

# BOARD BRIEFS

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

### *Board of Education Meeting*

*September 21, 2020*

#### Webinar, Updates Planned as New Trier Prepares for In-Person Return

New Trier is gearing up for a potential gradual return to in-person instruction starting Oct. 6, and Superintendent Paul Sally told the Board that students, families, and staff must work together to manage expectations and practice safe habits that will help keep school open.

The Reopening Advisory Board, administration, and Board of Education will consider health and operational metrics this week in preparation for a move to Step 4 on the District's Reopening Ladder, which allows for 25 percent hybrid instruction. These metrics and thresholds are available on the District's [COVID-19 dashboard](#), which is updated regularly with area COVID-19 cases and averages, active COVID-19 cases among students and staff, and numbers of students and staff in quarantine. A decision on movement to Step 4 will be announced on Friday, Sept. 25.

New Trier already has successfully welcomed thousands of students to its campuses for athletics, extracurriculars, and freshman and sophomore tours. More recently, cohorts of students with priority needs began in-person instruction.

The potential reopening to 25 percent of students each day will require a significant amount of communication to families, students, and staff, Sally noted. This week parents will receive an email about logistics such as transportation and lunch service, and students and parents will learn about safety processes and assigned days on campus. Families of students who receive Special Education services will receive additional information. Next week, parents will have a chance to attend a reopening webinar on Sept. 30, and students will receive a video outlining safety procedures on each campus.

Families also should have realistic expectations about the gradual return to campus, Sally said. In this step of the reopening process, most students will be on campus for two consecutive days in a two-week period. This allows them an in-person Blue Day/Green Day pairing every other week. The school calendar has some non-standard weeks in the next few months that disrupt the regularity of in-person learning for each group to start. Assuming that New Trier moves to Step 4 and stays on that step through early November, the in-person instruction days by first letter of last name will be:

- A-E: Oct. 6, 7, 27, 28
- F-K: Oct. 20, 21; Nov. 2, 4\*

- L-Q: Oct. 8, 9, 22, 23
- R-Z: Oct. 15, 16, 29, 30

\*No in-person pairing Oct. 13-14 because of a mandated state testing day for seniors on Oct. 14; Nov. 3 is Election Day holiday

Some teachers will continue to teach remotely based on their accommodations, and in these cases students will have substitutes in the classroom to supervise and facilitate interactions with the remote teacher.

A return to in-person instruction and movement up the [Reopening Ladder](#) is possible only if COVID-19 cases for New Trier Township and the surrounding area remain low and only if families and students follow the school's health protocols, including social distancing, mask wearing, and quarantining. New Trier is relying on the entire community to practice safe habits, follow Illinois guidelines, and to be honest on the daily health screening. Students and staff must stay home if they are sick, have traveled to an at-risk state, or have participated in an activity or sport that violates Illinois health or gathering guidelines. Only by working together will the New Trier community be able to serve as a positive example about how to offer in-person instruction safely amid this ongoing pandemic.

The Board presentation can be found [here](#).

## Board Approves Final Budget for 2020-2021

The Board of Education approved a \$114.7 million budget for 2020-2021 that is balanced with the exception of a \$1 million contingency for COVID-19 related costs.

Associate Superintendent Chris Johnson told the Board that the budget will allow the District to continue its commitment to exceptional teaching and learning, student services, and extracurricular programs. The District is required to adopt a budget by Sept. 30 each year.

Despite the uncertainty surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic, the budget represents strong fiscal stewardship and will allow New Trier to directly support educational outcomes for students and key areas of the District's strategic plan, Johnson said. While the final numbers include a \$1 million contingency for COVID-19 costs related to areas such as supplies, operations, and staffing, Johnson explained that those costs could be partially offset by a reduction in spending in other areas, such as travel, and the district will continue to pursue available state and federal reimbursement for COVID expenses.

New Trier receives 90 percent of its revenue from local property taxes. Johnson noted that the District last asked residents for an operating rate referendum in 2003 and has extended its no-referendum commitment over a decade past the original date, with no plans for another referendum in the near future. State revenue increased slightly this year, and federal revenue increased by 13 percent.

Salaries and benefits are the largest costs for the district, accounting for 80 percent of all expenditures. The community has consistently supported hiring and maintaining high quality faculty and staff; 97 percent of teachers have master's degrees or higher, and 80 percent have achieved Master Teacher or Leader Teacher status.

The budget includes funds for portions of the 15-year facilities plan improvements completed in summer/fall 2020 and planned for the summer of 2021. These improvements have included additional and renovated classrooms, office spaces, and a renovation of the Northfield Campus Library along with necessary maintenance and repairs at both campuses.

The full budget 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 6:30 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/>*