

# D211 POST: FOUNDATION TAPS DISTRICT 211, HARPER COLLEGE, NIU FOR BACHELOR'S DEGREE GRANT

High School District 211, Harper College, and Northern Illinois University have been selected to participate in a one-year “design challenge” that aims to dramatically move the needle on bachelor’s degree completion for community college students.

The Michael and Susan Dell Foundation is funding the nonprofit Education Design Lab to lead the Seamless Transfer Pathway Design Challenge. Harper, NIU and District 211 are among just four groups of two- and four-year institutions chosen nationwide for the grant.

“We know that through our partnerships, we are able to achieve more together than we ever could individually,” Harper College President Dr. Ken Ender said. “If we are going to increase baccalaureate completion in a transformational way, we must begin to think of the high school, community college and university as a single network.”

Research shows about 80 percent of students who enroll in a community college intend to complete a bachelor’s degree. Yet, according to the Education Design Lab, only 25 percent make the leap to a four-year school within five years, and just 17 percent complete a four-year degree within six years of transferring.

The design challenge will bring together partners to break down transfer barriers.

Harper, NIU and District 211’s proposal aims to reduce the time and cost of earning a bachelor’s degree with a goal of a 30 percent increase in the number of Harper students who go on to graduate from NIU within six years. Several initiatives will make this possible including:

- Power of 15: Based on research showing students who enter college with 15 credits are twice as likely to graduate with a four-year degree, the Power of 15 program increases opportunities for students to earn college credit while still in high school.
- Reducing remediation: Opportunities will be expanded for students to take developmental English and math courses during their senior year of high school so they enter Harper automatically eligible for college-level courses.
- Reduction in “wasted” credits: Continued alignment of pathways will ensure students take courses they need to successfully complete their desired program.
- Early college credit: Students will take college credit courses while in high school at a sharply reduced cost.
- Promise Scholarship: Students can earn up to two years of free tuition at Harper by meeting benchmarks in the areas of attendance, rigor, quality, persistence and community service.
- Unified transition advising: Students will be advised through a coordinated, case management effort that will serve them from high school to completing their bachelor’s degree at NIU.
- Guaranteed enrollment: If students stay on their pathway and meet minimum

requirements, they will not need to apply for admission to NIU after completing Harper.

Beginning this fall, the design challenge will provide partners with coaches, access to experts in transfer pathways and reimbursement for national cohort meetings and design sessions. Pilot programs developed over the next year will be launched in fall 2018 and results tracked for six years.

"Our partnership with Harper College has made the pursuit of a college degree a real possibility for many of our students," District 211 Superintendent Dr. Daniel Cates said. "For years, we have envisioned how we might connect more of our high school students with a four-year college program at Northern Illinois University, and we are excited to partner with Harper College and NIU to make this dream a true possibility for our students."

"We are excited to partner with Harper College and Township High School District 211 on an innovative pathway to increase the number of students earning a four-year degree," said Ron Smith, NIU Director, Community College Partnerships. "Our collective efforts will better prepare students for success throughout their college and career endeavors."

For more information on the design challenge, visit [eddesignlab.org](http://eddesignlab.org).

(Release courtesy of Harper College Media Relations Office)

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## D211 POST: DISTRICT 211 JOINS SPRINT'S 1MILLION PROJECT



*Joanna Avalos, a senior at Palatine High School, completes a survey before receiving a wireless hotspot from Sprint as part of the 1 Million Project. Township High School District 211 paired with Sprint in the project which provides free wireless internet to high school students.*

Students within Township High School District 211 will have easier access to the internet to complete web-based homework after the District partnered with Sprint in its 1Million Project. The project provides qualifying students a free wireless hotspot from the Sprint Foundation, with an unlimited data package from Sprint, enabling them access they might not otherwise have.

"This generous program will be a game-changer for our students," said Dr. Daniel Cates, District 211 superintendent. "Since we began the one-to-one program, we have been mindful of students who did not have regular, reliable internet access."

For some students, it will reduce the number of hours they have to remain after school to work on assignments.

"I will usually stay here until 6:00 p.m.," said Priyanshu Bahadur, a sophomore at Palatine High School. "If I cannot stay, then I have to come in early the next day to finish."

With this device, Priyanshu said he would be able to spend more non-school hours at home with family.



*Rusty Cumings, the assistant principal at Schaumburg High School, discusses the wireless hotspot from Sprint to a student.*

For a student at Schaumburg High School it was time away from school that caused trouble in his ability to do homework. He said when his family is on the road, he cannot access the internet to complete larger assignments. With this device, he will be able to stay on top of his assignments.

For Palatine High school senior Honoer Okhave this will improve more than just his academic performance.

"I didn't have internet at home, so I just wouldn't do my homework," said Honoer. "I used to get in trouble a lot."

Honoer said he was excited when he saw the letter announcing the new program.

"I used to wish the school could find a way to get us Internet outside of here," he said. "This is like a dream come true."

Sprint plans to distribute 1million devices to qualifying students during the five-year project. District 211 is one of the first school districts in Chicagoland to participate.



*Joanna Avalos, Priyanshu Bahadur, and Honoer Okhavhe, students at Palatine High School, learn how to use their new wireless hotspot.*

"We are both grateful and excited for our students who will benefit because they now have convenient and reliable access to the same universe of information that others have," said Dr. Cates.

The District has distributed 225 devices to students. Each device has built-in content filters, similar to filters that are in-place in school networks. Part of the agreement between Sprint and participating schools is that Sprint will handle all technical issues and trouble shooting with the devices.

Students who receive a Sprint device will have access to the service for the duration of their high school career.

Dr. Cates believes this will have a positive impact on students well beyond this school year.

"Once we can draw upon the impact for our first group of students, we hope that no student in the future has to be limited by a lack of internet access," he said.



Mr. Mike Alther, an assistant principal at Palatine High School, explains how to use one of the Sprint wireless hotspots.

## ANNUAL DIRECTIONS 2015 COLLEGE AND CAREER FAIR EVENT APPROACHING FOR STUDENTS IN SPECIAL EDUCATION



Post-secondary options for students with special needs sponsored by the  
[Northwest Educational Council for Student Success](#)

In an effort to help encourage and provide guidance for parents transitioning their students out of high school and into vocational or collegiate opportunities after graduation, District 211 is part of a team of local educational institutions participating in Directions College and Career Fair 2015.

The event, which will take place on Sept. 29 from 5:45 – 8:30 p.m. at the Forest View Educational Center, 2121 S. Goebbert Rd., in Arlington Heights, is sponsored by Township High School District 211, High School District 214, Barrington Community Unit School District 220, St. Viator High School, William Rainey Harper College, and Northwest Educational Council for Student Success.

All students who have received any type of special education programming, as well as their families, are encouraged to attend. Representatives from colleges and post-secondary institutions will be available to distribute literature and discuss their programs.

"Township High School District 211 is excited to once again be part of bringing the Directions College and Career Fair to the northwest suburbs," said Renée Erickson, director of special education in District 211. "Directions College and Career Fair is

a great opportunity for students with special education needs, and their families, to explore post-secondary education and training options as they plan for the future. With over 50 post-secondary education and training organizations participating, this is set to be the greatest event this group has hosted to date."

The evening will begin with a keynote from Dr. Mark Harris, the director of Student Disability Services at the University of Iowa. He will be speaking about some of the top mistakes parents make during the transition to college.

Parents and students are encouraged to attend the College and Career Fair that will take place during the event. From 7:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m., attendees can view a panel discussion with representatives from four-year colleges and universities, community colleges, career training programs, and Life Skills training programs.

To register in advance, obtain further information or for special accommodations, please visit the [website](#).

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## D211 RECEIVES 2ND AWARD FOR TRANSPARENCY

Township High School District 211 was recognized with a "Sunny Award" from the Sunshine Review on March 8, 2012. The award honors the most transparent government web sites in the country, and District 211 was one of 19 honorees in Illinois, which included 7 school districts. This is the second consecutive year that District 211 has been honored with the award.



"The Sunny Awards recognizes governments that are doing an exemplary job at proactively disclosing information to taxpayers," said Michael Barnhart, president of Sunshine Review in an online posting. "There are so many organizations and associations that highlight what is wrong with government. We at Sunshine Review are proud to acknowledge those who are doing it right and setting a transparency standard that all governments can, and should, meet."

The Sunshine Review analyzed more than 6,000 government web sites, grading each on a 10-point checklist for transparency. Editors looked for content that included budgets, meeting, lobbying information, financial audits, contracts, academic performance, public records, and taxes, with those agencies receiving a grade of "A" being recognized with a "Sunny Award." District 211's web site received a grade of "A+."

The Sunshine Review, started in 2008, is a nonprofit organization promoting state and local government transparency.

Additional information on 2012 Sunny Awards is available [here](#).