

BOARD BRIEFS

News from the New Trier Township High School District 203

Board of Education Meeting

September 16, 2019

New Trier 2030: Equity Goals Initiative Update

Throughout the school year, New Trier will present reports to the Board of Education to keep the Board and the community informed about progress on the District's new strategic plan, *New Trier 2030*. Dr. Tim Hayes, Assistant Superintendent for Student Services, kicked off this series of reports with an update on the work of the Equity Goals Committee.

New Trier 2030 includes both Culture, Climate, and Equity and Student Personal Growth, Engagement, and Well-being as frameworks, or areas of focus, for the strategic plan. Hayes noted that data collected from students in recent years identified disparities in students' perception of safety, sense of belonging, and participation in school activities based on their racial and gender identities, sexual orientation, and special education status.

For example, student surveys such as the Comprehensive School Climate Inventory and Youth Risk Behavior Survey find that students who identify as Black or as LGBTQ report feeling less safe at New Trier and are more likely to say they have been bullied. New Trier's own extracurricular data show that students who are not White or Asian and those who have an Individualized Education Plan are less likely to participate in the extracurricular program.

The District's *New Trier 2030* equity work supports the idea that in order to learn effectively, students must feel safe at school, connected to peers and adults, and accepted as unique individuals. The 2019-2020 annual plan seeks to address some of the disparities in student experiences by having each department or area of the school establish an equity goal that relates to curriculum, instruction, or the classroom environment and seeks to positively impact the student experience.

Hayes presented examples of department equity goals. Many core academic departments will be participating in professional development in this first year to understand how to develop meaningful connections in lessons. Extracurricular departments will analyze participation data and develop recruitment strategies for students and staff. Some areas, such as the adviser program and the English Department, will look at the power of language and how to help students discuss the impact of slurs such as the n-word - both how and why such language is used in certain texts and what impact it can have when used in casual conversation.

In the spring, departments will report progress toward their goals. Hayes' full memo to the Board can be found here: <http://bit.ly/ntequitygoals>

Board Approves 2019-2020 Budget

The Board of Education approved a \$113 million budget for the 2019-2020 school year that supports New Trier's deep and broad curriculum, robust extracurricular program, and numerous student services while maintaining the District's financial health into the future.

Chris Johnson, Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations, told the Board that the District last went to voters for an operating rate referendum in 2003 and promised then that there would not be another referendum for five years. Because of careful financial management, the District has extended that commitment by a decade and does not anticipate another referendum in the foreseeable future. The budget approved by the Board is balanced, with a small surplus in operating funds.

Most of the District's revenues - 91 percent - come from local property taxes. The largest expense - 67 percent - is salaries. The community has consistently ranked recruiting and maintaining a high-quality teaching staff as a top priority. At New Trier, 94% of teachers have a master's degree or higher, far exceeding the 61% state average; 77% of teachers have 15 years or more of teaching experience.

Johnson noted that New Trier's budget process seeks to assure that taxpayer dollars are used to support opportunities for students and to keep the school as a valued hallmark of the community. He told the Board that because of the community's investment, New Trier can support an extracurricular program with more than 85 percent participation, a special education program serving more than 650 students, a unique adviser program, significant service opportunities for all students, an athletic program designed to encourage participation with multiple team levels, and a vast array of academic pathways that allow students to pursue their interests and passions.

The budget also includes funds for continued facility improvements, including security improvements this year at both campuses and planned summer 2020 renovations to classrooms on the 3rd floor of the Winnetka Campus and the Northfield Campus library, among other improvements. Johnson's full budget presentation can be found here: <http://bit.ly/ntbudget1920>

Other News from the Sept. 16 Meeting:

- The Board welcomed this year's foreign exchange students, who have already jumped into New Trier student life by joining clubs, sports teams, or taking new classes like early bird yoga. The students, placed by the exchange organization AFS and hosted by families in Wilmette, Glencoe, and Kenilworth, are: Amanda Lindholm, Finland; Clemence DeVienne, France; Camilla Petrelli, Italy; Julia Pfeffer, Brazil; and Marta Ravazzoni, Italy.

- Superintendent Paul Sally updated the Board on new Parent/Community Advisory Groups that will help the District gather feedback and share information with the community about *New Trier 2030*, the strategic plan. The groups, split into morning and evening sessions, will meet three times a year to review progress and provide input on the annual plan for *New Trier 2030*. Sally said the District will target a broad cross-section of the community by inviting members of various New Trier Township community organizations, businesses, service groups, and religious faiths as well as parents from within and outside of New Trier's parent organizations. A separate group, the All School Forum, will be used to gather student feedback about the strategic plan.

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/>