

YOUR SCHOOLS

The Magazine of Thornton Township High Schools District 205

Fall 2010 Vol. 57 Special Edition

Special Edition: Freshmen Center and Upper House Academies Discussion

- ★ WHY CHANGE NOW?
- ★ WHAT IS THE CONTROVERSY?
- ★ WHAT IS THE FRESHMAN CENTER?
- ★ WHAT ARE THE UPPER HOUSE ACADEMIES?
- ★ WHAT ARE THE FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS?

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THORNTON TOWNSHIP HIGH SCHOOLS



43%
OF FRESHMAN
READ
BELOW
5TH GRADE
LEVEL

Why is District 205 Proposing Such Radical and Bold Changes Now?

FRESHMAN DID NOT ACHIEVE SOPHOMORE STATUS
42%

“43% of freshmen in 2009-2010 entered District 205 high schools reading below 5th grade level.”

District 205 is a 9th-12th grade school system with three high schools. Although the three high schools reside in South Holland, Dolton, and Harvey, the District includes 13 communities, 9 elementary school districts and 46,000 households.

“42% of freshmen in 2009-2010 did not earn the credits to become sophomores.”

of Students Reading Below Grade Level

GRADE LEVEL	# OF STUDENTS
Below 2 nd	36
2 nd	141
3 nd	135
4 nd	164
5 nd	160

Source: Gates McGinitie Reading Pre-Test Results

District 205 is the first high school district south of Chicago, serving 13 communities, 9 elementary school districts and 46,000 households.

• CURRENT FRESHMEN CHALLENGES

- 43% of freshmen entered with reading scores below 5th grade
- 86% are NOT ready for high school according to EXPLORE Scores (EXPLORE is the high school entrance exam)
- 42% of our freshmen are not earning enough credits to be promoted to sophomore year
- 35% of freshmen drop out of District athletic programs due to ineligibility
 - Current eligibility is a 1.5 GPA

• CURRENT UPPER GRADE CHALLENGES

- Students who complete freshman year off track spend up to three years recovering
- Fewer than 10% of students enroll in Advanced Placement courses
- 29% of junior students meet state standards in math on PSAE
- 40% of junior students meet state standards in reading on PSAE

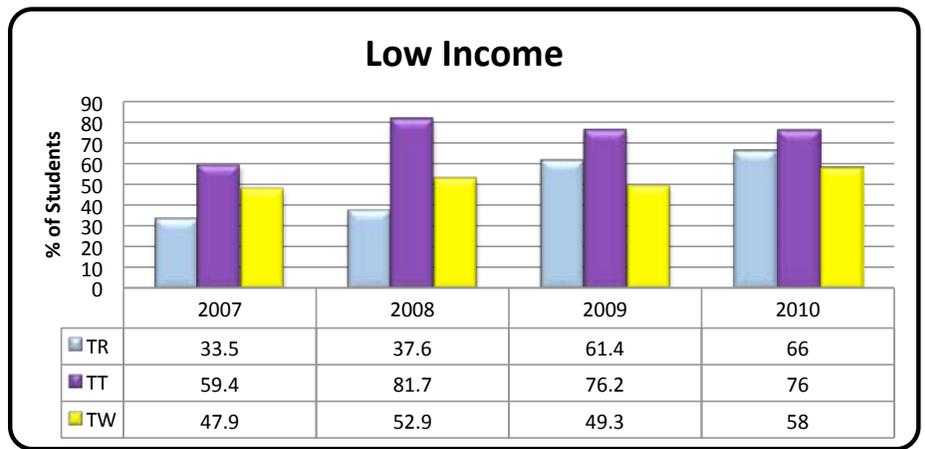
CURRENT ECONOMIC CHALLENGES

- District 205 includes 13 communities, 9 elementary school districts and 46,000 households.”

32 MONTHS

Beginning freshman year, District 205 has 32 MONTHS, a little more than 2 ½ years, to get students to 11th grade level on the Prairie State Achievement Exam (PSAE) and succeed after high school.

Communities Served by District 205 Schools		
Thornton 76% Low Income	Thornridge 66% Low Income	Thornwood 58% Low Income
Blue Island	Burnham	Calumet City
Dixmoor	Calumet City	East Hazel Crest
Dolton	Dolton	Harvey
Harvey	Riverdale	Hazel Crest
Markham	South Holland	Markham
Phoenix		Phoenix
Posen		South Holland
Riverdale		Thornton



“The three high schools are among the lowest performing 5% of secondary schools in Illinois.”

Elementary School Districts Served by District 205

133	149	152
147	150	152 ½
148	151	154

Transportation

The District has been utilizing transportation for its students since Thornton opened its doors in 1899. Today, nearly 200 buses are used daily to transport students to and from school.

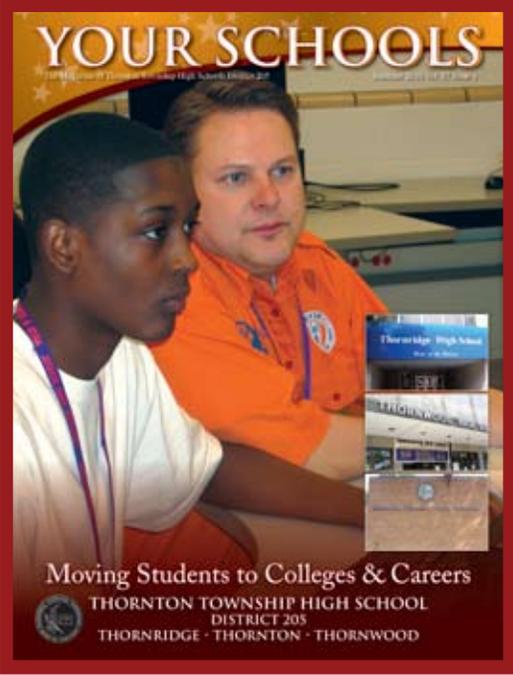


What is the Controversy?

District 205 applied for a School Improvement Grant with only 30 days to complete the application process. During the normal procedure of applying for a grant, the District would have reached out to students, parents and community members to participate in strategic planning meetings. However, due to the short turnaround period of this particular grant, that did not happen.

If you reference the Summer 2010 Volume 57 Issue 1, you can revisit the initial information relayed to parents and community members about the School Improvement Grant in the Superintendent's message titled "Radical and Bold 21st Century".

- After receiving the grant, the District did not want to move forward with the decision to transform the schools without the input of the community. (See Back Cover for Frequently Asked Questions)
- The District has held public forums, where students, parents and community members were able to share their passions and perspectives about the proposed transformation with the District 205 administration and Board of Education.



Radical and Bold Change for 2025

On June 14, 2010, District 205 submitted a grant to the Illinois State Board of Education for \$6 million in hopes of beginning bold, new, and radical changes for our schools. In reviewing the data and talking with parents and community leaders, business as usual **cannot** continue.

The students of the 21st Century have more demands on their time and intellect. The careers presently available to the workforce are rapidly changing. The students preparing to compete in 2025 must be more *flexible, technological* and master how to work in teams. Students must master reading, writing and arithmetic in ways that were not taught to most of their parents. In order to make these changes we must **"think out of the box"**.

School Improvement Grant

If the District is successful in obtaining the School Improvement funds, changes will be implemented. Changes are neither comfortable nor easy. Nevertheless, the impending changes are designed to revolutionize teaching and learning in order to prepare our students to compete globally and internationally, not just nationally.

What is the School Improvement Grant (SIG) Program?

The School Improvement Grant Program is funded with Federal dollars to assist the lowest-achieving schools to improve achievement and make Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) under No Child Left Behind.

The program can provide up to \$2 million per year, per school, for as many as 3 years.

What does the SIG grant require?

As stated, the grant requires **radical** change. The District had to select a Lead Partner, Supporting Partner, and use data to determine what major changes would provide the most immediate and significant improvement.

What is the National Education Agenda?

President Obama has stated that the success of our nation depends on our ability to compete with nations around the world. For the United States to compete globally, the President has initiated a national challenge to reform education because he believes "it starts in the classroom."

According to the White House, American students rank

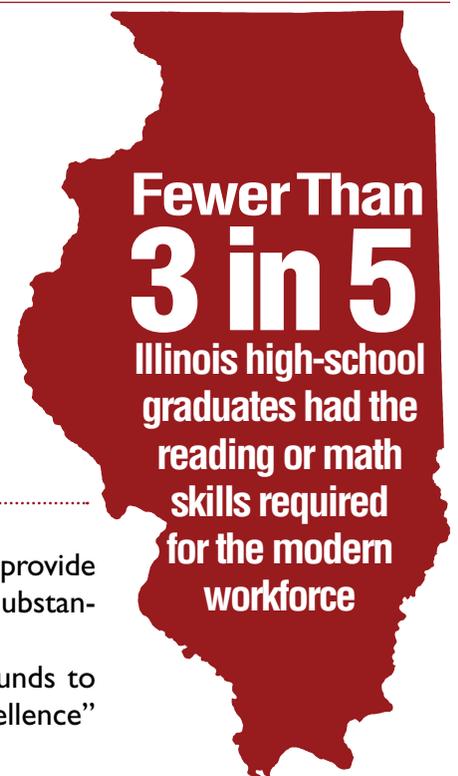


among students across the globe.

In support of the President's national reform agenda, the U.S. Department of Education has granted \$146 million to the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) for School Improvement Grant (SIG) work. ISBE awarded \$137 million to SIG winning schools.

What is the State of Illinois' Education Agenda?

- In Illinois only 17% percent of high schools made Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in 2009 (Illinois Interactive Report Card data).
- In Cook County less than 7% of high schools made AYP in 2009 (Illinois Interactive Report Card data).
- Eighth grade students in the State of Illinois rank 29th in math and reading on national tests (Advance Illinois data).
- Compared to the rest of the United States, Illinois ranks 19th in students obtaining high school diplomas and 28th in receiving a high school diploma or higher (Advance Illinois data).



"Illinois is in the bottom half of states on national tests"

The State of Illinois is using the Federal funds to provide approved school districts the resources to make substantial and radical change.

District 205 is a recipient of some of these funds to transform our schools into a "System of Excellence" where all students are prepared for success.

Why Do Students Who Were Successful In Elementary School Struggle In High School?

One of our challenges is that we are not a K-12 school district. We are a high school district, where 9 elementary school districts with 9 different boards of education--all of which have their own standards and expectations--feed into our high schools. We have a partnership with our elementary schools, but not a relationship where we can make demands on curriculum.

The State of Illinois does not have uniform benchmarks for elementary and high school students

Elementary and high school students are being measured on two different scales--elementary school: Illinois Standards Achievement Test (ISAT) and high school: Prairie State Achievement Exam (PSAE)--which creates challenges for students, parents, and schools.

ISATs Let Kids Pass with More Wrong Answers

TRIBUNE WATCHDOG: Test experts question point decline, but state officials stand by method

By Diane Rado *Tribune Reporter*

Illinois has been cutting the number of points required to pass annual achievement exams, allowing children to flub more questions but still be deemed "proficient".

Back in 2006, it took 36 of 56 points – about 64 percent – to pass the fifth-grade reading test. Now, it's 31 points, or 55 percent.

The third- and fourth-grade reading tests used to require 61 percent of possible points. This year, it's 54 percent.

Compared with 2006, fewer correct answers are required to pass 11 of 12 Illinois Standards Achievement

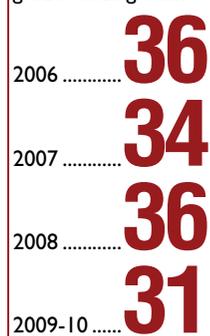
Tests in reading and math, state data show, raising questions about how much students really have to know.

Meanwhile, passing rates on the exams have risen, assuring parents and the public that schoolchildren are making gains.

State education officials attribute the declines in points required to pass to routine statistical practices, but testing experts question the changes, which come as schools face mounting pressure to get more students to pass exams.

A lower bar?

Points needed out of 56 to pass the fifth-grade reading exam:



Rado, Diane. (2010, October 18). ISATs Let Kids Pass with More Wrong Answers. *Chicago Tribune*, pp. Front Page, 4.

32 MONTHS

Beginning freshman year, District 205 has **32 MONTHS**, a little more than 2 ½ years, to get students to 11th grade level on the Prairie State Achievement Exam (PSAE) and succeed after high school.

Number of correct answers needed to pass ISAT

READING

Total points possible: 56 (50 multiple choice plus short response)

Year	Points needed	% to pass
2006	34	60.7%
2007	33	58.9
2008	30	53.6
2009	28	50.0
2010	30	53.6

Fourth grade

2006	34	60.7%
2007	32	57.1
2008	29	51.8
2009	30	53.6
2010	30	53.6

Fifth grade

2006	36	64.3%
2007	34	60.7
2008	32	57.1
2009	31	55.4
2010	31	55.4

Sixth grade

2006	31	55.4%
2007	31	55.4
2008	31	55.4
2009	31	55.4
2010	32	57.1

Seventh grade

2006	33	58.9%
2007	32	58.2
2008	31	55.4
2009	30	53.6
2010	31	55.4

Eighth grade

2006	32	57.1%
2007	34	60.7
2008	30	53.6
2009	29	51.8
2010	31	55.4

MATHEMATICS

Total points possible: 76 (65 multiple choice plus short response)

Year	Points needed	% to pass
2006	39	51.3%
2007	38	50.0
2008	35	46.1
2009	34	44.7
2010	35	46.1

Fourth grade

2006	36	47.4%
2007	36	50.0
2008	35	44.7
2009**	33	44.0
2010	32	46.1

Fifth grade

2006	36	47.4%
2007	34	47.4
2008	32	46.1
2009**	31	44.0
2010	31	42.1

Sixth grade

2006	35	46.1%
2007	34	44.7
2008	34	44.7
2009	35	46.1
2010	33	43.4

Seventh grade

2006	34	44.7%
2007	33	43.4
2008**	33	44.0
2009**	32	42.7
2010	32	42.1

Seventh grade

2006	31	40.8%
2007	30	39.5
2008**	30	39.5
2009**	30	39.5
2010	30	39.5

*Total of 55 points possible

SOURCE: Tribune analysis of data from the Illinois State Board of Education

**Total of 75 points possible

ISAT Measures Illinois Learning Standards

PSAE Measures College Readiness

- According to an October 18 Chicago Tribune article the state has approved the Illinois Standards Achievement Tests (ISAT) to allow students to be rated proficient in math and reading with more wrong answers.
- Essentially the bar has been lowered for elementary schools achievement, while the bar has been raised for high school students, so that they are able to compete at higher levels on ACT/SAT tests.
- This gap causes those same elementary students who succeed on the ISAT not to pass the PSAE.

What are the Academic Programs used at District 205?

High Schools That Work Initiative

(2002- Present)

- What's working and will continue:
 - Senior Project helped children focus on college and careers
 - Extra Help-Credit Recovery has increased graduation rates
 - Work-Based Learning Experiences-Summer Programs, Job Shadowing and Internships provided real-life opportunities
- Could Work Well:
 - Advisor-Advisee Program
 - Students re-doing work until it meets standards

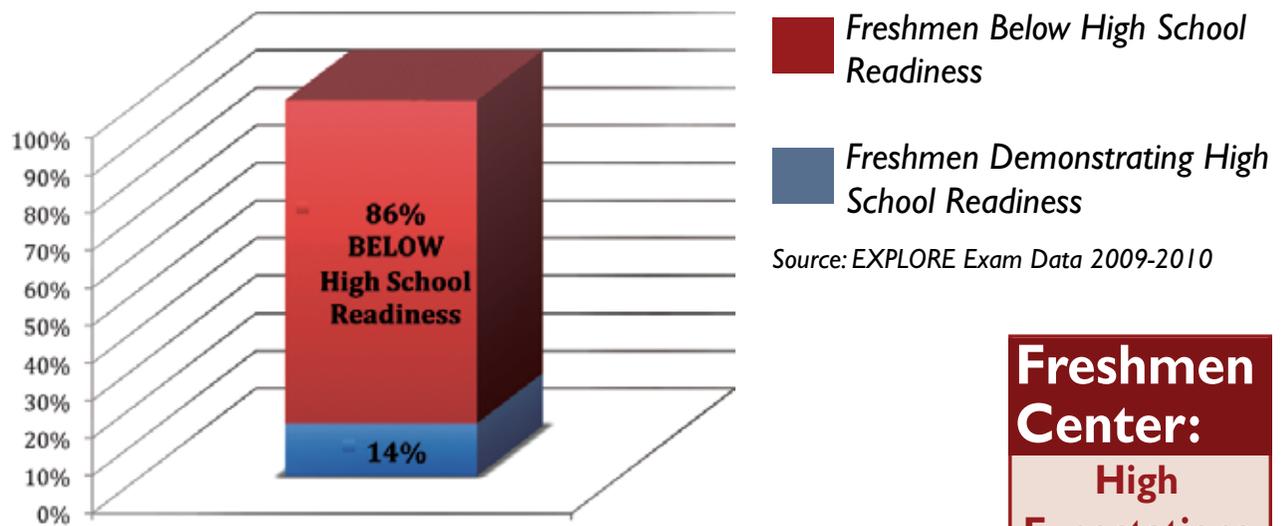
Small Learning Communities (SLCs) Initiative (2002- Present)

- What's working and will continue:
 - Dual College Credit or Industry Certification for High School Courses
 - Pre-Pharmacy
 - Project Lead the Way Pre-Engineering
 - Culinary Arts
 - Thornton Township Academy of Truck and Diesel Technology-Powered by Navistar
 - Increase Advanced Placement Courses
 - Advanced Placement Computer Science
 - Advanced Placement Government
- What needs work:
 - Teams of teachers who share the same students
 - Connecting the core curriculum to careers, i.e. math for Engineering, English for Mass Media, Chemistry for Medical Careers
 - Many students have not been able to fully access SLCs because they are playing catch-up; need to be on track to access SLC programs
 - Block Scheduling
 - The schools made gains on PSAE the last year of the block schedule
 - After eliminating the block, test scores have not increased

Where Are We Going?

While pockets of gains can be seen throughout District 205, EXPLORE data shows that too many students across the district are not prepared for an intense high school experience that will focus on college and career readiness.

Freshmen EXPLORE Scores Determine High School Readiness



Freshman Center:
High Expectations with Support for every student.

Freshman Center and Upper House Academies

Why a Freshman Center?

As evidenced by the information on pages 2 and 4, and throughout this document, bold changes are needed, now! The Freshman Center will put a laser focus on ninth graders in a smaller environment, free from the distractions of upperclassmen. Staff will be fully dedicated to nurturing freshmen to become independent thinkers and learners and high school ready. All freshmen will have opportunities to participate in extracurricular activities. The Center will use cutting edge strategies like Quantum Learning, ACT QualityCore, and America's Choice reading and math programs to put students on track to meet high standards and prepare for college and careers in the Upper House Academies.

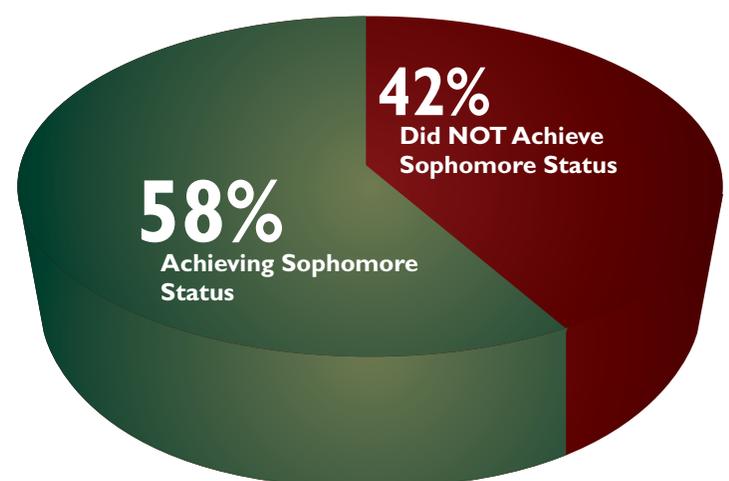
We are changing the way we educate our students.

Freshmen who are promoted to sophomore year are **three** times more likely to graduate from high school in **four** years than those who do not.

Current Freshmen Challenges

- 43% of freshmen entered with reading scores below 5th grade
- 86% of freshmen are **NOT** ready for high school according to EXPLORE Scores (EXPLORE is the high school placement exam)
- Only 14% are ready for High School according to EXPLORE Scores
- 42% of our freshmen are not earning enough credits to be promoted to sophomore year
- 35% of freshmen drop out of District athletic programs due to ineligibility
 - Current eligibility is a 1.5 GPA

% of Freshmen Achieving Sophomore Status



Source: 2009-2010 Freshman Academy Promotion Rate

What will be different in the Freshman Center?

The Freshman Center will create a culture focused on freshmen, where teachers, support staff and administrators are committed to freshman success.

- Features a Smaller Learning Environment: Approximately 1,350 students/One Principal for each 600-650 students
- Increased leadership opportunities when participating in extracurricular activities

Curriculum

- Offer intense and specialized focus on freshmen curriculum
- Lead partner **America's Choice** will provide math and reading ramp up courses for students 2 or more years behind
- **Navigator**, a computer-based program, will assess the needs of students to provide additional academic support
- More honors and elective courses will be offered

Support

- Student Advisory groups, consisting of 12-15 students, will meet twice a month to discuss topics like conflict resolution, goal setting, course selections, etc.
- All freshmen will be encouraged to participate in extracurricular activities
- Specialized mentoring programs will increase students' motivation to attend school, pass courses, and graduate from high school.
- Clinical social workers to address students' needs

Discipline and Safety

- A comprehensive security plan that includes an internal security firm, as well as cooperation from local police and the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE).
- Students will be supported by a humanistic approach to discipline
- Improving relationships between students and teachers will create a climate that encourages school spirit, class participation, and student motivation
- The School Improvement Grant pays for 2 clinical social workers to mediate student challenges, prevent suspensions and disciplinary actions
- Positive Behavior Intervention Strategies (PBIS) will be incorporated to help students recognize positive ways to deal with conflict

Staff

- Staff will be evaluated based on student success (**Fundamental Change**)
- Staff will be trained in Quantum Learning (innovative classroom technique)
- 100-135 students will be supported by a core team of 3-4 teachers for different subject areas (Math, English, and Science). These teachers will work together on developing positive relationships and increasing student achievement.

Activities and Athletics (Extra-Curricular)

- A focus on overall student achievement will help to increase the number of students who are eligible to participate in District 205's athletic program.
- 35% of freshmen drop out of District athletic programs due to ineligibility
 - Current eligibility is a 1.5 GPA
- Offer college tours

What about freshmen who are on track and excelling?

Fourteen percent (14%) of District 205 freshmen enter high school at or above grade level. There are freshmen in each building who are excelling, but the current Freshmen Academy configuration does not have enough students to offer a wide range of honors-level courses in each building. Bringing freshmen together in a central location will allow these students to be grouped together and taught by a team of teachers who will be solely focused on high-performing freshmen students.

Freshman Center – Options for students who meet and exceed standards

- Increased number of honors English, math, and science classes
- Removal of Reading Seminar – students will have two electives
- Expanded music program – vocal and instrumental (Band)
- Implement year-round enrichment programs that meet student needs beyond the traditional school year
- Include options such as art, Project Lead The Way classes, and foreign languages
- Incorporate clubs that promote student leadership and international awareness
- Provide enrichment opportunities in science and technology
- Implementation of a 6-year student plan which focuses on college and career readiness

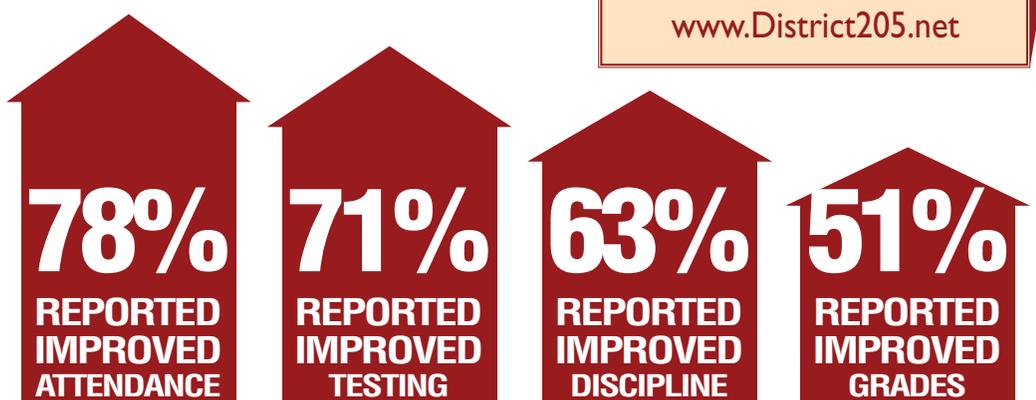
How will parents and students be involved in the Freshman Center and Upper House Academies transition?

- Volunteer as extracurricular activities/club sponsor
- Attend Parent Academies
- Participate in Mentoring Programs
- Volunteer for district-wide committees
- Attend Back to School Night

For more data on successful Freshmen Centers visit www.District205.net

Does research support the Freshman Center concept?

An independent study by Brown University's Education Department Chair, Kenneth Wong, on the impact of Chicago's Freshman Academy program determined the program to have produced significant benefits. Interviews of principals and teachers from the participating schools resulted in the following:



Similar results have been achieved nationally. Currently more than 170 Freshman Centers are in operation. In Illinois there are at least nine, including Lockport, New Trier and Lane Tech High Schools.

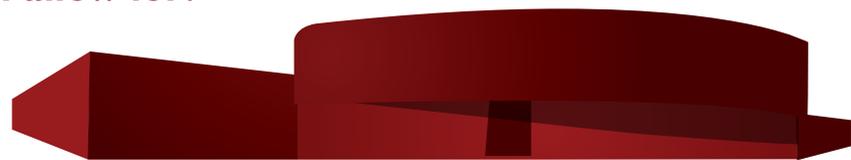
Why Upper House Academies?

Merits of Upper House Academies

While District 205 has had many successes and pockets of promise, some challenges still exist. **Based on Prairie State Achievement (PSAE) data, 69% of District 205 11th grade students did not meet or exceed college and career readiness standards in 2009.** It is the goal of the Upper House Academies to achieve a system of excellence that will prepare students for success in life beyond high school. Upper House Academies will consist of smaller learning communities that have both an academic and career-based focus.

Having a larger number of upperclassmen together will allow for:

- Expanded college and career programs
- Additional advanced placement classes
- Additional career certification programs
- A full range of electives
- Teachers to focus on upperclassman courses
- More efficient and appropriate staffing for upperclassmen needs
- A focused and comprehensive transition program to post-secondary institutions



Thornridge High School / Freshman Center



Freshman

Sophomore / Junior / Senior

College and Career Focus

The District has instituted new programs such as the Pre-Pharmacy Program, Project Lead The Way, International Culinary Arts and Thornton Township Academy of Truck and Diesel Technology Powered by Navistar. This year, financial literacy, Chinese, Arabic and Bio-Med programs are being implemented. All programs lead to a career or college. These programs could be expanded with two Upper House Academies as opposed to three separate high schools.

What will be different in the Upper House Academies?

Curriculum

- Expanded college and career programs
- Additional advanced placement classes
- Additional career certification programs
- Navigator, a computer-based program, will assess the needs of students to provide additional academic support

Support

- Student Advisory groups, consisting of 12-15 students, will meet twice a month to discuss topics like conflict resolution, goal setting, course selections, etc.
- Specialized mentoring programs will increase students' motivation to attend school, pass courses, plan for college and careers, and graduate from high school.
- A focused and comprehensive transition program to post-secondary institutions.

Discipline and Safety

- Students will be supported by a humanistic approach to discipline
- Improving relationships between students and teachers will create a climate that encourages school spirit, class participation, and student motivation
- Positive Behavior Intervention Strategies (PBIS) will be incorporated to help students recognize positive ways to deal with conflict
- A comprehensive security plan that includes an internal security firm, as well as cooperation from local police and the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE).

Staff

- Staff will be evaluated based on student success
- Staff will be trained in Quantum Learning (innovative classroom technique)
- 100-135 sophomore students will be supported by a core team of 3-4 teachers for different subject areas (Math, English, and Science). These teachers will work together on developing positive relationships and increasing student achievement.
- Advanced placement teachers will attend intense summer AP trainings to prepare for instructing students
- Lead partner America's Choice will provide math and reading training for teachers of upper level courses

Activities and Athletics (Extra-Curricular)

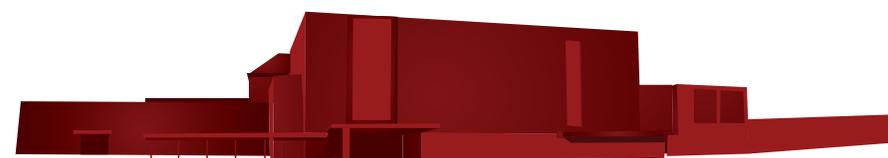
- A focus on overall student achievement will help to increase the number of students who are eligible to participate in District 205's athletic program.
 - Current eligibility is a 1.5 GPA

Upper House Academies – Options for students who meet and exceed standards

- Advanced Placement (AP) Institutes during the summer
- Arts and Communication House – Summer Arts Program
- Digital Media Program
- Mock Trials with Cook County Circuit Court at Markham Courthouse
- Business, Engineering and Natural Technology House (BENT)
 - Increasing enrichment programs in science and technology
- Health and Human Service House – Enrichment programs in medical careers (Nursing & Pharmacy)
- Expanding AP Offerings
- Provide programs for 8th graders in world languages
 - AP language classes as an option in the Upper House Academies for those students who start world languages in 8th grade.
- Summer Job Shadowing
- Development of a stronger partnership with South Suburban College
- Continuation of 6-year plan to focus on college and career readiness and success



Thornwood High School



Thornton High School

What Are the Frequently Asked Questions?

**These are the questions asked during the community meetings.

Who can we blame for not meeting AYP?

This is a complex issue. More than 60% of our students enter high school reading below 7th grade based on the Gates-MacGinitie reading test, which is given at the beginning of ninth grade. Eighty-six (86%) of students did not meet high school readiness benchmarks in reading and math on the EXPLORE exam. Beginning freshman year, the District has 32 months to prepare students to take the PSAE, the state exam for grade 11. As stated on page 4, students complete eighth grade believing they are prepared, based on their ISAT results. The standards for ISAT are not the same as the standards for PSAE. There is no single source of blame for students not achieving. There are multiple sources of responsibility for students' learning.

Where is the problem with some of our students?

Students who enter high school not meeting benchmarks may lack skills such as:

Reading

- Determine when (e.g., first, last, before, after) or if an event occurred in uncomplicated passages
- Identify a clear main idea or purpose of paragraphs in uncomplicated literary narratives
- Locate simple details at the sentence and paragraph level in uncomplicated passages
- Identify relationships between main characters in uncomplicated literary narratives
- Recognize clear cause-effect relationships within a single sentence or paragraph in uncomplicated literary narratives
- Use context to understand basic figurative language
- Draw generalizations and conclusions about people, ideas, etc. in uncomplicated passages

Math

- Perform common conversions (e.g., inches to feet or hours to minutes)
- Recognize equivalent fractions and fractions in lowest terms
- Solve equations in the form $x + a = b$, where a and b are whole numbers or decimals
- Solve routine one-step arithmetic problems (using whole numbers, fractions, and decimals) such as single-step percent
- Calculate the average, given the number of data values and the sum of the data values
- Perform computations on data from tables, charts and graphs
- Substitute whole numbers for unknown quantities to evaluate expressions
- Solve one-step equations having integer or decimal answers
- Combine like terms (e.g., $2x + 5x$)
- Compute the perimeter of polygons when all side lengths are given
- Compute the area of rectangles when whole number dimensions are given

What data or student information is used to evaluate the program and student achievement?

The EXPLORE, PLAN, and ACT tests evaluate student growth, as well as assessments from the lead and supporting partners. Students being promoted from one grade level to the next, grade point average, attendance and graduation rate, and postsecondary acceptance will also be used.

How is the District rated by the State, by building or District?

The schools are among the lowest performing 5% of secondary schools in Illinois. This is the basis for schools to be eligible for the School Improvement Grant 1003(g).

What happens to students that fall behind?

Students who fall behind will have extensive support. America's Choice Reading and Math Navigator programs will target students' individual needs and provide intervention to catch them up. Increased instructional time, professional development, and ongoing assessment will help the schools to keep students on track.

After freshman year, do students move to another school?

Yes. All students will be assigned to one of the Upper House Academies by attendance zones, or, in some cases, by enrollment in a specific program that may only be available on one campus, such as Navistar.

How will success be measured?

The Explore, Plan, and ACT tests will evaluate student growth, as well as assessments from the lead and supporting partners. Students being promoted from one grade

level to the next, grade point average, attendance and graduation rate, and postsecondary acceptance will also be used.

What happens in the upper houses (grades 10 – 12)?

Students in Upper House Academies will be prepared for college and careers. This includes strategies by our lead partners in reading and math, increased enrichment opportunities for students, and more Advanced Placement classes and new career-based programs for students in the Upper Houses. Professional development opportunities will improve teaching and learning, and curriculum will focus on skills that are necessary for success in college and careers.

What is the plan for freshmen now? (2010-11)

Many components of the program will be implemented this year for all students. These include advisories, America's Choice reading and math programs, ACT QualityCore, professional development for our teachers and extended instructional time.

Can freshmen take electives?

Yes, specific electives available for freshmen will be based on student needs and interests, such as world languages, art and music.

What will be provided for students who are ready?

Students entering our schools at or above grade level will have increased year-round enrichment opportunities, additional advanced placement classes, job shadowing opportunities, college tours, and an opportunity to take more electives.

What will the data be for juniors?

The goal of these changes is to increase the number of juniors meeting and exceed-

ing state standards on the PSAE. Improved grade point average, students on track for graduation, Advanced Placement enrollment and scores, and acceptance to postsecondary study will also be measured for juniors.

Will there be a gang problem? What is being done to prevent gang violence?

Gang activity has not been a major issue in our schools. Concerns have been expressed about bringing students from different communities together. District 205 serves 13 communities, and each of our buildings already serves students from at least 6 different communities. Each school has a Student Resource Officer from the local Police Department housed within the building to support student behavior and climate. We also encourage our students to get involved with the SAVE program (Students Against Violence Everywhere). We currently have policies in place which deter students from gang activity in the schools. District 205 is committed to providing ongoing professional development for staff on gang awareness.

How will consideration be given to athletics and the mixing of students?

The District is working with the Southwest Suburban Conference to address these issues. Students at the Freshman Center will participate in athletics.

What will be the status of students' rankings during the transition year?

The district is planning to maintain separate class rank for the current Thornridge juniors.