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# HISTORY

## The History of Township High School District 211

High school education in the Palatine-Schaumburg Township area began in 1875, with the first graduating class in 1877. Palatine High School is one of the four oldest suburban high schools and the first established northwest of Chicago. Charles S. Cutting was the school's first principal.



Palatine High School, 1875

The Palatine Township High School District was formed in 1914. Its first classes were held in space rented from the elementary district on the top floor of a school on Wood Street between Hale and Benton.



Palatine High School, 1913

In 1928, a separate high school building for 300 students was built on a four-acre site at 150 East Wood Street. The school opened with 125 students. Schaumburg Township was not part of a high school district, so some Schaumburg students came to Palatine on a tuition basis. Between 1928 and 1950, the enrollment grew from 150 to 391 students and projections indicated dramatic growth ahead. In 1952, an addition to Palatine High School was completed, increasing the building capacity to 700 students.



Palatine High School, 1928

In 1954, Schaumburg formed Elementary District 54 and joined Palatine Township High School District 211. After 1954, enrollments mushroomed at all levels. A second addition was approved for Palatine High School and a second site of 40 acres was purchased at Quentin Road and Illinois Avenue.

The second school opened in 1961, and was named "William Fremd High School." Mr. Fremd had been a member of the high school Board of Education for over 30 years and had served on school boards in the area for a consecutive period of more than 45 years. From 1961 to 1964, the District was organized as a 2-2 system with juniors and seniors at Palatine High School and freshmen and sophomores at Fremd High School. This system was phased out when James B. Conant High School, the District's third school and the first located in Schaumburg Township, opened in 1964 as a three-year school. Fremd High School converted to a three-year program in 1966.

In 1967, an administration center was built on Roselle Road near Algonquin Road. It houses all District staff, Board of Education meeting room, and a storage area for school supplies. The center was named to honor Gerald A. McElroy who served District 211 for 38 years as a teacher, coach, principal, and superintendent.

In 1967, building additions increased capacity at Conant High School from 1,700 to 2,600 students and Palatine's capacity from 1,000 to 1,800 students. In 1969, an addition to Fremd High School expanded its capacity from 1,600 to 2,700 students. District 211's fourth school, Schaumburg High School, opened in September, 1970. This structure, except for the gymnasium and parking site, was constructed by the Illinois Building Commission, a method of financing made necessary by the District's lack of sufficient bonding power in the late 1960s. Hoffman Estates High School, built to house an enrollment of 2,500 students, opened in 1973 as a freshman-sophomore school in Schaumburg Township.

On October 19, 1974, district residents approved a \$22 million referendum which provided funds for a sixth high school; an addition to Schaumburg High School which increased its capacity to 3,000 students; the addition of auditoriums and pools at Conant, Schaumburg, and Fremd High Schools; a pool at Hoffman Estates High School; and a District warehouse.

In 1976, the Board of Education decided that the building housing Palatine High School was unsuitable for future use as a four-year high school. Insufficient land to expand the building for future growth and the cost of needed repairs necessitated that decision. The building was closed in June, 1977.

The sixth high school, located near the intersection of Rohlwing and Cunningham Roads, opened in September, 1977, and was named Palatine High School. The newest building accommodated 2,500 students.

In 1983, physical education additions were completed at Fremd and Conant High Schools, and in 1997, a physical education addition was completed at Palatine High School. Construction was completed in 2002 on an addition at Fremd High School, turning the valuable space in the school's courtyard into new science laboratories named in honor of Gerald D. Chapman, who served District 211 for 36 years as a teacher, assistant principal, assistant superintendent, and superintendent. The old science labs were then converted to new English classrooms. The school also had the east exterior of the building remodeled.

A clock tower and covered walkways were constructed at Conant High School in 2002, as part of an exterior facelift for the school. Construction on an addition at Palatine High School was completed in 2003, adding 24 classrooms to the northeast corner of the building to handle enrollment growth.

On April 5, 2005, District residents approved a referendum resulting in a 40¢ increase in the Education Fund; 25¢

in the spring of 2005 and an additional 15¢ in the fall of 2005. Passage of this referendum avoided approximately \$18 million in program cuts, while assuring the District would remain on sound financial ground for many years to come.

In 2007, additions to Conant and Fremd High Schools were completed, adding new music facilities at both schools. The administration offices at Fremd High School were remodeled. At Hoffman Estates High School, the auxiliary gymnasiums were expanded. Construction included the addition of a locker room, team room, and an elevator.

In 2008, a science addition was completed at Conant High School. Academic additions that included relocation of administration offices were completed at Schaumburg and Hoffman Estates High Schools. An expanded Board of Education meeting room, named in honor of former Board member Anne Koller who served the District for 23 years, was completed at the Administration Center. Renovations also were completed to make the building more accessible, including installation of an elevator and a ground floor entry.

Palatine High School's student cafeteria was renovated during the summer of 2013, modernizing the original from when the school opened in the late 1970s. The school's administrative offices and student services area also were renovated during the summer of 2013 to help provide a better student assistance experience. A similar remodeling project took place at Conant High School during the summer of 2014, renovating the school's administrative offices and student services area.

In spring 2015, renovation to Conant High School's swimming pool facility was completed, including expansion of the pool and upgrades to lockerrooms. Similar renovations are underway at Fremd and Hoffman Estates High Schools, and planned to begin at Schaumburg and Palatine High Schools during second semester of the 2015-2016 school year. As part of a life safety project, a second floor corridor was constructed at Conant High School during the summer of 2015, connecting the mathematics and science departments. Upgrades to the Schaumburg and Conant High Schools media centers were done in 2015, with similar projects slated to begin at Palatine and Fremd High Schools during the 2015-2016 school year. Hoffman Estates High School media center underwent a partial renovation in 2008-2009, and will receive additional upgrades in 2016-2017.

District 211 also has two therapeutic special education schools: District 211 Academy-North, located in Palatine, and the Higgins Education Center, located in Hoffman Estates. These facilities serve approximately 150 special needs students. The District's newest building, the Higgins Education Center, opened in 2015 and is home to the Adult Transitions Program-South, New Endeavors, and District 211 Academy-South programs. Academy-South was originally founded during the 1975 school year and known as LEAP, Lifeskills Educational Alternatives Program, until changing its name to Academy-South in 2008 and then moving to the Higgins Education Center in 2015. Academy-North was founded in 2005.

The District adopted a new brand statement at the beginning of the 2013-2014 school year: "Extraordinary Opportunities. Innovative Teaching. Exceptional Learning." The purpose of the brand statement is to create clarity, simplicity, and identity for District 211 and its schools. When contemplating a new brand statement, the District considered the following: District 211's defining purpose; what differentiates District 211 from other school districts; District 211's promise to students, their families, and the community; and organizational qualities, characteristics, and values.

Demonstrating districtwide quality, all five District 211 schools were named among the top in the nation in the United States Department of Education's National Secondary School Recognition Program. Hoffman Estates High School was recognized in 1985, William Fremd High School received the award in 1987, Palatine and Schaumburg High Schools were honored in 1993, James B. Conant High School was recognized in 1996, and Palatine High School received its second Blue Ribbon award in 2000. That same year, Palatine High School was named a "New American High School" by the United States Department of Education, as one of only 10 schools nationwide to receive that distinction. Palatine, Fremd, and Schaumburg High Schools were named among the "Top 99" high schools in the country by U.S. News & World Report in 1999, and Palatine High School was nationally recognized by the United States Department of Education for its exemplary anti-drug program in 1991. High School District 211 was named among the elite school districts in Illinois by Expansion Management magazine, a publication for corporate re-location, in 1999, 2001, 2003, 2005, 2007, and again in 2009. In 1996, Redbook magazine recognized Schaumburg High School as "One of America's Best Schools." The District 211 Transportation Department was named among "Great Fleets Across America" by School Bus Fleet in 1999.



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