



Board Report to the Community

February 2004

New Trier Township High School District 203

New Trier launches strategic planning

by Onnie Scheyer and Hank Bangser



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In this issue of *The Board Report to the Community*, we have highlighted the most critical issue to be addressed in 2004; that is, the launching and completion of the strategic planning process at New Trier.

Last spring, after the overwhelming community support of the tax rate referendum, the Board committed to a serious study of the future of the District. Our last strategic planning process, which took place in the mid-1990s, produced a wealth of ideas and plans, most of which have been implemented and are solid components of the fabric of New Trier today.

Now, with the “1-3” enrollment model having been implemented (i.e., freshmen attending the Northfield Campus and sophomores, juniors and seniors attending the Winnetka Campus), and the passage of the referendum ensuring financial stability, the development of the long-term strategic agenda for the District emerged as paramount.

Multi-constituency planning team met in December 2003

To begin the planning process, in mid-December, a 30-person Strategic Planning Team met for 36 hours over a three-day period to create the draft strategic plan for New Trier. The participants represented all groups in the District — teachers, administrators, support and physical plant services staff, parents, Board members, students, and the community. While many members of the Planning Team did not know each other before the session, it became clear early on that there are fundamental values strongly held throughout the District, regardless of a person’s age or position. We found that we live in a unique community, one that is totally committed to the education of our youth. We hope you will agree when you read the results of the session in the article on page 2.

Planning facilitator notes “something special” about the New Trier process

Dr. Howard Feddema, one of the nation’s preeminent strategic planning facilitators in public and private education, led the December session. His engagement with the District will continue through the Board of Education approval of the final plan in December 2004. Dr. Feddema, who has helped 133 school districts in the past 15 years complete their strategic plans, offered the following perspective on his New Trier experience thus far.

“There was something truly special about New Trier’s planning session. Everyone knows that New Trier is among the best high schools anywhere. What I learned at the planning session is how

important it is to people at New Trier to pursue excellence without being brash. There seems to be a genuine, understated humility. Throughout the many hours that the team worked together, there was no hint of smugness, arrogance or complacency by anyone. I really admire that,” Dr. Feddema concluded.

Moving forward with an innovative and integrated plan

The planning session provided an opportunity for the participants to explore what makes New Trier strong today and what can be done to help move the District forward with an innovative and integrated plan. The Planning Team shared thoughts about the environment in which our students will be living and learning. Social and cultural influences were considered in concert with the academic arena. With the ongoing pursuit of excellence determined to be a fundamental standard for our students and staff, all aspects of the student’s experience at New Trier were explored. Ultimately, the partnership between the school and the community was a strong theme, and the respect and value of every student’s path through New Trier were emphasized.

You are welcome to serve on an action team

Please feel free to call either of us at 784-6108 if you would like to discuss any element of the draft strategic plan. Also, see page 2 for the timing and procedure through which you can volunteer to serve on one of the six action teams that will work from mid-February through September 2004. ●

Five components of the Strategic Plan

Presented below are the five components of the draft strategic plan developed by the District Strategic Planning Team from December 11-13.

Mission Statement

(expression of the school district's identity, purpose, and means of action)

The mission of New Trier High School is to inspire students "to commit minds to inquiry, hearts to compassion, and lives to the service of humanity"* by working in partnership with the community to provide innovative programs for all students, nurture their unique abilities, and encourage them to pursue excellence in their endeavors.

*The intent of the Strategic Planning Team is to retain the present district motto, with only the last word changed from "mankind" (in the present motto) to "humanity" (in the future motto).

Parameters

(standards which the school district will not compromise)

We will maintain academic performance at the highest levels consistent with our tradition of excellence.

We will maintain the 1-3 Enrollment Model: one school on two campuses.

We will practice fiscal responsibility by honoring the commitment made to the community by the Board of Education in the construction of the April 1, 2003 referendum; specifically, the District will maintain fund balance reserves of at least four and one-half months for at least five years, and there will be no new tax rate referendum for at least five years.

We will maintain a safe and respectful environment conducive to learning.

We will balance our quest for innovation with respect for our tradition.

Belief Statements

(expression of the school district's fundamental values, its ethical code, overriding convictions, and inviolable commitments)

We believe that . . .

- every human being is unique, has worth, and deserves respect.
- diversity enriches the individual, school, and community.
- each and every person can learn.
- individuals are responsible and accountable for their actions.
- education is a shared responsibility among the student, family, school, and community.
- emotional, physical, and social well-being enhance learning and life.
- integrity, civility, and fairness are vital to healthy human interaction.
- the pursuit of excellence in education justifies the investment of time, effort, and resources.
- each individual has the responsibility to contribute to others, society, and the environment.
- the courage to take risks and the willingness to learn from mistakes offer opportunities for growth.
- lifelong learning contributes to a meaningful life.

Objectives

(commitments of the school district to achieve specific, measurable results)

All students will explore their individual aspirations, talents, and interests and set meaningful goals so they can confidently pursue their dreams.

All students will demonstrate that they are making meaningful connections among their high school learning experiences: academic, social, and personal.

All students will consistently demonstrate ethical conduct as responsible citizens.

All students will make choices that will promote a healthy, balanced life.

Strategies

(initiatives through which the school district will deploy its resources toward the stated mission and objectives)

The following headings designate a tentative title of the related action team

In partnership with the New Trier community...

Climate of Exploration

...we will develop an educational climate and structure that enable students to explore aspirations, talents, and interests across their high school years in order to set meaningful goals and confidently pursue their dreams.

Connections among Experiences

...we will design and implement structures that will allow students to make meaningful connections among academic, personal, social, and other life experiences.

Ethical Conduct and Global Citizenship

...we will identify, communicate, model, and reinforce standards of ethical conduct and responsible global citizenship.

Healthy, Balanced Life

...we will identify those factors that place excessive demands on time and energy in the pursuit of excellence and develop plans to encourage a healthy, balanced life.

Intrinsic Value of Learning

...we will design academic leveling and grade weighting systems which foster the intrinsic value of learning and achieve our mission and objectives.

Optimal Use of Time

...we will design a calendar and schedule for optimal use of time to help us achieve our mission and objectives.

Facilities update: Science labs renovated; library is next



With numerous facilities projects successfully completed, New Trier's renovation efforts now are focused on \$1.8 million in improvements to the Winnetka Campus library, which has not undergone major changes since 1957.

A 20-person team is "close to finishing the design and development phase of the project," said John Neiweem, Director of Physical Plant Services. "Then we'll be able to start on the construction documents." Construction will begin this summer when the late 1950s-vintage library will be emptied, with books and other reference materials relocated nearby or moved to the Northfield Campus for use during summer school. A computer lab across the hall from the library — the largest of five computer labs at the Winnetka Campus — will be renovated at the same time.

19 science labs renovated

The library project is the latest in a succession of aggressive facilities projects necessary over the last decade. This past summer, a \$1.2 million overhaul of five science labs at the Winnetka Campus finished a multi-year project of remodeling all labs at both campuses, resulting in a total of 19 state-of-the art science classrooms for students.

Wes Baumann Student Center completed

Also completed at the Winnetka Campus was the Wes Baumann Student Center, dedicated to Mr. Baumann after his 2002 retirement as Principal of the Winnetka Campus. The facility has new student club offices and a workroom for use by all clubs. Two new conference rooms allow more space for meetings.

Donations fund four baseball dugouts

On the athletic front, four new baseball dugouts were built at Duke Childs Field at Willow and Hibbard Roads — two for the boys varsity field and two for the girls varsity softball field. The New Trier Booster Club and private donations from parents and others in the community funded about two-thirds of the project.

New trainer room better equipped to treat athletes

Also aiding New Trier athletes is a renovated interscholastic training room at the Winnetka Campus. The new room has more treatment tables and one-third more space for trainers to treat student athletes. The Northfield Campus trainer facilities were renovated when the campus opened in August 2001.

More improvements necessary

At the Northfield Campus, an all-new water main was installed and the Modern and Classical Languages Department office was relocated, making room for two additional classrooms. The Winnetka Campus also received upgraded offices and rooms in the kinetic wellness areas.

In late October, New Trier completed a health/life/safety re-inspection and audit mandated by the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE). While the ISBE praised New Trier's facilities and their management as "among the best in the state," the audit also identified work at both campuses that must be completed in the next five years. To correct specific deficiencies, the District will seek state approval to sell more than \$5.9 million in bonds for facilities projects at the Winnetka Campus and \$9.9 million for Northfield Campus improvements. The needs include parking lot and roof replacement, sidewalk repairs and locker room renovation. ●

Science labs provide flexible spaces

"The 19 labs installed in the past seven years allow students to learn in new ways," said Gerry Munley, Science Department Chair. Since their completion, representatives from nearly 60 other schools have visited New Trier to seek ideas for their own science lab renovations. Primary innovations include:

- universal lab station/table design allowing instruction of any subject in any room
- variations of the universal lab layout
- ADA stations in each lab for students with disabilities
- LCD projection units in all rooms that allow for projection of images from computers, the Internet, VHS, DVD and laser disks
- computer and audio-visual connection at each student lab table, allowing video signals to be projected to the large screen
- internet access from any table
- eight hallway display cases at the Winnetka Campus, bringing the science experience out of the classroom.



"The technology, lab table size and our storage space have all improved dramatically," Mr. Munley said. "The architects listened to science faculty members about how we teach and what future needs we expect in order to improve instruction. The communication and joint enthusiasm helped to create very usable and flexible spaces for students."

Promoting student and staff wellness all year long

The 2003-04 school year is going well at both New Trier campuses, thanks to a lively promotion of good nutrition and fitness for students and staff alike.

Kicking off the school year was a “Wellness Week” in September, filled with activities designed by the All-School Wellness Team that first introduced the concept a year ago. All week, students and staff took the 10,000 Step Challenge, wearing a pedometer with the goal of walking 10,000 steps (about 6 miles) per day.

Snack Bars were open on both campuses. The snack bars, staffed by parents, student volunteers and kinetic wellness teachers, offered such items as nutrition drinks and snack bars, trail mix and fresh fruit. The operation was such a success that the Winnetka Campus snack bar remained open the entire first quarter.

Lunch periods during the week had their own healthy flair, including a cookout organized by Tri-Ship, free apples

courtesy of the Parents Association, and an intramural whiffleball home run derby in front of school at the Winnetka Campus.

A Healthy Backpack Weigh-in shed light on the effects a heavy backpack can have on the back. An improv troupe performed skits that tied humor to good health.

The Parents Association sponsored an evening panel for parents on the subject of “Promoting an Emotionally and Physically Safe New Trier.” Panelists included Jan Borja, Northfield Campus Principal; Neva Egan, Social Worker; Tom Golebiewski, Social Work Department Chair; Nancy LaCursia, Kinetic Wellness Department Chair and All-School Wellness Committee Co-Chair; and Debbie Stacey, Winnetka Campus Principal.

Throughout the school year, the wellness theme is being promoted by various student organizations such as peer Helpers, SAADA, HIV/AIDS Coalition, Cancer Prevention Club, Fitness Force and Voices in Prevention. In addition, Kim Boyd, Wellness Coordinator and

All-School Wellness Committee Co-Chair, directs wellness activities, including supervising the wellness room.

According to Dr. LaCursia, the All-School Wellness Team works all year round to promote six areas of adolescent wellness:

- adequate fitness
- proper nutrition
- sexual health
- mental and emotional health
- substance education, and
- safety (prevention of intentional and unintentional injury).

“By reinforcing good and accurate information, along with providing skills — in communication and decision-making, for example — students can make informed decisions about their own wellness for years to come,”

Dr. LaCursia concluded. ●

New Trier staff are “Learning How We Learn”

“Learning How We Learn” is the theme of New Trier’s 2003-04 Professional Development plan that draws 600 teachers and support staff to school on two Institute and three Late-Start days this year. The days are being dedicated to an understanding of what happens in the brain during learning.

The idea of an over-arching theme to be addressed over several months is a new one this school year, explained Betty Brockelman, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction. “We wanted something that was academic in nature, that would cut across campuses, departments, and job categories — something that would connect us, that had long-term application and interest, and would allow teachers to observe each other in the classroom,” Dr. Brockelman said.

To start, staff read the book, “Teaching with the Brain in Mind” by Eric Jensen, which presents brain research along with successful tips and techniques for using the information in classrooms. Discussion groups met at the November 21 Institute Day to analyze the book’s first four chapters.

Following a strand

Besides reading the book, staff picked a thematic strand to follow for the year. The four choices included the following:

- Impediments to learning (What hinders learning?)
- Enhancement of learning (What can strengthen learning and the connections the brain makes?)
- Reading and writing
- Becoming your best self (available only to support staff, who were also able to sign up for the first three choices).

Based on their choice of educational strand, staff attended three related sessions at the November 21 Institute Day, most led by New Trier teachers who are experts in many of these areas. “This was the time for faculty to share their expertise with colleagues,” Dr. Brockelman said, adding that several outside experts also participated.

“Apply and try”

Staff also formed small action groups of three to five colleagues who will work together for the rest of the year to “apply and try” various strategies they will implement and observe in one another’s classrooms.

A late-start day in December and February and a full-day Institute Day on March 5 will complete the program. At the Institute Day, educational consultant and author Dr. David Sousa will address brain research as applied to reading. ●

Fall Sports: Trevians win on and off the field

It was a successful fall for New Trier sports, with athletes winning as much through participation as in competition. A record 1,069 Trevians joined teams, keeping 73 coaches, countless parents and more than a few bus drivers busy as the season unfolded. Fall Sports accomplishments include:

- State championship in boys golf
- State championship in girls golf
- Second in the state in girls tennis
- Second in the state in field hockey (girls)
- Third in the state in girls swimming
- State quarterfinals for football
- Sectional finals in boys soccer
- State quarterfinals for girls volleyball
- State finals for boys cross-country (placing 9th out of 30).

Creating opportunities

“It was remarkable to have the State places that our student athletes achieved,” said Athletic Director Jim Bloch. “The season was a fabulous experience — obviously a reflection of the students’ commitment to their sport.” But, Mr. Bloch added, “I don’t like to emphasize the winning from a ‘trophy’ perspective. There is much more to be said about the number of opportunities we create for our students.” He gives credit, too, to the coaches and community. “Wherever our athletes are playing — home or away — there are fans — student fans and adult fans.”

Football was the largest single program, with more than 220 boys involved. “Our players did an outstanding job at all levels,” said head football coach Dan Mortier. “This was the largest turn-out in many years, and it made for a very strong program from top to bottom.”

In sheer numbers, the combined girls and boys cross-country roster was the largest, with nearly 350 participants in both programs. A total of 192 girls wore the Trevian cross-country singlet — a number that Mr. Bloch claims is unrivaled by any high school in the midwest. “What attracts and then keeps our cross country runners involved is the fact that they have a good time,” said boys coach Doug Chase. “When the season is over they’re sorry to see it end.”

Working hard

Gary Groh, retired Technology Education Department Chair who coached his girls golf team to its fourth straight state title, said his teams’ successes have made the program almost self-sustaining. Girls enter high school very well-prepared and motivated to play.

The varsity boys golf team won its championship during what head coach Robert Ruiz described as a weekend of “horrendous conditions and killer winds.” “However,” he said, “the determining factor of the entire season was that the coaches and players kept the faith. Believing you can win is a powerful idea.” ●



photo by Scott Kieffer

Madama Butterfly, the teacher

What lessons might 14 and 15-year-olds learn about English languages, math, science and technology from an opera set in early 19th century Japan — with delicate music and a tragic story? Nearly 1,000 New Trier freshmen will discover the answer to that question when they travel to Chicago on March 11 for a Lyric Opera performance of Giacomo Puccini’s “Madama Butterfly.”

This spring’s trip will be the second year that the school’s freshmen will attend the opera. It is part of an interdisciplinary vision that a New Trier education should include experiences in service learning, athletics and performing arts. Currently, faculty are planning their “Madama Butterfly” lesson plans, drawing on last year’s experience involving a Lyric performance of Giuseppe Verdi’s “La Traviata.” At that time, English teachers spent several class periods helping students become familiar with the Traviata libretto, learning the story of the ailing courtesan Violetta, her lover Alfredo, and his father Germont. Social Studies classes compared a case study of a woman in the Middle Ages (the time period students were studying) with that of a woman at the time of the opera. Technology Education classes studied how steam engines changed the economy of Europe during the period depicted in “La Traviata.”

“Our trip to the Lyric Opera is designed to expose students to the art of opera and to offer a new point of entry for various disciplines from physics to kinetic wellness,” said Nina Lynn, Performing Arts Coordinator at the Northfield Campus. “Although many sophomores admit that Opera is not their top choice in entertainment, they valued the exposure last year. They believe that this year’s freshmen should have the same opportunity. Last year, everyone found something to like. We think this year will be no different.” ●

2004 - 2005 School Year Calendar *New Trier Township High School District 203*

August	26 Th	Opening Institute – Day 1
	27 F	Institute – Day 2
	30 M	First Day of Student Attendance
September	6 M	Labor Day (holiday)
	16 Th	Rosh Hashanah
	22 W	Late Arrival for Students (N - 9:40 a.m. & W - 10:00 a.m.) ¹
October	7 Th	Freshman Go-To-School Night (Northfield Campus) Regular School Day on Winnetka Campus
	8 F	No School
	11 M	Columbus Day (holiday)
	19 Tu	Late Arrival for Students (N - 9:40 a.m. & W - 10:00 a.m.)
	29 F	First Quarter Ends
November	9 Tu	Parent-Teacher Conferences (evening) Regular day for students
	10 W	Parent-Teacher Conferences (afternoon and evening) No school for students
	11 Th	Veterans' Day (holiday)
	12 F	Institute Day (no school for students)
	25 – 26 Th-F	Thanksgiving Vacation
December	8 W	Late Arrival for Students (N - 9:40 a.m. & W - 10:00 a.m.)
	18 Sa	Winter Break Begins

January	3 M	School Resumes After Winter Break
	17 M	Martin Luther King Day (holiday)
	18 – 20 Tu-Th	First Semester Exams
	21 Fri	Grading Day²
	24 M	First Semester Ends
	25 Tu	Second Semester Begins
February	8 Tu	Late Arrival for Students (N - 9:40 a.m. & W - 10:00 a.m.)
	21 M	Presidents' Day (holiday)
	25 F	Institute Day (no school for students)
March	15 Tu	Late Arrival for Students (N - 9:40 a.m. & W - 10:00 a.m.)
	24 Th	Third Quarter Ends
	25 F	Good Friday (no school)
	26 Sa	Spring Break Begins
April	4 M	School Resumes after Break
	13 W	Late Arrival for Students (N - 9:40 a.m. & W - 10:00 a.m.)
	27 – 28 W-Th	PSAE Testing for Juniors (schedule for sophomores and seniors to be announced) Regular school day on Northfield Campus
May	10 Tu	Late Arrival for Students (N - 9:40 a.m. & W - 10:00 a.m.)
	30 M	Memorial Day (holiday)
June	2 Th	Commencement (5:00 p.m.)³ Welsh-Ryan Arena – Northwestern University
	6 – 8 M-W	Second Semester Exams
	10 F	Last Day of Student Attendance

1 The number and placement of the late start days will be reviewed by the administration and Board of Education at the June 7, 2004 Board Meeting. The two principals will send a letter to all New Trier parents at the outset of the 2004-05 school year specifying the late start days.

2 A grading day is tentatively scheduled as a day with no school for students. If one snow day is used, January 21 will be a regular day for students.

3 Note change from traditional Sunday commencement. Multiple schools requested the Welsh-Ryan Arena on the first Sunday in June 2005. Two of these schools began using the facility prior to New Trier, so another date needed to be chosen.

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New Trier Township High School District 203

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New Trier Township High School District 203 serves Chicago's North Shore suburban communities of Glencoe, Kenilworth, Wilmette and Winnetka, most of Northfield and parts of Glenview and Northbrook.

Board Report to the Community

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