

## BOARD BRIEFS

*News from the New Trier Township High School District 203  
Board of Education Meeting  
February 18, 2020*

### Social-Emotional Learning Takes Central Role in *New Trier 2030*

Research shows that schools committed to developing students' social-emotional skills find positive outcomes, including an increased ability for students to manage stress and depression, better student attitudes about themselves and others, and improved academic performance. With that in mind, New Trier made the development of social-emotional learning skills a central goal in its new strategic plan, *New Trier 2030*.

Joanne Panopoulos, Assistant Superintendent for Special Education, updated the Board on the District's work on social-emotional learning (SEL) in the first year of *New Trier 2030* and shared a timeline for SEL strategies over the next several years.

Working from a model created by the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning ([CASEL](#)), New Trier has categorized social-emotional skills into five areas: self-awareness, self-management, responsible decision-making, relationship skills, and social awareness. A committee of 27 staff members representing all departments, support staff, and administration has been meeting monthly to create a comprehensive professional development plan for all staff to understand and build these skills.

Panopoulos said it was important to spend the first year of the strategic plan building SEL competency among adults in the school so they have a solid foundation upon which to plan curricular, instructional, and classroom practices to help develop these skills in students in the future. Professional development this school year has included a self-assessment in September, a November Institute Day with large group and breakout sessions, and department activities.

Starting next school year, the committee will likely propose that each department develop a goal for embedding SEL skill development in the classroom. Panopoulos said the committee would review these goals and make sure they complement each other and serve the greater goal of developing SEL skills in all students. In addition, New Trier along with its six sender school districts and the Northern Suburban Special Education District have announced a partnership with CASEL to integrate SEL work across the Township. The collaborative work will launch with a two-day Institute this June and extend to a Township-wide Institute Day in February 2021. Panopoulos' full report is here: <http://bit.ly/ntsel>

### *New Trier 2030* Updates: Leadership, Connection with Younger Families, Financial Communication

The 2019-2020 Annual Plan for *New Trier 2030* includes 11 strategies for achieving outcomes within the District's strategic planning frameworks. The Board received an update on progress toward three important strategies: identifying and developing leaders in the school, making stronger connections with families in the Township who have children younger than high school age, and presenting a clear and understandable view of District finances to a wide audience.

Principals Denise Dubravec and Paul Waechtler co-lead the committee overseeing the development of leadership goals within the strategic plan, including the creation of a cohort of aspiring faculty leaders. Guided by District documents such as the *Characteristics of Professional Practice for Leaders at New Trier*, this cohort has spent the school year exploring articles, videos, and case studies on topics such as leadership behaviors and theory, values-based leadership, authentic leadership, leading with a vision, and difficult conversations.

The leadership strategic planning committee also has recommended identifying the dispositions, concepts, and skills of student leadership as a research goal to shape future work on teaching leadership skills and providing even more leadership opportunities to students. Ideas for new student leadership development include an affinity group leadership strand and a student mental health board.

Within the Community Engagement, Partnerships, and Governance framework, a committee of students, faculty, staff, alumni, parents, and community leaders identified families with younger children as a key constituency to reach in the first year of *New Trier 2030*. Director of Communications Niki Dizon told the Board that the committee set a goal to help families make positive connections with their future high school before they begin the incoming student registration process in 8th grade.

One major strategy for achieving this goal was the creation of a publication targeted specifically at younger students and their parents, [\*Getting to Know New Trier High School\*](#), that focuses on the student experience - particularly how New Trier makes a big school seem small and the vast opportunities available for students to explore their interests and make friends. The committee is also researching existing opportunities for younger students to experience New Trier classes and activities with a goal to expand those opportunities in the future.

Chris Johnson, Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations, updated the Board on the financial communication strategy within the 2019-2020 Annual Plan for *New Trier 2030*. Johnson said that while the District provides an abundance of financial information on New Trier's website, the Finance Committee was charged with identifying how to present a brief, clear, and understandable overview of District finances to a broad spectrum of audiences.

The committee proposed a new way of presenting financial information within the Annual Report to the community, which will go out to all District households this month. The new communication includes quick budget takeaways, potential challenges facing the District, charts and graphics on actual revenues, expenditures, and New Trier's portion of a District resident's tax dollar, and a description of how tax dollars directly support students in and outside of the classroom. Johnson said the committee also has recommended a companion publication in the fall, once the budget is adopted, explaining how the budget supports students and strategic planning goals.

The full report on these three Annual Plan strategies is here: <http://bit.ly/nt2030feupdate>

### Other News from the Feb. 18 Meeting:

- Senior Sara Bunge from New Trier's Choir Opera performed a selection from "Jesus Christ Superstar," the spring musical that will mark the 100th anniversary of musical theatre performances at New Trier. In April 1920, the New Trier Music Department

mounted its first-ever theatrical musical production, Gilbert and Sullivan's "H. M. S. Pinafore." What followed has been an epic run of quality musical theatre that started the theatrical careers of thousands of students, as well as the professional careers of many including Ann-Margret, Liz Callaway, and Beck Bennett. "Jesus Christ Superstar" will run on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday, March 5-7 at 7 p.m., and Sunday, March 8 at 2 p.m. in the Gaffney Auditorium on the Winnetka Campus. Tickets are on sale now at <https://www.newtrier.k12.il.us/performingarts/>.

- The Health Services Department has put together a list of tips for students and staff to stay healthy during this cold and flu season. Tim Hayes, Assistant Superintendent for Student Services, noted that these tips include frequent hand washing, staying home when ill, covering coughs and sneezes, and regularly disinfecting surfaces. This same advice applies to all types of viruses, including COVID-19. The tips are available on the Health Services web page: <https://www.newtrier.k12.il.us/HealthServices/>
- The Board approved a maximum allocation of \$203,665 from the New Trier Scholarship Trust Fund to award scholarships to the Class of 2020. The Trust Fund was established in 1949 by the New Trier Parents' Association and residents of the Township for the purpose of providing college scholarships to New Trier students. It has since grown to include a number of community, alumni, memorial, and other scholarships and awards that help New Trier students pursue their post-high school goals. The annual allocation is based on the trailing average method, taking 6 percent of the trust's average total assets for the past four years to determine that year's allocation.

*The New Trier Board of Education generally meets on the third Monday of each month, with the business portion of the meeting beginning at 7 p.m. in Room C234 on the Northfield Campus, 7 Happ Road.*

*Full videos of Board meetings are available online at <https://nths.mediaspace.kaltura.com/category/BOARD+OF+EDUCATION/>*

*Information about Board of Education members, upcoming meetings, agendas, minutes, and other documents are available at <http://www.newtrier.k12.il.us/boardofeducation/>*