

# BOARD BRIEFS

## *News from the New Trier Township High School District 203*

### *Board of Education Meeting*

*May 20, 2019*

#### [New Art Class a Collaboration Between Art, Special Education](#)

A new art class at New Trier, Art Essentials, is celebrating a successful first year in bringing students of all abilities together to create art while forming friendships and positive relationships.

Art Department Chair Alicia Landes told the Board about the development of this new course as a collaboration between the Art Department and the Educational Life Skills (ELS) program, which serves students with special needs. Landes first created such a course when she was Art Department Chair at Highland Park High School, inspired after attending a performance by New Trier's High Five Choir, a class that brings students of all abilities together to sing.

Landes joined with special education teacher Colleen Koulentes to create some pilot lessons for students enrolled in an existing freshman art course, Art Exploration. Following the success of those pilot lessons, a small cohort of teachers collaborated throughout the 2017-2018 school year to create the new course, which offers a highly differentiated curriculum to meet the needs of all students.

Students in general education serve as Peer Helpers for their classmates in the ELS program in addition to learning about and creating their own art. In a video shown at the Board meeting, several students talked about the relationships they've built and what they have learned by participating in the class. Freshman Merrick Kehoe told Board members that the class has helped inspire her interest in a career in special education.

Next year, Art Essentials will have one section at the Northfield Campus and two at the Winnetka Campus. Landes said she hopes to give a presentation about the course at the National Art Education Association's annual conference and to visit other schools interested in creating a similar course.

#### [Elective Departments to See Changes Starting in 2019-2020](#)

In an effort to enhance curricular and interdisciplinary opportunities for New Trier students, the District plans to reorganize some of its elective departments over the next few years.

Starting next school year, the three distinct academic strands of what is now the Media, Speech, and Theatre Department will join other departments that align with their curricula. Media will join the English Department to create a Media and Journalism Division. That division will open new opportunities for students studying print, digital, and broadcast journalism as well as radio and podcasting, mirroring the integrated approach to journalism in most higher education programs. In addition, teachers in Film Production and the Literature and Film strand in English will have the chance to collaborate.

Speech and Debate will join the Social Studies Department as its own division, enjoying the support and collaboration of a large academic department with similar civic and government content. Bringing together Speech and Debate teachers with Social Studies teachers creates the possibility of a future curriculum revision that meets the state's civics requirement to give students another option for fulfilling that requirement.

Theatre will merge with Music to form the Music and Theatre Department. The two departments already share performance spaces and many students, and this new department will continue the rich curricular and co-curricular opportunities they have shared for decades.

Over the course of the next two to three years, the Applied Arts and Business Departments will merge, recognizing the intersection of business, entrepreneurship, engineering, design, and family and consumer sciences. As part of this restructuring, Driver Education will also move from Applied Arts to Kinetic Wellness.

These elective department changes not only will benefit students, but also will allow for more professional development and collaboration among teachers by combining small departments with larger ones. Existing courses will continue to fulfill graduation requirements as they currently do.

## Providing Flood Relief for Winnetka Homeowners and New Trier's Duke Childs Field

The Village of Winnetka and New Trier facilities and athletics leaders gave a presentation to the Board of Education on a proposed intergovernmental agreement that would provide flood relief and allow the District to improve Duke Childs Field, the school's baseball and softball facility in Winnetka.

New Trier and the village have been working on the proposed agreement for more than a year. It would allow for the installation of an underground stormwater detention system below the school's fields at Willow and Hibbard roads, providing protection from a 50-year storm on the site and in surrounding areas. Currently the fields and surrounding neighborhoods suffer from regular flooding during heavy rains.

In coordination with the flood relief, New Trier is considering improvements that could be done simultaneously with the village improvements or at a later date that include

enhancements to both the baseball and softball fields, better parking, new changing and bathroom facilities, batting cages, and new safety netting. The proposed improvements would reconfigure the site to include two baseball and two softball fields, with baseball fields in the existing locations and a new softball field in the northeast corner. The varsity baseball field would receive an artificial turf infield, and the entire varsity softball field would be artificial turf.

The District has considered these improvements to Duke Childs Field for many years, but by coordinating them with the village's flood relief plan, New Trier anticipates a savings of approximately \$2.5 million in stormwater detention costs had the District sought to improve flooding at the site and construct the improvements independently. The Board will consider the timing and the cost of the proposed District improvements once the village establishes a start date for the flood relief project.

The New Trier Board is scheduled to vote on the proposed intergovernmental agreement at its June meeting. The village also needs to secure agreements with the Winnetka Park District and School District 36 and get approval from the Cook County Board and Army Corps of Engineers. Pending those approvals, work could begin in July 2019, 2020, 2021 or 2022. The Athletic Department will work closely with the village to minimize the impact on students if work moves forward.

## Board Approves 5-year Contract for Physical Plant Services Staff

The Board of Education has approved a 5-year contract with the Physical Plant Services Association that provides financial stability for the District while setting new hourly rates for the District's custodial, general maintenance, and skilled maintenance staff.

The contract provides the following total salary increases (base plus step): 3.06 percent in 2019-2020, 2.58 percent in 2020-2021, 2.49 percent in 2021-2022, 2.44 percent in 2022-2023, and 2.92 percent in 2023-2024.

Non-salary-related changes to the contract include benefits to both the District and employees, such as a formal job training program for new hires and adjustments to the tuition reimbursement program to provide the ability for a maintenance or HVAC class to be reimbursed.

*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/>