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Board of Education Meeting Recap

The Township High School District 211 Board of Education met on Thursday, November 8, 2018, 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.

Recognitions

The Board of Education recognized two student-athletes from William Fremd High School for their 4th-place finish at the [state girls tennis meet](#) in the doubles competition.

The Board also recognized High School District 211's "*Those Who Excel*" Award recipients. The Illinois State Board of Education annually sponsors the "*Those Who Excel*" awards to honor individuals who have made significant contributions to the state's public and non-public schools. High School District 211 award-winners are (listed alphabetically):

- Board of Education President **Mucia Burke** (school board member category)
- Schaumburg High School Student Services Director **Yassila Delgado** (administrator category)
- William Fremd High School Social Studies Teacher **LoriAnne Frieri** (classroom teacher category)
- Palatine High School **Homerom Team** (team category): **Jessica Aulisio, Brittany Berleman, Jeanne Hedgepeth, Erin Luzadder, Erin Mahoney, Thomas Mocon, James Nowak, Fred Rasmussen, Joyce Richardson, Leslie Schock, and Claudia Sierra-Sokop**
- Palatine High School Family and Consumer Sciences Teacher **Emily Pilguy** (early career educator category)
- James B. Conant High School Nurse **Dawna Smeltzer** (student support personnel category)
- Hoffman Estates High School Teacher Assistant and Title 1 Attendance Interventionist **Andrew Wulbecker** (educational service personnel category)

Approval of Minutes

The Board of Education approved the minutes from its regular meeting on [October 18, 2018](#).

Fall Curriculum Committee Report 2018-2019

There is a formal Curriculum Committee for each department in High School District 211. Each committee has 11 members, including the department chair from each school, the principal from each school, and the associate superintendent for instruction. The committees hold meetings up to three times a year, focusing on curriculum discussions and items for approval as needed by department. After recommendation by the committee and superintendent, the core components of the curriculum are presented to the Board of Education for approval. The Board approved the [Fall Curriculum Committee Report](#) and recommendations as presented.

Placement Testing of Incoming Freshmen

The Board received information on this year's placement testing. On October 13, 2018, placement exams were administered to 2,739 of the anticipated 2,955 incoming freshmen in the high school graduating class of 2023. An additional 118 students attended a make-up test session on October 20, 2018. As a result of both testing sessions, 97% of all anticipated incoming freshmen have completed the assessment, which is used in combination with recommendations from eighth-grade teachers, to determine placement into ninth-grade English, mathematics, and science courses.

Of the 98 students who did not participate in testing, 12 of these students were withheld from testing per their Individualized Educational Plan (IEP). Each high school works individually with remaining students who miss testing sessions to account for the students' academic achievement as a factor influencing ninth-grade core course placement.

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.

2018 School Report Cards

School Report Cards provide information about academic performance and characteristics of students, faculty, instructional resources, and finances at the school, district, and state level. Prepared by the Illinois State Board of Education

(ISBE), Report Cards contain data received from and about schools at various points throughout the school year. According to Illinois School Code, School Report Cards are to be forwarded to schools from the ISBE annually by October 31 and made available by schools to the public within 30 days. Once the Report Card is issued by the ISBE, no information in the School Report Card can be modified.

The Board directed the superintendent to make appropriate availability of 2018 School Report Cards by placing a direct link to them on the District 211 and school websites. In addition to the complete online Report Cards, at-a-glance versions (two-page printable PDFs) of School Report Cards also are available.

Additional information on 2018 School Report Cards is available [here](#), while District 211 and School Report Cards are available [here](#), via the District 211 website.

Property Tax Appeal Board Refund Report

The Board of Education received the [Property Tax Appeal Board refund report](#), summarizing property tax refund losses as of October 31, 2018.

Illinois High School Association Letter of Appreciation

The Board of Education received a copy of a [letter of appreciation](#) from Illinois High School Association (IHSA) Assistant Executive Director Susan Knoblauch, expressing thanks to Conant, Fremd, Hoffman Estates, and Palatine High Schools' principals, athletic departments, and tennis coaches for hosting the 2018 IHSA Girls Tennis State Tournament.

Life Safety Survey

In 2010, the Board of Education approved a life safety survey prepared by Arcon Associates, Inc., and the report was submitted to the Cook County Regional Office of Education (ROE) and the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) for review and approval. After the life safety compliance recommendations were approved, the District developed detailed plans and specifications to implement and fund the approximate \$26 million of projects – \$16 million was funded with limited tax bonds, and the remaining \$10 million were paid from the District's reserves and annual operating budget.

In accordance with School Code (105 ILCS 5/2-3.12), school buildings must be surveyed by an architect or engineer, who upon completion of the survey, issues a Safety Survey Report. The survey is required every 10 years. The District's

past two surveys were completed in a seven-year cycle as previously permitted through an amendment or extension process. The ISBE currently requires that projects commence within six months of approval, and all projects be completed in a five-year timeframe.

The District has utilized Arcon Associates, Inc. and Amsco Engineering to complete an updated life safety compliance survey identifying projects that are categorized as architectural, plumbing, mechanical, and electrical. The recommendations in the report are itemized by building, and the report contains no recommendations that pose an immediate danger or require immediate attention.

Three options are available to fund the mandated life safety compliance work:

- A. Use existing Operations and Maintenance Fund operating funds;
- B. Levy funds into the Operations and Maintenance or Working Cash Funds;
or
- C. Issue life safety bonds with the limits set by P.A. 89-385 (Limited Tax Bond Authority)

Regarding Option A, the Operations and Maintenance Fund and Working Cash Fund levies are both components of the overall operating levy, which is part of the overall tax extension limit and both are subject to Tax Cap. Regarding Option B, under the provisions of Limited Tax bonds, the District can issue life safety bonds provided that the yearly debt service tax extension does not exceed the District's 1994 debt service extension amount of approximately \$13 million. District 211 has retired its outstanding debt and has stated a plan to fund all future approved life safety projects through the funds available in the operating levy. By utilizing yearly operating funds, the District will pay for all approved projects within its annual operating budget and will not levy for funds outside of the Tax Cap. By using this financial strategy, the District anticipates being able to fully complete and fund life safety projects while saving taxpayers the cost of issuing debt as well as the repayment of debt through a debt service levy that falls outside the annual Tax Cap limitation. The District's recent five-year financial forecast includes a plan to fund life safety projects of \$3 million annually through the Working Cash levy and approximately \$1 million annually in the Operations and Maintenance Fund. The District anticipates completion of all identified projects over a five-year period while also sustaining fund balance levels in accordance with the Board's fund balance policy.

The Board approved the [life safety amendments](#) for Palatine, Fremd, Conant, Schaumburg, and Hoffman Estates High Schools as submitted. Further, it authorized the Superintendent to file the life safety survey with the ROE and ISBE for review and approval.

Additional information on the life safety survey is available [here](#).

2018 Proposed Tax Levy, Truth in Taxation Resolution, and Property Tax Relief Grant

The levy and extension process is set in state statute (35 ILCS 200/18) and outlines the specific purposes for which taxes can be levied and limitations on the amount that taxing districts may levy. The major limitation placed on a taxing district's ability to raise revenue through property taxation is commonly referred to as the "Tax Cap." The Tax Cap (the Property Tax Extension Limitation Law) is intended to limit a taxing district's total operating fund levy amount to the increase in the Consumer Price Index, plus the addition of new property growth.

For the 2018 levy, the Tax Cap law will allow an increase of CPI-U (Consumer Price Index for Urban Consumers) of 2.1%, plus the addition of new construction estimated at an amount of 0.3% based upon historical trend. The 2.1% rate of CPI-U is the levy limit applied to all properties. New property is an amount that reflects new properties added to the tax roll, and only the property owners of the new property pay taxes on the amount levied for new property.

A portion of property taxes remains unpaid each year. In order to comply with the statute and set rates that will provide each taxing district with the amount levied, the Cook County Clerk adds an amount for "loss collection" to the levy amount. This amount includes a 3% loss and cost factor to the District's operating levies and 5% to debt service levies.

The District files its levy each year, but does not collect the amount of property taxes that it requests through the levy process. Property tax refunds from current and prior year tax years are lost from the District's current year tax collections annually, and the District is not able to recover this loss of revenue. For the past three years, District 211 has lost over \$25 million in property tax refunds, averaging more than \$8 million each year.

For the 2018 levy, the Tax Cap limit of 2.1%, plus new property (estimated at 0.3%) establishes the limited increase for the Aggregate Operating Extension of Capped Funds levy. Since there is no need for a Debt Service levy, the recommended levy amount is \$228.7 million, for a 2.4% increase of the prior year levy amount.

Levying the aggregate extension of capped funds at an amount less than the established limit under the Tax Cap law inhibits the District from collecting revenue to support these needs, and further, leads to loss that will continue to compound year-over-year and will impact programs. The following variables support the recommendation for a 2.1% + 0.3% new property increase of the aggregate of capped funds:

- the recommended amount supports the continuation of instructional programs for students;

- the impact of levying less than the allowable amount in these funds has a compounding and permanent effect year-over-year;
- the District's strategic direction to fund necessary capital improvements is through operational fund 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 following summary describes the compounding effect of not increasing the aggregate extension of capped funds levy for one year only. The compounding effect of no increase in these funds for one year would result in significant reduction in revenue over a five-year period totaling close to \$30 million. This amount would continue to compound over future years that imposes a loss of revenue for future operational needs. Additionally, a 0% levy increase for a one-year period results in the District not being able to fund its strategic initiatives while also maintaining fund balance at a level that adheres to its fund balance policy. If the District holds its anticipated \$20 million proceeds from the sale of its 60-acre property in conjunction with a one-year freeze, the District will end with an operating fund balance of 30% by FY2023. Utilizing the \$20 million for a purpose to benefit students further reduces the District's fund balance to a level of 22% when keeping the levy flat for only one year.

The recommendation for the 2018 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. A change in the 2018 levy recommendation will negatively impact the District's stable financial position and ability to fulfill all of its commitments as defined in the Strategic Plan.

Of the District's existing reserves, sizeable amounts have been committed to funding the remainder of the capital improvement projects outlined in the current five-year and future 10-year capital improvement plan. For the 2019-2020 school year, planned capital improvement projects include continued renovation of restrooms and replacement of stadium turf and tracks. Additional information regarding the commitment of reserve funds for the next several years was shared in detail with the Board at its September 20, 2018 meeting. Additional use of reserve funds is planned for making payments to the Illinois Municipal Retirement Fund (IMRF) to reduce the District's outstanding liability.

After viewing presentations on the 2018 tax levy at its October 18 and November 8, 2018 meetings, the Board approved a resolution that sets forth the recommended amount of \$228,699,500 as the proposed 2018 tax levy for High School District 211, and directed publication of a notice of public hearing on the proposed levy at its December 13, 2018 meeting. The 2018 levy amount is required to be approved and filed with the Cook County Clerk by December 24, 2018.

Effective for the 2018-2019 fiscal year, ISBE is providing a Property Tax Relief Grant Program (PTRG) as a component of the Evidence-Based Funding provision. The PTRG provides select school districts with an opportunity to provide property tax relief by lowering the property tax amount paid by local taxpayers by way of the State replacing a portion of yearly property tax revenue with state funds. The State has reserved \$50 million for this purpose in fiscal year 2019.

In order to qualify, school districts first adopt a levy amount and then submit an application to ISBE requesting grant funding. To provide property tax relief, the Board would adopt a resolution to provide property tax relief through an abatement resolution that would reduce the amount paid by local taxpayers. Preliminary data provided by the State indicates that District 211 could receive grant funds of 65.4% of each dollar of property tax relief to taxpayers. If awarded, the grant would be paid as additional state funding in May 2019. In subsequent years, the amount of the grant award would be added to the District's base funding minimum (hold harmless amount) and paid as State revenue under the category of Evidence-Based Funding. As the law presently exists, Districts that receive the PTRG once, will continue to receive this same amount of funding provided through the grant – \$5 million – each year thereafter.

In order to ensure that District 211 maintains its full operating potential within the established Strategic Plan, the District would designate \$2.6 million from the proceeds of the anticipated sale of the 60 acres and utilize these funds to reduce local tax burden.

The law also provides a unique situation for school districts with a tax levy that falls under the Property Tax Extension Limitation law, which applies to District 211. In the year following receipt of the grant, the aggregate levy of any school district receiving the grant shall include the amount of tax relief the school district provided in the previous taxable year. Therefore, an abatement of the aggregate operating levy would impact only one tax year, and would not have a compounding effect on levy losses each year thereafter.

District 211 is eligible to apply for a maximum of \$23,496,942 of tax relief towards the grant. The grant would reimburse the District for 65.4% of this amount, or a maximum of \$15,356,428. The State has reserved \$50 million next year for Property Tax Relief Grants, and school districts are prioritized based upon a Unit Equivalent Tax Rate (UETR) calculation that produces a calculation equalizing the tax rate for high school districts, elementary school districts, and unit districts. Available funds will be distributed to eligible applicants in the order of highest UETR first. Of the 851 districts across the State included in the preliminary calculation, District 211 is ranked No.28. Approximately \$56 million of relief is prioritized for districts ahead of District 211.

The Board authorized the Superintendent to apply for the Property Tax Relief Grant, that if received by the District, would allow the Board to abate the 2018 levy amount in the amount of \$7.6 million.

Additional information on the 2018 proposed tax levy, and information on the Property Tax Relief Grant, is available [here](#). A copy of the Board presentation is available [here](#).

Life, Accidental Death and Dismemberment, and Long-Term Disability Insurance Renewal

High School District 211 provides life insurance and long-term disability (LTD) insurance for eligible employees, which includes all full-time employees and 0.5 FTE or more licensed staff members. Life insurance is provided at a minimum of \$50,000 policy or paid equal to an eligible employee's salary rounded to the next \$1000. Long-term disability benefits are provided to full-time, eligible employees and provides 60% of the base salary at the time of the disability when a covered employee becomes disabled for 180 consecutive days. The plan is coordinated with TRS and Social Security/IMRF disability plans and any other applicable program. Eligible employees are eligible to retain their life insurance policy at their own expense at the contractual retiree life rate. Accidental death and dismemberment (AD&D) coverage is provided for eligible employees equal to one-time salary as a benefit for those who experience an accidental death.

The District's current life and LTD insurance is provided through Voya, and the existing three-year term expires in January 2019. In anticipation of this, the District worked with its insurance consultant, Hub International, to seek proposals for its insurance renewal. Proposals were sent to 10 providers, with seven being returned.

The Board of Education approved a two-year contract with Standard, effective January 1, 2019, for life insurance at a rate of \$0.135 per \$1,000 of coverage for active members, and \$0.540 per \$1,000 of coverage for retirees; accidental death and dismemberment insurance at a rate of \$0.018 per \$1,000 of coverage; and long-term disability insurance at a rate of \$0.065 per \$1,000 of coverage, as presented.

Additional information is available [here](#).

Administrative Appointments

The Board of Education approved the appointment of **Jacquese Gilbert** as the District's director of summer school and community outreach, effective July 1, 2019. Ms. Gilbert, currently a 12-month assistant principal at Hoffman Estates

High School, began her teaching career in District 211 in 1993 at Fremd High School as a physical education teacher and basketball coach. In 2001, she was promoted to 10-month assistant principal at Fremd High School, where she remained until her promotion to 12-month assistant principal at Schaumburg High School in 2004. After a year at Schaumburg High School, she joined the Hoffman Estates High School administrative team where she served until the 2009-2010 school year when she was named the 12-month assistant principal for discipline at Palatine High School. Ms. Gilbert returned to Hoffman Estates High School as the 12-month assistant principal for discipline for the 2018-2019 school year. Ms. Gilbert earned her bachelor's degree in physical education from the University of Illinois at Chicago, her master's degree in education from Chicago State University, and her administrative certificate from Loyola University.

The Board approved the appointment of **Karen Lasher** as the District's director of business services, effective July 1, 2019. Mrs. Lasher joined District 211 in 2009 as the administrative assistant to the principal at Hoffman Estates High School, a position she held until 2017 when she was appointed assistant to the director of business services. Prior to her service in District 211, Mrs. Lasher had reached a position of management at United Airlines, a company she had worked at for 23 years prior to her departure in 2008. In her last role as a senior staff specialist at United Airlines, Mrs. Lasher supported a multitude of business operations through analyzing business methods and increasing efficiencies. During her time at United Airlines, she also managed benefit information and services for employees. With her appointment as District 211's assistant to the director of business services, she combined her experience in school operations with her business services background in the corporate sector. Mrs. Lasher earned her bachelor's degree in management from National-Louis University.

The Board also approved the appointment of **John Pahlman** as the District's director of facilities and purchasing, effective July 1, 2019. Mr. Pahlman's career in construction and facility management started in 1987 at Lannan Woodworks in Round Lake Park, Ill. In 1997, he began his experiences as a school facility manager as the director of buildings and grounds at Ridgeland School District 122 in Oak Lawn, Ill., a position he held until 2008. From 2008 to 2016, Mr. Pahlman served Community Consolidated School District 62 in Des Plaines, Ill., as the director of maintenance and operations. In this position, he oversaw \$109 million in facility improvements while executing the district's master plan and provided supervision for the facility and maintenance staff. Mr. Pahlman accepted a position as the director of operations for Niles (Ill.) Township High School District 219 in 2016. In this role, he managed purchasing and construction projects throughout the district and facilitated the development of a long-term facility plan. Most recently in 2018, Mr. Pahlman was appointed to an interim position as the assistant director of operations for construction in Township High School District 214, where he has overseen quality assurance and cost containment for \$18 million in construction projects. Mr. Pahlman earned an associate's degree in applied science, heating, air conditioning, and

refrigeration in 2001, a bachelor's degree in business and technology from Governor's State University in 2003, and a master's degree in school business management from Northern Illinois University in 2005. He secured a superintendent's endorsement in 2012, and he is currently pursuing a doctorate in educational leadership through Western Illinois University.

These administrative appointments will begin upon the retirement of current Director of Facilities and Business Services **Christopher Kontney** and Director of Summer School and Community Outreach **Jerry Treviño**.

Mr. Kontney, who has served District 211 for the past 31 years, has worked at the G.A. McElroy Administration Center since 2000, first as director of business services (2000-2014) and currently as director of facilities and business services. He began his education career as an applied technology teacher at Prospect High School in 1986, before joining District 211 in the same capacity at Schaumburg High School in 1987. In 1994, Mr. Kontney was named an assistant principal at Schaumburg High School, and then moved to Fremd High School as an assistant principal before being promoted to director of business services.

Mr. Treviño, who has served in District 211 for 24 years, has been the District's director of summer school and community outreach since 2014. Prior to this, Mr. Treviño served as an assistant principal at Conant High School for 20 years, coming to District 211 from Houston, Texas in 1994.

Next Board of Education Meeting

The next scheduled regular Board of Education meeting will be held on Thursday, December 13, 2018, beginning at 7:30 p.m. in the Anne Koller Board Meeting Room at the G.A. McElroy Administration Center.

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