

**NEW TRIER TOWNSHIP HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT 203
REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION**

February 19, 2019

**New Trier Township High School
7 Happ Road, Room C234
Northfield, IL 60093**

A **Regular 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, in Room C234 on Tuesday, February 19, 2019 at 7:00 p.m.

Members Present

Ms. Cathy Albrecht, Vice President
Mr. Keith Dronen
Ms. Carol Ducommun
Dr. Marc Glucksman
Ms. Lori Goldstein
Mr. Patrick O’Donoghue
Mr. Greg Robitaille, President

Administrators Present

Dr. Paul Sally, Superintendent
Dr. Timothy Hayes, Assistant Superintendent for Student Services
Mr. Christopher Johnson, Assistant Superintendent for Finance & Operations
Dr. Joanne Panopoulos, Assistant Superintendent for Special Education
Mr. Peter Tragos, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum & Instruction
Mr. Mike Lee – Assistant Principal for Administrative Services (Participated on behalf of Mrs. Denise Dubravec, Principal – Winnetka Campus)
Mr. Paul Waechtler, Principal – Northfield Campus

Also Present

Mr. Myron Spiwak, Director of Business Services; Mr. George Sanders, Director of Human Resources; Ms. Gail Gamrath, Assistant Principal of the Northfield Campus; Ms. Niki Dizon, Director of Communications; Ms. Athena Arvanitis, Assistant Principal for Student Programs and Operations; Dr. Chimille Dillard, Director of Curriculum and Instruction; Mr. Ed Zwirner, English Department Coordinator and New Trier Educational Association President-Elect; Mr. Paul Moretta, Athletic Department Coordinator and New Trier Educational Association President; Ms. Barbara Hayes, English Department Faculty; Ms. Kris Kelsh, Math Department Faculty; Ms. Stephanie Gamuaf, MCL Department Faculty; Ms. Kerri Simons, MCL Department Faculty; Ms. Sarah Axon, Special Education Department Faculty; Mr. Dan Rogan, Post-High School Counselor; Mr. Matt Temple, Music Department Faculty; Ms. Sara Chao, MCL Department Faculty; Ms. Laura Deutsch, Kinetic Wellness Department Faculty; Ms. Lucy Riner, Kinetic Wellness Department Faculty; Ms. Trish Sheridan, Junior Girls Adviser Chair; Ms. Anne James-Noonan, Performing Arts Coordinator; Mr. Steve Drappuch, Social Studies Department Faculty; Ms. Lindsey Ruston, Board of Education Secretary; Mr. Daniel Schaibly, Technology Department; Mr. Eric Johnson, Technology Department; and members of the press and community.

BUSINESS MEETING

I. CALL TO ORDER – 6:00 p.m. – Rm. C234

Mr. Robitaille called the Regular Meeting of February 19, 2019 of the Board of Education to order at 6:00 p.m. in Room C234. Roll call was taken and all members were present except for Ms. Goldstein. Mr. Robitaille asked for a motion to move to Closed Session. Ms. Ducommun moved that the Board of Education adjourns to closed session for the purpose of discussing the appointment, employment, compensation, discipline, performance, or dismissal of specific employees of the District or legal counsel for the District, including hearing testimony on a complaint lodged against an employee or against legal counsel for the District to determine its validity; and security procedures and the use of personnel and equipment to respond to an actual, a threatened, or a reasonably potential danger to the safety of employees, students, staff, the public, or public property. Dr. Glucksman seconded the motion. Upon a roll call vote being taken, the members voted as follows:

AYE: Mr. Dronen, Ms. Ducommun, Dr. Glucksman, Mr. O’Donoghue, Ms. Albrecht, Mr. Robitaille

NAY: none

ABSENT: Ms. Goldstein

The motion passed.

II. CLOSED SESSION – 6:00 p.m. – Rm. A201A

III. BUSINESS MEETING

Open Session – 7:00 p.m. – C234

Mr. Robitaille called to order the Open Session, Regular Business Meeting of the New Trier High School Board of Education of February 19, 2019, at 7:01 p.m. All members were present.

IV. Minutes

Mr. Robitaille asked for any comments or adjustments on the Minutes for the Regular Meeting on January 22, 2019 (open and closed session). There was one addition requested by Mr. Robitaille which Ms. Ruston included. Dr. Glucksman moved and Ms. Goldstein seconded, the motion to approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting of January 22, 2019 (open and closed session). Upon a roll call vote being taken, the members voted as follows:

AYE: Dr. Glucksman, Ms. Goldstein, Ms. Albrecht, Mr. Dronen, Mr. Robitaille

NAY: none

ABSTAIN: Ms. Ducommun and Mr. O'Donoghue

The motion passed.

V. Communications

Mr. Robitaille invited anyone from the audience who wished to address the Board to come forward and fill out a yellow communications request form from the back table. No one came forward to address the Board.

VI. Special Orders of Business

A. Choir-Opera Presentation

Ms. Anne James-Noonan, Performing Arts Coordinator and Director for the Choir-Opera musical, The Addams Family, introduced Ms. Izzy Vratimos, who is playing Wednesday in the production. Ms. Vratimos, is a senior and was accompanied by Ms. Celia Villacres of the Music Department. Ms. Vratimos sang “Pulled” from the musical. Ms. James-Noonan also noted that there are about 100 students involved in the production with 33 students in each cast. There is also a large stage crew and orchestra. The show will run March 7th through the 10th in the Gaffney Auditorium. Mr. Robitaille thanked Ms. Vratimos for her performance.

B. Report from Campus Principals

Mr. Paul Waechtler, Principal of the Northfield Campus, shared information and events happening at the freshman campus, which included:

- **Course requests for 2019-2020** Mr. Waechtler thanked Mr. Mike Lee, Assistant Principal for Administrative Services; Ms. Gail Gamrath, Assistant Principal at the Northfield Campus; Mr. Mark Howard, Freshman Boys Adviser Chair and Ms. Sue Ellen Haak, Freshman Girls Adviser Chair, as well as the advisers for their work with current students in preparing for next year.
- **Soft Lockdown** New Trier went into a soft lockdown on Thursday, February 14th as there was police activity at Loyola Academy when the fire alarm went off. Mr. Waechtler noted that during a soft lockdown, classes continue, but students and staff stay inside. Dr. Sally noted that the event lasted for about thirty minutes. This event reinforces Administrator thinking about security at the Northfield Campus which includes bringing forward to the Board items such as bringing the vestibules up to the same standard as at the Winnetka Campus. In addition, the Board will receive information on improving perimeter security in the coming months.

Mr. Waechtler noted that the school communicated with parents when the soft lockdown began, as well as, as when the school went back to normal operations after everything was cleared at Loyola. He noted that it is a good reminder that New Trier is always thinking about security and it continues to be discussed. Mr. Robitaille asked Mr. Waechtler to go through the sequence of events including when the notification of lockdown happened. Mr. Waechtler noted that he was in a committee meeting with Mrs. Dubravec when they were pulled from that meeting as it was occurring. They received notification that there was police activity at Loyola and the plan was to continue normal operations. The school resource officer, Mr. Steve Malinowski, was informed that the fire alarm went off at Loyola, and at that time, New Trier went into a soft lockdown. At that point, Ms. Gail Gamrath made an announcement as a passing period began. Faculty did a wonderful job ushering students back into the buildings. Dr. Sally expressed that at no time was the school in any danger, that the situation at Loyola resolved itself, and these actions are the precautions we must take. Mr. Waechtler concurred and noted it was a good exercise for all involved. Ms. Ducommun asked if students knew how to navigate the school from the

inside. Mr. Waechtler commented that they did, on the first floor, one can circumnavigate the whole school, while the third floor is a horse-shoe shape.

- **Incoming Freshmen Pilot Program** Mr. Waechtler then highlighted the work that Ms. Lori Worth, 8th grade placement coordinator and Ms. Gamrath have been doing with the pilot program for incoming freshmen. The pilot took place at Sunset Ridge and Central School. Parents and students had a 15-minute conference during which the incoming freshman registered for classes. It was very well received by families. Feedback from each sender school has been positive as well. Mr. Waechtler worked a 3-hour session and mentioned that it allowed for New Trier staff to personally counsel families. Parents noted that they went from anxious to excited about New Trier. Ms. Gamrath has also sent a survey to parents, that feedback will be shared once it is received. Dr. Sally noted that the next step is to scale it up to include the entire freshman class next year. He also thanked Ms. Gamrath, Ms. Worth and Mr. Waechtler.

Ms. Denise Dubravec, Principal for the Winnetka Campus, was unable to attend the meeting due to illness. In her place, Mr. Mike Lee, Assistant Principal for Administrative Services at the Winnetka Campus, shared the following student events and program updates from the Winnetka Campus:

- **Course Registration** – Mr. Lee thanked those who helped with class registration, including department leaders and advisers. Total registrations are three percent higher this year over last year in terms of total registrations.
- **Peer Helping Club -Valentine Blood Drive** - The students and staff helped save 432 lives through their donations. Thank you to sponsors Ms. Sarah Fergus, Special Education department faculty and Ms. Kate Kalnes, Kinetic Wellness faculty, and the club.
- **Girls Gymnastics** - The Girls Gymnastics team finished 2nd in the state and had a fabulous team competition on Friday that propelled them through individuals on Saturday. This is only the second time the team has taken a top finish in the state.
- **Special Olympics** - The Special Olympics basketball team finished their winter basketball game this weekend at Maine West. The students did an amazing job and are great role models for sportsmanship on and off the court. There is nothing like this program and the team is so appreciative of all the support they receive from the staff, students and families. A big thank you to our student helpers, which included Ms. Emily Waechtler, Mr. Waechtler's daughter. The team sponsors are Ms. Kay Pothast, Kinetic Wellness department faculty, Ms. Mary Beth Barrett, Science department faculty and Mr. Marty Laffey, Math department faculty.
- **State Boys Swim Meet** - The State Boys Swim meet will be held this weekend at the Winnetka campus.
- **All-School Forum** - At the most recent All-School forum, the group discussed the topic of 'the value of failure'. Last spring a sophomore student, Ms. Alex Rubinstein, shared with Ms. Dubravec, a project that she wanted to do on failure. By the fall, Ms. Rubinstein developed a mural that was placed in the concourse about the idea of failure and interviewed alumni and current students. She was invited to the meeting and her project was used to springboard the conversation on the value of failure. There were many take away from the students' perspective such as, how do we guide students through failure, how does one find other opportunities elsewhere, how the way stress is talked about could contribute to more stress, and enforcing that the journey of hard work is often times more valuable than the outcome itself. There is a true value to failure. Mr. Dronen will share more about this in his report.

Dr. Tim Hayes, Assistant Superintendent for Student Services, shared that on Wednesday, February 13th, New Trier hosted the third annual Adolescent Health Summit. New Trier welcomed 80 mental health professionals, educators and law enforcement officers. The group spent the day talking through adolescent health issues and focused on four issues: understanding the prevalence of vaping, looking at social media and adolescent development, racial equity work and well-being and finally, motivational interviewing, which is a counseling technique that is helpful in assisting students to modify their behavior. The Summit was successful and has received wonderful praise and is something that is done as members of the Crisis Response Network of the North Shore, which is one of New Trier's community partners.

Mr. Peter Tragos, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, noted that on Tuesday, February 12th and Wednesday, February 13th, New Trier hosted the Regional Office of Education (ROE) for a compliance visit, which occurs every four years. The ROE, on behalf of the Illinois State Board of Education, is on-site examining documents and materials that the Curriculum and Instruction department has gathered to ensure that New Trier is in compliance with state statutes, laws and other requirements. It is a time-intensive process to prepare, areas reviewed included students, staff and personnel, policy and governance, health, life safety and instructional programs. Mr. Tragos recognized his administrative assistant, Ms. Olivia Koppmann, who did a terrific job with all of the work needed for this visit. He also thanked Ms. Lindsey Ruston, Administrative Assistant to the Superintendent and

Secretary to the Board of Education, for assisting Ms. Koppmann as Ms. Ruston had been through the last compliance visit. He also went on to thank department chairs and coordinators, Mr. George Sanders, Director of Human Resources and his office, the student services department and the special education department. The visit went well with Regional Superintendent Mr. Rich Duran. He was impressed with the preparation, materials and the work that is being done at New Trier. The school is waiting on their final written report, but from what Mr. Tragos understands, the District passed the audit. There are a couple of areas that New Trier will need to improve on, but they are relatively minor.

FOIA Report

Mr. Chris Johnson, Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations, noted that there was one FOIA request received since the last Board of Education Regular Meeting. The request asked for information about the school's policies on bullying. The request has been closed.

C. Student Well-being Report

Dr. Tim Hayes, Assistant Superintendent for Student Services, presented the Student Well-being Report. One set of important data used in this report is the results of the Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS). The survey has been given every other year since 2009 with Dr. Hayes reporting on it as a standalone report. With the creation of New Trier 2030 and the Student Personal Growth, Engagement, and Well-being Framework, longstanding health goals will be incorporated. The YRBS results will be one set of data that will be used to measure progress towards those goals. This survey has been given during even years at New Trier and was developed by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC). The CDC gives the survey every other year on odd years, but due to the time it takes to publish their results, New Trier ends up receiving the odd year results at the same time it's even year results are ready. This allows the school to compare the data at the same time. The survey is given during March through all Kinetic Wellness classes. New Trier has a high response rate, with 3,209 students participating last year.

Over the summer, the data is analyzed for any positive health trends, as well as, areas of concern. The top three areas of positive health trends were safety, physical health and students accessing support when they are struggling. Also identified were three areas of concern, the first being stress, both external, such as attending a high performing school like New Trier and internal, which can be compounded by issues going on in their personal lives, all of which can lead to anxiety and depression. The second area, which has been a concern for some time, is binge drinking. While the national trend has been going down, New Trier has been trending up. Work to combat this problem has centered around evidence-based health curriculum and time spent talking with parents about the dangers of binge drinking to have a consistent message both at school and at home. The final area of concern is weight management. The number of students that are unhappy with their weight, while it is not a large percentage, many of those who are, are choosing diet pills or other harmful strategies versus a healthy diet and exercising.

Next steps include administering the YRBS again this year so the District has baseline data that will match the beginning of the strategic plan. This means that the data will be collected in the same year as the national data and the school will have to wait about eight months to receive that data, but that will not stop the District from looking at trends and moving forward. This past year, work has been done around debunking post-high school myths that may be contributing to students' sense of stress. Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) skill development is part of the strategic plan and research shows that schools that focus on SEL skill development have positive impacts on many things including students' feelings of stress and anxiety. The health curriculum will continue to be reviewed annually to make sure the most relevant information is being taught to students. The adolescent health summit, which Dr. Hayes spoke about earlier in the meeting, is a community partnership that is helping the school to be connected to those services that families and students are using in the community.

Finally, New Trier along with several schools and mental health agencies, including Loyola Academy, have established the North Shore Coalition for Drug-Free Communities. Not only is this a good opportunity to collaborate around health issues across the community, but is the first step in accessing federal grant money that would be used to support the work that needs to be done on vaping and binge drinking. These grants are offered to communities like New Trier's because they are shown to be effective as students receive a consistent message across the community – in school, at local businesses they visit, through community organizations and support through township and village governments. This consistent message has a positive impact on students' health behaviors. Dr. Hayes then offered to answer any questions that the Board might have.

Mr. Dronen noted that a third of students said they are receiving treatment for stress, anxiety and depression in the past twelve months, he inquired if that number had gone up in the last year. Dr. Hayes responded that it has remained

consistent, with communities similar to New Trier reporting the same observations about their students. Mr. Dronen said that this was not necessarily an issue as it means that if a student has a concern, they are talking with their health professional and there should not be a stigma around that. Next, Mr. Dronen inquired about the numbers within New Trier who are receiving help and if the school is reaching everyone that it can. Dr. Hayes noted that there are students who report being anxious or depressed who are not connected to resources inside or outside the school. Work is ongoing to identify those students and throughout the course of a school year, thirty to forty students will be referred to the Social Work department for services. Staff have received Question, Persuade, Refer (QPR) training, one goal of that training was to make sure that all adults in the building are aware of the signs that they might receive from a student that indicates the student needs support. Dr. Hayes noted that he would like those numbers to match 100% as there is no stigma in getting help when someone needs it. Mr. Dronen commented that at an All-School Forum meeting that students noted a stigma among New Trier students if they seek that help. It is one thing to identify the students, but the next step is if will those students seek help. He wondered if there is a stigma amongst students regarding mental health care or social work. Dr. Hayes stated that unfortunately this is a reflection of a national stigma regarding mental health and for some students and families reaching out for help is seen negatively or as a sign of weakness. He noted that the school is trying to change that perception as many people need help at certain points in their lives, especially during adolescence and in a community like New Trier where there is a lot of pressure to succeed. Dr. Hayes said that the community does have many resources both organizationally as well as individual practices and this particular group reports that they are seeing New Trier students. He suggested using social marketing as a way to reach students to dispel the stigma attached to reaching out for help. Mr. Dronen then commented about the binge drinking portion of the report suggesting that the community as a whole needs to address this issue, not just the school. He noted that colleges and universities struggle with the same issue. Dr. Hayes concurred, adding that when asking university deans what they think New Trier should be doing to better prepare students for attending college, the response at the top of the list is to help students make better and healthier choices around alcohol.

Dr. Glucksman inquired how dynamic is it to revise the health curriculum to fit current trends. Dr. Hayes responded that it is standard practice once the YRBS results are received. The Kinetic Wellness department chair sits on the committee that reviews the data over the summer and then reconvenes the course committees as the school year begins to start that revision process. One frustration is that it takes time to measure the change. In the years where the YRBS is not administered, the Kinetic Wellness department continues to explore topics where there is new information and support or even what is being heard from students in terms of what they may be confused about or misunderstand. This work also carries over to the adviser program, for instance discussion about making healthy choices prior to a big dance.

Ms. Goldstein commented that high school students are not of legal age therefore they are getting alcohol from someone, usually parents, who believe it is a rite of passage or to get them ready for college. Dr. Hayes noted that in looking at the national statistics for binge drinking, a community like New Trier may be predisposed to this issue as binge drinking is more prevalent among suburban, affluent communities that are predominantly white and college going. Dr. Hayes believes that there is a cultural element that contributes to the idea that students have that they should engage in this type of behavior. While students do seem to understand the dangers around binge drinking, a cultural change is needed around their beliefs on it.

Ms. Ducommun is also concerned about the binge drinking numbers and noted that the past two studies are where the numbers have jumped dramatically when compared to the national average. Ms. Ducommun is interested in parsing the demographics and agrees with the cultural predisposition and went on to share an anecdote. She noted that the group, Mothers Against Drunk Driving, morphed into what is currently the Family Action Network (FAN) which is a very effective group. She encouraged not only community coalitions, but also engaging parents in discussion around this topic. Ms. Ducommun highlighted the statistic that over 30% of New Trier students binge drink in a 30-day period. Dr. Sally noted that this is not dissimilar to what other area schools are experiencing. He went on to stress the importance of the partnership between the community and parents. He spoke to one myth, among many, that parents allow their children to drink as a way to prepare them for college. Dr. Sally highlighted that for an affluent community like New Trier's, having access to Uber and Lyft has impacted this as well. While companies like those have helped to decrease drunk driving, an affluent community has access to those resources. Dr. Hayes talked further about the studies that Dr. Sally mentioned in regards to the exposure approach to alcohol while in high school. He noted those students are more likely to have difficulty with alcohol later in life compared to those parents who hold a firm boundary on not drinking, even when a child may violate that rule, it is the consistent message that is important. An important topic to discuss with parents is that young people will one day be old enough to drink and the goal is to have a healthy relationship with alcohol. Ms. Ducommun then shared an additional anecdote. She also highlighted

from the report her concerns about post-high school stress and believes it has gotten worse due to several factors. She has heard from parent groups that students are so concerned with making the right choice. Ms. Ducommun encouraged sharing examples with students of choices that other students have made where that choice did not lead to a student getting into the college of their choice, but understanding that life can still be ok even with these stressors. Ms. Ducommun commended Dr. Hayes for cross tabulating the data around sleep, particularly the impact of stress and sleep. She encouraged getting this message out to parents and students that if one is able to get more sleep, a person is usually able to deal better with stressors.

Discussion then focused on a question asked by Mr. O'Donoghue. He inquired if New Trier students were engaging in risky behaviors more often than the national averages. While that data is not available, Dr. Sally encouraged Dr. Hayes to share stories from students who sat on a panel during the health summit, there were two students from New Trier and three students from Loyola Academy. The students shared that while their friends are trying to stop vaping, they are turning to other ways to self-medicate to deal with stress. The panel challenged the professionals at the summit to help them find better ways to manage stress. Discussion then centered around national data. Mr. O'Donoghue went on to say that he does not want the data to be perceived that New Trier students are engaging in risky behaviors much more than the national average. While students are in one area, at this time, there is nothing to show that that is the case in regards to all risky behaviors. Dr. Hayes emphasized the importance of recognizing that this community is a very healthy, safe place to raise children and send them to high school. There are many health risks that New Trier students do not have to worry about. Dr. Sally interjected that risky behavior looks different in different communities. Discussion then continued.

Ms. Albrecht noted that in past reports, the percentage of students engaging in risky behaviors would increase from freshmen year to senior year and wondered if that was still the case. Dr. Hayes confirmed that was still the case. He noted that, for binge drinking, freshmen and sophomores were well below the national average, juniors were similar to the national average with seniors increasing above the average. Ms. Albrecht then commented that typically the main unit on alcohol was taught during sophomore year, she inquired if this was still happening. Dr. Hayes stated that some of the health curriculum has shifted to Kinetic Wellness classes during junior and senior years where students are more likely to engage in this behavior. This same approach would apply to information discussed in adviser room. Discussion continued about the timeline of when information is provided to students and examples of what is covered with students. Ms. Albrecht also noted the importance of reaching parents on this topic. She then highlighted the anecdotes about those students who change colleges after their first year, and thought it is important for students to know that it is acceptable to change schools. Dr. Hayes concurred and suggested that changing the script on the post-high school experience so it is more positive and students feel more in control might help relieve some of the stress that students feel regarding the process.

Mr. Robitaille noted the importance of the report and thanked Dr. Hayes for his work on it.

D. Remote Learning Presentation

Mr. Peter Tragos, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, presented about Remote Learning. Prior to Mr. Tragos' presentation, Dr. Sally shared a few events that have led to the implementation of remote learning days. The first being the number of snow and cold days that have needed to be taken this year. The second were changes in the school code last fall that now allow for remote learning days. On January 30th and 31st, many schools instituted remote learning days, however, at that time, the District did not feel it was ready to offer an authentic experience for students and teachers. Due to the days that need to be made up, Dr. Sally discussed the changes to the remaining 18-19 school year. The last day of school for students will be Thursday, June 13th, while the last day for teachers will be Friday, June 14th.

Mr. Tragos went on to give more details in regards to the planning and implementation of remote learning days. He too noted that many peer schools, as well as some within the township, moved forward with these days at the end of January, but that New Trier felt it needed more time to plan. Mr. Tragos formed a representative committee with a liaison from each department and in early February each department engaged in a conversation around remote learning including what teachers would do and how they would engage students. The guiding question of this work is, "what types of remote learning activities would be relevant, meaningful, and manageable for students and teachers?" The purpose of the committee is to put together a pilot for the winter of 2019, if needed, and around the aforementioned question, develop a set of guidelines for teachers and students with the idea of building a system and a structure that ensures consistency of experience and expectations, while allowing departments to fill in what they need to continue learning. Teachers, when asked, what they might do for instruction on this type of day responded

with creative and thoughtful ideas. Mr. Tragos shared some of those examples, many involving existing technology tools in new and novel ways. From this, it is up to departments to determine what is a relevant, meaningful and manageable learning experience, while recognizing that during these weather events, students may have responsibilities at home as well. The committee's next task is to strike a balance between these. Mr. Tragos then opened up the presentation to any questions.

Mr. O'Donoghue mentioned the five-hour seat time required for a regular school day and wondered if the same amount of time applied to these remote learning days. Mr. Tragos responded that last fall, the state law changed and it is now up to individual school districts to define a school day as they saw fit; no longer is it required to have five hours of seat time to count as an instructional day. Conversation continued between Mr. O'Donoghue and Mr. Tragos around this topic.

Mr. Robitaille commented that he was trying to connect the thought that the District would like to try this at the next opportunity, but is still trying to figure out how to execute and deliver this type of day. Mr. Tragos responded that the committee is one meeting away from completion on consistent guidelines and expectations, which departments will use to determine the more technical pieces of these days, but the content and curriculum is developed and ready for delivery.

Dr. Glucksman shared that this is the way a lot of learning occurs. He also mentioned that some of the sender schools have already tried this and Mr. Tragos confirmed that three of the sender districts experimented with this previously.

Mr. Dronen noted that the law is currently under review and asked Mr. Tragos to discuss this further. Mr. Tragos shared the legislative steps that have taken place. He does not anticipate a full return to the required five-hour seat time, but rather amendments for remote learning to facilitate these types of days. Mr. Dronen then inquired if this was a good thing and both Mr. Tragos and Dr. Sally responded that it was, with Dr. Sally noting that the benefit of the flexibility the revised law allowed school districts in dealing with cold and snow days. The state has received a lot of feedback encouraging them to not return to the five-hour seat time requirement as it was previously defined. He believes compromises are currently being worked on. Mr. Dronen asked if New Trier has contacted the state legislators in regards to this and Dr. Sally said the District has spoken with them. Discussion then continued around more specific details of the current law. Conversation then led to virtual classes to which Dr. Sally noted that New Trier believes students need to be in school in front of teachers. Remote learning days would apply to emergency days or cold and snow days as a way to keep learning moving forward as well as the flexibility to experiment and innovate with creating different types of schedules for students.

Ms. Albrecht mentioned that she thought this would be of benefit to those parents who may not be able to be home on a snow day as it does give some structure to their child's day. She also noted that students should know what is expected of them and how to access it while making sure the workload is consistent for all students.

E. New Trier 2030 Update

Dr. Sally gave the Board an update on the strategic plan, New Trier 2030, noting that a more significant update will be provided to the Board at the March meeting. At that time, Dr. Sally plans to speak about the work on the strategies for the 2019-2020 annual plan. After the Board's approval at the January Board meeting, Dr. Sally engaged faculty at the staff meetings. Faculty was informed that committees would be forming soon around the annual strategies and how the District will work on them. There are many layers to this work, such as what group should do the work or what group should review it. In development, is a chart that looks at all the different areas that are impacted, especially the classroom and what a teacher may need to do in response to the strategic plan, what type of meetings departments may need to have, how the technology department supports the plan, how does the adviser program come into play, as well as, administrator time to oversee the whole process. Each area has its own column to better understand the demands, so that the plan can be achieved and successful in the first year. There are other groups that need to be looked at to determine how they will be involved, such as the community, parents, students and the Board. Each area of the school needs to be mapped out, with the first column in the chart being the classroom. The school will want to know how this will impact not only the classroom, but teachers and those staff not in the classroom. All of this will be presented at the March Board meeting in draft form, then in April, the Board will be able to approve the plan for 2019-2020, so that the school can move forward with planning prior to the summer, especially so that summer grants can be put into place to start work on the various initiatives.

VII. Administrative Items

A. Treasurer's Report for January 2019

Mr. Chris Johnson presented the January 2019 Treasurer's Report. The Finance Committee reviewed and recommended several changes to the report, which are being presented this month. The Cash and Investments in Summary is now split into two pages. The first has district accounts, which are comprised of the education, operation and maintenance, debt service, transportation, IMRF, capital projects, and working cash funds. The second has custodial (non-district) accounts, which include employee flex funds and student activity/convenience accounts. The committee thought that separating these pages would make it easier to understand how these types of funds are different and then tie them to the monthly financial report. This month, the District cash and investments totaled \$90,636,332. The weighted portfolio yield is 2.2% for PMA and 2.17% for other investments. Non district accounts totaled \$2,646,036. January saw the beginning of tax payments for the 2018 levy, with more expected this month. It is typically a low month for cash balances, shown on the Cash Flow Summary chart, as the school year is in full swing, with many expenditures occurring. The District is in a gap between tax payments with those payments resuming in earnest in February. He also noted that on the Cash Flow Summary chart that the working cash fund balance represents funds that can be moved temporarily or permanently, and is now classified as unrestricted. It was previously backed out of the total and listed as a restricted fund balance.

B. Financial Reports for January 2019

Mr. Johnson reviewed the Financial Reports for January 2019. Operating revenue was \$53,533,587 for the first seven months, or 24.97% lower compared to last year. He reminded the Board that the District received over \$24 million in tax distributions in January 2018, as many taxpayers rushed to prepay their taxes due to the change in the tax law. The District is already seeing tax payments come in and it will take several months to even this variance out. Other Local Sources remain higher due to recognition of Summer School and transportation fees in October, which are not booked until February. Interest income continues to outpace last year's receipts. The budget has a 3.01% increase in operating revenue for the year. Operating expenditures were \$54,218,922 through January, or 2.02% higher than last year's amount. Exclusive of the interfund transfers, the expenditures were slightly higher at 2.90%. The budget for operating expenditures is 2.80% higher than last fiscal year. One change to this report is with an accrual adjustment on the "Monthly Financial Report." This reflects accrued but not paid expenditures, and allows the reader to connect the Treasurer's Report to the Monthly Financial Report. The District wants to provide better understanding regarding its cash balance on the Treasurer's Report and how it is connected to balances on the Monthly Financial Report. At times, expenses are accrued in a previous month such as payroll, but the payment is not actually made until the following month, which is the largest cause of that difference. Mr. Johnson thanked the Finance Committee for their help with these changes.

Mr. Robitaille thanked Mr. Johnson and Mr. Spiwak, Director of Business Services, for making the District's cash position easier to understand. The down side is that the comparability to prior years has been compromised and he wondered if there is a way to fix that. After discussion, it was determined that Mr. Spiwak would go back one year for comparability purposes. Both Mr. Robitaille and Mr. Johnson noted that these changes are reassuring and allows the average person to make the necessary connections between the two reports. Mr. Johnson also thanked Mr. Spiwak for leading this process.

C. Board Policy – First Reading (6-230, 7-200)

Mr. Peter Tragos, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, presented the first reading on Board Policy 6-230 Library Resource Center. The primary purpose of revising Policy 6-230, which was revised and approved in April of 2018, was to match the language, philosophy, and procedures found in Policy 6-210, both of which guide the selection of instructional materials, whether they be in the library or the classroom. The goal was to align the language as well as the administrative process to match both policies, 6-210 and 6-230.

Policy 7-200 Student Behavior is simply a reformatting of numbers, there were no other changes made.

Mr. Robitaille asked for any questions or concerns, none were mentioned.

D. Scholarship Trust Fund Allocation

Mr. Johnson introduced the scholarship trust fund report. He noted that the Trust Fund was established on July 21, 1949, so this is the 70th year that the Fund has given scholarships to New Trier students. He then introduced Mr. Spiwak, who presented the report on the Scholarship Trust Fund Allocation. The Fund is managed by Mr. Richard Drake, a local investment professional who provides this service on a complimentary basis for the District. Mr. Spiwak went on to give an overview of the Fund. He noted that the total assets were just under \$3.3 million as of

December 31, 2018, compared to the year prior, when the assets totaled approximately \$3.7 million, indicating that the Fund is currently down slightly. The Fund continue to be within the investment guidelines previously set by the Board. It should be noted that the Fund is not intended to cover all of the scholarships each year. The remaining amount is filled in by small donations and money the District has at First Bank/Byline. For example, in May of 2018, \$149,000 in Scholarships was awarded, the District withdrew \$132,000 of that from the Trust Fund, with the rest coming from Byline.

The actual return for the Fund for 2018 was down 6.6%. The benchmark fund that it is compared to is the Vanguard Balanced Index Fund which was down 2.8%, so the Trust Fund was down slightly more than the benchmark. The Trust Fund does not mirror what the benchmark fund has so there will be variations. Mr. Drake noted in his report that double digit declines in small company stocks and international indices impacted the Fund more than those losses did in the Index Fund. Mr. Spiwak noted that the five-year average return is 6.0% compared to 6.9% for the Vanguard Balanced Index Fund. The previous two years, the District's Trust Fund was ahead of the Index Fund by double digit returns. The District uses the trailing average method to determine the yearly allocation for the Scholarships. This method takes 6% of the average total assets for the past four years for awards. This allows for market fluctuations and to be as fair as possible to each Senior class. For the 2019 Scholarships, the amount allocated is \$177,767, which is an increase of \$12,329 from last year. Mr. Spiwak then asked for any questions.

Dr. Glucksman asked what the mechanism is for how this money is allocated. Dr. Hayes replied that there is a yearly Scholarship Committee that is chaired by Ms. Athena Arvanitis, Assistant Principal for Student Programs and Operations. The committee is made up of Post-High School Counselors, representatives from Tri-Ship and Girls' Club and others. They determine who will receive the named scholarships as well as other scholarships and the amount awarded. Dr. Hayes further explained how the scholarship is distributed either to the student directly or to the university they are attending.

Ms. Ducommun clarified that although the Board will allocate a certain amount, the full amount may not be distributed so as to keep consistency from one year to the next. Mr. Johnson concurred, stating that the District tries to keep round numbers over time and will increase a scholarship amount if possible.

Mr. Robitaille estimated that it is around the mid-four percent in terms of disbursement. Dr. Glucksman noted that the amount is more than many college endowments, to which Ms. Ducommun agreed.

Mr. Dronen commented that Mr. Drake's report was excellent. He encouraged Mr. Drake and the District to consider increasing the cash allocation, not the overall allocation, going forward. By increasing the cash balance, if there is a down market, the District would already have the cash in reserves so as not to sell into a down market. He encouraged looking one, two, even three years in advance.

Mr. Robitaille thanked Mr. Drake for his report. In reviewing the ten year returns, Mr. Robitaille wondered if having everything an ETF would be a more efficient manner to manage the fund and save Mr. Drake the effort of doing this for free and creating the report. He recommended that this be discussed at a future Finance Committee meeting.

Ms. Ducommun motioned that the Board approve a maximum allocation of \$177,767 for scholarships for the 2019 graduation class and that these funds be withdrawn from the S&P 500 Stock Fund Index and the Small Cap Fund. Dr. Glucksman seconded the motion. Upon a roll call vote being taken, the members voted as follows:

AYE: Ms. Albrecht, Mr. Dronen, Ms. Ducommun, Dr. Glucksman, Ms. Goldstein, Mr. O'Donoghue, Mr. Robitaille

NAY: none

The motion passed.

VIII. Consent Agenda

- the Bill List for the Period, January 1 – 31, 2019;
- the Personnel Report (Appointments, Administrator's Contract – Director of Human Resources, Changes of Status, Leaves of Absence, Resignations, Retirements, and Stipends);
- Board of Education Meeting Calendar: 2019-2020;
- Board Policy – Second Reading (6-60)

- 2018-2019 Calendar Update
- Resolution Authorizing Prompt Payment of Bills

Mr. Robitaille asked if any Board member would like to remove items from the Consent Agenda for separate discussion. Ms. Ducommun requested to pull the 2018-2019 Calendar Update. Mr. O’Donoghue moved that the Board of Education approve the Consent Agenda which includes: The Bill List for the Period, January 1 – 31, 2019; the Personnel Report (Appointments, Administrator’s Contract – Director of Human Resources, Changes of Status, Leaves of Absence, Resignations, Retirements, and Stipends); Board of Education Meeting Calendar: 2019-2020; Board Policy – Second Reading (6-60); and the Resolution Authorizing Prompt Payment of Bills. Ms. Goldstein seconded the motion. Upon a roll call vote being taken, the members voted as follows:

AYE: Mr. Dronen, Ms. Ducommun, Dr. Glucksman, Ms. Goldstein, Mr. O’Donoghue, Ms. Albrecht
Mr. Robitaille

NAY: none

The motion passed.

Ms. Ducommun shared that she pulled the 2018-2019 calendar update for further discussion due to angst that has been shared with her, particularly in the parent groups that she is a liaison for, and she thought if the Board could talk about the decisions that are being made, that would help those concerned. Discussion then continued. Dr. Sally explained that he spoke with Board Members, the Association and parents. If school went to Friday in June, Dr. Sally noted that exam make-ups would have to take place the following week and students would not complete their semester until summer school has already started. This is in addition to the stress around finishing up the semester and then going right into summer school. He noted that there are only two breaks for many students, the first being the long weekend prior to the start of summer school and the time between the end of summer school and the start of fall sports, which is about ten days. The District did not want to move summer school back; this was another reason to implement a remote learning as well once this scheduling situation arose. The last day of student attendance will remain on Thursday, three days of school were missed so both grading days will be used. Friday will be added as a day for teachers, post the last day of school for students, to conclude the year.

Ms. Ducommun clarified that the District keeps 182 days for staff with 181 days for students, which is still above the 180 required by the state. Further discussion continued between Ms. Ducommun and Mr. Robitaille. Dr. Sally stated that the updated calendar would be communicated to faculty and parents the following day.

Ms. Ducommun motioned and Dr. Glucksman approved the 2018-2019 calendar update as submitted.

Upon a roll call vote being taken, the members voted as follows:

AYE: Ms. Ducommun, Dr. Glucksman, Ms. Goldstein, Mr. O’Donoghue, Ms. Albrecht, Mr. Dronen,
Mr. Robitaille

NAY: none

The motion passed.

IX. Board Member Reports

Mr. Dronen reported that *All-School Forum* held on February 13th discussed the value of failure. Students shared examples of failure and how that has made them stronger.

On Saturday, Mr. Dronen attended the *Special Olympics* basketball game at Maine West. Mr. Dronen thanked Ms. Pothast, Ms. Barrett and Mr. Laffey for the work they do and noted that the students had a good time.

Ms. Ducommun shared that members of the *Parents’ Association* and *Fine Arts Association* read many of the Board reports and offer feedback. Parents spoke highly of the trial run of advising eighth graders on their schedules and would like that option at all the sender schools. They were also interested in the Student Participation Report that Dr. Hayes gave in January. They thought Dr. Hayes did a good job with the report and are also focused on the 9% of

students who were not active. The parents encouraged further conversation around the prompts as some stated their student may not realize that an activity they do outside of school should be shared so it is included in the report. They also suggested sending out Board Meeting summaries with links to some reports similar to what is done in the elementary districts. PowerSchool was also discussed, particularly regarding those students who schedules are not standard. The parents also want to stay involved in the Strategic Plan and Ms. Ducommun shared the conversations she has had with parents. Ms. Ducommun has attended the sophomore class executive board meeting and is scheduled to attend the freshman meeting as well. She noted that there is a lot of interest about what is being done at the Board level and parents wanting to be involved.

Mr. Robitaille noted that most of the material from the *Finance Committee* meeting was previously covered in the meeting.

Ms. Albrecht said that the *New Trier Educational Foundation* has a meeting on Wednesday, February 20th. She also reminded the group about the Alumni Achievement Awards scheduled for March 14th at the Orrington Hotel. She encouraged fellow Board members to attend.

Ms. Goldstein reported on *NSSSED*. At the last meeting, NSSSED shared an update on their Strategic Plan. Ms. Goldstein noted that it is amazing how much NSSSED has accomplished. The executive board reported that in the first year, they have recruited and retained high quality staff, branded and completed a website refresh, created a district communication plan, started Blackboard and began a new student information system. Dr. Sally mentioned that NSSSED had some great meetings with the District to review the services that are used and projections for the future. He noted that Dr. Joanne Panopoulos, Assistant Superintendent for Special Education, was key in those meetings, with Ms. Goldstein adding that NSSSED wants to be more in tune with the districts.

Dr. Glucksman noted that the work of the *Board Policy Committee* was previously shared by Mr. Tragos.

X. Calendar of Events & Board Members' Requests for Staff Research and Future Agenda Items

Calendar of Events: Dr. Sally highlighted the following dates, which included:

- The District ACT is Wednesday, February 20th. Sophomores will have a Career Day, it is a regular day for freshman, and no school for seniors.
- Friday, February 22nd is an Institute Day. The school will host the state swim meet at Winnetka and at the Northfield campus, Dr. Yong Zhao, who is a leading educational thinker and professor, will present to He has previously spoken at New Trier and will speak to parents, students and staff during his visit. He will also present to parents at a FAN event on Thursday night. We were able to bring Dr. Zhao to New Trier through the financial support of the New Trier Educational Foundation.
- Spring Sports will begin on February 25th.
- Choir-Opera, who presented a wonderful song earlier in the meeting, will host their musical on March 7-10th.
- The Alumni Achievement Awards will take place on Thursday, March 14th. Most award winners will also meet with students either earlier that day or the day prior. One recipient will travel to New Trier in April to meet with students.

There were no requests for Staff Research and Future Agenda Items.

XI. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. O'Donoghue moved and Ms. Goldstein seconded the motion to adjourn. Upon a voice vote being taken, all members indicated they were in favor.

The meeting adjourned at 8:46 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lindsey Ruston, Secretary

Gregory Robitaille, President