: STUDENT INVOLVEMENT: ATHLETICS, ACTIVITIES AND INTERNSHIPS

- **Positives:** *Discuss the positives in regard to District 211 athletics, activities, and internships.*
- **Concerns:** *Discuss any concerns in regard to District 211 athletics, activities, and internships.*
- **Suggestions:** *Discuss suggestions in regard to District 211 athletics, activities, and internships.*

TASK #2: SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL WELLNESS

- **Celebrate:** *Discuss what District 211 is doing right to ensure the social and emotional wellness of high school students.*
- **Greatest Surprise:** *Based on the presentation, what were the greatest surprises for your group in regard to the social and emotional wellness of high school students.*
- **Greatest Concern:** *What concerns your group the most about the social and emotional wellness of high school students?*
- **Suggestions:** *Discuss suggestions in regard to the social and emotional wellness of high school students.*

TASK #3: FIVE KEY COMPONENTS TO STUDENT READINESS

What if every high school student had an Individual Student Readiness Plan displaying a student's strengths and areas for development in each of the five Key Components for Student Readiness: Academic Readiness, College Major and Career Exploration, Global Competitive Skills, Student Involvement, and Wellness?

- **Benefits:** *Discuss the benefits of every high school student having an Individual Student Readiness Plan displaying a student's strengths and areas for development in each of the five Key Components for Student Readiness.*
- **Concerns:** *Discuss the concerns of every high school student having an Individual Student Readiness Plan displaying a student's strengths and areas for development in each of the five Key Components for Student Readiness.*
- **Communication Suggestions:** *Discuss suggestions for effective parent, student and school communication regarding a student's Individual Student Readiness Plan.*

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.

Nearly 200 participants attended the third *211 of Tomorrow* community engagement sessions on April 4 and 5, 2016, at Hoffman Estates High School and Palatine High School, respectively.

The presentation began with Associate Superintendent Dr. Lisa Small presenting information about opportunities for student involvement in District 211 through various clubs, activities, and sports as well as information about the internship program that is being developed for the students. Superintendent Dr. Daniel Cates then shared information about student wellness, how District 211 supports students through various services provided, as well as a new process that is being considered to assist in developing, supporting, and determining student readiness called an Individual Student Readiness Plan. The presentation can be viewed [here](#), on the District's Community Engagement website. Then, participants worked in 27 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: STUDENT INVOLVEMENT: ATHLETICS, ACTIVITIES AND INTERNSHIPS

211 of Tomorrow participants listed a number of positives, concerns, and suggestions in regard to student involvement while in high school.

POSITIVES

By far, the most listed positive was the variety and number of opportunities offered by District 211. Participants felt that there is "something for everyone" and there are "opportunities for individuals, competitive and non-competitive. One group noted that the opportunities include options that are student-driven and support student interest. *211 of Tomorrow* small groups also shared satisfaction with the impact of student involvement on the development of life skills such as time management, being part of a team, discipline and responsibility. Also indicated as a positive by the groups was the large percentage of students involved in sports, activities and clubs within the district.

CONCERNS

While groups shared varied items of concern, the most frequently mentioned concern was the conflicts that arise if a student is involved in more than one sport, activity or club. Participants noted that it is difficult to participate in more than one and "teachers/coaches [make] it 'either-or'." Other concerns listed in relation to this topic include conflicting practice schedules and having to choose between which sport/activity to attend. Another concern shared by multiple groups was the challenge in balancing academics and sports/activities. One group noted "at times students are spread so thin with numerous commitments," while another said, "Activity hours are very long...less time to do work at home." Also mentioned by the small groups was a concern that the participants were unfamiliar with the internships or a desire for more internship options such as opportunities in the trades.

TASK #3: FIVE KEY COMPONENTS TO STUDENT READINESS

BENEFITS

Small group participants identified many benefits to every high school student having an Individual Student Readiness Plan, including the five Key Components for Student Readiness. Several small groups noted the impact on a student's future as a benefit. Groups made comments such as, "Gives students direction," "Helps them in future career choices," and "Way to set goals." Another benefit frequently mentioned was the individualized nature of this type of plan with groups citing ideas such as, "Focus on how strengths can improve areas to work on," and "Being able to track how a student is doing." Participants also appreciated that this plan could promote student awareness and ownership as well as how this plan addressed the concept of the "whole child."

CONCERNS

Two main concerns were listed by the *211 of Tomorrow* groups related to the Individual Student Readiness Plan. The most frequently listed concerns focused on plan management. Several groups questioned how this type of plan could be managed, who will manage the plans, who will define readiness, if there is time to make the plans truly individualized, as well as how the plans will be maintained. Also included by several groups was the concern that students may be asked to make decisions about their future path too early. One group questioned, "Do 15-year-olds need to know their career," while another group shared the concern that it may "push freshman into paths too soon."

COMMUNICATION SUGGESTIONS

Participants were asked to provide suggestions for effective parent, student and school communication regarding a student's Individual Readiness Plan. A number of groups recommended ideas relating to parent involvement and a cooperative approach between the student, parent and school. One group suggested a mandatory counselor meeting with parents at least once per year and others suggested ideas related to a mentor program such as student mentors. Another common suggestion category was related to using technology to support the process and plan. A group suggested "software to track your own progress," and another suggested the availability of an App to fill out a readiness plan. Also mentioned by a few groups was the idea of creating a homeroom time in the schedule.

OTHER SUGGESTIONS

A small number of groups or individuals provided other suggestions for District 211 administration to consider. Ideas included promoting science and STEM, creating a "parent corner" on websites to list parent information, as well as not allowing extra-curricular activities during winter and spring breaks.

**For a complete listing of all responses,
please see the CES-3 Verbatim Response Documents for April 4 and 5 found at
<http://adc.d211.org/communityengagement>**



DISTRICT 211
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROGRAM
A Planning Process

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SESSION (CES) #4

Monday, May 2, 2016

Conant High School

Tuesday, May 3, 2016

Fremd High School



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.

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?

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/>**