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Board of Education Meeting Recap

The Township High School District 211 Board of Education met on Thursday, October 15, 2020, at Hoffman Estates High School in order to protect public health and to be in compliance with state directives to avoid large public gatherings. The following is a recap of items that were acted upon at the meeting.

Recognitions

A total of 30 District 211 students have been named 2020-2021 National Merit Scholars. In order to adhere to safety protocols, the Board of Education recognized the following National Merit Scholars from William Fremd and James B. Conant High Schools, presenting each with the Robert Creek Excellence Award (medallion): **Nathan Arango, Ysabelle Buenavista, Cara Chang, Stella Chung, Gabriel Classon, Joshua Corrigan, Manas Gandhi, Natalia Gorecki, Allison Kao, Anshul Kaushik,** and **Sravy Konasai** from Fremd High School; and **Martin Ferris, Rei Komura, Sanjana Rajesh,** and **Matthew Schmitt** from Conant High School.

The Board recognized Conant High School junior **Nivedha Krishnan** for earning the highest possible composite score on the American College Test (ACT). Of the nearly 2 million students who take the ACT exam each year, less than two-tenths of one percent of test takers earns a top score. Over the past 21 years, 140 District 211 students have earned a top score on this exam, and the complete list is available here.

Presentation: 2020 Tax Levy and 2020 Tax Levy Information

The Board of Education viewed a presentation by Chief Operating Officer **Lauren Hummel** and Controller & Treasurer **Barbara Peterson** and received tax levy information at the meeting, including tax levy background information, 2020 levy considerations, a 2020 tax levy recommendation, financial projection information, and the 2020 tax levy calendar.

For the 2020 levy, the Tax Cap limit of 2.3% + new property (estimated at 0.43%) establishes the allowable increase for the Aggregate Operating Extension of Capped Funds levy. Since there is no need for a Debt Service levy, the Property Tax Extension Limitation Law (PTELL) is $241.7 million.

The District anticipates closing on the sale of land this month with a one-time receipt of land sale proceeds in the amount of $17.7 million. It was recommended that the District file the 2020 levy in December 2020 under the limitations of PTELL (2.73%) and further discuss filing an abatement of the 2020 levy in January 2021 – the levy abatement may be filed by March 2021. Additional time to review the levy abatement will allow the District to close on the land sale, have known information on the 2020 CPI amount, and begin discussion on student fee revenue for the upcoming school year.

The Tax Cap determines the amount by which the total levy may increase over the total levy amount for the aggregate operating funds from the prior year. The total 2020 levy may increase by 2.73% over the prior year amount; the District's levy recommendation to consider an abatement of $2 million provides savings to taxpayers for the 2020 levy year and each year moving forward.

The following variables support the recommendation for the 2020 levy:

- the recommended amount supports the continuation of instructional programs for students;
- the District's strategic direction to fund necessary capital improvements is through operations and annual future savings;
- the District's strategic direction is to remain debt-free; and
- the future financial position of the District for future Boards of Education would be compromised.

The District's recommendation for the 2020 levy is a critical component of preserving the District's long-term financial stability while being able to fund its current level of operations, complete necessary capital improvement and life safety projects, and retain a level of reserves to safeguard against possible unknowns. The recommendation to review an abatement of $2 million beginning January 2021 will allow the District to continue fulfilling its instructional and operational commitments while using a portion of the land sale proceeds to provide tax relief.

The following levy calendar has been established and provides for determination of a proposed 2020 levy amount at the November 12, 2020 Board of Education meeting:

- **November 5, 2020** – tentative Budget & Finance Committee meeting for further review of 2020 levy information, if needed
- **November 12, 2020** – scheduled Board of Education meeting; determine amount of proposed 2020 levy (this determination must be made not less than 20 days prior to the levy adoption)
- **November 26, 2020-December 3, 2020** – prescribed form of notice of public hearing must be published in a newspaper with general circulation within the school district no more than 14 nor less than seven days prior to the public hearing

- **December 10, 2020** – scheduled Board of Education meeting; public hearing on proposed 2020 levy at 7:30 p.m. and adoption of 2020 levy
- **December 29, 2020** – last day to file 2020 levy with the Cook County Clerk

The tax levy information the Board received is available here.

Approval of Minutes

The Board of Education approved the minutes from its regular meeting on September 17, 2020.

2020-2021 School Year Update

Superintendent **Lisa Small** presented the Board of Education with an update on the 2020-2021 school year. A copy of her report is available here.

District 211 Equity Team Update

The Board of Education received an update on Equity Team meetings. Committee meetings were held for the Equitable Opportunity and Achievement Committee; the Equitable Practices and Mindsets Committee; the Equitable Curriculum and Instruction Committee; and the School, Family, and Community Partnerships Committee. A summary of each committee meeting is available here.

In addition to separate committee meetings, the full Equity Team held its monthly meeting on October 6, 2020. The Team participated in discussions that included concepts related to bias, cultural humility, deficit-model thinking, and authentic dialogue. Following reports from each committee, committees engaged in discussions related to the implementation of Phase 1 of the plan, stakeholder engagement. Discussions centered around the necessity to engage all District 211 stakeholders, including but not limited to: students, parents, staff members, community members, and organizations. Special consideration was given to families that may experience language barriers or that have not traditionally engaged in District surveys or events. Other discussions included the desire to ensure that all stakeholders feel comfortable in sharing their experiences, feel affirmed and validated in their thoughts, and that the committee practices intentionally how to engage stakeholders. Developing plans include the use of survey tools, focus groups, and the possibility of individual interviews. Stakeholder engagement plans will continue to be refined in the coming weeks, including use of a consultant or organization to support the plan and ensure validity and reliability of the process and collection of responses.

The next meeting of the full District 211 Equity Team will be held on November 10, 2020.

2020 Summer School Enrollment and Cost Analysis

The Board received an update on Summer School 2020. Each summer, District 211 provides learning opportunities for students during two semesters of summer school. In March, an emergency order was issued by the governor to close all schools and implement remote learning. The school closure continued into the summer months, and while many other high school districts chose to only offer summer school courses to students who needed to fulfill a graduation requirement or chose to cancel all summer opportunities, District 211 offered the full range of academic enrichment courses to students.

Summer School 2020 operated at a net cost of $1,380,392 to High School District 211, representing 5,601 students in credit-bearing courses and 3,472 activity and athlete camps enrollees. This included waiver of fees for 266 Incoming Freshman Academy students, 135 Sophomore Academy students, and 395 Emergent Bilingual students. Additionally, reduced fees were collected from 1,118 three-week Freshman Invitational Mathematics program students and 367 Project Excel students. These varying fee structures allow for students to access summer curriculum to address learning gaps in English, writing, and mathematics.

Additional information on Summer School 2020 is available here.

2020-2021 Free and Reduced-Price Meal Eligibility

The Board of Education received information on District 211's participation in the National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs, federally assisted meal programs that provide qualifying students with access to nutritionally balanced, low-cost, or free 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), qualify for income-eligible Medicaid, or if their household meets income eligibility guidelines established by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). A student with a household income at or below 130% of the poverty level is eligible for free meals; those with income between 131% and 185% of the poverty level are eligible for reduced-price meals (30¢ for breakfast and 40¢ for lunch as defined by the United States Department of Agriculture). For the current 2020 fiscal year, a family of four must have a gross income of less than $34,060 annually to qualify for free meals or $48,470 annually to qualify for reduced-price meals.

Eligibility for meal benefits is reviewed and determined annually based upon the guidelines established by the USDA. The dispersion of low-income students remains inconsistent between District 211 schools, ranging from a low of 16% at Fremd High School to a high of 50% at Palatine High School. The number of students eligible for meal benefits across District 211 has decreased by 12% since September 30, 2019. Several factors may have contributed to this decline. In September, the USDA extended multiple emergency meal waivers allowing school districts to serve meals at no charge to all children 18 years and younger through December 2020. Students qualifying for meal benefits may also qualify for academic fee waivers per Illinois School Code and Board of Education Policy JN – Student Fees. The Board of Education also approved at its July 16, 2020 meeting to waive textbook/instructional fees for all students for the 2020-2021 school year, and families did not have to complete a meal application in order to qualify for fee waivers.

Additional information on free and reduced-price meal eligibility is available here.

Update on Foreign Exchange Trips

High School District 211 began hosting foreign exchange trips in 1976. Since that time, the Board of Education has granted yearly permission for students to participate in foreign exchange trips to a variety of locations – including Germany, Austria, France, Spain, China, and Costa Rica.

In March, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has advised travelers from the United States to "avoid all nonessential travel to foreign countries and U.S. Territories around the world." The CDC updated its guidance in August to include "destination-specific Travel Health Notices," and the locations to which District 211 has historically traveled for exchanges are considered Level 3 (high risk).

Due to the continued risk of transmission of COVID-19 and the travel guidance issued by the CDC, the District will not ask the Board of Education to recommend any foreign exchange trips for the summer of 2021.

Amendment to the Terms and Conditions of Sale of Real Property

At its May 23, 2019 meeting, the Board of Education approved a bid to sell its 62-acre land located at East Wise Road and South Summit Drive in the Village of Schaumburg to Nitti Development, LLC. The existing terms and conditions of the sale of property outline a timeline for closing on the sale of land. Nitti Development, LLC obtained approval from the Village of Schaumburg for its development plans in August 2020 and was seeking an extension on the closing

date from October 15, 2020 to October 30, 2020. If, however, either party requires additional time beyond October 30 for the closing, the closing date may be mutually agreed upon by both parties with a closing date not to exceed beyond November 30. Additional information is available here.

The Board approved the Amendment to the Terms and Conditions of Sale of Real Property as presented.

10-Year Facilities and Capital Improvement Plan Update

It has been the long-standing commitment of District 211 to provide safe, functional, and adaptable facilities that contribute to the educational program and have a positive impact on student achievement. As a component of the District's financial and operational goals, the long-range capital outlay plan is designed to align with the District's Strategic Plan, building utilization, improvement and maintenance schedule, and serve the educational goals. The District is in year four of its current 10-year capital improvement plan and is completing projects consistent with its Strategic Plan. The capital improvement plan is reviewed and updated annually to convey the District's progress and to consider adjustments necessitated by financial, demographic, technological, or energy-related conditions.

The Board of Education received a report summarizing the capital improvement work completed to date and the progress relative to life safety projects. The report also included the capital improvement timeline scheduled over the next several years. The capital improvement schedule was created in conjunction with financial considerations to ensure the District operates debt-free.

The report included information on life safety projects that were completed during the summer at each school. Information on major capital projects also was provided, including locker room and washroom renovations at Fremd High School, stadium turf replacement and track resurfacing at Conant High School, culinary arts lab renovation at Palatine High School, and athletic field upgrades at Conant High School, as well as routine maintenance and facility upkeep projects across the District. The report included a summary of all prioritized improvements recommended for completion through fiscal year 2027.

As District 211 continues with its capital improvement plan without debt to pay for the recommended projects, financial planning remains critical. Through combined efforts of budget reductions and efficiencies, the District will plan to fund all of the recommended capital improvement projects through the use of its annual operating budget and existing reserves.

For the prior 2019-2020 fiscal year, the ending financial budget position resulted in a budget surplus of $8.4 million. A portion of these funds have been

transferred along with operating reserves to pay for the 2020-2021 facility improvement projects in the Operations and Maintenance Fund, and a similar approach is recommended for future budget years. By planning to fund facility improvements that have been outlined in the Strategic Plan through reserves, District 211 avoids the issuance of new debt and any additional costs associated with debt issuance. Accrued reserves and future budget planning provide the stability to fulfill the District's future capital improvement plan well into the future. By funding these capital projects from existing reserves, the District's operating and educational fund balances will remain at a level that will continue to sustain financial stability into the future.

National School Boards Association National Connection Fees

The Board of Education approved the National Connection fees of the National School Boards Association (NSBA) for a period of January 1, 2021 through December 31, 2021 at a cost of $5,335. The cost for last year's 15-month period was $6,668.75. District 211 has been a member of the NSBA since 1971.

NSBA's National Connection is a partnership of state school boards associations and NSBA and offers benefits that will keep school administrators and school board members informed of national education issues. A list of benefits is available here.

Proposed New Policy

As part of its ongoing Policy Manual review, the Board of Education reviews proposed policy revisions, proposed policy deletions, and proposed new policies from the Administrative Board Policy Group. The Group is comprised of Board President **Robert LeFevre,** Board Vice President **Anna Klimkowicz,** Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction **Joshua Schumacher,** Director of Administrative Services **Matthew Hildebrand,** and Assistant to the Superintendent **Kathe Lingl**. Proposed policy revisions also are reviewed by legal counsel.

The Board initially reviewed the proposed new policy Title IX Sexual Harassment Grievance Policy. No action was taken at the meeting.

Sale of Surplus School Property

The Board authorized the sale of used, surplus vehicles by way of public sealed bid, public auction site, or company trade-in. The surplus vehicles include two International Harvester 4000 Series dump trucks with snowplow and salt spreader model years 1996 and 1997; a 2001 Ford pickup F250; a 2002 and a

2004 Chevrolet Astro van; and three 2003 Chevrolet Express vans. Additional information is available here.

Illinois Association of School Boards Resolutions 2020

The Illinois Association of School Boards (IASB) Delegate Assembly is the policy-making body of IASB. The Delegate Assembly is comprised of one voting delegate from each member district. High School District 211 Board of Education Vice President **Anna Klimkowicz** serves as a member of the 2020 Resolutions Committee. With the cancellation of the 2020 joint annual conference of the Illinois Association of School Boards/Illinois Association of School Administrators/Illinois Association of School Business Officials, the Delegate Assembly of IASB will be conducted virtually on November 14, 2020. The Delegate Assembly will review, discuss, and vote on proposed resolutions submitted by member districts. District 211 Board Member **Steven Rosenblum** will represent District 211 as the voting voice for the Board. The results from the proposed resolutions and amended statements will guide the IASB's position statements and staff in ongoing legislative efforts.

This year, there are eight proposed new resolutions, three reaffirmations of existing position statements, one new belief statement, and 28 amended/deleted position and belief statements.

The Board reviewed a report with the proposed slate of resolutions. Additional information is available here, along with a copy of the 2020 Resolutions Committee Report.

Potential Topics for Future Discussions

The Board of Education asked the Superintendent to provide a presentation on the Deep Equity program at its November 12, 2020 meeting.

Next Board of Education Meeting

The next scheduled regular Board of Education meeting will be held on Thursday, November 12, 2020, with closed session beginning at 6:30 p.m. and open session beginning at 7:30 p.m. in the Anne Koller Board Meeting Room at the G.A. McElroy Administration Center.

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