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Board of Education Meeting Recap

The Township High School District 211 Board of Education met on Thursday, January 15, 2015, in the Anne Koller Board Meeting Room at the G.A. McElroy Administration Center. The following is a recap of important items that were acted upon at the meeting.

Military Recognition

The Board of Education honored Private First Class **Leon Dixon**, a 2013 Schaumburg High School graduate who is now serving in the Illinois National Guard. Private First Class Dixon led the audience in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Recognitions

The Board of Education recognized student-athletes from William Fremd High School who earned honors in state swimming and diving competitions. A complete list of student-athletes recognized is available [here](#).

The Board recognized four students who were named to the *Daily Herald* Leadership Team for 2014-2015: **Dhivyaa Anandan** from Palatine High School, **Allison Cochran** from Fremd High School, **Michael Einig** from James B. Conant High School, and **Christopher Napier** from Schaumburg High School. This honor recognizes students who are among the top in leadership through their involvement in school, church, and community organizations.

Presentation: School Lunch Program

High School District 211 operates one of the largest school food service programs in Illinois, with more than 8,000 students eating school lunch and breakfast each school day. As a participant in the National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs, District 211 offers a variety of nutritionally balanced meal options to students in order to support adequate growth, development, and nutritional well-being. Beginning with the 2014-2015 school year, the food service department is operating under new regulations as outlined under the Healthy Hunger Free Kids Act of 2010. The department has transitioned its meal service to offer more complete "combination" meals and less à la carte meals offering students greater access to more nutritionally balanced meals.

The Food Service Department is dedicated to providing the highest quality food and service for students and staff in District 211 schools every day. At the meeting, Director of Food Service **Mary O'Connor** and Assistant to the Director of Food Service **Stacy Lenihan** provided a brief overview of the nutrition standards for meals and healthful procedures for daily food service operations in District 211.

Approval of Minutes

The Board of Education approved the minutes from its regular meeting on [December 11, 2014](#).

Placement Testing of Incoming Freshmen

The Board received information on this year's placement testing. On December 6, 2014, placement tests were administered to 2,651 of the anticipated 2,820 incoming freshmen. An additional 78 students attended a make-up test session on December 13, 2014. Of the 91 students who were not tested, 35 of the students were withheld from testing per their Individualized Educational Plan (IEP). Students who were unable to attend either the initial or make-up testing will be scheduled for an individual make-up session. Results of the Explore test, together with recommendations of junior high school teachers, will be used to place students in courses for the 2015-2016 school year.

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

Secondary School Cooperative Risk Management Program (SSCRMP)

The Board of Education received information on the District's involvement with Secondary School Cooperative Risk Management Program, a risk-sharing insurance pool comprised of School Districts 211, 207 (Maine Township), 214 (Wheeling and Elk Grove Townships), and 225 (Northfield Township) of which District 211 has been a member since 1989. The pool provides comprehensive insurance coverage at a lower cost than school districts could obtain individually.

For 2015, SSCRMP will maintain a self-insured retention (shared deductible) of \$1,000,000 for liability claims and a \$250,000 self-insured retention for property claims. SSCRMP continues to successfully manage claims, member equity, and excess loss reserves. Each member district is responsible for paying the initial \$1,000 deductible for its own boiler machinery claims; \$5,000 deductible for

errors/omissions; and, \$100,000 for crime claims. Workers' compensation coverage with SSCRMP has a July 1 renewal date and provides for a \$350,000 deductible for individual claims. SSCRMP loss-fund reserves are used to pay claims within the self-insured retention for property or liability claims. A separate loss-fund is maintained for workers' compensation claims.

For the 2015 policy year, SSCRMP has maintained its level of coverage in all categories. An increase of almost 9% in the cost of property coverage occurred primarily due to severe storm damage in the fall of 2014 that caused significant damage to properties in all of the covered districts. Overall, SSCRMP costs will increase by 2.7% for 2015.

Based on the loss funding appropriation, property, and specific liability losses allocated to District 211, the 2015 member contributions for the District will be \$828,449. This is a 3.8% increase from the 2014 allocation of \$797,818. The 2014-2015 budget includes an appropriation of \$878,000 for property/liability insurance costs in the Operations/Maintenance and Transportation Funds.

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

Student Fee Waivers and Low-Income Students

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

High School District 211 participates in the National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs that allow qualifying students to receive free or reduced-price meals during the school day. Students may qualify for free meals if they are a foster child, homeless or migrant student, recipient of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) or Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), or if their household meets income eligibility guidelines established by the United States Department of Agriculture. New for the 2014-2015 school year, households also may qualify for meal benefits if their household receives income-based Medicaid benefits.

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

The number of students eligible for meal benefits in District 211 has increased by 159% over the past 10 years. The prevalence of low-income students is growing annually in District 211. The notable increase in eligibility from the 2013-2014 school year to the 2014-2015 school year can be primarily attributed to the addition of Medicaid eligibility to the qualifying criteria. While all of the District's schools have experienced growing trends of free or reduced eligible students over the decade, the dispersion of low-income students is not consistent from school to school. Current data shows that District 211 schools range from 16% to 51% eligibility.

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

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

Each year, the District reviews student fees and brings a recommendation to the Board on rates for the upcoming school year. Because the District has experienced a significant increase in the number of students eligible for free or reduced-price meals and fee waivers, combined with the District's current financial position and interest to avoid a fee revenue shift to students not eligible for fee waivers, student user fees have remained constant.

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

Student User Fees for 2015-2016

The Board of Education established student fees for the 2015-2016 school year. This is the ninth consecutive year that District 211 fees, with the exception of school lunch prices, have not increased.

The textbook/instructional supply fee for the 2015-2016 school year will remain \$160.00.

The driver education behind-the-wheel fee for 2015-2016 will remain \$350.00.

The student parking user fee will remain \$65.00 per semester for 2015-2016.

The bus transportation fee for next year for students whose residence is within 1.5 miles of school will remain \$170.00 and is due in full by July 10, 2015. There is no bus transportation fee for those students who reside beyond 1.5 miles from school. A late registration fee of \$35.00 will be added to all payments received after July 10, 2015.

The Board approved fees for Summer School 2015. Summer School fees will remain \$140 per semester for credit courses, and fees for non-credit athletic and activity camps will remain \$70 per session. The cost for invitation programs for incoming freshmen and sophomores will remain \$30. The fee for competitive varsity baseball and softball will remain \$175 for the summer. Transportation fees will be \$35 per semester. The Driver Education fee will be \$350 for behind the wheel, and for those students enrolled in classroom only, a \$70 fee will be assessed.

Additional information on student user fees is available [here](#).

School Breakfast and Lunch Prices for 2015-2016

The price for the standard breakfast will remain \$1.45 per meal for students and \$1.70 per meal for adults. The price for students who qualify for reduced-price meals will remain 30¢ per breakfast and 40¢ per lunch (with milk). The Board approved standard lunch price points at \$2.35, \$2.50, \$2.65, and \$2.90 per meal (with milk) for students, and \$3.30 per meal (excluding beverage) for adults.

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

Winter Curriculum Committee Report

Curriculum committees have three opportunities each school year to discuss and recommend curriculum changes to the Board of Education. The winter round of curriculum meetings have a focus on textbooks and software evaluations. This more singular winter curriculum meeting focus was put in place to meet the timeline requirements of the budget. While textbook companies are gradually offering more textbooks in an electronic format, the availability and extensive cost savings are not yet realized across all companies.

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

Proposed School Calendar for 2016-2017

In order to maximize the value of each instructional day, the District investigated the impact of its traditional school calendar, specifically, considering the merits of a school calendar under which the first semester ends prior to the start of winter break and the school year ends prior to Memorial Day. This calendar model, referred to as a collegiate calendar, represents a departure from the traditional school calendar under which the first semester ends in January, about two weeks after students return to school from winter break.

The Board of Education received information on the collegiate calendar model, including information from consultation with school districts that have adopted a collegiate calendar, information on alignment of school calendars between District 211 and Districts 15 and 54, information on the impact of a collegiate calendar on IHSA student athletics, information on the adjustment to teacher routines and practices under a collegiate calendar, as well as survey data of District 211 parents, students, and staff.

The Board approved the [calendar for the 2016-2017 school year](#), using the collegiate calendar model, as presented. The calendar has a start date of Thursday, August 11, 2016, for the teacher institute day, with a second teacher institute day on Friday, August 12, 2016, and the first day of student attendance being Monday, August 15, 2016. This design provides the opportunity to schedule the entire first semester prior to the start of winter break, with final examinations occurring on the last three days of first semester, December 21-23. Second semester begins on January 9, 2017, with a teacher institute day and students returning from winter break on January 10, 2017; final examinations being held on May 24-26, 2017; and the semester ending at the end of the day on May 26, 2017, prior to the Memorial Day holiday weekend.

Additional information on the 2016-2017 school calendar is available [here](#).

Communications Audit

A communications audit is a comprehensive review and evaluation of outgoing communication, such as websites, electronic communications, and printed materials. An audit will help determine whether the information and messages being communicated are effective. A communications audit can help build support by demonstrating commitment to improving communications and willingness to listen, share, and respond to stakeholders.

The Board of Education authorized the superintendent to enter into a contract with Unicom-Arc, a St. Louis-based communications company that submitted a proposal, to conduct a communications audit at a cost of \$9,500, plus travel and

lodging expenses. Unicom-Arc has successfully conducted audits for many school districts, as well other business clients.

Additional information on the communications audit is available [here](#).

Strategic Plan

At the December 11, 2014 Board of Education meeting, Board Secretary Anna Klimkowitz requested that the Board discuss the development of a strategic plan. In each of the upcoming Board meetings, the Board will review information contained in the existing five-year strategic plans in the areas of instruction, capital projects and finances and additional consideration of a formal strategic plan will take place later in the spring.

Next Board of Education Meeting

The next scheduled regular Board of Education meeting will be held on Thursday, February 12, 2015, beginning at 7:30 p.m. in the Anne Koller Board Meeting Room at the G.A. McElroy Administration Center.

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