



PHOTO BY TAO ZHANG

What I Know That Is Certain

THE 2020-21 SCHOOL YEAR marks my 34th year working in public education. In that time I've worked in different positions, at different schools, and in different school districts. However, one thing has always remained constant. The first day of school is my favorite day of the school year.

There is nothing better than seeing the hallways and classrooms come alive as students and staff return to the building, and that feeling of excitement and hope for a brand-new year. Before last March, I thought I would get to experience that special day one more time as I embark on my last year as superintendent in Barrington 220.

But 2020 had other plans for all of us.

This pandemic has turned lives and livelihoods upside down. It has changed everything from the way we connect to one another, to the way we shop for groceries. "The only thing that's certain is nothing is certain" has become the coronavirus catchphrase.

Yet, despite this uncertain time in all of our lives, I am confident Barrington 220 will continue its mission of *inspiring all learners to achieve excellence*. As educators, we are also lifelong learners, and our staff learned a lot last spring when the pandemic pushed school districts into unknown territory.

With the realization that at some point during this school year our students would be learning

virtually, over the summer many of our educators took it upon themselves to participate in professional development that was designed to improve virtual instruction. In addition, during the teacher institute days prior to the beginning of the school year, all teachers engaged in professional development that focused on best practices for virtual instruction.

Even though the way we're delivering education to our students right now is different and will most likely change several times throughout the '20-'21 school year, I know Barrington 220 staff will rise to the occasion and provide an excellent education for the students in our community.

I hope to see all of our students return to our school buildings soon.

Dr. Brian Harris is the superintendent of Barrington 220 School District.



Barrington Early Learning Center Recognized for Excellence

BARRINGTON 220'S EARLY LEARNING CENTER (ELC) has achieved a Gold Circle of Quality rating from ExceleRate Illinois, the state's quality recognition and improvement system for early learning and development providers. This is the second time the Center's "Preschool for All" Program has received the top award, after earning it in 2017. In addition, the Early Learning Center received the Silver Circle of Quality in 2014.

For more than 30 years, the ELC's Preschool for All program has served at-risk children ages three to five in the Barrington area. Gold Circle programs meet the highest quality of standards in the following areas: learning environment, teaching quality, all program administrative standards, professional development, staff/child ratios, and staff qualifications. To earn the award, the ELC had to pass an audit, performed by inspectors hired by the Illinois State Board of Education.

"Newly retired ELC Principal Barbara Romano and the ELC staff worked exceptionally hard to earn this recognition. I'm extremely proud and appreciative of the hard work and dedication to our early childhood program! We will continue this work of excellence in the years to come," said Michelle Acosta, who started as principal of the ELC on July 1, 2020. The Illinois ExceleRate Gold Circle of Quality is awarded on behalf of the Illinois State Board of Education, the Governor's Office of Early Childhood Development, the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services, and the Illinois Department of Human Services. To learn more about ExceleRate Illinois, visit: excelebrateillinoisproviders.com.



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