

**NEW TRIER TOWNSHIP HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT 203  
REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION  
October 15, 2012  
New Trier Township High School  
7 Happ Road, Room C234  
Northfield, IL 60093**

A **Regular Meeting** of the Board of Education of New Trier Township High School District 203, Cook County, Illinois was held at New Trier High School – Northfield Campus, 7 Happ Road, Room C234 on Monday, October 15, 2012 at 7:30 p.m.

**Members Present**

Mr. Alan R. Dolinko, President  
Mr. F. Malcolm Harris, Vice President  
Ms. Carol F. Ducommun  
Mr. Peter Fischer  
Ms. Lori Goldstein  
Mr. John Myefski

**Administrators Present**

Dr. Linda L. Yonke, Superintendent  
Mr. Donald Goers, Associate Superintendent  
Mr. Timothy Hayes, Assistant Superintendent  
for Student Services  
Mr. Paul Sally, Assistant Superintendent for  
Curriculum & Instruction  
Dr. Timothy Dohrer, Principal – Winnetka Campus  
Mr. Paul Waechtler, Principal – Northfield Campus

**Members Absent**

Mr. Patrick O'Donoghue

**Also Present**

Ms. Niki Dizon, Director of Communications; Mr. George Sanders, Director of Human Resources; Ms. Ellen Ambuehl, Director of Special Education; Mr. Christopher Johnson, Director of Technology; Mr. Matt Ottaviano, Assistant Principal, Winnetka Campus; Mrs. Linda Knier, Director of Academic Services; Ms. Denise Hibbard, Assistant Principal, Northfield Campus; Mr. Christopher Wildman, Director of Business Services; Ms. Katherine Schindler, Assistant Principal for Student Services, Winnetka Campus; Ms. Athena Arvanitis, Director of Student Life; Mr. Terry Phillips, Mathematics Department, NTEA President; Ms. Elizabeth Blodgett, Business Services, NTESPA Co-President; Mr. Dan Lawler, English Department; Ms. Judy Macnab, Library Department Chair; Ms. Erika Immel, Library Department; Mr. David Goodspeed, Science Department; Ms. Julie Novak, Social Studies Department; Mr. Josh Wenger, Aramark; Mrs. Ronna Gordon and Mrs. Betsy Helmer, New Trier Parents Association Co-Presidents; members of the press and members of the community.

**BUSINESS MEETING**

**I. CALL TO ORDER – 7:30 p.m.**

Mr. Dolinko called the Regular Meeting of the Board of Education to Order at 7:30 p.m. Roll call was taken. All members were present. Mr. Dolinko welcomed those in attendances, and announced that if anyone wished to address the Board, he or she needed to fill out a yellow Communications Request Form found on the table at the back of the room and pass it up to the Board table.

**II. Closed Session – No Closed Session — C234**

The Closed Session was cancelled for this evening.

**IV. Minutes**

Mr. Dolinko requested a motion to approve the minutes of the August and September meetings. Mr. Fischer moved and Mr. Myefski seconded the motion to approve minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Board of Education held on September 18, 2012, open session; and the Regular Meeting of August 20, 2012, open session, revised. Upon a roll call vote being taken, the members voted as follows:

AYE: Ms. Ducommun, Mr. Fischer, Ms. Goldstein, Mr. Harris, Mr. Myefski, Mr. Dolinko

NAY: None

The motion passed unanimously.

**V. Communications**

Mr. Dolinko invited members of the Community to share their comments with the Board. No one came forward to speak.

**VI. Special Orders of Business**

**A. Report from Campus Principals, Assistant Superintendents & Associate Superintendent**

Mr. Paul Waechtler, Principal of the Northfield Campus, reviewed recent events at the freshman campus which included the distribution of interim progress reports and the end of First Quarter, with Parent Teacher Conferences to follow soon. The freshman mixer was a success on October 3, with positive feedback from parents and chaperones, and the annual Freshman-Go-To-School night on October 4 received equally positive reviews. Student Activities Night took place at the end of September introducing students to clubs, performing arts and sports. On September 20 the freshman choir students met Chicago Opera Theater members in the Cornog for a mini-performance of the Magic Flute. Tim Estberg arranged the collaboration with COT through their education outreach program. The students were also able to attend the Chicago Opera Theater's performance at the Harris Theatre in Chicago.

Dr. Timothy Dohrer, Principal of the Winnetka Campus, highlighted the numerous presentations sponsored by FAN and the Parents' Association on subjects ranging from resilience, social and emotional learning, and beauty/goodness/truth with authors Paul Tough, Brene Brown and Howard Gardner. Dr. Dohrer recapped the Spirit Week and Homecoming activities. He also spoke about the performances of Lagniappe/Potpourri scheduled for later this week and *Laughing Stock* next week.

Mr. Timothy Hayes, Assistant Superintendent for Student Services, noted important work being done through the Advisor Program. For example, the junior Bridge Builders assist sophomores transitioning to the Winnetka campus; the Names Program is starting for the year; and the "Clothesline" exhibit brings attention to the issue of dating violence.

Mr. Paul Sally, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, reported that the October Test day will take place this week on Wednesday, October 17. Freshmen will have a shortened day schedule, sophomores will be taking the PLAN test, and juniors will be taking the PSAT or ACT tests. The seniors will have the opportunity to talk with the college counselors from the Post High School Counseling Department. This is the second year of a two year trial for the test day. An assessment of the day will be presented to the Board in the spring. In the afternoon of the testing day, learning cohorts will meet. Mr. Dolinko inquired if the assessment presentation would be in time for the Board's decisions on the school calendar. Dr. Yonke noted that the school calendar will be voted on at the November meeting and the Test Day is included for next year. This, however, can be easily changed to a regular school day with approval of a revised calendar. The number of school days does not change. Mr. Sally also noted that this week New Trier will be hosting a group of superintendents from Minnesota who are interested in our mobile learning initiative. The visit is arranged through Apple.

Mr. Don Goers reported that there were no FOIA requests since the last Regular Board of Education meeting.

**B. New Course Proposals**

Dr. Yonke reviewed the lengthy process for the development of new course proposals which begins in the spring and early summer when teachers conduct studies and work on summer grants. In September, new course proposals are presented to the departments and Curriculum Council. She noted that Board approval of the new courses would occur at the November regular meeting.

Mr. Paul Sally described the new course proposals for the school year which are *Gourmet* in the Applied Arts Department and *Dance at Dawn* in the Kinetic Wellness Department. New courses for Summer

School include *Sports in American History* in the Social Studies Department and two travel opportunities, *Canyon Lands Ecology and Wilderness Experience* and *India Service Learning Experience*. Major revisions are planned for two science courses for the school year, *Environmental Geoscience Level 2* and *Level 3* at Winnetka and *Fundamentals of Biomechanics and Sports Medicine I & II*. Revisions are also included for *Public Speaking and Strategic Communications* in the Speech & Theatre Department. Mr. Sally noted the courses which will be renamed or reclassified for clarification purposes. Discussion followed as Mr. Sally, Dr. Yonke, and staff responded to questions and concerns by the Board. Issues of concern included the name change of IGSS Global Systems to IGSS Environmental Science, the costs involved in the summer travel opportunities, travel insurance, and class sizes. David Goodspeed of the Science Department gave an update report on the Ecology and Wilderness electives. Of particular concern to several Board members was the cost of the proposed service-learning trip to India. Athena Arvanitis, Director of Student Life and Summer School Coordinator, explained the process for estimating and pricing the travel programs and noted that most travel abroad programs do offer financial assistance to students. Mr. Sally stated that he would provide more information and context for these questions at the November meeting.

### **C. Class Size Report**

Dr. Yonke prefaced the Class Size report, produced by Mr. Sally and Mr. Ottaviano, by reviewing the statistics from last year and the changes in this year's numbers. Mr. Sally reported that the average class size has gone down to 22.5 from 22.9 last year. Noteworthy drops were also seen in the percentage of large classes, down to 0.5% from 1.5% and the percentage of small classes, currently at 6.8% as opposed to 8.2% last year. Mr. Sally spoke of the methodology used to plan the number of sections of each class while keeping class size and teacher fifths at reasonable levels. The report also includes information on the specific sections that are larger than the target range (30 and over) and those that are smaller than the target range (16 and under); lists of total enrollment by department; an analysis of the average number of scheduled periods per day per student; and lists of total enrollment, FTEs and average teacher loads in the non-traditional classroom areas. Board discussion followed with comments related to the improvements in class size since last year.

### **D. Benchmarking Consortium Report**

Dr. Yonke reported on the fall meeting of the Benchmarking Consortium which met in Palo Alto, California, on October 3-5. New Trier is one of six school districts from across the country to participate. All of the member schools are high performing suburban districts of medium size. While most are PreK-12, discussions often focus on high school issues. High school principals and technology directors were included to further expand discussions. Highlights from these fall meetings included a tour of Google headquarters, a panel discussion of university student life directors, and a survey of graduates administered by five of the six districts. Dr. Yonke noted that the Google tour was fascinating and presentations focused on how Google's successes in the workplace might transfer to schools and education. Workplace environment and increased opportunities for employees to collaborate were cited as areas of importance to Google that could also work well in an educational setting. Equally intriguing were the discussions with the university directors, who noted the area of difficulty for most high achieving students was the adjustment to college life. The graduate survey was administered to recent graduates of five of the six districts, who had experienced one year of college. The survey focused on students' perception of preparation for college academic work as well as their adjustment to college life and independent living. Information from New Trier graduates will be presented in the Profile Report at the November meeting; New Trier graduates indicated that they were very well prepared in English and Writing as well as in other academic areas. Student survey responses also concurred with the university directors points about the differences students experience as they transition to college life. Board members continued the discussion as Dr. Yonke responded to their comments and questions. Discussion encompassed unified districts; collaboration in the school and workplace; preparing students for the 21<sup>st</sup> century workplace; and school climate and culture.

## **VII. Administrative Items**

### **A. September Financial Reports**

Mr. Don Goers reviewed the quarterly reports which included Cash Flow Statements of the last three years, September's Financial Statement and Investment Report, as well as the Revenue, Expense and New Trier

Extension reports. Due to early receipt of tax revenues, the District's position looks very good, showing Operating Fund revenues at 42% after three months as compared to 3.18% during the same time last year. Revenue and expenses will balance out as the year progresses.

**B. Proposed 2012 Tax Levy**

Mr. Don Goers began with an update of the actual figures from the 2011 Agency Tax Rate Report from the County Clerk's Office. The total 2011 tax levy, excluding bond and interest was reduced \$572,434 as a result of the tax cap to an extension of \$87,650,966. However, the District was projecting a tax cap reduction of \$863,060 so the final tax extension will result in approximately \$290,000 more than was projected based on the additional tax revenue generated from new property. Actual new property was \$33.4 million compared to the projected amount of \$20 million. Mr. Goers noted an unanticipated 10% reduction in the multiplier, which is assigned by the Illinois Department of Revenue, negatively impacted the District's equalized assessed evaluation (EAV). This decrease in the EAV brought an increase in the projected tax rate from \$1.438 to \$1.611 for Operating Funds and from \$1.494 to \$1.674 overall. Mr. Goers then presented the proposed estimate of the 2012 Tax Levy which will primarily support the 2013-14 School Year Budget of \$91,606,400. The proposed 2012 Tax Levy is based on the Consumer Price Index from December 2011 of 3% with an adjustment for new property. Using 2011 as the basis for the 2012 Budget planning, Mr. Goers reviewed three options with variables in new property levels. He is recommending an estimated levy based on an increase of 3.0% plus an additional sum to capture tax revenues from new property, totaling \$91,606,400 excluding bond and interest, which is a 4.5% increase over last year's tax extension. However, he indicated that he is projecting that the tax cap will reduce the 2012 Levy Extension to \$90,610,900, representing a 3.38% increase over the 2011 Tax Extension. Although not required by the Truth in Taxation Act, since the Levy estimate is less than a 5% increase, a Public Hearing for the 2012 Tax Levy is recommended for the December 17, 2012 Regular Board meeting. Much Board discussion followed on the appropriate estimated formula to be used as determined by the estimated new property. Conversation ended with an agreement to use the estimate of \$80 million in new property for the estimated tax levy. Ms. Goldstein moved and Ms. Ducommun seconded the motion that the Board approve the 2012 Levy estimate of \$91,606,400 and that a Public Hearing be held at the December 17, 2012 regularly scheduled Board meeting. Upon a roll call vote being taken, the members voted as follows:

AYE: Mr. Fischer, Ms. Goldstein, Mr. Harris, Mr. Myefski, Ms. Ducommun, Mr. Dolinko

NAY: None

The motion passed unanimously.

**VIII. Consent Agenda**

- Bill List for the Period September 1-30, 2012
- Personnel Report
- Application for Recognition of Public Schools
- Residency Appeal (cancelled)

Dr. Yonke prefaced the Consent Agenda discussion with a notice that the Residency Appeal has been postponed to a future date. Mr. Dolinko asked if any Board member wished to remove any item for separate discussion. No one requested further discussion of any consent agenda items. Mr. Myefski moved that the Board approve the Consent Agenda items which include the Bill List for September 1-30, 2012 as presented, the Personnel Report as presented, and the Application for Recognition of Public Schools as presented. Mr. Fischer seconded the motion. Upon a roll call vote being taken, the members voted as follows:

AYE: Ms. Goldstein, Mr. Harris, Mr. Myefski, Ms. Ducommun, Mr. Fischer, Mr. Dolinko

NAY: None

The motion passed unanimously.

## **IX. Board Member Reports**

Mr. John Myefski reported for the **All School Forum** meeting he attended. Discussion centered on the data gathered from the Youth Risk Behavior survey conducted by the Student Services department every two years. Student stress was a significant issue and generated conversation on health and wellness. Mr. Myefski asked if the survey would be shared with the Board and indicated that one suggestion was to offer Health classes during each year instead of during only the first two. He noted that the **Technology Committee** meeting was very interesting as it reviewed the feedback from teachers about the iPad pilot program. He would like to see a presentation that would include information on what was and was not successful in the pilot. Mr. Myefski discussed the **Finance Committee** meeting and its discussion of student fees. He feels the need to bring the Student Fee discussion back to the Board to provide a direction for the Finance Committee. Much discussion followed on the role of the Finance Committee, the work to be done, changes to the student fees structure, and Board workshop meetings. The general consensus was that an open workshop meeting should be scheduled to discuss fees where background research will be presented for discussion. The meeting will include all constituent groups and will be included on the Board Requests for Staff Research. Mr. Myefski also reported for the **Facilities Steering Committee**, that the next step in the research of ADA accessibility issues will be to get an estimate for services from an architectural firm. The architect will provide conceptual designs for the ADA improvements suggested by the committee, as well as cost estimates of each project. Dr. Yonke noted that it is a request for an estimate of the cost of addressing the ADA issues in the Gates Gym, the Auditoriums, and the North Building at Winnetka.

Mr. Mac Harris related the discussions from the **Communications Committee**. The main focus was on the Board's Annual Report and finding ways to use the report as a tool to educate the community about New Trier.

Ms. Ducommun reported for the **Parents' Association** and praised the organization for all the work it does for the school. This year's communications work will focus on the Student Directory, E-news Communication, and an electronic version of the Parents Press and other publications. The Room Rep Handbook will also be worked on and updated.

Ms. Goldstein stated that the **NSSED Finance Committee** is debating between building a reserve fund for the District or addressing emergencies with a special assessment as needed. The **ECGC** (Ethical Conduct and Global Citizenship) committee has not met this month. They are however, sponsoring a film on November 6 called "Miss Representation," which is about how the media portrays differences in gender. Ms. Goldstein noted that the **Fine Arts Association** is working at the Lagniappe/Potpourri and *Laughing Stock* performances. In addition, the Coffee House Art Exhibit is scheduled for October 23 through November 16 and numerous instrumental and choral concerts are scheduled in November. To increase fundraising, they are planning an opening night reception on November 14 and an Alumni Concert for Thanksgiving 2013.

Mr. Fischer also attended the **All School Forum** discussions on the Youth Risk Behavior survey. He believes the results would be informative for parents and students to dispel misperceptions of school life and suggests sharing the information with them. He noted that the **New Trier Education Foundation** met and discussed the success of the fall Golf Outing as well as long range planning of fund raising options to replace the spring Alumni Event if it is held every other year in the future.

Mr. Dolinko added information about the **Finance Committee** related to the restructuring of the Facility Rental Fees to incorporate the new turf fields in Northfield. The fields are being rented out and are generating income for the District. The committee looked at the rental policy as well as the fee schedule for all rental spaces.

## **X. Board Members' Calendar of Events**

- Calendar of Events

Dr. Yonke reviewed significant dates in the next month which include the District Dialogue on Wednesday, October 17 at noon at Sidley & Austin in downtown Chicago for parents working downtown; Parent Teacher Conferences on November 7 and 8; the Fall Institute Day on November 9 (no school for students); and the next Board of Education meeting on November 19.

- Board Members' Request for Staff Research and Future Agenda Items

There were no additional requests for staff research or agenda items that were not previously mentioned

(student fees).

**XI. ADJOURNMENT**

Mr. Dolinko requested a motion to adjourn. Mr. Fischer moved that the Board adjourn the meeting. Mr. Myefski seconded the motion. Upon a voice vote being taken, all members indicated they were in favor.

The meeting adjourned at 10:28 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Lou Anne Kelly, Secretary

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Alan R. Dolinko, President