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Board of Education Meeting Recap

The Township High School District 211 Board of Education met on Thursday, December 11, 2014, 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 Lance Corporal **Grant Dunham**, a 2013 William Fremd High School graduate who is now serving in the United States Marine Corps. Lance Corporal Dunham led the audience in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Recognitions

The Board of Education recognized student-athletes who earned honors in state athletic competitions, including Schaumburg High School girls cross country and the Palatine High School girls cross country team that placed second in state; Palatine and Conant High School boys cross country; and the Fremd High School boys soccer team that placed third in state. A complete list of student-athletes recognized is available [here](#).

The Board recognized Schaumburg High School soccer student-athlete **Jessie Lopez**, who was named an All-American by the National Soccer Coaches Association of America (NSCAA).

Fremd High School Track & Field Coach **Jim Aikens** was recognized for being selected as a finalist for the National High School Athletic Coaches Association (NHSACA) Coach of the Year award. The NHSACA annually recognizes coaches for their outstanding service and unselfish devotion to student-athletes.

The Board also recognized Fremd High School Boys Soccer Coach **Steve Keller** for being named Coach of the Year by the Illinois High School Soccer Coaches Association. This honor recognizes him for his leadership, dedication, and commitment to excellence, as well as his team's success this past season.

Adoption of 2014 Tax Levy

Following a public hearing, the Board of Education approved the proposed 2014 tax levy as presented. The Board extended a Debt Service levy reduction plan providing for a \$2 million decrease in the 2014 tax levy. Since 2007, the Board has reduced the Debt Service levy by \$28.3 million using existing reserve funds to pay an apportionment of its outstanding bonds. The total 2014 tax levy, excluding the Debt Service Fund and approved tax abatement, is \$212,648,268, and it reflects an increase of \$3.6 million or 1.7% over the 2013 tax levy.

Additional information on the 2014 Tax Levy is available [here](#).

Approval of Minutes

The Board of Education approved the minutes from its regular meeting on [November 13, 2014](#).

Proposed Policy Revisions and New Policies

As part of its ongoing Policy Manual review, the Board of Education reviews proposed policy revisions and proposed new policies from the Administrative Board Policy Group. The Group is comprised of Board Vice President **Mucia Burke**, Board Member **Robert LeFevre**, Associate Superintendent **Lisa Small**, Director of Administrative Services **Matthew Hildebrand**, and Assistant to the Superintendent **Kathe Lingl**.

After initially reviewing proposed policy revisions at its November 13 meeting, the Board approved Board policy files: [GCBD Professional Staff Leaves and Absences](#); [GBCC Drug and Alcohol Free Workplace](#); and [GBCE Drug and Alcohol Test Program](#).

The Board also approved new proposed policy, [Prevention of and Response to Student Bullying](#), after initially reviewing it at the November 13 meeting.

2013-2014 Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR) of Board of Education Funds

The Board of Education acknowledged receipt of the June 30, 2014 Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR), which includes financial statements, as prepared by High School District 211, and audited by Baker Tilly Virchow Krause, LLP, Certified Public Accountants. Illinois School Code and the District's adopted policy require an annual audit by independent certified public accountants.

The Governmental Accounting Standards Board encourages every governmental

entity, including school districts, to prepare and publish a Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR). The CAFR serves as the District's official annual financial report and contains introductory information, schedules necessary to demonstrate compliance with finance-related legal and contractual provisions, and statistical data. The purpose of the financial statements is to report on the financial position and operations of the District.

The High School District 211 CAFR was prepared by the District business office and reviewed by Baker Tilly Virchow Krause, LLP. On December 3, 2014, Board of Education Audit Liaisons Bob LeFevre and Mike Scharringhausen met independently with the supervising auditors from Baker Tilly Virchow Krause, LLP, to review and ask questions about the audit process.

The 2013-2014 CAFR is posted on the District 211 website for viewing [here](#).

2016-2017 School Calendar Proposal

High School District 211 has historically followed a traditional school calendar with classes beginning in the last third of August. The first semester ends in January about one week after students return to school from winter break and the school year ends in early June.

In recent years, many school districts have recognized drawbacks to the traditional school calendar. The traditional approach to the school calendar is to schedule first semester final examinations after winter break. Upon return from winter break, teachers almost universally spend several class days reviewing previously covered content to make up for the typical learning loss that occurs when students are away from school. Additionally, students often are tasked with the completion of projects and other assignments while on break. The pressure to complete these assignments causes stress, as students attempt to balance the school-based workload with the demands of personal and family obligations during the winter holidays.

District 211 has been investigating school calendar options under which first semester ends prior to the start of winter break. Such a calendar, referred to as a collegiate-style calendar, offers multiple advantages. The collegiate-style calendar helps students with the learning process since final exams are completed before exiting school for the extended break, and students and teachers do not have to devote class time after winter break reviewing previously covered material in preparation for final exams. Additionally, the earlier start to second semester provides additional class time prior to the administration of Advanced Placement exams in May. From a family perspective, a collegiate school calendar frees students from the need to prepare for final exams during winter break. It also aligns the high school's winter break with college-age students' winter break, allowing families with students in high school and college

more opportunities for family activities. A collegiate-style calendar provides high school students the opportunity to seek summer employment before college students return home to compete for the same summer jobs. Adopting a collegiate-style calendar requires attention to many factors, including the alignment of the high school calendar with the calendars of local elementary school districts, the scheduling of high school graduation ceremonies, the impact of the regular school calendar on the start of summer school, the scheduling of athletic practices in August, and the availability of family vacation time during the latter weeks of summer.

Nearly 70% of high school districts in Cook, DuPage, and McHenry counties have already adopted a collegiate-style school calendar. District 211 has consulted with many of these districts and they report that the collegiate model is serving their needs very well. Students, parents, and staff have adjusted to the new schedule and it is viewed positively within their communities. The toughest part of the change was the transitional summer, which was about two weeks shorter than normal.

Furthermore, District 211 has discussed this potential change in school calendar with School Districts 15 and 54. Both elementary districts have expressed an interest in adjusting their calendars to coincide with the high school calendar as much as can possibly be done. Options for high school graduation ceremonies are being formulated, as the large off-site arenas that have been used in recent years may not be available in the later weeks of May.

Given the complexity of the move to a collegiate-style school calendar, the District would not pursue such a change until the 2016-2017 school year. Delaying the change until then allows for the necessary planning and communication. It also provides time to gather input from families as they consider the impact a collegiate-style calendar might have.

In order to understand the preferences and concerns of parents, teachers and students surrounding the potential adoption of a collegiate-style calendar for 2016-2017, the Board approved administration of a survey. The survey will be conducted during the period of December 12, 2014, until January 5, 2015, and the results will be brought to the Board of Education at its next meeting scheduled for January 15, 2015.

Comprehensive School Climate Survey

The Board of Education authorized the administration of the Comprehensive School Climate Inventory (CSCI), a tool used to survey school climate and meet a survey mandate by Illinois State Board of Education. The CSCI will be given in District 211 in 2015 as an alternate to the ISBE's 5Essentials Survey, at a cost of \$10,650.00. Additional survey information is available [here](#).

Administrative Appointment

The Board of Education approved the appointment of **James Fleischman** as the director of transportation, effective July 1, 2015. Mr. Fleischman is currently assistant to the director of transportation, a position he has held since 2010. Mr. Fleischman began his High School District 211 career as a school bus driver in 1997, and he was promoted to transportation supervisor in 2003. Mr. Fleischman also is certified through the State of Illinois as a driver trainer and certified safety officer. Prior to coming to District 211, Mr. Fleischman served as a manager for 17 years at Lee Wards, Inc.

Mr. Fleischman will replace current Director of Transportation and Driver Education **Raymond Gawron**, who will retire at the end of the school year after 34 years in District 211. Mr. Gawron began his education career as a physical education/(driver education) department chair at Hoffman Estates High School in 1981, and he was promoted to director of transportation and driver education at the Administration Center in 2002.

Next Board of Education Meeting

The next scheduled regular Board of Education meeting will be held on Thursday, January 15, 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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