

# BOARD BRIEFS

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

### *Board of Education Meeting*

*November 18, 2019*

#### [New Trier Details Lessons Learned, Action Plans Following 11/8 Lockdown](#)

Superintendent Paul Sally gave a presentation to the Board detailing the timeline, issues identified, and plans for immediate action following the Winnetka Campus lockdown on Nov. 8 that was accidentally activated by a staff member.

Sally began by apologizing to students, parents, and staff for the stress and uncertainty caused during the lockdown, which lasted 17 minutes before it was lifted. He and Winnetka Police Chief Marc Hornstein also praised students and staff for their quick action. Sally noted many stories of staff gathering students from hallways and common areas, of students helping calm each other, and of students and staff following the training they had received during lockdown drills. The building was quiet and hallways clear in about a minute, the school's police officer was immediately in the hallways, and additional police were on site within three minutes.

The lockdown also identified a number of areas for further action by the school, including in training, communication, systems, and facilities. Sally outlined next steps in each of these areas.

The school is providing additional training to all staff on the lockdown protocols for classrooms, common areas, and hallways, as well as on the lockdown activation system to assure another accidental lockdown does not happen. Students and staff will be reviewing lockdown procedures in classrooms and other areas, including the cafeteria, library, bathrooms, and hallways. In addition, the school is enhancing its existing lockdown training for substitute teachers to make sure they carry keys and know what to do in any lockdown scenario.

Sally stated that communication to parents is a top priority, and that protocols established with police focus on keeping students safe and gathering information in the first minutes of any emergency. However, he noted that parents should not have to wait until the end of an emergency situation to receive official notification from the school as happened with this lockdown. New protocols will allow an off-site team to inform parents quickly via text and email shortly after a lockdown has been called. The timing of further updates via text, email, and on the school website and social media will depend on the situation. Sally said the school is committed to communicating with parents and other key groups as quickly as possible while making sure students are safe in emerging situations.

Systems that the school has identified for review include the locations and procedures for use of lockdown activators, evaluation of the school's recently upgraded wi-fi coverage on both campuses, and continued review of cellular access, which is dependent on carrier and can be poor in certain areas of the campuses. The school is also reassessing the ability of classroom doors to lock internally and re-auditing all spaces to make sure areas are clearly marked as "safe" or "move" in a lockdown. The school will determine if spaces that are not considered safe in a lockdown can be made so by additional window coverings or other changes.

Sally said that staff, students, and parents gave valuable feedback during an all-staff meeting on the Monday after the lockdown, via emails and calls, and during the processing of the event in adviser rooms and other classes. He thanked the entire New Trier community for supporting the school both during the incident and in its efforts to learn from it. Sally's full presentation can be found here: <http://bit.ly/ntsecuritypresentation>

## Student Survey Supports Community Approach to Health, Substance Use

Kinetic Wellness Department Chair Andy Butler and Student Assistance Program Coordinator Kristine Hummel presented the latest results of New Trier students' responses to the national Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) – including the influence of parental attitudes on student drug and alcohol use – and updated the Board on the work of the new North Shore Drug-Free Communities Coalition.

New Trier students have taken the Centers for Disease Control's YRBS for many years. It includes questions about drug and alcohol use, safety, mental health, sexual health, nutrition, and exercise, among other topics. Areas of concern for New Trier students include binge drinking, marijuana use, vaping, and stress.

New information this year on students' perceptions of their parents' attitudes toward substance use found substance use among students steadily rose based on perceived parental approval of alcohol, binge drinking, e-cigarettes, and marijuana. Students were roughly 4 times more likely to use a substance if they thought their parents approved of its use.

While reported binge drinking and marijuana use rates remained relatively unchanged between 2018 and 2019, New Trier students still engaged in those behaviors at a rate higher than the national average. Results on vaping were more encouraging, with reported use of e-cigarettes showing a significant drop between 2018 and 2019, even before the more recent news of vaping-related deaths.

Stress also remains a concern for New Trier students, who identified academics as the number one source of stress, followed by post-high school plans, relationships with friends, extracurricular commitments, family issues, and social media. Substance use, stress, and depression were also clearly connected in the results from the 2019 YRBS. Students who reported higher levels of stress were more likely to drink or use substances.

Tim Hayes, Assistant Superintendent for Student Services, noted that the legalization of recreational marijuana in Illinois raises new concerns about student marijuana use. Other states that have legalized recreational marijuana have seen increases in underage use, hospitalizations for overdose, and traffic accidents involving marijuana use.

New Trier, along with 47 other schools, organizations, and public agencies, recently established the North Shore Drug-Free Communities Coalition. The partnership is working toward submitting a Drug-free Communities Grant application that would allow for sustained, community-based work to address adolescent health issues. The coalition has identified several focus areas that are in alignment with New Trier's health work, including binge drinking, vaping, and marijuana use. Hayes' full report is here: <http://bit.ly/nthealthsurvey>

## Facilities Committee Explores Options for Athletic, KW Improvements

The Facilities Steering Committee is exploring options for improvements to athletic, kinetic wellness, and academic classroom spaces on the northeast portion of the Winnetka Campus that the district could achieve without the need for a bond referendum as a part of the District's 15-Year Facilities Plan.

Chris Johnson, Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations, updated the Board on the committee's ongoing work, including a needs assessment, analysis of facilities in other schools, community engagement, architectural assessment, and cost estimation.

An assessment of existing athletic and kinetic wellness facilities on the Winnetka Campus found that these facilities are undersized, antiquated, and do not accommodate the district's large and broad programs, limiting opportunities during the school day and reducing practice time and other opportunities after school.

The northeast portion of the Winnetka Campus includes the oldest existing buildings on the campus, the 1928 Gates Gymnasium and the 1925 Boiler Plant, which are expensive to maintain. While the District has maintained the gym to the best of its ability, the fixed nature of its space and its outdated mechanical systems mean that New Trier student-athletes are learning, practicing, and competing in facilities that do not provide the same opportunities for them as facilities in neighboring districts. The Boiler Plant is largely unused, heating only the Gates Gymnasium. The analysis will consider how improvements to this area of the campus can also improve instructional spaces for core academics.

The Facilities and Finance committees, along with architectural firms Wight & Company and Cashman Stahler Group, will look at different options to improve facilities on that portion of the campus. They plan to report back to the Board with a possible recommendation in May. The full report is here: <http://bit.ly/ntfacilities1119>

## Other News from the Nov. 18 Meeting:

- The Board approved an agreement with the New Trier Educational Foundation, which committed to providing at least \$150,000 toward the construction of a greenhouse on the Winnetka Campus south green roof to benefit students in the Educational Life Skills and Transition programs. The District's Naming Committee agreed to name the project "Sofi's Greenhouse" in honor of Sofi Troglia, a student in the Educational Life Skills program who passed away in December 2017 and whose family partnered with the Educational Foundation on the project. The estimated cost of the greenhouse is \$300,000, which includes the structure and equipment, plus accessibility enhancements to accommodate students who may be in wheelchairs or have other mobility concerns. To learn more about the project or to make a donation, click here: [igfn.us/f/2id7/n](http://igfn.us/f/2id7/n)
- The Board approved the District's 2019 tax levy, which was first presented at the October Board meeting and is the primary funding source for District programs and operations each year. The final levy includes a 1.9 percent increase, exclusive of taxes levied on new property. The full presentation can be found here: [bit.ly/taxlevynt](http://bit.ly/taxlevynt)

*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://nthsmediaspace.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/>*