In the spring of 2006, the District 225 Board of Education took action to place a $94 million building bond referendum on the ballot for the November 7, 2006 election. According to a fall newsletter issued to the community, $48 million would be used for facility renovations and improvements, $25 million for mandated life safety projects, and $21 million would be used to restructure existing revenue bonds. In addition, the district advertised that the referendum would “1. Maintain the academic, activity and athletic opportunities for current and future students; 2. Bring aging and inadequate facilities up to current standards to meet student needs; and 3. Maintain financial stability for at least ten years.” The estimated increased cost to the average homeowner was advertised to be $120 per year based on a home with a fair market value of $548,472 and an estimated assessed property value of $335,000.

On November 7, 2006 the referendum passed by the narrowest of margins. In early January of 2007, the district issued $68.5 million in bonds to restructure existing debt and begin construction projects. The interest rate for the bond issuance was lower than the estimate prior to the referendum and the average taxpayer realized a slightly lower increased cost of $116 per year for referendum debt. A second bond issuance of $15.5 million went forward in January 2008 and the final bond issuance of $10 million was completed in the fall of 2011. Continuous efforts by the Board of Education to take advantage of reissuance opportunities during the life cycles of the bonds have resulted in a total savings of $10.5 million due to lower interest rates, reducing the overall debt burden to taxpayers.

It gives me great pleasure to report that the referendum projects were completed as advertised. Measures of student academic achievement are at their highest levels in history, average class sizes across the district
District 225 Superintendent Mike Riggle has announced his intention to retire from the District at the end of the 2018-19 school year.

“I feel privileged to have served in this outstanding district for the last 20 years,” said Superintendent Dr. Riggle. “With the completion of multi-year bargaining agreements with the employee unions, it is an excellent time for the Board of Education to seek a highly qualified candidate to serve as the next superintendent. I will continue to manage the important business of the District until a new superintendent is selected and a smooth transition is realized.”

Riggle came to the Glenbrooks in July 1998 as the newly appointed principal of Glenbrook North High School and has served as superintendent of the District since July 1, 2008. Prior to his time in the Glenbrooks, Riggle served for eight years as the principal of Bloomington High School South in Bloomington, Indiana.

“The Board wishes to thank Dr. Riggle for his exemplary 20 years of service to the Glenbrook High Schools,” said Board President Skip Shein. “During his tenure, the District has witnessed unprecedented growth in student achievement, employee satisfaction and financial stability. Mike has worked tirelessly to deepen critical relationships with our feeder elementary districts, park districts, religious and cultural organizations, and the villages of Glenview and Northbrook. Mike consistently demonstrates the highest level of personal integrity, always leading by example. Mike’s experience, thoughtfulness and steady hand will be difficult to replace. The Board wishes Dr. Riggle and his family well as they move forward together into the next phase of their journey.”
The Board approved the 2019-2020 school calendar, which will continue to have semester final exams as well as the completion of the first semester scheduled after winter break.

For many years, the school year calendar has been adopted in the late spring as it is an important consideration in establishing school calendars in the elementary districts, for scheduling park district programs and for planning many family celebrations and vacations. However, this spring, the Board delayed discussion of the 2019-2020 calendar to allow for greater input from the school community on a potential shift to a calendar that would schedule final exams and the conclusion of the semester prior to winter break.

“We are grateful to those parents, students and staff members who submitted responses to the recent school calendar survey,” said Superintendent Dr. Mike Riggle. “A calendar change is an important and impactful decision, and a comprehensive analysis and thorough discussion of the recent school calendar survey results will take time.”

The district’s external consultant, The Hanover Research team, is currently processing and analyzing data from the school calendar survey and will provide the district a report upon completion. The district expects to review and discuss those results, with the 2020-21 school calendar in mind, during the second semester.
Glenbrook North reported that 97 percent of the graduating class of 2018 is pursuing higher education this fall at 145 institutions.

University of Illinois and Oakton Community College remain the most popular college choices selected by Glenbrook North students, followed by Illinois State University, University of Wisconsin-Madison, University of Colorado-Boulder, Indiana University-Bloomington and Purdue University.

Some of the other top-attended institutions include University of Michigan, Northwestern University and DePaul University. Students applied to an average of more than six institutions.

Of the 445 (2018) graduates attending college, 75 percent remain in the Midwest – with 44 percent of those students remaining in Illinois. Five graduates are attending institutions outside of the U.S. Overall, 64 percent of students are attending public schools and 36 percent are attending private schools.

In addition, several graduates stated they are taking alternative paths to continuing their education such as working on a horse farm, participating in an international mission trip, attending technical institutes and pursuing career education.

Final transcripts were sent to the NCAA for 27 graduates who plan to participate in college athletics.
Reconfigured gym space improves utilization

Glenbrook North students walked into newly renovated gyms this school year.

The gym floors in the four back gyms at GBN were replaced, interior walls and ceilings painted, and light fixtures were retrofitted to LED, as part of summer life safety work. By removing the wall between two of the back gyms, one large space was created to allow more flexibility in hosting larger games and competition, and even, homecoming.

Between daily PE classes, athletic practices, intramural programs and various community events, the gyms continue to see more and more use, said John Catalano, GBN athletic director.

“We outgrew the space in terms of the amount of competitions we host and the amount of fans that come to watch,” he said.

The total construction cost approximately $950,000, including budgeted and planned life safety projects. Up to 330 people can now be seated in the larger space for a single event. Previously, only 75 people could be seated in each gym and up to 30 people would try to watch events from the hallway.

This larger space also includes a retractable curtain that creates two separate spaces as needed for PE classes and athletic practices.

“The new gyms give us advantages we’ve never had before,” John Catalano, GBN athletic director said. “They’re going to be used a great deal by our teams.”

DID YOU KNOW?
This past June, 138 Glenbrook District 225 graduates received the Illinois State Seal of Biliteracy. Of that group, seven graduates are fluent in more than two languages.
At the ages of four and five, recent graduate Catherine O’Regan and 2017 alumna Colette O’Regan were handed their first rackets. They have been playing tennis ever since.

Catherine graduated this past spring with four state tournament qualifications under her belt, three of which she entered as Colette’s doubles partner.

“I knew that we needed to play together since we had played together our entire lives, so I told [our coach] that I wanted to play with Catherine to see how we worked as a doubles team,” Colette said. “Thankfully, she said yes and we proved that we could go far if we played together permanently.”

Catherine said the sister dynamic only occasionally caused disagreements on the court.

“We felt comfortable telling each other our honest opinions and didn’t hold back if we thought our own strategies were better,” Catherine said. “However, our disagreements never got in the way of winning a match or having fun.”

Colette said it was this honest feedback that often led to their success.

“We both wanted to succeed so we made sure that we were on the same page about what we needed to do,” Colette said.

Colette said the first season she played with her sister was “extremely fun” because no one knew who they were yet, and they didn’t feel as much pressure as they did in their final seasons.

“By the end [of our high school career], we definitely had a greater understanding of the importance of each point and how far we could go if we worked together,” Catherine said.

Colette can happily reflect on the growth that she and her sister underwent from the beginning to the end of their high school tennis careers.

“It was really fun to see how we improved together, individually and as a team, and I’m so happy that I have all these memories of playing with [Catherine] when I think about my high school tennis career,” she said.
As a Spartan, Ryan Raddon was known for his involvement in a wide range of extracurricular activities including soccer, lacrosse, volleyball, swimming and performing arts. If he wasn’t playing sports or skateboarding, he was adding to his record collection, or performing in choir or a sketch comedy group.

It was the musical interest that really paid off. Now Raddon’s millions of fans know him as Kaskade, six-time Grammy nominee, DJ and producer. His love for dance music has sold out top venues such as Navy Pier and the Staples Center. Raddon has headlined every major North American musical festival, including drawing the two largest crowds ever to Coachella in 2015. He’s released 10 solo albums and performed at more than 5,000 shows. Raddon was the first American DJ to secure a Las Vegas performance residency.

Raddon attended Brigham Young University in Utah after graduating from GBN. It was then that he really dove into his passion for music, taking any available gig and learning from his struggles along the way. He remained dedicated and patient.

“Having the wherewithal to stick with what you love when success isn’t guaranteed is rough sometimes,” he said.

Genuine, empowering, extraordinary.

These were just a few words used to describe English teacher Amanda Scholz, as student Prajnaa Bangalore Mahaveer Jain delivered the speech introducing Ms. Scholz.

“I am beyond excited to present this award to a teacher who goes far beyond what is expected,” Jain said. “This teacher continually shows genuine concern about shaping her students into self-advocating and capable individuals. This teacher is a uniter. She is able to bring people together by curating a classroom environment that validates and explores individual circumstances that we don’t have at GBN. Then, she teaches us how to apply it to our own lives. This teacher continually broadens her knowledge and understanding of others, emphasizing our shared humanity.”

“When she addresses us, I sense the trust she places in each one of us as humans first, and then as students,” Jain said. “She even ends class stating her thanks for the work we’ve been doing … On top of her distinction as an educator, she remains incredibly humble.”

Ms. Scholz has been teaching in District 225 for nearly 20 years.
The exploration of learning spaces continues

The spring semester welcomed the exploration of eight new learning spaces, four at both GBN and GBS. Now, after months of analyzing the impact on student wellness and meaningful work, the Board of Education has approved the implementation of an additional 32 learning spaces between the two high schools.

The research highlights indicate that students experiencing the new classrooms reported a 76% increase in creativity, 59% increase in motivation to learn and 48% increase in connection with classmates.

With a total transformation of 40 learning spaces during the second semester, thousands of students and nearly 100 teachers will be impacted.

This winter, another wave of teachers from different departments will begin a similar design process. New prototypes will emerge, and will be tested in classrooms during the second semester.

“Staying in the question and pushing on concepts through a beautifully messy process of design thinking made this vision of active learning spaces come to life,” said director of instructional innovation Ryan Bretag.
The safety and security of students and staff continues to be a top priority in our district. Earlier this spring, Facility Engineering Associates (FEA) conducted a physical security assessment of all district buildings and campuses. Several of FEA’s recommendations have been implemented this fall.

Recent security improvements include the hiring of a full-time district Safety and Security Manager, development of a task force, consistent visitor check-in system at all locations, distribution of clearly marked visitor lanyards with a printed ID badge, and the exchange of credentials at the time of visitor check-in. In addition, all staff are required to wear identification badges.

The district has also revised crisis plans, engaged in building security assessments, and participated in scenario-based crisis training in partnership with the other Northfield Township school districts.

This fall, physical modifications were made to the main entrances of all Glenbrook facilities. A combination of impact-resistant and bullet-proof security glazing was added to building entrances throughout the district. The cost of these enhancement projects was $145,830.

The district has also formed a task force comprised of district administrators, architects, and local police and fire personnel. The task force has been charged with identifying and reviewing additional measures and crafting a three-year plan for improving safety and security through facilities enhancements. The task force will consider all improvement options by researching the impact on resources, protocols, personnel, and culture. The group will then provide recommendations to the Board of Education for discussion.

“The safety and security of our students and staff is an ongoing effort that has been and will continue to be at the forefront of all that we do moving forward,” said Superintendent Dr. Mike Riggle.
District designs new position to focus on safety and security

At their regular meeting on July 30, the District 225 Board of Education approved the hiring of Mr. Joel Reyes for the newly created position of district safety and security manager. Reyes will work in partnership with school and district leadership teams in efforts to improve security and safety for students and staff.

“This position evolved from the security assessments conducted last spring, and we feel extremely fortunate to find a high calibre candidate with the skills and background necessary to lead our efforts to improve safety and security in all district facilities,” said Superintendent Dr. Mike Riggle.

Reyes, a state-certified police officer, has 28 years of law enforcement experience with the Northbrook Police Department. Having served in a supervisory capacity for 17 years, Reyes has been commander for the past seven years, and acted as the department’s designated emergency manager. A former chief warrant officer for the U.S. Army, Reyes also volunteers with the American Red Cross and serves on the Village of Skokie Public Safety Commission. He holds two master’s degrees from the University of Illinois Springfield in legal studies and public administration, as well as a bachelor’s degree in interdisciplinary studies from Governors State University.

“Recent events in the U.S. and abroad are reminders of how security and safety must adapt to contemporary standards,” said Reyes. “In a school setting, we must act as advocates for the student population.”

have remained the same and athletic and activity opportunities available to students have been enhanced. Facilities throughout the district meet current standards and are more than capable of meeting the needs of a growing student population that is at the highest level in history.

Twelve years have now passed since the referendum and District reserve levels are stable at an estimated 70 percent of Operating Funds. With the recent completion of multi-year collective bargaining agreements, the district is well-positioned financially for the future. The best news for taxpayers is that the debt burden from the 2006 referendum will end in January 2027 and the district will be debt free.

My sincere thanks and gratitude go to the many people who have worked diligently to keep this promise to the community, and to our community for their continued trust and support.

Michael D. Riggle, Ed.D.
Superintendent
New principal joins Glenbrook Evening High School

On August 29, Mr. Edward Amos began serving as the new principal of Glenbrook Evening School.

Mr. Amos has experience as a school counselor, assistant principal and dean of students in both Chicago Public Schools and School District U-46. His education includes a Bachelor of Arts from Hawaii Pacific University, Master of Arts from Roosevelt University, and Master of Education from DePaul University, where he is currently enrolled in a doctoral program for educational leadership.

Mr. Amos was selected from a talented pool of candidates by an interview committee comprised of teachers and administrators who believe he is strong leader, who will be able to relate to his student population and inspire those who struggle academically. One committee member stated, “He believes in all students, and is passionate about relationships, connections, and getting to know every student and staff member.”

“I am excited about the leadership and vision he will bring to the program given his passion and commitment to support all students,” said his supervisor, assistant superintendent for educational services Dr. Rosanne Williamson.

“I am incredibly humbled by the opportunity to serve the families of the evening school and I am eager to begin building on the rich history of this program by starting a new chapter for our students and faculty,” said Amos.