

# LARGE SUMMER SCHOOL PROGRAM ENHANCES LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES



*Students work in a summer Consumer Education course at Fremd.*

When school is out for summer, there are many students who are focused on continuing their education, or brushing up on academic or athletic skills they might not have time for during the regular academic year.

District 211's expansive summer school program, which started June 13, is unique not only in the amount of courses offered, but also in the amount of students who take advantage of this opportunities.

"There is a mindset that summer school is for students repeating a course, and although we have students who do for various reasons, most students are here to advance and accelerate their skills in what I believe is one of the largest summer school programs in the state of Illinois," said Charles Chamberlain, District 211 director of summer school, evening programs, and continuing education.

Courses offered during summer school allow students to remain in an academic setting nearly year round. This summer, there are 63 different academic courses with 401 different sections offered in the District's summer school program, which also include special education, freshmen and sophomore academies, and English as a Second Language (ESL) courses. Additionally, there are 226 athletic and activity camps offered to students for various athletic and spirit teams.

During the summer, a large number of students enroll in the District's summer school program. Although enrollment figures for the current summer school will not be available until after second semester, student enrollment for summer 2011 was 13,680. This number reflects the number of students in each class. However, it is possible for students to take more than one summer course at a time.

Because of the large number of students who enroll in summer classes, it provides opportunities for District 211 staff to teach these courses. This summer, there are 260 District 211 staff members, plus an additional 115 teachers hired from outside the District, teaching summer school classes. There also are 295 coaches who run

athletic and activity camps during the summer as part of the summer school program.

Academic courses offered over the summer help students open time in their class schedules during the regular school year for when they might be taking a heavier class load or more challenging courses, such as Advanced Placement or honors classes. Students also can take required courses such as Health Education or Consumer Education in summer school, as well as courses designed to further advance skills in reading, writing, or mathematics.

Other summer school offerings unique to District 211 are its freshmen and sophomore academies, and ESL academies. Incoming freshman and returning sophomores may receive an invitation to participate in academy-level courses, free of charge, to help improve vital academic skills during the summer.

“The academies were designed to help students who need to improve skills in reading and math,” Chamberlain said. “They are invited by the District based on test scores and there is no charge for the course or transportation, and they receive academic credit. We strive to make opportunities acceptable and accessible for parents and students in the summer, and if it improves skills and is free of charge, that’s a win-win.”

Athletic and activity camps are for all students and do not count for academic credit. Camps must follow standards outlined by the Illinois High School Association and are available for athletic teams at each school, as well as spirit groups such as cheerleaders, pom poms, and flags. The purpose of these camps is to not only advance skills in a particular sport or activity, but to also regulate off-season practice time for student-athletes.

Chamberlain, who has been with the District since 1972, said he has watched the District’s summer school advance from a smaller program to the expansive educational opportunity it is today.

“It really has evolved from just basic math, science, reading, writing and social studies,” he said. “It’s a way for District 211 students to experience other things, to keep them involved, and keep them active in a positive way.”

Additional information on the summer school program is available on the District 211 [website](#), as well as by calling the summer school office (847-755-6820) or your high school.