

DuPage High School District 88 and Elmhurst College Asynchronous Math Courses Team

**Illinois Chapter of the National School Public Relations Association (INSPRA)
Distinguished Service Awards – May 10, 2019**

Award received: Award of Merit in the Team category

The mission of District 88 (comprised of Addison Trail High School and Willowbrook High School) is “to work for the continuous improvement of student achievement.”

As part of that mission, the district continuously strives to help students prepare for post-secondary success. So when Addison Trail Math Department Head Jason Bugajsky and Willowbrook Math Department Head Brian Chelmecki noticed an increase in the number of students completing all math courses offered in District 88, they began working on a solution for students to further their math careers by offering an opportunity for them to take Calculus 3 for college credit. During the 2016-17 school year, they worked with District 88 administrators to form a plan. The group reached out to Elmhurst College to see whether a partnership was possible and was met with open arms. Not only did Elmhurst provide an option for Calculus 3, but during planning meetings and through collaboration, the teams began to discuss a second course to serve a greater population of District 88 students. As a result, two asynchronous math courses were formed.

The District 88 team worked with professors and administrators at Elmhurst College to create an Asynchronous Calculus 3 Model and an Asynchronous College Algebra class, which are provided to students at no cost through the use of Title I funds. For the Asynchronous Calculus 3 class, pupils participate in live online lectures led by an Elmhurst College professor and complete modules and homework assigned by the college. District 88 math teachers guide and support students through the course. After successfully completing the course, students receive credit for Elmhurst College’s Calculus 3. So far 10 students have taken this class, and Bugajsky and Chelmecki said they look forward to increasing that number.

Through the Asynchronous College Algebra course, participants are enrolled as Elmhurst College students. The staff at Addison Trail and Willowbrook collaborated with Elmhurst College faculty regarding assignments and grading, and students complete the class with the support of District 88 teachers. Currently, 24 district 88 students are taking Asynchronous College Algebra. After successfully completing the course, participants receive college credit that can be transferred to other colleges and universities while serving as a placement mechanism, allowing students to directly enroll in subsequent college courses.

Elmhurst College Vice President for Admission Timothy Ricordati said he was thrilled to partner with District 88 and implement these initiatives.

“Research shows the more students are exposed to college-level coursework in high school, the greater their college attendance and college graduation rates – especially with students who are the first in their family to attend college, as well as underrepresented student groups,” Ricordati

said. “The leadership and creative thinking at District 88 under Superintendent Dr. Scott Helton is tremendous. These days, we are all facing limited resources to serve all students, and to make a course like Calculus 3 available to high school pupils is a tremendous benefit and gives them a leg up in their college career.”

Willowbrook High School senior Bahgat Hassan completed the Asynchronous Calculus 3 course this past semester and said he took the class to challenge his mathematical ability.

“I think it’s important to allow students to challenge themselves with college-level coursework and earn college credit while in high school because this will not only prepare them for such material in the future, but also allow those of us going into advanced degrees to experience a course before getting to college,” Hassan said. “This opportunity helped prepare me for success by giving me experience with the type of math I will be using in my career.”

Hassan is still deciding where he will continue his education, but he plans to major in theoretical physics to conduct research in the field.

The District 88 administrators and staff members involved in the asynchronous courses are: District 88 Superintendent Dr. Scott Helton, Addison Trail Principal Michael Bolden, Willowbrook Principal Dr. Daniel Krause, District 88 Director of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment Dr. Adam Cibulka, Addison Trail Math Department Head Jason Bugajsky, Willowbrook Math Department Head Brian Chelmecki, Addison Trail math teacher Natalie Stach Wilen, Willowbrook math teacher Ryan Bazon and Willowbrook math teacher Steve Bridges. The Elmhurst College administrators and staff involved are: Vice President for Admission Timothy Ricordati, Department of Mathematics Chair and Professor Evans Afenya, Ph.D., and Department of Mathematics Professor Allen D. Rogers, Ph.D.