

MAINE TOWNSHIP HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT 207



SPRING 2025

District 207 to Embark on Strategic Planning Process Where Community Partnership will be Vital



Beginning in fall 2025, District 207 will embark on a comprehensive strategic planning process that will guide the district's vision, goals and priorities for the next three to five years. This initiative represents a critical opportunity for the community to help shape the future of education in District 207.

The strategic planning process will be inclusive, transparent and forward-thinking. Through a multitude of ways (surveys, focus groups and interviews), District 207 will seek input from all stakeholders including the community, students, families and staff. Through the process, the district seeks to understand what is working well and learn where there are opportunities for growth. The outcome will be a shared vision for student success and a strategic roadmap that reflects the values and goals of our diverse community.

As part of this process, the district will develop a "Portrait of a Graduate" to define the skills, competencies and experiences all District 207

graduates should have when they complete their high school education. Alongside that vision, the plan will outline specific goals, strategies and metrics for measuring progress. The result will be both a public-facing strategic plan and internal work plans to support long-term execution and continuous improvement. A dashboard also will be developed to keep the public updated on the progress of the plan.



A steering committee made up of students, staff, parents and community members will help guide the strategic planning process. Any community member interested in volunteering to be on the steering committee can visit bit.ly/207Form or use the QR code above to complete the form.

The district will share information with community members about surveys, focus groups and other engagement strategies. Anyone who volunteers for the steering committee and is not selected will be specifically notified about these opportunities. The goal is to ensure all stakeholders provide input through the many opportunities that will be provided. ■



Many Students Who Need Additional Support are Part of the Transition Program

There is an amazing group of District 207 students with individualized education programs (IEPs) who continue with specialized programming after meeting high school graduation requirements. The Transition program in District 207 offers a wide variety of services to these students as they integrate into adult life after high school. The program, located at Maine East, provides support through the school year in which a student turns 22.

“Our staff show incredible care for our students, while also challenging them to be as independent as they can be,” says Special Education Department Chair Michael Lowe. “We strive to prepare our students for their adult lives beyond their time with us, whether that be in the workplace, at college, at home, in the community or in adult programs.”

Transition currently serves approximately 60 students to help them build the skills needed for life after high school, which might include living more independently, seeking employment, developing vocational training skills and/or working toward college.

Students have opportunities to learn and practice using public transportation, gaining confidence and independence in navigating their communities. Students also participate in lessons in other independent living skills, such as grocery shopping on a budget, preparing healthy meals and practicing responsible citizenship. Other students are taking college-level classes part-time while also attending the Transition program part-time.

Students in Transition work toward developing vocational or employment skills as part of their school day. Students experience work-based learning or vocational training experiences where they go to a jobsite, either on campus or at community businesses. Through this training, students are able to practice job skills, as well as learn how to take initiative, problem solve and communicate effectively. Whether students pursue employment, college or adult service programs, Transition provides District 207 students with opportunities tailored to their individual goals and strengths.

Journey to Jewel-Osco

In addition to some students participating in work training in the community as part of the program, there are some students who have earned paid jobs with the support of Transition. Tony started working at Jewel-Osco last year after filling out the application with the help of Transition’s employment specialist, Whitney Nuam.



Transition student Daniella packs together a car care kit during a trip to the Avenues work center.



Jeyden (left) and Tony (right) show off the Demon Brew menu featuring coffee and smoothie flavors of the day.



The Transition program staff are passionate about the growth and wellbeing of their students.

“Watching our students in Transition get employed is the absolute best thing,” expresses Nuam. “I get to see them get out into our community and achieve the same goals as other adults. I love to see the maturity and pride that comes with achieving this goal.”

At Jewel-Osco, Tony says he enjoys getting to do a variety of different tasks including collecting carts and bagging groceries for guests. He says his work experience helps improve a variety of his skills.

“In my point of view, this program has helped my child in a great way,” shares Tony’s mom, Maria. “It has helped him find a job and acquire more skills to be independent.”

Other Avenues

While some students find their place in the workforce or in college, other students may find success attending adult programs, which work with individuals of various abilities to find greater independence.

Transition student Daniella speaks highly of the days she gets to attend Avenues to Independence, a flexible day program that serves the northwest suburbs and Chicago. Daniella and a few other students visit the Avenues work center in Wheeling, which offers job training and employment opportunities specializing in packaging and assembly operations.

“She loves Avenues,” explains Daniella’s mom, Maria. “She likes the activities there and even showed me how to get there one day. She loves packing together different kits.”

In addition to attending Avenues, Daniella also enjoys a variety of things about Transition especially working at Demon Brew, Maine East’s in-house coffee shop.

Going for the Goal

While each experience is different, the impact Transition has made on the lives of its students, their families and its staff is undeniable. It’s a program that is all about helping students reach their goals in a way that works best for them.

“Transition made a good impact on me and I’ve mastered goals in Transition like how to get and keep a job,” wrote one student. “It helps you be independent for the future and to work on your goals. Take your time, no rush.” ■



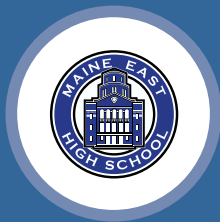
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District 207 Teachers and Staff Honored

A total of nine individuals and one team from District 207 were honored as part of the 2025 Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) Those Who Excel and Teacher of the Year program.

Maine West Counselor Eliades Hernandez, Maine West Lead Security Guard Erik Lozano, Maine West Social Science Teacher Melissa Murray, Maine East Psychologist Ruth Shook-Orr and community volunteer Jessie Maag earned awards of excellence in their respective categories. For a full list of those honored, please visit bit.ly/D207TWE25.

Additionally, Maine South Math Teacher Cheng Jin and Maine South English Teacher Zanfina Muja were selected as Golden Apple Awards for Excellence in Teaching finalists. Read more at bit.ly/D207GoldenApple25. ■



Zanfina Muja and Cheng Jin



Eliades Hernandez



Erik Lozano



Melissa Murray



Ruth Shook-Orr



Jessie Maag