

# D211 POST: THREE FORMER SUPERINTENDENTS VISIT DISTRICT 211



*From left to right: Dr. Richard Kolze, Dr. Nancy Robb, Dr. Dan Cates, and Dr. Gerald Chapman.*

Township High School District 211 prides itself on providing students with the highest quality education and opportunities. Building a strong reputation did not happen overnight. It is the product and impact of each staff member under the leadership of the superintendent that led to the District's success and reputation.

To celebrate the District 211 legacy, Superintendent of Schools Dan Cates recently invited three local former superintendents to visit the school district and discuss their time in District 211.

Collectively, the four superintendents have more than 100 years of experience served in District 211, with more than 40 combined years served as superintendent. Dr. Richard Kolze began working in District 211 in 1957 and served as superintendent from 1970 – 1990. Dr. Gerald Chapman started in District 211 in 1965 and served as superintendent from 1990 – 2001. Dr. Nancy Robb began her District 211 career in 1980 and served as superintendent from 2009 – 2014. Dr. Cates entered District 211 in 1992 and has served as superintendent since 2014.

While each superintendent's tenure contributed different initiatives within the

District's evolution, they shared a common thread – providing the highest quality opportunities possible for students and the community. Each superintendent similarly described the charge and responsibility of upholding the legacy built by each of their predecessors and the importance of fulfilling the trust provided to the District by community members.

*"Trust is something that I hold as a priceless commodity,"* said Dr. Cates during a round-table discussion. *"We have always provided extraordinary opportunities and there is always that next level to achieve. Early on in my career, I sensed we are always pushing for the next best thing. Innovation and expansion to more opportunities were just inherent."*

When discussing the fondest memories of their time in District 211, all the superintendents reminisced about the students and people they encountered each day on the job. Dr. Robb shared a story during her time as principal at Palatine High School. *"After 9/11, students came to me because they wanted to make a flag that would be as large as the football field, so when planes started to fly again it could be seen. We had a flag ceremony and invited the community, students, and staff. The power of students working together in a very difficult situation, and making something good come from it, I will never forget."*

Each superintendent had a connection to the community and to each other. Dr. Kolze mentioned how a former instructor of his led him to be an educator, and former District 211 Superintendent Gerald A. McElroy helped push him to success. Dr. Chapman credited Dr. Kolze's positive influence for his success as a developing administrator, ultimately leading to the role of superintendent. Dr. Robb mentioned that Dr. Kolze also hired her for her first administrative position and Dr. Chapman encouraged her to consider being superintendent. Following the same cycle, Dr. Cates expressed gratitude to Dr. Chapman and Dr. Robb for hiring him and setting him on the path to becoming superintendent. *"When you get older you don't think about thanking the people who did so much for you,"* said Dr. Kolze. *"I am here because someone helped me to college, McElroy pulled me along the way. You shouldn't miss those opportunities to thank people who helped you along the way."*

As the District continues planning for the future and prepares students to be college and career ready, Dr. Cates and the former superintendents see great opportunities in store. *"Every generation and every decade provide a different need,"* Dr. Chapman said. *"The most difficult thing is to recognize what those needs are going to be, and how we are going to be at the forefront of it. We have a great track record of that and keep exceeding. That didn't happen by accident. We want to have a strong academic program and a strong athletic program. Both of those are good for kids."*

Their work to better the community doesn't stop within District 211. Outside of the District and in retirement, these superintendents have worked in service of their communities. Throughout each of their careers, all four superintendents resided within District 211 boundaries, and still do. Additionally, all have served in community organizations, some of which include the Palatine Rotary Club, Excel Beyond 211, Community Consolidated School District 15, William Rainey Harper College, and the Palatine Chamber of Commerce. Strong community connections help strengthen District 211 and its programs. *"We are fortunate that the community has been very supportive of District 211,"* said Dr. Robb. *"Fundamental to all of that is we have a great staff. You have to hire well to have the staff that's able to carry things out."*

*I believe the staff has worked as a team and everyone has worked together to provide additional educational opportunities for our students.”*

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## D211 POST: D211 BOARD OF EDUCATION APPOINTS NEW MEMBER TO FILL VACANT SEAT



*Steven Rosenblum*

The High School District 211 Board of Education has selected Schaumburg resident Steven Rosenblum to fill the vacant seat on the seven-member Board. Mr. Rosenblum's appointment became effective immediately at the August 3 special Board of Education meeting, and runs through the completion of former elected High School District 211 Board Member Lauanna Recker's term in April, 2019. Ms. Recker resigned her position on the Board on June 28, 2017.

Mr. Rosenblum has been a District 211 resident since 1998 and is the parent of two Schaumburg High School graduates. He has been active in the community through his involvement serving on the leadership board and planning committee of the American Diabetes Association Northern Illinois Affiliate since 1985, as assistant scoutmaster in the Boy Scouts of America (2005-2006), and serving as company chair for the Toys for Tots Drive (2016-2017). He also has been a member of the Schaumburg High School VIPs (booster club), Schaumburg Elementary School District 54's Advisory Council for District Initiatives (ACDI), Beth Tikvah Congregation (Hoffman Estates) Board of

Directors and choir member, and St. Hubert's Jobs Ministry. In 2012, Mr. Rosenblum was nominated for the Schaumburg Community Volunteer of the Year award. Mr. Rosenblum is employed in human resources management, and has been a member of the Human Resources Management Association of Chicago.



*Illinois State Board of Education Secretary Cesilie Price administers the Oath of Office to new High School District 211 Board Member Steven Rosenblum at the August 3, 2017 special meeting.*

The District 211 Board of Education received 16 applications for the vacant seat, considering all 16 applicants and interviewing finalists through a series of interviews on July 31 and August 1, before making its decision. In order to serve on the High School District 211 Board of Education, one must be a registered voter, 18 years of age or older, and a resident of District 211 for at least one year. Major responsibilities of the Board of Education are to express and represent the view of the community in matters affecting education, determine education standards and goals, adopt policies for the administration of the school system, employ a Superintendent of Schools, authorize the appointment of teachers and other staff members, approve curriculum, secure money for school operational needs and building programs, and authorize expenditures.

Mr. Rosenblum took the oath of office as a High School District 211 Board of Education member at the beginning of the August 3, 2017 special Board of Education meeting.

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[D211 POST: HEHS RETIREE ROBIN JACOBI RECEIVES PRESTIGIOUS AWARD](#)

# FROM FRENCH GOVERNMENT



*Robin Jacobi with Denis Quénelle, Deputy Cultural Attaché*

Robin Jacobi has been selected for induction into the French Republic's prestigious *Ordre des Palmes Académiques* (Order of the French Academic Palms) at the grade of Chevalier (Knight).

The *Palmes académiques* was founded by Napoleon in 1808 to honor education and is the oldest non-military French decoration. This distinction was initially awarded to outstanding members of the university community. Today, it recognizes the significant contributions of teachers through their teaching, scholarship and leadership over the course of their careers. It is also bestowed upon a select group of individuals who, though not members of academia, have demonstrated outstanding devotion to the French language and culture. The *Palmes académiques* is awarded by the Prime Minister of France, upon the recommendation of the Minister of Education.

The investiture ceremony took place on July 27, 2017 at Emmett's Brewery in Palatine in the presence of family, friends, and colleagues. It was presided over by Denis Quénelle, Deputy Cultural Attaché from the Consulate General of France in Chicago.

Ms. Jacobi is a long-time resident of Palatine. She retired in June 2016 from Hoffman Estates High School where she was a French/Spanish teacher and club advisor for over 28 years. In addition to her teaching responsibilities, she has been president and secretary of the Chicago/Northern Illinois Chapter of the American Association of Teachers of French and served on its executive council for 20-plus years in various capacities. Among the many activities during her tenure as president, the most important are transitioning the organization into the digital age, creating and maintaining the group's first web page, and helping organize an international French teachers' conference in Chicago.

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# D211 POST: INTRODUCTION TO GRADING IMPROVEMENTS



*A message from Superintendent Dan Cates ...*

*(reprinted from the July/August 2017 Superintendent's Newsletter)*

Just for a moment, consider what you believe a report card grade should represent. Most of us can likely agree that a grade serves to communicate a student's performance within a given course. Though grading might initially seem uncomplicated and straightforward, opinions differ widely about characteristics that should or should not factor into a final grade. Complexities associated with grading continue to merit extensive interest and study in countless articles, books, and professional seminars.

Input gathered during the community engagement sessions led us to thoroughly review our grading practices. Throughout the last school year, many people worked extensively to identify how we could improve and ensure the meaningfulness, consistency, accuracy, and timeliness of our grades. Each semester, we issue approximately 360,000 final grades, totaling about 720,000 official grades per year. Individual grades for daily homework, quizzes, and tests all factor into these final semester grades, bringing the total number of grades assigned each year easily into the many millions.

We must ensure that students and parents can understand a student's performance through the grades we assign. Earlier this summer, I sent a message encouraging you to watch for upcoming communications about our grading improvements and in this column, I will briefly introduce some of the improvements we will implement in the upcoming school year.

## Consistent Grade Reporting System

Recognizing that each student's teachers might use a different reporting system in the electronic gradebook – for example, some use points or percentages while others use letter grades – all teachers in the same school will use the same grade reporting system. This consistency will make it easier for parents and students to read and understand the grade information found in Infinite Campus.

## Timing of Grades

Rather than assigning grades every nine weeks, we will now issue an in-progress grade report stating the student's current letter grade status in each course at the 6-week and 12-week points of each semester. We will no longer have the 9-week quarter grades or the 4½-week mid-term progress reports. Eighty percent of the final semester course grade will be based on performance throughout the 18-week semester. As in the past, 20% of the final grade will be based on the semester exam. This semester grading system is similar to the typical collegiate grading system.

## Improved Progress Comments

Teachers recently created improved performance comments for the 6- and 12-week in-progress grade reports and semester report cards so the statements are more meaningful to students and parents. The improved progress comments describe academic behaviors as well as communication skills, attitude, work ethic, timeliness, problem solving skills, teamwork, and flexibility demonstrated in the classroom. These "soft skills" are frequently required in employment settings and are helpful habits and skills to practice during high school.

## Course Syllabus

Each teacher will provide every student with an informative course syllabus that conveys the expectations and requirements of the course.

We all get better when we work together. To help ensure that every student and parent fully understands the improvements in our grading practices, you will continue to receive information through additional communications leading up to the start of the school year.

# FHS FEATURED IN 'EDTECH MAGAZINE' FOR HELPING STUDENTS USE TECH TO ADVANCE

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Technology Coordinator Keith Sorensen (left) and Steve Elza say a robust infrastructure is essential to support devices in Fremd High School's automotive classes.

HOME CLASSROOM

JUL 03 2017 CLASSROOM

## Career-Focused Schools Use Technology to Help Students Advance

Innovative tools are a necessity in vocational programs, experts say.

by Calvin Hennick

Calvin Hennick is a freelance journalist who specializes in business and technology writing. He is a contributor to the CDW family of technology magazines.

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Fremd High School was recently featured in *EdTech Magazine*. The article explores how innovative technology is helping students become career ready. Read an excerpt below:

*In the past, students in Steve Elza's automotive classes at William Fremd High School in Palatine, Ill., had to take turns using a diagnostic scanning tool that cost the school up to \$8,000. Today, the teens use an inexpensive device that connects via Bluetooth to the tablets they all carry.*

*"Today's cars have 100 or more computers in them," says Elza. "We have to have computers to work on them." That's just one of the ways technology is transforming automotive education at*



Fremd.

When the district deployed tablets, students in career and technical tracks were among the most enthusiastic adopters, says Fremd's Technology Coordinator Keith Sorensen.

"Devices changed the automotive program the most," he says. "Students film or take photos each step of the way. They are really good at documenting their work and explaining it."

Elza, who also coaches the school's Hot Rodders of Tomorrow team and was named the 2015 Illinois Teacher of the Year, says all the software the students use is online.

"When they look up a torque spec for a brake system, they use our online software and find that information right on their tablets," he says. "They also use computers to do 3D modeling of parts."

In addition to automotive classes, Fremd offers students the chance to learn about building construction, engineering, electronics and woodworking. This sort of applied technology instruction was once called "vocational," and it was seen by many as a place to put students with limited academic skills.

But today, career and technical education programs prepare students for both college and the workplace. (Some of Elza's students go to \$18-an-hour jobs after graduation, while others pursue four-year degrees.) And, as many of these career paths become more technical in nature, school districts are investing in technology to help their students keep pace with career demands.

To read the full article, click here: <https://edtechmagazine.com/k12/article/2017/07/career-focused-schools-use-technology-help-students-advance>

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# PHOTOS: UPDATE ON FHS ATHLETIC FIELD CONSTRUCTION

Work is underway on FHS' athletic fields to help with drainage. This is the first phase of the athletic field renovations and the drainage project is nearing completion. View some of the photos below:









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# HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT 211 BOARD OF EDUCATION SEEKS CANDIDATES TO FILL OPEN SEAT



On Wednesday, June 28, 2017, Lauanna Recker

resigned from the Township High School District 211 Board of Education, effective immediately. Ms. Recker's resignation creates an open seat on the seven-member Board, which needs to be filled for the remainder of her term.

The remaining six Board of Education members are responsible for appointing a resident of the Township High School District 211 community to complete the remainder of Ms. Recker's term, which runs through April 2019. According to Illinois School Code, members of the Board must appoint someone to this position on or before August 14, 2017.

In order to serve on the High School District 211 Board of Education, one must be a registered voter, 18 years of age or older, and a resident of District 211 for at least one year. Major responsibilities of the Board of Education are to express and represent the view of the community in matters affecting education, determine education standards and goals, adopt policies for the administration of the school system, employ a Superintendent of Schools, authorize the appointment of teachers and other staff members, approve curriculum, secure money for school operational needs and building programs, and authorize expenditures.

Interested individuals should complete an application, and must submit it, along with a cover letter, on or before 4:00 p.m. on July 12, 2017, to:

*Anna Klimkowicz, Board of Education Secretary*

*Township High School District 211*

*G.A. McElroy Administration Center*

*1750 South Roselle Road*

*Palatine, IL 60067-7336*

Applications are available at the District's five high schools and the G.A. McElroy Administration Center, and an online application is available on the [District 211 website](https://adc.d211.org/board-of-education-vacancy/) (<https://adc.d211.org/board-of-education-vacancy/>). Applications also can be submitted via [email](mailto:webmaster@d211.org) ([webmaster@d211.org](mailto:webmaster@d211.org), use subject line "Board Vacancy Application") or fax (847-755-6810). The Board of Education will consider all applicants, but will not be limited to applicants in making its decision.

For questions or additional information about this position, please contact the Superintendent's office at 847-755-6610.