

BOARD BRIEFS

News from the New Trier Township High School District 203

Board of Education Meeting

January 21, 2020

District Offers Progress Report on First Year of *New Trier 2030*

Superintendent Paul Sally gave the Board a mid-year progress report on the inaugural year of the District's new strategic plan, *New Trier 2030*, outlining the measurable steps the school has taken to implement its first-year goals.

New Trier 2030 defines a plan for the District over the next decade and beyond, with the overarching vision of developing in every graduate "the skills and dispositions to lead meaningful, compassionate, and impactful lives." The plan identifies six frameworks that cover the work of the District as a whole: Intellectual Engagement, Growth, and Readiness; Student Personal Growth, Engagement, and Well-being; Culture, Climate, and Equity; Leadership Throughout the School; Community Engagement, Partnerships, and Governance; and Finance, Facilities, and Human Resources. Each year, the Board will approve an Annual Plan with specific outcomes for that year. The 2019-2020 plan is [here](#).

Sally told the Board that the District is on track to achieve its first-year goals, with the work divided into areas of action, professional learning, study, and research. A number of committees have been overseeing the District's work toward specific goals, and administrators have been working with students, staff, parents, and community members to implement the goals.

For example, the committee overseeing social-emotional skill professional development has offered numerous professional learning opportunities for all staff to understand the key elements of social and emotional learning: self-awareness, self-management, responsible decision-making, relationship skills, and social awareness. As staff develop greater understanding in these areas, they will move into concrete plans for implementing this skill development with students in and outside of the classroom.

Another committee has been meeting regularly throughout the year to define the Characteristics of a New Trier Graduate, a set of characteristics, competencies, skills, and dispositions New Trier students should possess to thrive in a rapidly changing world. A final document will be used across the school to design learning experiences and environments.

In Finance, Facilities, and Human Resources, committees have developed a 15-year facilities plan to prioritize work on both campuses and are working on easy-to-understand public documents about the District's budget to share with the community.

Every department and area of the school has created an equity goal, and the Equity Goals Committee is aligning that work across the District. For Leadership Across the School, the campus principals have engaged with faculty and staff to learn about different leadership styles and strategies. And in Community Engagement, Partnerships, and Governance, the District has created a new publication to connect with younger families and students - *Getting to Know New Trier High School* - meant to answer common questions and dispel myths about New Trier. The superintendent's full progress report can be found here: <http://bit.ly/nt2030update>.

PSAT/NMSQT to Move to Saturday Test Date Starting Next Year

Starting next year, New Trier juniors who wish to take the PSAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test will do so on a Saturday instead of during a school day.

Peter Tragos, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, told the Board that offering the optional test on a Saturday will save valuable instructional time and will assure students do not feel pressure to make up lost class time or assignments. This year, about half of the junior class opted to take the test during the first half of a regular school day.

New Trier used to offer the test only on a Saturday, then moved it into the school day at a time when the state required only one high school assessment, the ACT. The state now requires all high school students to take the SAT suite of assessments: the PSAT 8/9 freshman year, the PSAT 10 sophomore year, and the State SAT junior year. Given this change, students now have ample practice tests in school to prepare for the SAT. The additional required standardized testing has also reduced instructional time during a student's high school career. Moving the optional PSAT/NMSQT to a Saturday balances an opportunity for students who might qualify for scholarships with the desire to minimize standardized testing during school days.

Chimille Dillard, Director of Curriculum and Instruction, said parents of current sophomores will receive detailed information about the Saturday, Oct. 17, 2020 PSAT/NMSQT test date and registration instructions starting in May, and New Trier's testing website will include that information and an FAQ. New Trier athletic, activity, and performing arts sponsors have been asked not to schedule contests or performances on that date, if possible. In addition, New Trier will partner with Niles North High School so students who are unable to test on Saturday, October 17, 2020 can test at Niles North on Wednesday, October 14, 2020.

15-Year Facilities Plan Update

Chris Johnson, Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations, updated the Board on work toward the 15-year facilities plan, including completion of security projects at both campuses, planned work over the next two summers, and an analysis of options for academic, athletic, and kinetic wellness needs on the east side of the Winnetka Campus.

In Summer 2019, the District implemented security upgrades on both campuses, including a fencing and secure vestibule project at the Northfield Campus. That project is nearly complete, with both the vestibules and the gated fence now operational. Johnson told the Board the Village of Northfield recently approved signage to clearly identify the two secure entrances to the campus, and that will be installed in the spring.

Plans for this summer, which the Board approved in the fall, include the renovation of the Northfield Campus Library, renovations to older portions of the 3rd floor of the Winnetka Campus to improve classroom, department, and other spaces, mechanical projects, and roof replacements. The Facilities Steering Committee, which includes members of the administration, faculty, and community, is reviewing proposals for Summer 2021. These proposals include the continuation of third-floor renovations at the Winnetka Campus, Northfield Campus classroom and office enhancements, and more work on roofs and mechanical systems.

The District also has begun work on an analysis of the athletic, kinetic wellness, and academic needs on the east side of the Winnetka Campus, including possible options for the 1928 Gates Gymnasium and 1925 Boiler Plant, the oldest buildings on the campus. Members of the Facilities Steering Committee and other District representatives are touring nearby schools with the District's architects to assess ideas for a potential project at the Winnetka Campus. Johnson told the Board that any potential project would not include a bond referendum and that the Finance Committee is looking at funding models using existing and projected resources. The Facilities Steering Committee expects to make its recommendation in May, following a period of community engagement. Johnson's full report is here: <http://bit.ly/Jan20ntfacilities>.

District Begins 2020-2021 Budget Cycle

The District began its budget planning cycle for the 2020-2021 school year with updated five-year projections and parameters for the upcoming budget.

Chris Johnson, Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations, told the Board that the District is on pace to present an operating budget that is balanced on a consolidated basis, with a small operating surplus, which will be used for annual facilities work. The budget assumes flat state funding, salaries as calculated under existing contracts, and a slight decrease in student enrollment, among other factors.

The District's last operating fund referendum was 17 years ago, and the District expects to again present a balanced budget using existing resources at the July Board of Education meeting, assuming there are no major changes in revenue at the state or local level.

Local property taxes account for approximately 90 percent of New Trier High School's revenues. The 2019 tax levy, using the 2018 Consumer Price Index cap of 1.9 percent, in part funds the 2020-2021 budget. It is expected the New Trier portion of tax bills will rise on average by 1.9 percent, exclusive of taxes levied on new property. The state's

Property Tax Extension Limitation Act restricts school districts to increasing their levies by the Consumer Price Index or 5 percent, whichever is less. The full report is here: <http://bit.ly/nt2021budgetupdate>

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/>