

BOARD BRIEFS

*News from the New Trier Township High School District 203
Board of Education Meeting
July 13, 2020*

New Trier to 'Start Smart' for 2020-2021 School Year

New Trier has spent the summer preparing for a safe return to in-person learning for students and staff amid the uncertainty of the COVID-19 pandemic and the complexity of being a large high school with hundreds of curricular and extracurricular options, Superintendent Paul Sally said in presenting a potential school reopening plan to the Board.

The District's plan calls for New Trier to "start smart" by gradually allowing students into the two campuses to get used to new health and safety procedures and a blended way of teaching and learning. Sally said that if all goes well, the school hopes to eventually operate in a 50/50 hybrid learning environment, where students switch between having classes in school and remotely on a regular schedule, allowing the campuses to enforce social distancing and keep gatherings below state guidelines. He noted that this is still only an option, as circumstances in the state may change before the opening of school at the end of August.

When the hybrid schedule is fully implemented, students will be assigned to either Attendance Group 1 (in school on Tuesdays and Wednesdays) or Attendance Group 2 (in school on Thursdays and Fridays). Some students with IEPs and specialized learning needs will be placed in both groups to maximize in-school instruction. Families will be informed of their student's Attendance Group by August 15. Students in the same family will have the same attendance group. Trevian Days (most Mondays) will be all-remote to start.

In addition, all families will be offered the option at the beginning of each quarter to have students learn in an all-remote environment. The commitment to remote learning will be for the full quarter to allow the school to schedule accordingly. Sally said that New Trier learned much from the emergency remote learning plans teachers had to develop in the spring and will use what the district learned to offer a robust, engaging, and appropriately challenging remote experience in the 2020-2021 school year.

The District has continued to prepare for three learning scenarios for the upcoming school year: all-in-school, hybrid, and all-remote. Sally told the Board that having everyone in school to start is the least likely scenario, given the guidance for health, safety, and social distancing in place at this time. He also said that it is likely that the school may need to switch to all-remote for periods during the school year if state guidelines or local outbreaks of COVID-19 make that decision necessary. The District's goal has been to have students learning in school as often as possible while protecting the health and safety of students and staff.

The potential hybrid opening, coupled with the new [Trevian Block Schedule](#), gives New Trier the most flexibility to transition between remote and in-person learning as circumstances dictate, Sally said. More information can be found on [New Trier's Back to School web page](#), which is updated regularly, and in the [school reopening memo to the Board](#).

New Trier Gives Update on Summer Equity Work and Plans for 2020-2021

Culture, Climate, and Equity is one of the six frameworks that are the building blocks of New Trier's new strategic plan, *New Trier 2030*, and the Board received an update on the first year of work in that area as well as ongoing summer work to plan for the upcoming school year.

The core values of the Culture, Climate, and Equity framework emphasize the need to create an equitable, safe, inclusive, and welcoming climate that:

- creates the conditions that allow individuals to reach their full potential.
- is built upon respect and the appreciation of differences.
- holds individuals accountable for their actions and creates access to justice.

In the first year of *New Trier 2030*, each department and area of the school set a specific equity goal and formed an equity committee within their department, reporting to a school-wide Equity Goals Committee to review connections and progress toward those goals. For example, the English Department participated in a series of workshops on best practices in planning and executing lessons around texts that deal with the issues of race, gender, sexual orientation, and religion, while the Applied Arts department committed to bringing in professionals who are underrepresented in fields such as architecture and engineering so students could see themselves reflected in those fields.

Other equity work in the 2019-2020 school year included building stronger connections between administrators and student affinity groups, which are groups of students who share an identity and meet in a supportive environment with adult mentors. This year, New Trier created a coalition of these affinity groups to share experiences with each other and the school. In addition, New Trier expanded its promotion of TrevTips, an anonymous reporting site, for students to feel safe reporting incidents such as personal safety, hazing, harassment, bullying, or incidents of hate speech or bias.

The school also made strides toward the *New Trier 2030* goal to “recruit, develop and retain a diverse and exceptional faculty” by building recruiting relationships with collegiate institutions including Historically Black Colleges and Universities, expanding New Trier's use of professional networks, and examining screening processes and questions. Several professional and leadership development opportunities centered on issues of equity, and the school began training staff members in restorative justice practices. Finally, all students participated in a multi-day Power of Language lesson in their adviser rooms about the harm of the N-word and other slurs.

This summer, seven subcommittees of faculty, staff, and administrators are meeting to make recommendations for equity goals in the 2020-2021 school year. The committees focus on: climate and professional expectations, student voice and creating an inclusive community, curriculum and instruction, professional development, policy and other systemic practices, restorative practices and discipline, and student programming, awareness, and alternatives to seminar day. These committees are also meeting with students, alumni, parents, and community members who have expressed interest in sharing their experiences with New Trier. Their recommendations will be presented to the Board at its August meeting.

The full memo on New Trier's equity work can be found [here](#) or on the school's [Ongoing Commitment to Equity page](#).

Board Approves Updated Calendar for 2020-2021 School Year

The Board approved an updated calendar for the 2020-2021 school year to reflect a new mandated state holiday and state testing days, to align with the new Trevian Block Schedule and any potential hybrid learning scenario, and to incorporate District Planning Days to help New Trier faculty and staff collaborate and refine plans under any learning scenario.

Election Day, November 3, 2020 has been declared a state holiday, and schools cannot be in session. In addition, the Illinois State Board of Education has mandated seniors in the Class of 2021 to take a state SAT either in October or on a makeup day in April. As a result the new ISBE testing days are:

- October 14, 2020 – state testing day for Seniors; no school for Sophomores and Juniors; Trevian Day for Freshmen
- April 13, 2020 – state testing day for Sophomores and Juniors; no school for Seniors; Trevian Day for Freshmen
- April 14, 2020 – state testing day for Freshmen; Trevian Day for Sophomores, Juniors, and Seniors

The following days were not student attendance days on the original calendar but are now student attendance days in the revised calendar: October 9, 2020 and February 26, 2021 (pending an IHSA decision on the State Swim Meet, which was to be held at New Trier but may be moved).

The following days were student attendance days, but are no longer student attendance days in the revised calendar: August 31, 2020, October 5, 2020, November 3, 2020, February 22, 2021 (pending an IHSA State Swim Meet decision), March 8, 2021, and April 12, 2021.

A new [color-coded calendar](#) shows the type of schedule for each day - Blue, Green, or Trevian. In the event New Trier is operating in a hybrid learning scenario, the lighter blue/green indicates when Attendance Group 1 is in school and the darker blue/green indicates when Attendance Group 2 is in school.

Other News from the July 13 Meeting:

- The Board approved a tentative budget for fiscal year 2021 based on revenue and expenditure expectations for the upcoming year. Chris Johnson, Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations, told the Board that the tentative budget reflects significant challenges facing the District during the uncertain and unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic. The budget takes a conservative approach but has some unknowns, including potential contingency costs related to opening the school with many extra precautions to keep students and staff safe. More information on those costs will be available when the final budget is presented in September, Johnson said. The tentative operating budget is balanced and shows a projected surplus of \$296,507. The full memo can be found [here](#).
- Superintendent Paul Sally updated the Board on the progress made and programs/initiatives implemented in the first year of New Trier's new strategic plan, *New Trier 2030*. The District was able to achieve many of its 11 measurable goals for the year, though some were delayed due to the school closure and switch to remote teaching and learning. The full report can be found [here](#).

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.

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/>

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