

# MAINE TOWNSHIP HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT 207



FALL 2019

## Taxes Reduced by \$46 Million

When taxpayers in Maine Township High School District 207 approved the sale of bonds to replace outdated plumbing, electrical and mechanical systems, it was anticipated and shared with voters that the borrowing rate for the bonds would be at 4.54%. With two-thirds of the bonds sold recently, the rate for those bonds was much lower at 2.92%. The remaining bonds are estimated to be sold in 2022 and the total estimated savings to the taxpayers is \$46.8 million in interest costs.

The lower interest rates are a reflection of current borrowing costs, the District being seen as a sound investment and the District's excellent bond rating.

The District sold \$130 million in bonds through three issuances in October, and the total interest costs are 15% less than was shared with the taxpayers last fall prior to the referendum vote.

The taxpayers provided the District the ability to sell \$195 million in bonds. The District is projected to borrow the remaining \$65 million in 2022 and utilize \$45.7 million from reserve funds for the projects. Even with spending money from

reserves, the District will maintain at least a 50% fund balance. The State of Illinois requires districts to maintain at least 25% in reserve.

District 207 was assigned an Aa1 rating for these bond sales to upgrade the schools, the second highest rating available from Moody's Investment Services.

Assistant Superintendent for Business Mary Kalou shares that the low interest rates the District received as part of the recent sales reflected the strong financial

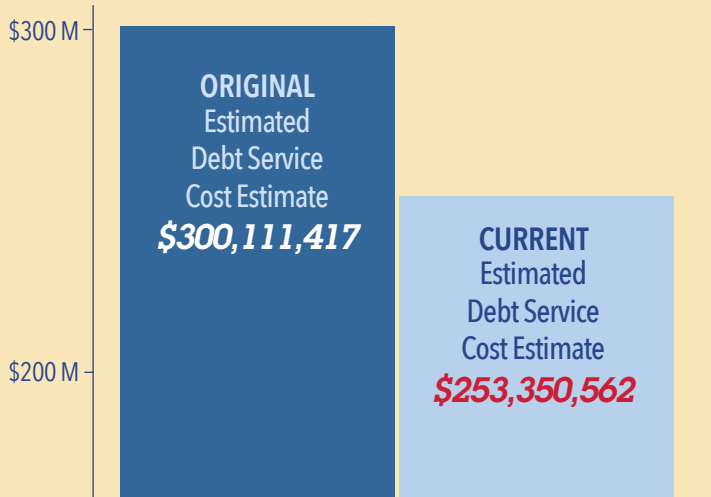
reputation of the District. "The rates reflect a feeling that District 207 is a sound financial investment," she says.

The first round of borrowing occurred on October 8, 2019 and October 23, 2019. The District sold a portion of the referendum bonds through the Illinois Finance Authority, which will allow the bonds to be exempt from both federal and Illinois taxes and save the taxpayers money. In addition, the District plans to refinance all of the remaining bonds from 2011 which will save the taxpayers an additional \$48,000. ■

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**4.54%**  
ORIGINAL  
Estimated  
Interest Rate

**2.85%**  
CURRENT  
Estimated  
Interest Rate



# Unique Approach to Ensuring All Students are Provided High Quality Instruction

**The best athletes in the world have them. Renowned surgeons and doctors have them. Highly successful business leaders have them.** A coach or mentor is a vital component to achieving success in many careers. Unfortunately, many teachers are not afforded this opportunity. That is not the case in Maine Township High School District 207.

The District is in its sixth year of “all in coaching.” That means every single teacher at Maine East, Maine South and Maine West has a coach and a coaching plan.

“Coaching is ubiquitous for athletics and private industry,” Superintendent Dr. Ken Wallace says. “The District’s graduating class of 2018 was likely the first class in the country whose teachers, for all four years, had instructional coaching and a personalized coaching plan for the sole purpose of improving learning conditions for students. This approach is what sets District 207 apart from other school districts and it builds the foundation for all other things we do to help students be successful.”

**District 207 is at the forefront of job embedded professional development and employs student-focused educators who are supported through this unique coaching program.**

The goal is to ensure all teachers are learning and growing in their craft. The coaching takes many forms including one-on-one coaching, peer-to-peer coaching and instructional rounds, which are similar to hospital rounds and involve teachers observing the instructional practices of other colleagues in the building.

The impact of this dedication to the “all in coaching” model is multi-faceted. It is based upon the idea that each student, no matter which teachers



*Snjezana Salamon talks with District 207 coach Eric Coval as part of the “all in coaching” provided to all teachers aimed at improving student performance.*

they are assigned, are being provided with a high quality education because all teachers are trained and coached.

**The district’s attention to adult learners is positively impacting student learning.** In fact, recent numbers show that the district’s free and reduced lunch percentage is on the rise which typically

means a drop in ACT composite scores. However, the opposite is true in District 207 as ACT scores are on the rise. The district attributes the steady improvement in student learning, in part, to the laser focus on adult learning including the “all in coaching” model.

“The implementation of ‘all in coaching’ is enhancing the culture of learning in our district,” says District 207 Adult Learning Coordinator Jill Geocaris. “Teachers are invested in this process because they see a commitment to their own learning and professional growth as a commitment to their students. They want to see students learn and experience success and they know the coaching process helps to make this happen.”

In the most recent survey of teachers about the coaching program, nearly 90% of respondents reported that the coaching plan “improved my teaching.”

“Since so much of our coaching is centered around student success, the impact of coaching has been tremendous,” says Maine East Teacher and Coach Judy Tyler. “The goal of our instructional coach team is to deepen our relationships with staff, ensure we are helping to meet their needs and use coaching cycles to improve their practice to impact student learning.”

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## Coaches Coaching Coaches



In order to ensure coaches in District 207 and beyond have the support to develop

their craft and improve their practice, the Chicago Coaching Center (CCC) was founded by District 207 Superintendent Dr. Ken Wallace. The CCC is a progressive collection of instructional coaches who provide a collaborative learning environment for instructional coaches and teachers in the Chicago-land area and beyond.

The CCC is currently directed by District 207 Adult Learning Coordinator Jill Geocaris. The coaching center partners with

the Illinois Council of Instructional Coaches and several area districts to develop curriculum for its instructional coaching certification programs.

*“The Chicago Coaching Center allows our District 207 coaches to not only share their knowledge in order to impact other school systems but to also sharpen their skills and bring those back to our teachers and students in District 207,” Wallace says.*



**MAINE TOWNSHIP  
HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT 207**

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## State Honors for Several Educators

The Illinois State Board of Education recently honored five educators from District 207 for their efforts on behalf of students at Maine East, Maine South and Maine West as part of the 45th annual Those Who Excel Awards.

Career and Technical Education Teacher Tom Kaiser from Maine East earned a meritorious award in the classroom teacher category. The ASCEND leadership team at Maine West earned a meritorious award in the team category. Those honored at Maine West include Assistant Principal for Student Services Dr. Claudia Rueda-Alvarez, English Department Chair Dr. Tim Pappageorge and Science Teacher Nate Hassman. Counselor Tim Spiegel at Maine South earned a recognition award in the student support personnel category.

Kaiser was honored for his unique approach to learning where trying, failing and trying again is an integral part of the learning process.

The ASCEND team was recognized for supporting historically under-represented student populations to take more challenging courses. A former ASCEND student wrote: "I always thought that I would never be able to take an Advanced Placement class because it would be way too hard for me but we were prepared to take on the challenge."

Spiegel was lauded for his dedication to his students and being a trusted advisor during the college and career exploration process. ■

*From top, the ASCEND group at a recent meeting; Tim Spiegel advises a student about post-graduation options; Tom Kaiser works with a student in class.*

