



*Dr. Harris rides with BHS Principal Steve McWilliams in the 2019 Homecoming Parade down Main Street.*

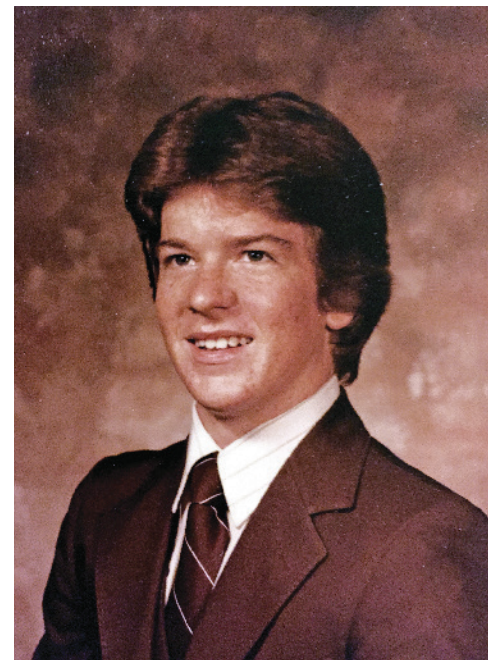
## Reflections Before Retirement

**A**T THE END OF JUNE 2021, Dr. Brian Harris will retire after serving seven years as Barrington 220's Superintendent of Schools and a total of 34 years in public education. Quintessential Barrington talked with Dr. Harris about his time in Barrington and life beyond working in a school district.

**QB:** *Now that you've been the leader of Barrington 220 for nearly a decade, what do you think makes Barrington 220 such a successful and special school district?*

**BH:** Barrington 220 is a nationally recognized school district because of our dedicated and talented students and staff, innovative curriculum and instruction, rich history, and strong sense of community. When I came to the district in 2014,

the community welcomed me back with open arms. I had served as the Assistant Principal at BMS-Station Campus from 1993-98. The level of support from our stakeholders is incredible. One of the best examples of this was the implementation of the BHS Business Incubator program during my first school year as superintendent. This innovative and entrepreneurial program was born through the idea of two Barrington area entrepreneurs. Through collaboration with the district and support from the Barrington 220 Educational Foundation, the program became a great success and INCubatoredu is now in 160 schools nationwide. The program has also evolved over the past few years to include curriculum for elementary and middle school students.



*A photo of Dr. Harris from the late '80s when he began his career in public education.*



**QB:** What are some of your proudest accomplishments from your time as Superintendent of Schools?

**BH:** When I think about accomplishments, I think about initiatives that will leave a lasting positive impact on Barrington 220 students. Leading the school district's information campaign for a \$147 million bond measure, which was approved by the community in March 2020, is definitely at the top of that list. Over the next four to five years all of that funding will be used to transform our schools by significantly enhancing safety and security at each building, renovating educational spaces to provide the best learning experiences possible for our students, and repairing things like our school roofs, windows, electrical systems, plumbing systems, heating, and air conditioning.


Another accomplishment that comes to mind is helping to implement new start times at all of our schools at the start of the 2017-18 school year. Change is never easy, but sometimes it's necessary in order to do what is best for kids. This initiative originated with the district's strategic plan "Vision 2020", which was created from the input of hundreds of stakeholders. Within the first year of implementing the new start times (starting the elementary day earlier and the middle and high school day later), data showed noticeable and measurable improvements in our students' social emotional well-being and academic performance.

I am also proud of the work we have done at Barrington High School to increase enrollment in Advanced Placement courses. BHS has been on the College Board AP Honor roll for the past five years as we have continued to maintain high test scores, while increasing the number of students enrolled in our AP courses. We were able to do this by providing opportunities for many students to take capstone courses in all content areas, whereas in the past they may have not had that chance due to access and equity issues in our system.

Finally, during my second year in the district we implemented the extended-day kindergarten program, which has been highly successful. The long-term benefits for our students will be realized in the coming years as they matriculate through Barrington 220.

**QB:** What has been the biggest challenge you have faced as Superintendent of Schools and how did you overcome that challenge?

**BH:** Without a doubt, the impact of this once-in-a-lifetime pandemic has been the biggest challenge I have faced during my 34 years in public education. The education profession is all about people and nobody decides to become an educator to watch learning take place through a screen. When the situation began to rapidly evolve in March 2020 there was a lot of uncertainty. Things were literally changing by the day and there was no playbook to follow. Month after month, the question of how to educate children during a global pandemic divided communities across the country, including Barrington 220. At the end of the day, the safety of our students and staff is always our top priority and we have made decisions based on the data, science, and public health guidance. I am so proud of how our students and staff have navigated the challenges they have faced during this time, and I am excited to see how they will use those skills of flexibility, creativity, and perseverance in the future. It feels wonderful to finally have most of our students back in our buildings five days a week for the entire school day!



Make safe choices tonight.  
Drinking isn't worth the risks. ❤️ 🤔  
Love, Mom and Dad


# TALK

early.  
often.  
about alcohol.

It's not one, 60-minute conversation.  
It's 60, one-minute conversations  
that make the difference.

The research is clear—strong parental disapproval is the **NUMBER ONE** reason teens give for why they chose not to drink. Talk to your kids early and often about alcohol. For helpful talking tips, additional resources, and information, visit [www.bstrongtogether.org](http://www.bstrongtogether.org).

[www.bstrongtogether.org](http://www.bstrongtogether.org)



# LAURA GEORGE

## CONSULTING

ACT/SAT Tutoring • College Consulting  
Essay & Application Assistance



The Road to College Brings Unique Challenges This Year.  
We Can Help You Navigate Them.

Laura George is a nationally renowned college admissions expert and the founder and moderator of the popular "Parents of College Bound Kids" group on Facebook. Join the nationwide conversation today!

**Free 20-MINUTE CONSULTATION**  
Contact us today!

We are a trusted, local ACT/SAT tutoring and college consulting practice serving the Barrington area.

Recently Featured On

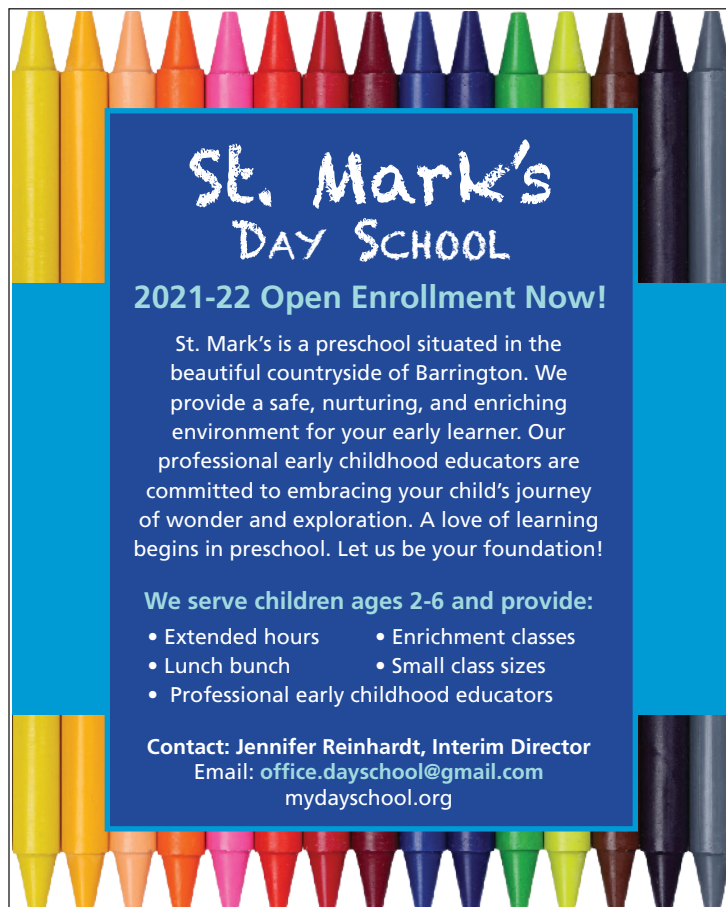


There are 4,000+ Colleges in the US. Which Are Best For Your Student?

Our College Search and Selection Package offers guidance on identifying best-fit colleges and building a balanced list that matches your child academically, socially, and financially.

[Laura@LauraGeorgeConsulting.com](mailto:Laura@LauraGeorgeConsulting.com) • 847-363-6780 • [www.LauraGeorgeConsulting.com](http://www.LauraGeorgeConsulting.com)





## St. Mark's DAY SCHOOL

### 2021-22 Open Enrollment Now!

St. Mark's is a preschool situated in the beautiful countryside of Barrington. We provide a safe, nurturing, and enriching environment for your early learner. Our professional early childhood educators are committed to embracing your child's journey of wonder and exploration. A love of learning begins in preschool. Let us be your foundation!

**We serve children ages 2-6 and provide:**

- Extended hours
- Enrichment classes
- Lunch bunch
- Small class sizes
- Professional early childhood educators

**Contact: Jennifer Reinhardt, Interim Director**  
 Email: [office.dayschool@gmail.com](mailto:office.dayschool@gmail.com)  
[mydayschool.org](http://mydayschool.org)



Dr. Harris poses for a photo with Bronco Billy during an event at BHS.

**QB:** What are some opportunities for Barrington 220 moving forward?

**BH:** We are wrapping up an unprecedented school year that has impacted everyone in this community in their personal and professional lives. There is a lot of healing that must happen and there will need to be even more of a focus on the mental health of our students and staff than ever before. In addition, there is a lot of work that will need to be done next school year and beyond to address any learning loss and “schooling” loss that may have occurred due to family hardships and remote learning. At the same time, the pandemic has taught us that there are some students who thrive in a remote learning environment and there is a chance to explore an innovative opportunity moving forward for those students.

During the 2021-22 school year, the district will most likely embark on developing a new strategic plan. The district's current plan “Vision 2020” was a 10-year plan through 2020. This will be a great opportunity for the community to come together and provide input and feedback in order to shape where our school district is headed in the future.

In addition, our Board of Education has made a commitment to promote equity, race, and cultural sensitivity across the district. Last fall the district hired Barrington 220's first ever Director of Equity, Race and Cultural Diversity Initiatives to lead that charge. I look forward to seeing the work that will get done in the years to come.

**QB:** What are your plans for retirement?

**BH:** I am excited to spend more time with my family and have the flexibility to travel. My wife and family have been a tremendous support to me for my entire career and now it is time for me to be able to spend more time with them. I do plan to stay engaged in public education by working with a local regional office of education focused on special projects, possibly teaching at the University level, and also considering additional consulting opportunities. U



## Love your smile.

orthodontics  
cosmetic dentistry  
teeth whitening  
preventative care  
oral surgery  
safe, caring,  
full family service



**HARTdental**  
 728 W. NORTHWEST HWY., BARRINGTON  
 847-865-4278