

**NEW TRIER TOWNSHIP HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT 203**  
**SPECIAL WORKSHOP MEETING OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION**  
**June 30, 2014**  
**New Trier Township High School**  
**7 Happ Road, Room C234**  
**Northfield, IL 60093**

A **Special Workshop Meeting** of the Board of Education of New Trier Township High School District 203, Cook County, Illinois was held at New Trier High School – Northfield Campus, 7 Happ Road, and Room C234 on Monday, June 30, 2014 at 7:00 p.m.

**Members Present**

Mr. Alan R. Dolinko, President  
Mr. F. Malcolm Harris, Vice President  
Mr. Peter Fischer  
Ms. Lori Goldstein  
Mr. John Myefski  
Mr. Patrick O'Donoghue  
Mr. Greg Robitaille

**Administrators Present**

Dr. Linda L. Yonke, Superintendent  
Ms. Cheryl Witham, Assistant Superintendent  
for Finance & Operations  
Mr. Paul Sally, Assistant Superintendent  
for Curriculum & Instruction  
Mr. Timothy Hayes, Assistant Superintendent  
for Student Services  
Ms. Denise Hibbard, Principal, Winnetka Campus  
Mr. Paul Waechtler, Principal, Northfield Campus

**Also Present**

Ms. Nicole Dizon, Director of Communications; Ms. Ellen Ambuehl, Director of Special Education; Mr. George Sanders, Director of Human Resources; Mr. Christopher Wildman, Director of Business Services; Mr. Steve Linke, Plant Operations Manager for Winnetka Campus; Mr. Dave Conway, Plant Operations Manager for Northfield Campus; Mr. Rob Martinelli, Pepper Construction; Mr. Jay Ripsky, Pepper Construction; Mr. David Powell, Wight & Co.; Mr. Andy Joseph, Wight & Co.; Ms. Elizabeth Hennessy, Wm. Blair & Co.; Mr. Tom O'Donoghue; Ms. Karen Ann Cullotta, Chicago Tribune and members of the press and community.

**I. Call to Order – 7:00 p.m.**

Mr. Dolinko called the Special Meeting of the Board of Education to order at 7:00 p.m. Roll call was taken. All members were present. He outlined the agenda for the evening noting there will be public comment after the presentations for anyone interested in speaking.

**II. Community Engagement Update – Paul Hanley**

Dr. Linda Yonke introduced this agenda item by noting it was the recommendation of the Community Engagement Committee to conduct both a mail survey and a phone poll to assure that every resident had an opportunity to share feedback on the facilities proposal. The phone poll was conducted from June 9-11. The mail survey was dropped at post offices May 28 with a return deadline of June 16. Mr. Paul Hanley of George K. Baum & Company addressed the Board on the results of the mail survey and Mr. Jim Hobart of Public Opinion Strategies presented the results of the phone poll. Mr. Hanley began by reviewing the tasks of the Community Engagement Committee which were to identify key members of the community, create a Citizen's Task Force that would include diverse opinion, schedule community meetings and staff meetings and implement the two surveys. He spoke on the mail survey which was sent out to 23,592 residents. The response rate was 12.8% of those surveys sent out. This compares to a typical mail survey which yields response rates between 8 and 17 percent. He noted that the mail survey is not "scientific". However its importance is that it is likely the "most read" of the four mailings received by township residents. He reviewed the results of the public opinion survey and the information as reported by community, elementary districts, length of residency, parents with and without school age children, and District employee status. He also included respondents' grades for the School District, their level of awareness of facilities plans, priorities regarding parts of the proposal, and support for specific elements such as the use of District reserves and the size of the project. Mr. Hanley also noted that the survey asked if the resident would like additional information regarding New Trier's facility project. He said nine percent of respondents requested information and highlighted that these were thoughtful and insightful questions on the details of the project and phasing and its impact on students. He recommended responding to these, perhaps on the school website. In summary he noted that the District had the strongest positive grade response that he has seen in over twenty years and it indicates a trust in the institution.

Mr. Jim Hobart of Public Opinion Strategies presented the results of the phone poll that was conducted from a survey of 300 likely voters throughout the District from June 9-11, 2014. Mr. Hobart explained the criteria for the scientific poll based on the number of voters in the District and the methodology of the survey. Responding to a close simulation of the ballot language, residents were 64% in favor of the proposed bond measure; 26% were not in favor of it. He highlighted the fact that 44% of the 64 were definitely yes voters showing the intensity of their opinion. Nineteen percent were definitely no. Mr. Hobart continued to break down the survey results by political party, gender, age and District villages. The survey also recorded residents' comments on the proposal, asking what priorities they hold for the township's high school. Eighty-three percent of respondents held a consensus that the District was on the right track for the facilities project. The phone survey also revealed that 81% of residents grade the high school with a B or better, and 72% of those surveyed have confidence in how the District handles taxpayer dollars. Mr. Hobart concluded with a bottom line assessment showing that 1.) A significant majority support the bond measure and the intensity of that support is very high; 2.) Parents are strongly supportive of the measure, but support with non-parents is significantly softer. It is important to maintain the current level of support with non-parents; 3.) Voters give the District very high grades and they understand that the facilities at the school need improving; and 4.) Top messages focus on accessibility and maintaining the school's strong reputation (and consequently, property values). Board discussion followed as Board members queried Mr. Hanley and Mr. Hobart on the polls undecided category, the timing of a fall versus spring referendum; the strength of the 64% positive respondents and the comparison of these survey results compared to four years ago. Noting the results of both the mail and phone surveys, Mr. Hanley stated that combined together they were a positive message for the facilities project and referendum. Both Dr. Yonke and Mr. Dolinko noted the work will continue and addressing the no and undecided voters is a top priority. Mr. Hobart noted he would provide further answers to Mr. O'Donoghue's question and will respond to others as noted.

### **III. Facilities Steering Committee Update**

Dr. Yonke noted the Committee meetings with Wight & Co. and Pepper Constructions were making progress on programming, design, and cost estimating. The next Facilities Steering Committee meeting is on July 16. Information from that meeting will also be shared for discussion on July 24. Dr. Yonke asked about the possibility of splitting the July Board meeting due to the amount of business for that meeting and the interest in a Facilities update. She suggested the regular Board business be addressed on Monday, July 21 and have presentations by Wight & Co. and Pepper Construction on Thursday, July 24. Mr. Myefski and Mr. Dolinko would be absent on Monday, July 21 and Mr. Dolinko absent on July 24. Discussion followed and consensus agreed to Dr. Yonke's suggestion. It was noted that Board business could be conducted with the quorum of five members. Dr. Yonke noted Facility materials and documentation would be made available early for the July 24 Special Meeting.

### **IV. Construction Management Update – Pepper Construction**

*This Agenda Item was postponed to the July 24, 2014 Special Meeting.*

### **V. Public Comment**

Mr. Tom O'Donoghue addressed the Board to be mindful and sensitive to the residents who still know very little about the school and its facilities issues. He urged continued efforts to reach out to all residents with referendum information.

### **VI. Adjourn**

Mr. O'Donoghue moved to adjourn the Special Meeting at 9:00 p.m. Ms. Goldstein seconded the motion. All voted in favor (voice vote).

The meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Lou Anne Kelly, Secretary

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Alan R. Dolinko, President