

Discover214

2023-2024 ANNUAL REPORT TO THE HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT 214 COMMUNITY



Our Mission and What We Believe

PRIMARY MISSION

Our Primary Mission is to help all students learn the skills, acquire the knowledge and develop the behaviors necessary for them to reach their full potential as citizens who can meet the challenges of a changing society.

SECONDARY MISSION

Our Secondary Mission is to provide residents with opportunities for lifelong learning.

WHAT WE BELIEVE: DISTRICT 214 PARAMETERS

- 1. Keep all programs, practices and activities consistent with the District mission, vision and goals.
- 2. Operate six comprehensive high schools and one specialized school with five programs to meet student needs and interests.
- 3. Enlarge our candidate pool to attract highly qualified individuals to increase our cultural and ethnic diversity.
- 4. Give the instructional program the highest priority in allocation of resources.
- 5. Maintain sound fiscal practices to ensure appropriate budget fund balances and a balanced operating budget.
- 6. Provide a Community Education Program that supports lifelong learning opportunities.
- 7. Review and update District goals annually.

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left to right - back row: Leonard “Lenny” Walker (Vice President), Andrea Rauch, Mark Hineman, Dr. Scott Rowe and Frank Fiarito
left to right - front row: William J. Dussling, Alva Kreutzer (President) and Mildred “Millie” Palmer

Dear District 214 Community,

It is with great pride and gratitude that I present to you the High School District 214 Annual Report for the 2023-2024 school year. This report highlights the remarkable efforts and achievements of our students, staff, families and community over the past year.

Throughout the 2023-2024 academic year, our District embarked on a transformative journey, guided by a commitment to listening, evolving and strengthening our community connections. Under the leadership of new Superintendent Dr. Scott Rowe, and with the valuable input of our entire community, we have laid the groundwork for a comprehensive strategic plan—the first in nearly three decades. This plan will steer us for the next five years and ensure that District 214 continues to lead in preparing students for success in college, careers and life.

We also began essential capital improvements across our schools, reinforcing our dedication to maintaining the facilities that support both our students and the larger community. These improvements, which will continue over the next decade, ensure that our learning environments remain modern and equipped for the future.

At the core of everything we do is the well-being and success of our students. This past year, we addressed the challenges of post-pandemic attendance by implementing tailored interventions for students and continuing to support student well-being through a modified block schedule that enhances academic rigor and provides space for collaboration.

As we look forward to the 2024-2025 school year and beyond, I am confident that District 214 is well-positioned for even greater success. Our collective efforts are focused on preparing our students not just for today’s world, but for the rapidly changing future. I encourage you to stay engaged with District 214 as we continue to create new opportunities, foster innovation and strengthen our community connections.

On behalf of the Board of Education, I want to extend my deepest thanks for your ongoing support of our students, schools and community.

Sincerely,

Alva Kreutzer, President,
Board of Education, High School District 214

A discussion with Superintendent Dr. Scott Rowe after his first year at District 214

You devoted much of your first year to listening...to students, staff, families and community. Related to that...

What are a couple of the most important things you learned?

I learned that the people who make up the District 214 staff are incredibly talented and dedicated educators, who love working in District 214. I had the most enjoyable year spending time in our schools and connecting with our staff and watching them dedicate themselves to our students.

I also learned that our leadership team and many staff members are eager for change and to support our system to evolve. There is a palpable desire to be more aligned across our buildings in our systems and instructional expectations. That desire to align is shared in the community as well. This alignment comes from a place of wanting to do a really good job and serve our students at a very high level and know where we are going as an organization, so they can support that direction from the classroom or office in each school.

What did you hear that requires the most immediate attention?

The most important and immediate action is to develop a North Star for the District, which we will achieve during our strategic planning process. With a North Star, all aspects of the District will know where we are headed, which will be in alignment with our communities' values and priorities. This will allow us to build capacity in the organization for decisions at each school to represent their unique cultures and needs that are still in alignment with the District vision and direction.

Dr. Scott Rowe has served as the Superintendent of High School District 214 since July 1, 2023. He previously was the Superintendent of Huntley Community School District 158. He served for seven years as a middle school and high school principal within District 158 prior to becoming superintendent. He began his career as a social studies teacher and assistant principal in other districts.

Dr. Rowe holds a bachelor's degree from Missouri State University and master's and doctoral degrees in educational leadership from Aurora University.



It was clear from the onset that you value transparency on the District's part. What steps have already been taken and what additional steps should the District and community expect in this regard?

A public school district is representative of the community and we don't take it lightly that we are well-resourced through our community's tax contributions. Our community deserves to know that their tax dollars are being put to good use and we are being good stewards of those resources. Additionally, our schools are housing the most precious resources of our community, our children. We need our families to have a great deal of confidence in how we care for them and ensure our learning environments are safe and nurturing where we value a sense of belonging for all students. Finally, our community is proud of District 214, which gives me great pride in my work. I want the community to know of the wonderful things we are working on and have a great deal of confidence in us that we are focused on growth and opportunity for their children, and we are continually pursuing excellence in everything we do.

The District is in the midst of strategic planning work to define and set priorities for five years but also suggest how we both prepare for and manage the inevitably large and currently unknown changes that will occur in education 15 to 20 years from now.

What would you like the community to know about this process and its benefit for the District and entire community?

This is the first time the District has built a comprehensive strategic plan in nearly 30 years. I really want this plan to represent our entire community and be broad enough that everyone can see their priorities in it. Therefore, I ask that everyone participate as we continue to seek feedback that will contribute to the plan. We genuinely do want your involvement and support because this plan will guide our work for the next five plus years.

Like many districts, 214 experienced the lingering pandemic effect of too many student absences. Can you tell us a little about the District's campaign to improve attendance and its results so far?

Attendance and focus while in school are vital to student success. We began our efforts to improve attendance by simply making families aware of their individual child's attendance patterns as compared to the average attendance patterns and the ideal patterns to create awareness. The Deans and Counselors offices are layering in additional interventions and supportive conversations around this as well, that are more personalized to the individual student needs. Each school is focusing on student culture and sense of belonging as well. We believe that a student's sense of belonging and belief that we want them there and they are missed when they are not at school is important to motivating them to attend daily. This will be an ongoing effort for years to come, but is the perfect example of it taking a village to raise a child. We want to partner with families to support them to get their student to school each day and need their support to help that happen.



Now that you've been out and about in the District's facilities for a year, what's your brief assessment of the work that lies ahead to maintain this vital community investment in our schools and campuses?

We're undertaking significant construction upgrades at Elk Grove High School and athletic field improvements at Buffalo Grove High School. Buffalo Grove High School is our youngest building at 51 years old. Much of the original mechanical equipment remain at Buffalo Grove and many of our other buildings. I share that detail because it is a testament to the people who work in D214 that we take great pride in our facilities and our Central Maintenance Team does an excellent job maintaining our equipment. That being said, our team can only manage things for so long.

A year of listening and strengthening connections

For District 214, the 2023-24 school year was a time of special emphasis on listening, evaluating and nurturing community connections, all while furthering our support of students.

During his first year as superintendent, Dr. Scott Rowe—working closely with the Board of Education—actively encouraged students, staff, families and community members to share thoughts, points of pride and concerns regarding the District.

This process, with its invaluable feedback, set the stage to begin work on a comprehensive strategic plan, the District’s first in almost 30 years. In partnership with DeliverEd—which has supported districts nationwide in similar work—District 214 last spring and summer conducted surveys and focus groups, collecting responses that will inform the strategic planning process through to its conclusion in 2025. Additional information about this process and its importance may be found on Page 17’s brief look at what to expect in 2024-25.

As noted in more detail on Page 8, 2023-24 also marked the beginning of capital improvements that will continue for the next decade. With school buildings and other campus facilities ranging in age from 51 to 67 years old, repairs, upgrades and repurposing of some spaces are needed to serve students and protect the community’s investment in its schools. The work began in earnest this past year with extensive improvements to student service areas at Elk Grove High School and to outdoor

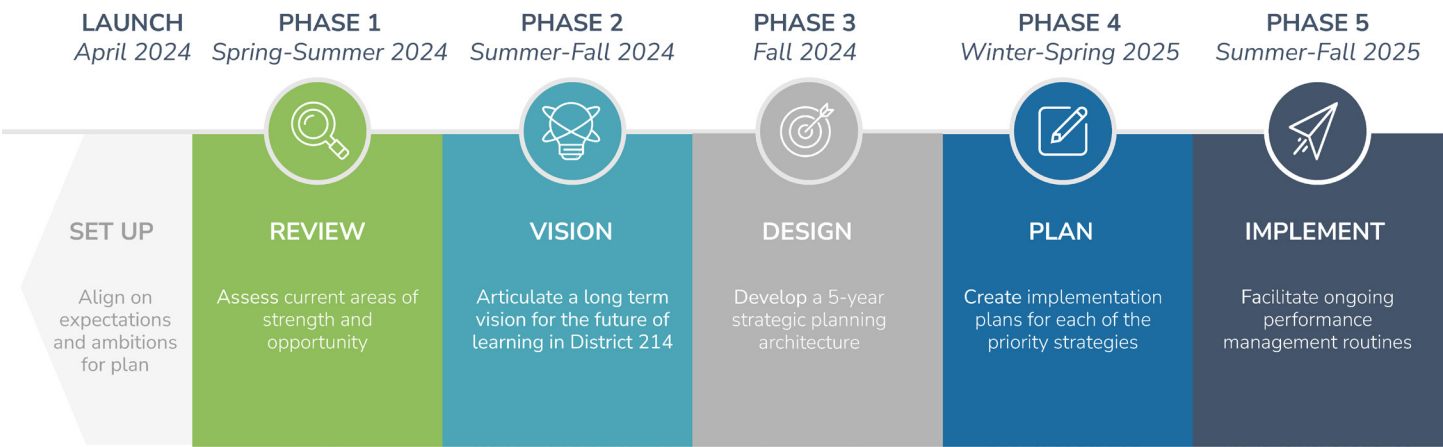
In partnership with DeliverEd...District 214...conducted surveys and focus groups...that will inform the strategic planning process through to its conclusion in 2025.

physical education and athletic facilities at Buffalo Grove High School.

Student well-being and learning are, of course, at the heart of all that we do. With that in mind, 2023-24 also featured a concentrated effort to improve student attendance, which in districts nationwide is still experiencing residual effects of the pandemic. District 214 worked to improve attendance by informing families of their individual child’s attendance patterns as compared to the average attendance patterns and the ideal patterns. Additional interventions were tailored for individual student needs. While the District made progress during 2023-24, the effort will continue in the coming years.

After careful deliberation and assessing input from students, staff and families, District 214 also decided during 2023-24 to continue for all schools the use of a modified block schedule. This schedule offers benefits for learning and accommodates a later start time, which we found to be important for student well-being and staff collaboration.

The Five Phases of the District 214 Strategic Plan



Celebrating Success: National Honors for Prospect and Wheeling High Schools



Prospect High School named Blue Ribbon School

In 2023, Prospect High School was honored as a National Blue Ribbon School, recognized for exemplary academic performance. This prestigious award highlights the dedication of students, educators, families, and the community in striving for high achievement. Prospect was one of only three public high schools in Illinois to receive this distinction and among just 52 high schools across the nation to be recognized in the High Performing Schools category.



Wheeling High School named Democracy School

Wheeling High School was recently named an Illinois Democracy School, recognized for its commitment to promoting civic learning and fostering participatory citizenship among students. The designation encourages students to engage in civic discussions, empowering them to become informed and active members of society. Led by Principal Dr. Bradford Hubbard, the school joins an elite network of schools dedicated to promoting democratic values through open dialogue, diverse perspectives, and thoughtful classroom discussions. The work continues as the school identifies new growth opportunities to maintain this prestigious status.

District 214 welcomes school leaders to explore future-ready programs

During the 2023-2024 school year, High School District 214 welcomed educational leaders and professionals from across the country to observe our innovative implementation of career connected learning. In total, 36 school districts from 20 states visited District 214, eager to learn about our approach to preparing students for college, careers and life.

These site visits featured presentations by District administration, panel discussions with staff, teachers and students, plus tours of our high school facilities and pathways classes. Attendees gained valuable insights into how we are shaping future-ready students. We were proud to share our work and hope that visitors’ knowledge helps enhance educational practices in their communities.



Discover our Facilities

Some of District 214’s primary responsibilities are so deeply intertwined that there’s little point in discussing one without the others. Take, for instance, the District’s obligation to provide contemporary learning opportunities and spaces while also acting as responsible stewards of the community’s financial investment in its schools. These intersect in ways that may not be top-of-mind to casual observers but are very much the focus of the District’s Board and administrative team.

District 214’s school buildings range in age from 51 to 67 years. The oldest, Prospect, opened in 1957, the year of Sputnik. The newest, Buffalo Grove, opened in 1973—half a century ago. While the District has meticulously cared for its facilities over these decades, time nonetheless takes a toll and demands repairs, upgrades and sometimes repurposing. Our brick-and-mortar schools, athletic fields, fine arts spaces and ancillary facilities are aging and require attention. In addition, the learning spaces of 1957 or 1973 don’t always mesh with what students need today to prepare for future success.



The District is refining the details of a 10-year capital program that will guide the work of ensuring that facilities are maintained, repaired and updated in ways that serve students and the community for decades to come.



Working with inspectors, architects, construction management experts and specialists in mechanical, electrical and plumbing systems, District 214 has conducted comprehensive and detailed assessments of all facilities. When we say all facilities, we mean everything—from lighting, fencing and parking lots to flooring, roofing, boilers and chillers. From tennis courts and storage sheds to science classrooms to theater curtains. And much, much more.

At each step of the process, the District and its partners evaluate current conditions, identify life safety items requiring attention, and incorporate building and grounds needs. All this work is being done to establish priorities and build a long-range management plan and an accompanying budget for the coming decade. District 214 will provide updates and information for community members throughout this undertaking.

SOME WORK HAS ALREADY BEGUN

Significant projects initiated during the 2023-24 year include repurposing space at Elk Grove High School for more efficient delivery of student services. Also featured at Elk Grove is an exciting new culinary arts space, made possible in part by generous contributions from Elk Grove Village and featuring contemporary space to prepare students for culinary careers while showcasing their work for the community.

GAME CHANGING SPORTS FACILITIES

Game Changing Sports Facilities Coming to Buffalo Grove High School. The Buffalo Grove High School field renovation project is well underway.



Building a brighter future

Also launched during 2023-24 were substantial upgrades to Buffalo Grove High School’s outdoor athletic and physical education facilities to remediate long-standing drainage problems and enhance student and spectator experiences. This will be the common thread throughout this process: enhancing student experience, improving community experience in our shared spaces and honoring one of the most vital investments that any community can make.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY

At High School District 214, energy efficiency has become a cornerstone of its sustainability efforts, driving environmental responsibility and fiscal savings. The District has embraced various strategies to reduce energy consumption, ensuring that schools provide high-quality education and minimize their ecological footprint.

District 214 has continued implementing several initiatives, from upgrading lighting systems to replacing outdated heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) units with more energy-efficient models. Over the past two years, District 214 has made significant major mechanical improvements totalling **\$13,307,332.13**. These efforts have focused on upgrading essential mechanical systems across several schools, including building automation systems, chiller replacements and boiler replacements.

One of the most significant upgrades is the continued installation of LED lighting across all buildings. This will significantly cut down energy usage while enhancing the learning environment. LED lights are longer-lasting and more energy-efficient than traditional lighting, reducing the District’s energy bill by thousands of dollars annually.

Additionally, the District invests in smart building technologies, including automated systems to control lighting, heating, and cooling. These systems adjust based on occupancy and time of day, ensuring energy is used only when necessary. In many classrooms and hallways, motion sensors turn off lights when rooms are unoccupied, while advanced thermostats optimize heating and cooling according to outdoor conditions and building usage.



District 214 has also begun to explore renewable energy options such as solar panels. By combining technological upgrades, smart energy management and renewable energy sources, the District continues demonstrating its commitment to creating a greener future for students and the community. The results are precise: reduced energy consumption, lower operational costs and a healthier environment for future generations.

Some examples of these renewable energy strategies can be seen at all seven campuses, as we currently have 42 EV car plugs throughout the organization; that is, three charging stations per school that anyone can utilize. Furthermore, we replaced every single hand dryer in the District with one of the most efficient hand dryers available on the market. We have just about every bathroom fixture operated by solar charge on/off. We have also been working diligently by removing old porcelain water fountains that are not energy efficient and “going green” inspired bottle fillers that help reduce plastic potentially going into our landfills while promoting good water bottle reusing usage.

District 214’s commitment to sustainability aligns with its broader objectives of prudent fiscal management and responsible community stewardship. Over the past two years, working with ComEd and Nicor, we were able to bring back to the District a total of **\$301,093.98** by applying for customer incentives and rebates. By prioritizing energy efficiency, the District ensures that cost savings are redirected toward educational programs and facilities that directly benefit students. These efforts contribute to environmental preservation and demonstrate how schools can play a leading role in energy conservation.

\$301,093.98

Over the past two years, working with ComEd and Nicor, we were able to bring back to the District a total of \$301,093.98 by applying for customer incentives and rebates.

Discover Real-world Learning

District 214, a national leader in college and career preparation, partners with over 1,500 businesses to offer students impactful internships and apprenticeships. For the Class of 2024, the District awarded 844 College and Career Pathway Endorsements—a 154% increase from last year’s 332—representing 35% of all endorsements in the state, underscoring its commitment to student success.

Scan the QR codes to see our students explore a wide range of career opportunities.

DRIVING HER PASSION

Wheeling High School senior Cristal Juarez paved her way forward with an internship at the auto body shop at Tasca Chevrolet in Wheeling.



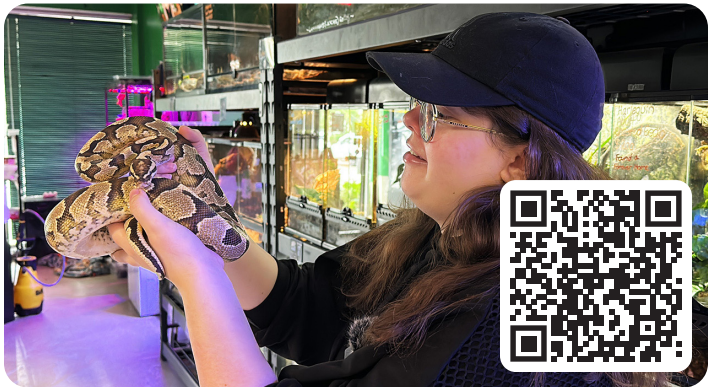
SPROUTING NEW DREAMS

Prospect High School recent graduate Ava Foster’s internship with the Prospect Heights Natural Resources Commission blossomed into a full-blown passion for environmental science.



EXPLORING THE REPTILE REALM

Shira Tavalin from The Academy at Forest View is interested in herpetology and interned at Chief Reptile in Mount Prospect.



SKATING TO NEW OPPORTUNITIES

John Hersey High School senior Dominik Popperl took his hockey skills to the marketing team at Nicholas Sportsplex in Mount Prospect.



PASSION FOR FASHION

Buffalo Grove High School’s Gina Deckowitz and Jessica Riesterer learned how to run a business at Charisma Clothing Boutique in Arlington Heights.

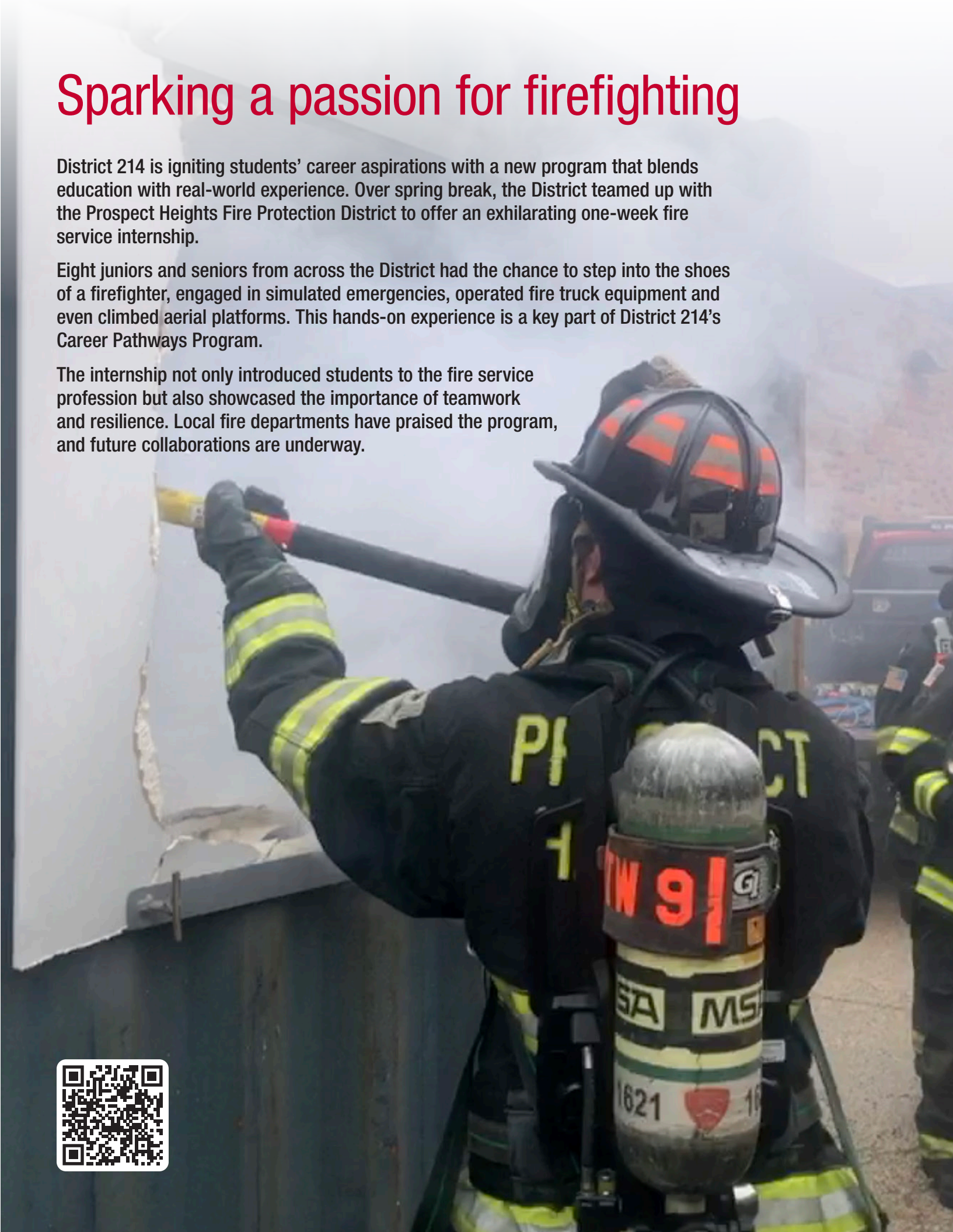


Sparking a passion for firefighting

District 214 is igniting students’ career aspirations with a new program that blends education with real-world experience. Over spring break, the District teamed up with the Prospect Heights Fire Protection District to offer an exhilarating one-week fire service internship.

Eight juniors and seniors from across the District had the chance to step into the shoes of a firefighter, engaged in simulated emergencies, operated fire truck equipment and even climbed aerial platforms. This hands-on experience is a key part of District 214’s Career Pathways Program.

The internship not only introduced students to the fire service profession but also showcased the importance of teamwork and resilience. Local fire departments have praised the program, and future collaborations are underway.



Discover our Programs

Our educators are committed to going above and beyond, fostering an environment where every student has the opportunity to thrive. Whether students are passionate about the arts, drawn to engineering, or interested in the trades, we offer a wide range of specialized programs designed to inspire and engage. These unique programs not only ignite curiosity but also provide hands-on experiences, helping students discover their true potential.

Scan the QR codes to discover more.

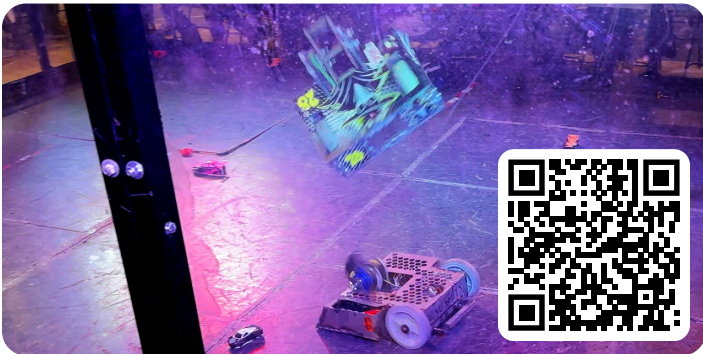
UNLEASHING CREATIVITY THROUGH ARTS UNLIMITED

The Arts Unlimited reception is an annual celebration of student talent, creativity and artistic expression in both fine and performing arts.



LET'S GET READY TO RUMBLE!

Students build, battle and smash their way to victory in our annual Robot Rumble competition.



RACING TEAMS TAKE DESIGNS TO THE FINISH LINE

Student teams spend months brainstorming, building models and fabricating a one-person High Mileage Vehicle focused on speed and fuel efficiency.



FUTURE CHEFS RISE TO THE CHALLENGE

Culinary students from Buffalo Grove, Elk Grove and Rolling Meadows high schools go head-to-head in the Great Culinary Competition Bake-off.



FIXER-UPPER TO FABULOUS

Students in the Practical Architectural Construction (PAC) program spent two years completely renovating this home.



Code breakers and trend makers

Alex Strugacz and Miguel Aenlle are freshmen at Cornell University and the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign this fall, but their journey began much earlier at John Hersey High School. Friends since sixth grade, these 2024 graduates charted an extraordinary path with groundbreaking achievements:

Hersey Hack Club: Alex and Miguel founded this club, drawing 20 to 30 students each week to tackle new tech presentations and projects.

Hersey Developers: They launched an authentic coding internship, now the largest in District 214, providing 30 students from all District high schools with valuable programming experience.

App Showcase: Their app, EasyMeal, was showcased at Apple's flagship store on Michigan Avenue.

HS HACKS: They organized a hackathon that attracted 120 students from over 30 schools, handling everything from marketing to recruiting STEM professionals for workshops.

Hersey computer science teacher Bob Brown says he's not seen anything quite like Alex and Miguel in all his years as an educator.

"As sophomores, they asked if we could start a new club for computer science students," Brown recalled. "We agreed it would be student run. They absolutely took the reins and ran with it. Every single Friday during the school year, they teach students something new that's web-based or app-based or something else that's cool in computer science."

"We got as close to offering a professional software development experience as they possibly could get as high school students..."
— Miguel Aenlle

Moreover, Brown said, Alex and Miguel approach it as any adult professional would: preparing and walking through the presentation in advance and evaluating afterward what went well and what they could improve.

Angela Ferrazza, Hersey's Student Success Coach, remembers interviewing Alex and Miguel individually and reaching the same conclusion.

"Their requests, in scope, were nothing like a typical student, in which we could set up an internship for coding or an introduction to working the front and backend of a web site.



Alex Strugacz, Bob Brown and Miguel Aenlle

These two had already done it. I asked them to come in together, and I was honest; I said, 'I feel like I'm going to fail you. In fact, it feels like maybe there's something you can teach.'"

So they did. Working with Ferrazza and other Hersey staff, Miguel and Alex established their own academically accredited 60-hour internship experience: Hersey Developers, composed of a 20-hour skills segment followed by a 40-hour project component. Together, Alex and Miguel guided interns through the development of websites to be used within District 214.

"We got as close to offering a professional software development experience as they possibly could get as high school students," Miguel said. "We had them work through realistic real world software development tasks. We hosted orientation meetings; we discussed coursework assignment and learning skills." In their role as instructors, Alex and Miguel evaluated interns' work and gave essentially real-time feedback..

How did the friends arrive at this point, initiating and delivering projects so far above and beyond the norm? Miguel says that a childhood interest in Legos led to middle school programming and eventually a programming course via MIT. He cites, too, finding part-time work at a remodeling company's IT Department that lets him apply his software skills in a business setting.

Alex's coding journey started early in high school and led to an online Harvard computer science course that deepened his interest. After scoring a 5 on an AP computer science exam without actually taking the course, he decided he might be on the right track.

Alex is majoring in computer science as well as minoring in artificial intelligence at Cornell. Miguel is studying computer science, and hopes to conduct artificial intelligence research at the University of Illinois. As for what's next for the duo, they both envision eventually founding their own tech start-ups. And there, the question may not be whether that happens...but how soon.

Shining a Spotlight on Innovation: 2024 Ennis Award nominees shape the future of education

The District 214 Board of Education established the Dr. Elizabeth A. Ennis Innovator Award in 2005, in honor of Dr. Ennis, our sixth Superintendent.

Every year, each District 214 school nominates one individual or team for the award. A District committee—composed of a Board of Education member, principal, support staff, licensed educator and central maintenance personnel—reviews the nominations and selects that year’s recipient.

During her 15-year tenure as Superintendent, Ennis achieved significant milestones, including the establishment of the District 214 Vanguard School and the Newcomer Center. Her legacy lives on through this annual award. It is presented to an employee or team of employees who have demonstrated leadership in the development and implementation of an idea to improve student learning and achievement.

Shelby Rosin, science teacher at Prospect High School, is the winner of the 2024 Dr. Elizabeth A. Ennis Innovator Award from High School District 214.



different. She created an interactive presentation in Apple’s Keynote program that included photos and links to videos, and opportunities for the students to play around with the look of the results they were reporting—shapes and colors and styles.

“The technology opened the door to the material,” she said. Changing the output got students more engaged. Kids were taking ownership of their work, collaborating and problem-solving.”

Rosin’s Apple representative encouraged her to post the presentation on the Apple Education Forum, where it’s been viewed by more than 1,200 educators. In addition, Rosin has shared her enthusiasm for classroom technology with her fellow teachers at workshops for new teachers and at professional development sessions.

- The other 2024 Ennis Award nominees included:**
- Jeanne Shin-Cooper: Buffalo Grove High School
 - Kirsten Fletcher, Patricia Hartwig, Melinda Perkins, Tim Phillips, Lisa Pokorny and Julie Schroeder: Elk Grove High School
 - Dawn Francis, Amy Ohrt, Rob Pihl, Sam Silver, Matthew Stack and Heather Yalda: John Hersey High School
 - Parisa Fayeizadeh, Fernando Gonzalez, Gabriela Medina, Violeta Reyes, Sheila Rudden-Shorey and Belen Uriostegui: Rolling Meadows High School
 - Kristie Allen, Megan Baker, Elizabeth Christell, Elizabeth Delgado and Natalie De Meo: Wheeling High School

“The technology opened the door to the material,” she said. “Changing the output got students more engaged. Kids were taking ownership of their work, collaborating and problem-solving.”

— Shelby Rosin

Rosin was recognized for using technology tools in innovative and engaging ways in the classroom.

In Rosin’s case, taking 10 minutes to switch how she delivered lab materials meant everything to her freshman Biology students.

Now in her fourth year at Prospect, Rosin is part of a teaching and learning cohort that works with an Apple Computer representative to find new ways to use District 214 students’ iPads in classes. “I love technology,” Rosin said. “I realized that although we have the iPads in our District, in many cases they’re just replacing paper. Often it seems that the same worksheets are simply getting transferred to the iPad.”

When she started planning for the annual Elephant Poop Lab—an investigative lab looking at soil and seed dispersal—Rosin decided to take the worksheet questions and do something

The many dividends of early college credit

What does it mean to jump-start the future for District 214 students? More than we can even begin to detail in the limited space of these pages.

One essential element, of course, is providing real-world work-based learning experiences. These hands-on opportunities inform students about which careers they want to pursue—and which they don’t. The experiences also provide invaluable mentoring from professionals in many fields.

But jump-starting the future also has meaning in dollars and cents. District 214 is a regional and national leader in creating opportunities for students to earn early college credit and professional certifications—both of which pay real dividends.

Students who earn early college credit—through Advanced Placement courses or dual-credit opportunities offered in partnership with higher education institutions—routinely report that the academic rigor of these courses and the time management and self-advocacy skills they develop put them well ahead of their peers in college and university settings.

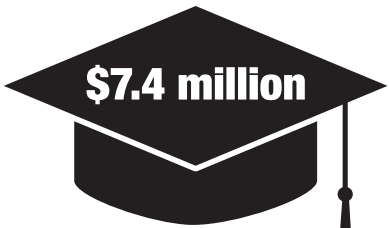
But that’s not all. District 214 graduates who have earned early college credits often step onto a college campus well-positioned to spend less time and money earning their next degree.



A similar principle applies to earned professional certifications. Consider the journey of 2024 Elk Grove High School graduate Emily Sohn (pictured left), who early in high school did not

know what she wanted to do – only that college did not interest her. She tried Project Lead the Way classes, which sparked an interest in manufacturing. A subsequent apprenticeship with DEMGY, a local plastic injection molder manufacturer, allowed her to explore all aspects of the business. She focused on machine operation/maintenance/automation and earned several certifications, including one to operate a forklift. All of which figured into DEMGY’s decision to hire her immediately after graduation.

Or take the case of Prospect High School culinary arts teacher Elizabeth Abraham (pictured right), a Prospect graduate herself, who says that her extensive dual credit work in high school allowed her to switch from an elementary to secondary education major in college and still graduate in four years.



The Class of 2024’s credits translate to a value of \$7.4 million, averaging \$3,000 in savings per student

District 214 offers over 30 Advanced Placement (AP) courses and more than 70 dual-credit courses taught by qualified high school teachers in partnership with seven higher education institutions.

The number of students earning certifications and early college credit has significantly increased.

- Fifteen years ago, there were 232 dual-credit enrollments district-wide.
- In 2023-24, that number surged to 9,281.

92% of District 214 graduates now participate in Advanced Placement, dual-credit or both.

- The Class of 2024 earned:**
- 53,434 college course credits through Advanced Placement and dual-credit combined.
 - This averages 18.45 credit hours per student.
 - 28,815 of those credits were earned through dual-credit alone (9.95 average credit hours per student).

- Financial savings through early college credit:**
- At Harper College, in-district students pay \$138.50 per credit.
 - The Class of 2024’s credits translate to a value of \$7.4 million, averaging \$3,000 in savings per student.

- From the Class of 2016 to the Class of 2024:**
- A total of 350,687 potential early college credits were earned.
 - Of those, 132,743 credits came from dual-credit alone.
 - The potential value of all credits through Harper College is nearly \$46 million, with \$18 million attributed to dual credit alone.

These programs provide significant educational and financial benefits to District 214 students, giving them a head start on their future.

District retains strong financial position

High School District 214 closed the 2023-24 fiscal year, which ended June 30 and begins the new year in a strong financial position. A few points of interest:

The District ended the fiscal year in a stronger position than anticipated due to higher-than-expected returns on District investments and adjustments to property tax revenue.

The District's strengths include healthy general fund reserves, low debt burden, a large and diverse tax base and a strong financial management team.

As District 214 has developed long-range financial projections, it has considered enrollment projections, staffing plans, program evaluation and needs, special education services, technology, facilities improvement and maintenance on both a short-term and long-term basis.

An essential factor in long-term planning is the District's capital improvements plan, discussed in additional detail under the construction update section of this report.

The District will continue to seek efficiencies and control expenses to ensure financial stability and long-term sustainability.



District 214 has been awarded the Certificate of Excellence in Financial Reporting from the Association of School Business Officials each year since Fiscal Year 2009. This reflects the District's commitment to the highest standard of school system financial reporting.



4.0

The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) utilizes the "School District Financial Profile" for assessing a district's financial health. The system uses five indicators to arrive at a composite district financial profile. The best category of financial strength is Financial Recognition. A school district with a score of 3.54 – 4.00 is assigned to this category. **District 214's overall score for Fiscal Year 2010 through 2023 was 4.0.**



Independent analysts confirm the District's strong financial position and reporting practices. Moody's has affirmed its municipal bond rating of Aa1 for District 214.

The year ahead: planning and endless possibilities



While this annual report focuses primarily on the 2023-24 school year, the new year is now underway and merits attention as well.

Nothing is more central to charting the District's future course and remaining a leader in preparing students for success than developing a strategic plan. This plan will maximize our ability to meet the changes in education that we know lie ahead and to respond effectively to inevitable changes that are not yet known.

As Superintendent Dr. Scott Rowe notes in his Q&A earlier in this annual report, this plan will serve as a North Star of sorts. It will enable us to align all aspects of the District with our communities' values and priorities. The District's strategic planning process, which began early in 2024 with surveys and focus groups, will continue throughout this year. Work is currently underway on a design phase, with a plan to be finalized during the winter and spring of 2024-25 and implementation to follow.

Once the work is completed, District 214 will have not only a 5-year plan with detailed priorities but also a look at how the District will shape the future of public education for the next 15 to 20 years to best meet the needs of our communities. What forces, such as artificial intelligence and other developing technologies, will shape how our students learn and teachers teach? How do we remain flexible enough to adapt to the changes in the workforce? These are the kinds of essential questions that will be addressed and enable us to make the best use of our opportunities.

As mentioned elsewhere in this report, the community can also expect to see more construction in our schools and to

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hear additional details as District 214 refines and finalizes its 10-year capital improvement plan. Our schools range in age from 51 to 67 years. Among any school district's most compelling responsibilities is protecting the community's investment in its schools—an investment in brick-and-mortar and ancillary facilities as well as in the educators and technology that provide excellent learning experiences.

While our Central Maintenance Team has done an excellent job maintaining our equipment and buildings over decades, older buildings at some point need repairs and upgrades, as any owner of an older home knows. The District will, of course, share updated plans as they are available.

Finally, as always, the current academic year brings a wealth of learning experiences for students—new opportunities for internships and apprenticeships, increasing numbers of students earning early college credit and professional certifications and, of course, students utilizing countless co-curricular activities to further develop skills and confidence. There also will be fine arts presentations, athletic events and so much more to give the community a glimpse of our students and educators at work. We hope to see you there.

Community Education offers enrichment and opportunity for all

Founded in 1947, District 214 Community Education has grown and evolved over 77 years to provide the most relevant youth and adult enrichment programs and continuing education classes.

A look at the numbers emphasizes the “community” in Community Education, which offers hundreds of lifelong learning opportunities annually. In fiscal year 2024, Community Education offered 365 enrichment classes and programs to nearly 3,000 residents of all ages. Through special events, the Community Education theater program and area partnerships, Community Education presented 18 performances attended by more than 2,500 community members.

Core Aquatics, the community swim program, provided lessons, swim team and water polo opportunities to 1,091 participants, ages 3 to 18. One of Core’s premier swimmers, Noah Thomas (John Hersey High School Class of 2022) competed in four events at the U.S. Paralympic Swimming Trials in Minneapolis.

Community Education Travel (CET) provided opportunities to 2,850 community members on trips ranging from one to 14 days. In fiscal year 2024, CET led 71 day trips, making them one of the Midwest’s leading day trip organizers. CET also led

a four-day trip to Boston to see the Cubs play at Fenway Park and an international excursion to northern Spain and Portugal.

Community Education’s Adult Education and Family Literacy program continues to offer a variety of programs to enrich the professional and personal lives of adults, including English as a Second Language (ESL), Family Literacy, College and Career Ready classes, the Illinois High School Equivalency test preparation in English or Spanish, U.S. Citizenship Test Preparation and Read to Learn Adult Literacy and more. All classes are free.

Through our Citizenship program, 155 students became naturalized citizens during 2023-24. The Read to Learn program provided instruction to 243 adult learners. The Women’s and Children’s Center enrolled 47 women in English classes while 54 of their pre-school-aged children attended child education programs. Finally, 24 students passed their high school equivalency/GED test—one of our most successful years.

By any measure, Community Education is serving the needs of an evolving community, just as the District, with the aid of programs like these, fulfills its goal of providing lifelong learning for community members, from birth through adulthood.

Education Foundation expands the scope of student support

The District 214 Education Foundation complements the work done by our schools by utilizing contributions from generous donors to offer student support beyond the scope of the District’s funding and budget. The importance of this becomes especially clear in light of the fact that one in three families face financial hardship in our District.

The Foundation’s #214Cares campaign, established during the pandemic, has raised and distributed more than \$100,000 to students and their families for critical needs ranging from food and clothing to housing and medical expenses.

Each spring, through the generosity of donors, the Foundation awards districtwide and school-specific scholarships. In 2023-2024, the Foundation awarded more than 90 scholarships valued at more than \$110,000.

In addition, contributions to the District 214 Education Foundation help provide tens of thousands of dollars in funding for early college credit by covering Advanced Placement test

fees for students in need, and help support the business aspirations of entrepreneurial students through initiatives like the annual StartUp Showcase.

Overseen by a 14-member Board of Trustees, the Foundation broadened the appeal of its traditional golf tournament by hosting “Tee up for 214” at TopGolf Schaumburg. Community members, donors, District leaders, vendors and business partners gathered to raise significant funds to support District 214 schools.

The Foundation enjoys the strong support of District 214 educators and staff, who last year donated \$32,000 through the employee giving program.

The Foundation welcomes the contributions and involvement of D214 alumni, who are encouraged to stay connected through the District Alumni Association. Anyone interested in contributing or in learning more about the Foundation may do so at 214foundation.org.

District Facts

High School District 214 is one of the largest high school districts in Illinois.

Six high schools and one specialized school with five programs serve about 300,000 residents in a 68.3-square-mile area, including all or sections of Arlington Heights, Buffalo Grove, Des Plaines, Elk Grove, Mount Prospect, Prospect Heights, Rolling Meadows and Wheeling.

Our schools are equipped with a language laboratory, a library, a college/career center, computer laboratories, a writing laboratory and a technology center.

Each school has a football/soccer field, gymnasium, baseball and softball fields, tennis courts and running tracks, and all schools have access to swimming pools.

Students in every school may choose from approximately 140 co-curricular activities consisting of interscholastic sports, fine and performing arts, student government and interest-related clubs.

*Submitted to ISBE

Total student enrollment for 2023-2024 was 11,863* in grades 9 through 12.

The average class size for 2023-2024 was 22.

92.2% Graduation Rate 4 Years (students who entered 9th grade in school year 2019-20).

STUDENT 2023 RACIAL/ETHNIC DIVERSITY

White	51.5%
Black	2.4%
Hispanic	34.4%
Asian	8.4%
American Indian	0.1%
Two or More	3.1%
Other	0.1%



HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT 214

2121 South Goebbert Road
Arlington Heights, IL 60005
847-718-7600 | www.d214.org

District 214 Community Education

2121 South Goebbert Road
Arlington Heights, IL 60005
847-718-7700 | www.ce.d214.org

District 214 Education Foundation

2121 South Goebbert Road
Arlington Heights, IL 60005
847-718-7754 | www.214foundation.org

Buffalo Grove High School

1100 West Dundee Road
Buffalo Grove, IL 60089
847-718-4000 | www.d214.org/bghs

Elk Grove High School

500 West Elk Grove Boulevard
Elk Grove Village, IL 60007
847-718-4400 | www.d214.org/eghs

John Hersey High School

1900 East Thomas Street
Arlington Heights, IL 60004
847-718-4800 | www.d214.org/jhhs

Prospect High School

801 West Kensington Road
Mount Prospect, IL 60056
847-718-5200 | www.d214.org/phs

Rolling Meadows High School

2901 West Central Road
Rolling Meadows, IL 60008
847-718-5600 | www.d214.org/rmhs

Wheeling High School

900 South Elmhurst Road
Wheeling, IL 60090
847-718-7000 | www.d214.org/whs

Specialized Schools

2121 South Goebbert Road
Arlington Heights, IL 60005
847-718-7775 | www.d214.org/specializedschools

– **International Newcomer Academy**
www.d214.org/newcomer

– **LIFE Transition Program**
www.d214.org/life

– **The Academy at Forest View**
www.d214.org/academy

– **Vanguard School**
www.d214.org/vanguard

– **Young Adult Program**
www.d214.org/yap

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