



Above: On Dec. 4, Dr. Brian Harris visited the White House for a College Opportunity Day of Action.

## Barrington 220 Invited to White House

An invitation to the White House by the President of the United States and the Department of Education is a once-in-a-lifetime occurrence for most people, but for Barrington 220's Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Brian Harris, that invitation has been made twice, in just three weeks. These exclusive invitations are the result of innovative and unique initiatives in Barrington 220 that the federal government believes other districts can learn from.

We asked Dr. Harris about his travels to Washington, D. C., and what they mean for the future of Barrington 220 School District.

**QB:** *You were invited to the White House in November with about 75 other superintendents nationwide as part of the "ConnectED to the Future Summit." What was the summit about?*

**BH:** I was honored to be one of the superintendents selected to attend this summit, which convened educators who are leaders in the transition to digital learning. A major initiative of President Barack Obama and Secretary of Education Arne Duncan is putting technology in the hands of all learners and provide broadband access to all public schools. Many of our programs in Barrington 220, including One-to-World and Project Horsepower, fit this vision and caught the department's attention.

Through our One-to-World initiative, we are providing a technology device to all 9,000 students in the district through a multi-year implementation. Currently, all high school students are equipped with MacBook Air computers, our 6th-graders have iPads, and our 7th-and-8th-graders have Netbooks. The elementary and pre-kindergarten grade levels will receive devices in phases over the next few school years.

Barrington 220 is the first public school system in the U.S. to launch Project Horsepower, a groundbreaking pilot initiative created in partnership with Comcast designed to provide students who qualify for the Federal free-and-reduced lunch program with free wireless Internet

access at home. About 200 families currently take advantage of this program, and we are working to increase that number.

**QB:** *Your Dec. 4 visit to Washington was for the White House College Opportunity Day of Action. You and other school leaders in the country were asked to commit to new action to help more students prepare for and graduate from college. What did Barrington 220 commit to?*

**BH:** Two of the commitments we presented at the summit were The Harper Promise Program and the Power of 15 initiative.

Harper Promise is a new program set to launch next fall, inviting high achieving high school students to commit to the program during their freshman year. If they meet the academic and extracurricular goals set for them through their high school career, they will earn a full scholarship to Harper College.

The Power of 15 initiative is focused on the district's effort to give college-ready students the opportunity to accumulate 15 dual-credit college



At the White House (from left) are Harper College President Dr. Ken Elder, District 214 Superintendent Dr. David Schuler, NECSS Executive Director Cynthia Garcia, District 211 Superintendent Dr. Daniel Cates, and John Rico of the P-20 Council.

credit hours prior to their high school graduation. A pilot of this program will take place in the summer of 2015.

**QB:** *Only a handful of school district leaders were invited to each of these events. Why was Barrington 220 included over similar high-performing districts in our area?*

**BH:** These invitations did not come by chance. I was invited to represent Barrington 220 at the White House summits because our culture of innovation is being noticed. Our students and staff refuse to accept the status quo and are always looking for new ways to improve education. It was an honor to collaborate with representatives from like-minded districts across the country to share ideas and best practices. 

Lisa Stamos is the publisher of Quintessential Barrington.

## The Power of 15: Coming Summer of 2015

Eligible students in the Barrington High School class of 2016 will have the unique opportunity to participate in the Power of 15 initiative's pilot program this summer.

Through Barrington 220's partnership with Harper College, students identified as "college-ready" by school counselors will be able to experience a college campus and earn dual credit by taking Speech 101 at Harper.

By taking and completing this course, students will earn English credit toward high school graduation, and also college credit on a Harper College transcript. Students will receive honors credit from Barrington High School and a weighted grade for the course. Harper's grading system will apply to the Harper transcript.

The Power of 15 is Barrington 220's effort to provide college-ready students the opportunity to earn 15 college credit hours or equivalent learning through dual credit and/or Advanced Placement (AP) courses prior to high school graduation.

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