

D211 POST: DISTRICT 211 BUS DRIVER PASSES 50 YEARS OF SERVICE TO DISTRICT



Bus Driver Bill Dahl has worked as a teacher and bus driver for District 211 for more than 50 years.

In 1968, then High School District 211 Superintendent Gerald A. McElroy called 22-year-old Bill Dahl to the District's administration center for an interview to teach physical education and driver's education at the recently built James B. Conant High School. More than 50 years later, Dahl still wakes up early every morning to start his work day with District 211.



*Dahl as a teacher
in 1970.*

Dahl said when he started working for the District, most teachers also doubled as bus drivers. He said anyone who coached a sport also was encouraged to be a licensed bus driver.

Dahl said working as a teacher and driver for the District was easy due to the environment.

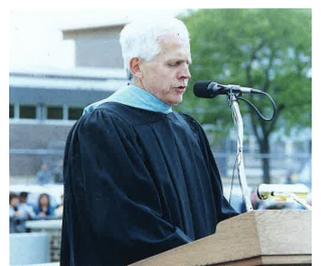
"I was 22 when I walked into that building (Conant High School) for the first time and most of the staff was the same age," Dahl said. "It's been a family. Even though the District is as big as it is, it still feels like a family."

Dahl has seen the District 211 bus fleet expand since the late 1960s. His first bus was bus number 8, a bus he took over from former District 211 Superintendent, teacher, coach, and bus driver Richard Kolze, and Dahl is currently assigned to bus 631. He said he has seen a vast evolution of transportation over the past five decades.

"My first bus was a gasoline-fueled bus," he said. "Since then, I have driven diesel and now propane fueled-buses."

Dahl said that throughout his time with District 211, and Conant High School specifically, he has many vivid memories of how things have changed and advanced.

"Of course, one of the biggest changes to the District is the size," he said. "Another of the biggest changes is special education. People with special needs



*Dahl addresses
students at Conant
High School's
graduation in
2001.*

students move to District 211."

Dahl's wife, Barb, who has been driving buses for the special education program for 28 years, said her bus includes multiple support staff personnel.

"I have three students in wheelchairs who ride my bus," she said. "I have an aid and a nurse who ride along with me."

Dahl, who recently turned 74, said that when he retired from teaching 17 years ago, he wasn't ready to settle down.

"I wasn't ready to be a couch potato," he said. "I am privileged to continue to work."

He said he still looks forward to getting up in the mornings and driving his routes.

"I like routine in my life," Dahl said. "One of the best parts of my day is, I pick up my bus and get to Schaumburg High School a little early where a group of us pull out our lawn chairs. We sit out there and talk. The camaraderie that we have developed in transportation is very important."



District 211 bus driver Bill Dahl (far right) talks with other drivers prior to starting his afternoon bus route at Schaumburg High School.

Dahl added that he always was grateful for the opportunities he has had throughout his time in District 211.

"I was so blessed that I got a call from McElroy to come in for an interview," he said. "In all the years I taught, I never worked; I went to school. Even now I don't see this as work."