

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

April 20, 2020

**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 virtually via Zoom on Monday, April 20, 2020 at 7:00 p.m.

Members Present

Ms. Cathy Albrecht, President
Mr. Keith Dronen
Ms. Carol Ducommun
Dr. Marc Glucksman, Vice President
Ms. Jean Hahn
Mr. Brad McLane
Mr. Greg Robitaille

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
Mrs. Denise Dubravec, Principal – Winnetka Campus
Mr. Paul Waechtler, Principal – Northfield Campus

Also Present

Ms. Niki Dizon, Director of Communications; other administrators, faculty and staff, Mr. Mike Hill, Technology Department; Ms. Lindsey Ruston, Board of Education Secretary; members of the press and community.

BUSINESS MEETING

I. CALL TO ORDER – 7:00 p.m. – Zoom

Ms. Albrecht called the Regular Meeting of April 20, 2020 of the Board of Education to order at 7:00 p.m., virtually, via Zoom. Roll call was taken and all members were present.

II. CLOSED SESSION – Cancelled

III. BUSINESS MEETING

Open Session – 7:00 p.m. – C234

IV. Minutes

Ms. Albrecht asked for any comments or adjustments on the minutes of the Regular Meeting of March 16, 2020 (open and closed session). There had been a request from Mr. Robitaille for two slight changes, which were incorporated. Ms. Hahn moved, and Dr. Glucksman seconded, the motion to approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting of March 16, 2020 (open and closed session). Upon a roll call vote being taken, the members voted as follows:

AYE: Ms. Ducommun, Dr. Glucksman, Ms. Hahn, Mr. McLane, Mr. Robitaille, Mr. Dronen, Ms. Albrecht

NAY: none

The motion passed.

V. Communications

Ms. Albrecht explained that, due to the remote Board meeting, public comments were needed to have been submitted to the Board of Education secretary by 2:00 p.m. Commenters were instructed to write their comments in accordance with Board Policy 2-230 Public Participation at Board Meetings, including ensuring a 3-minute time limit when read. There were no public comments submitted.

VI. Special Orders of Business

A. FOIA Report

Mr. Johnson gave the FOIA report noting that there was one request pertaining to information on the school closure since the last Board meeting, which has been closed.

B. Update on Remote Learning

Dr. Sally began the update on remote learning, noting that each of the administrators participating in the Board meeting would provide further information pertaining to their respective areas. They wanted to provide the Board and community with a comprehensive overview of remote learning and next steps now that in-person school has been cancelled for the remainder of the school year. The presentation will discuss what has been done, where the District is going, as well as give the Board an opportunity for questions and comments about this work. It has been a difficult time, and while the April 17th announcement by Governor Pritzker to cancel in-person school for the rest of the school year was not surprising, it still hit many of families and students hard. Dr. Sally then highlighted the areas that would be discussed. He went on to share the COVID-19 timelines for the previous two months.

Ms. Niki Dizon, Director of Communications, discussed the communications pieces which have been essential, noting that they must be effective and timely. Families, students, and community are looking to New Trier to provide updates in this fast-moving situation. That communication has taken place on a regular basis with the school's key stakeholders. After communicating about the school closure via the emergency system to families and students, communication turned to more regular messages of information. This information was disseminated in a variety of ways, with the main focus being on driving people to the school's website. Ms. Dizon worked with Mr. Boris Spektor, Web Developer, to quickly develop a comprehensive and robust website. The video messages from the principals and Dr. Sally have been well received as they allow for that personal connection.

While social media has been used for information, it has largely been used for that community connection. Ms. Dizon went on to share some examples from social media and how that is being used to celebrate students, what teachers are doing in their virtual classrooms, and what the New Trier Educational Foundation (NTEF) and the New Trier Parents' Association (NTPA) have done to support those in need in the community. She also highlighted the work being done by three teachers in the Applied Arts department who were using the 3D printers and laser cutters to make Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for frontline workers. Ms. Lia Kass, Communications Specialist, has done much of putting these social media posts together.

Mrs. Denise Dubravec, Principal at the Winnetka Campus, focused her part of the presentation on the school's plans to connect and celebrate students, particularly seniors. As soon as it became clear that there was a potential for a school closure, administrators began discussing options for upcoming events, such as Prom that was originally scheduled for April 25th. It was rescheduled to May 15th, but, unfortunately, that has now been cancelled. Seniors Awards is scheduled for May 28th, which Mrs. Dubravec will host virtually and has been preparing with the Post-High School Counseling (PHSC) department. She then went on to discuss the different plans for commencement, noting there is a Plan A, Plan B, Plan C1 and Plan C2. Plan A was to host commencement on the original date of May 31st at the Sears Centre, but as soon as the closure was announced, the school secured a back-up date of July 12th, which is Plan B. Plan C1 would be implemented if the new date of July 12th ends up being cancelled, then the school will put together a virtual commencement. Plan C2 would be to invite seniors back to campus in August for a gathering at the stadium such as for a picnic.

The NTPA will also move their graduation night celebration to July 12th. If July 12th does not work, NTPA would possibly have their event the evening of the school one. This August event may provide an opportunity to distribute yearbooks. Due to the pandemic, the factory where the yearbooks are produced is closed, so they will not be ready for a spring distribution. They may be ready this summer or not until the fall. If they are ready this summer, there may be a welcome back festival a few days prior to school starting for rising sophomores, juniors and seniors. In preparation for commencement, there will still be a senior speaker as well as an alumni speaker, Mr. Chris Cox. Seniors last day is May 21st.

Mrs. Dubravec then went on to share some pictures of banners that have been displayed at the Winnetka campus, particularly one that Mr. Augie Fontanetta, Director of Athletics, had created to celebrate those New Trier senior athletes who will be playing at the collegiate level. He also created a tribute video that was posted on Instagram. Parents also created a banner to thank teachers and staff as well as yard signs that can be seen on each campus. Mrs. Dubravec is working on a tribute video for seniors as well as some surprises.

Mrs. Dubravec and Mr. Paul Waechtler, Principal at the Northfield Campus, are working with Ms. Athena Arvanitis, Assistant Principal for Student Programs and Operations, to determine a process, following the Center for Disease Control (CDC) guidelines such as wearing face masks and social distancing, for students to pick up items in their lockers and elsewhere in the building.

Next to present was Mr. Peter Tragos, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction. He discussed how

the grey/blue/green schedule originated and our progress with it for remote learning. He noted that the grey/blue/green schedule was developed during spring break with administrators and some faculty members. They developed guiding principles that focused on faculty and student well-being while moving learning forward at the same time. The schedule provides structure and consistency while also maintaining flexibility for staff and students. Feedback on the schedule from students has been positive. Mr. Tragos acknowledged that remote learning is not an easy environment to teach and learn in, but teachers are working hard to engage students in learning and make connections with them. He went on to share examples of what learning looks like in various classes.

Then, Mrs. Dubravec began the discussion on the feedback from the second Remote Learning Survey. The first survey was given right after the first week of remote learning. This most recent survey was conducted last week and students, parents and staff were invited to take it. The questions that were created were similar for each group so answers could be compared. She went on to share the kinds of questions that were part of the survey. Mrs. Dubravec focused on the responses from students. They noted that the grey/blue/green schedule is working well, like the access to staff that is available on grey days and are getting more sleep. They also offered areas that could be improved upon such as consistency with Canvas, feeling connected, the grading process and the workload balance. Finally, Mrs. Dubravec shared next steps for students, which are to remind faculty how important their interactions with students are, professional development on use of Canvas, and clarity around grades.

Mr. Waechtler shared the parent feedback. The number one thing that parents noted was how impressed they are with the teachers and appreciative of their efforts as well as impressed with the level of instruction and how quickly teachers are innovating in this new environment. They noted that they are also appreciative of the routine, that there is a good mixture of instruction and work outside of class time, their students are getting more sleep and less anxiety about school. Suggestions for improvement include more instruction and peer interaction. Several noted that the workload is too much for their student as their student has issues with executive functioning and this can be a lot without the additional supports that they are used to. Some commented about Zoom, noting that while it is a good lecture tool, it is not necessarily a good facilitation of discussion tool. Next steps include some clarification about why in-person school cannot be replicated, increased peer connections, and reasoning for the reduction of curriculum for fourth quarter, but are still preparing students to be successful when they return in the fall, which has been a mindful process in course committees.

Finally, Mr. Tragos shared staff feedback. Faculty also noted the benefits of the grey/blue/green schedule giving them and their students a routine as well as a chance to collaborate with colleagues. Other areas that have been going well are the Zoom meetings and pre-recorded videos, student engagement, the effort of all staff across the school to serve students, and finally, communication. Staff suggestions for improvement included more professional development in Canvas and other technology tools, streamlining communication, clarifying grading expectations and balancing prep time and instruction. Next steps include clarification around grading guidance, which was discussed at the staff meeting earlier in the day, end of year procedures and curriculum planning, particularly for sequential courses, for the first quarter when students return in the fall.

Mr. Tragos then went on to share various implications for learning such as adapting curriculum. Approximately one unit from fourth quarter curriculum was removed in each class. As a way to make remote learning manageable, teachers were encouraged to determine what the most important items are that they want to teach. For non-sequential courses, curriculum was selected that was deemed essential content, concepts and skills. For sequential courses, such as math and Modern and Classical languages, curriculum was selected that would best integrate into first quarter next year. There are also plan to realign curriculum to bridge fourth quarter to first quarter. Curriculum articulation is taking place with sender schools to plan for the transition for eighth to ninth graders. Typical assessments are difficult, so teachers are adjusting how students can demonstrate what they have learned as well as how learning can be seen in class.

Mr. Tragos discussed final exams, noting that there would not be traditional exams in June. It is important to bring closure to a class though and summative reflection assignments and activities will take place within the regular blue/green day schedule. Mr. Tragos briefly touched on the end of the school year and proposed changes in that schedule. If approved by the Board, June 5th will be the last day of student attendance, leaving June 8th through 11th as professional days for teachers to do curriculum planning and preparation for the 2020-2021 school year.

Next, Mr. Tragos shared grading guidance. ISBE has stated that remote learning should not have an adverse impact on students' grades and the emphasis for schoolwork during this time should be on learning and not compliance. New Trier has tried to live up to the spirit of that by creating two documents which were developed by administrators

and faculty leadership. The first, New Trier Remote Learning Grading Processes, has a set of guiding principles and practices for grading in this environment. For the practical implementation, the same group, created the Guidance for Implementing 4th Quarter and 2nd Semester Grading. Mr. Tragos noted that the focus is on student well-being, followed by engagement, learning and feedback and then grades. Most importantly, this time period is unlike any other and the school does not have a comparison for grading during remote learning, therefore it is important for teachers to give not only themselves, but their students, some grace during this different and difficult time.

Dr. Joanne Panopoulos, Assistant Superintendent for Special Education, presented on meeting students' needs, particularly those with individualized learning plans (IEPs) and 504 plans. Dr. Panopoulos began by thanking the faculty and assistants for their work during this time. She also applauded the parents of special education students. Ongoing communication with parents and students about goals and services and how those are being adjusted in this new environment has been important and conducted in a variety of ways. Case managers have also been proactive in contacting families to let them know how their student's needs will be met, and last week, they began documenting the efforts that are being made so parents have a clear understanding what remote learning looks like for their student and how they can support their student at home.

Dr. Panopoulos reiterated that the health, safety and welfare of students are priority followed by a good faith effort to provide services. Dr. Sally confirmed that every student with an IEP will receive a remote learning plan, noting that some plans may be more involved while others will not be. Dr. Panopoulos went on to further discuss this noting that the plans are dependent on a student's level of support. She reiterated how supportive the families of these students have been, particularly those in the Educational and Life Skills (ELS) and Transition programs and noted an example of a virtual job shadow activity for Transition students.

Next, Dr. Tim Hayes, Assistant Superintendent for Student Services, presented on supporting student well-being during remote learning. He noted his pride for the way that New Trier's teachers, advisers, and staff having been working to connect students. The adviser program has been a large component of this connection. In addition to daily check-ins, advisers are continuing to create community within the adviser room. Dr. Hayes provided several examples of this.

Adviser chairs have focused their work on those students who are having difficulty with remote learning. Adviser chairs have been tracking those students who they have reached out to, there are about 56 students that the school is working closely with and checking on these students' wellness. These checks include determining how well engaged a student is, if they are healthy and doing ok. Of those 56 students, 36 of them were on a list that was created at the end of third quarter who had incompletes or failing grades, so many had academic issues going into remote learning. Seven of those students are receiving some kind of Bridges support. The adviser chairs have then triaged each student into either a high, medium or low level of concern. 19 of the 56 students were deemed high concern, meaning they are disconnected or struggling with a significant issue. 26 of the 56 students were struggling with substantial issues going into remote learning and about 15 of those students started having significant difficulties during remote learning. Many of those students were not engaging in some way such as in their school work and the school is working to better understand those cases. There were also some students who were either coming out of hospitalization or going in when remote learning began. The school has been working with these families and students to make sure they are supported and well connected during this time.

Dr. Hayes went on to share about the work of health services. They have assisted about 30 families since March 5th around issues of possible COVID diagnoses. These families are very appreciative of Ms. Colleen Sheridan, school nurse at the Winnetka campus, and Ms. Doreen Clough, school nurse at the Northfield campus, who have answered questions and provided guidance. They are also working with teachers and advisers to determine readiness to learn of those students who might be ill.

In social work, Dr. Hayes noted that this is where the school feels the restrictions of remote learning. The department is providing supports for students with IEPs as well as helping general education students connect with resources in the community such as the Crisis Response Network. They have been very generous in helping the school provide as many resources for students and families as they can. Bridges and the Guided Assistance Program (GAP) are continuing their work with students. Case managers and instructional assistants are also providing well-being support for their students. Dr. Hayes noted that overall, students with issues related to anxiety seem to be doing well during remote learning, while there is concern for those who are dealing with depression, who might have executive functioning issues and those who are disengaged from remote learning.

Mr. Paul Waechtler, Northfield campus principal, then shared about incoming freshmen, noting that the focus will be welcoming these students to ninth grade. Some items will stay the same such as communications about residency verification, transportation and summer reading as well as adviser room assignment, schedule and bookstore information. The in-person events will either be altered or rescheduled such as New Trier 101, After the Academics, and iPad training.

Dr. Sally then transitioned to speaking about planning for the 2020-2021 school year. Discussions will center around the risk of new local outbreaks, the number of staff and students out of school for a period of time, the use of masks, and the school's vulnerable populations. Planning time is needed for all of this as the school works through blended learning for students and staff in August. A contingency plan is needed as it may be possible that not all students and staff will be back on campus in the fall. Much has been learned during this time, and the school now knows the things that it might need to do, so the question becomes how does the school ensure that it is ready and well-trained.

Dr. Sally then stepped through the end of the year calendar, noting that there were 93 days in first semester that were normal, 32 of the 89 days in second semester were also straightforward. There were seven Act of God days, five of which were used during Phase I of Remote Learning and the other two were teacher planning days to make the transition to remote learning. By the end of the year, the school will have had 45 gray/blue/green days and one last day of school to bring closure to classes. ISBE has granted four district planning days to schools in lieu of instructional days. Dr. Sally then displayed the May calendar, noting that May 21st will be the last day for seniors. He went on to propose a plan for the end of the school year, for the Board's consideration, noting that June 4th would be a typical grading day for teachers, followed by the last day of school on June 5th. Four of the days in the following week, June 8th through June 11th, would be District Planning Days. In the original 2019-2020 school calendar, June 11th was the last day for student attendance. There would be no change to the start of summer school on June 15th.

Mr. Tragos then segued into discussing the plan for summer school which is in the early to mid-planning stage. The District is committed to running a full academic program as there are a variety of reasons that students enroll in summer school. It is likely to start in remote learning and possibly transition to a blended approach later in summer dependent on the stay-at-home orders for that time. Mr. Tragos is also working closely with Mr. Fontanetta and the Athletics department to determine what summer sports may look like. Discussions are also taking place with the Special Education department and the Extended School Year (ESY) program.

The last part of the presentation was given by Mr. Johnson on the financial implications of the school closure. The most important work is certainly what students, teachers, parents and families are doing to keep learning moving forward. That said, the District is starting to shift to understanding the long term implications of this event. Mr. Johnson took a moment to thank all the staff working behind-the-scenes, such as the Business Office staff for keeping paychecks going and vendors paid, and the Physical Plant Services department, who are maintaining the buildings. Mr. Johnson also thanked Mr. Michael Marassa, Chief Technology Officer, who has not even officially started yet, but has been available to the District on a daily basis.

The District is working to evaluate the impact of current events on the budget with a focus on aligning resources to support students and families during this uncertain time. Students who qualify for financial assistance can pick up lunch and breakfast from the school and the school is seeing an increased utilization of this. Through the fundraising that Mrs. Dubravec mentioned earlier, the school is providing grocery gift cards to students who qualify for financial assistance. Mr. Johnson thanked those who have donated to these fundraisers. To provide relief for families next year, the District will freeze student fees and revert the increase that was proposed in a prior month, as well as, reduce the cost of the iPad for incoming freshman. The District expects some small revenue reductions this year, but those will be offset by reduced expenditures such as field trips and travel for professional development.

The District will shift some planned capital from next year to this year to relieve pressure on next year's budget as the District monitors the long-term impact. This will also create space in the budget for any unplanned expenses related to the current situation or for any drop in revenue that is unexpected next year. Even without this event, the District was in the process of working the five-year plan that the Board reviewed in January, by doing the normal staffing and budgeting process to align with expected revenue and number of students, which is expected to decrease. All of this is being monitored carefully and work is being done with departments to think about their budgets. The goal is to create a recommendation for a balanced budget this summer.

Dr. Sally shared some final thoughts. He thanked Ms. Dizon and Ms. Kass for creating branding around the school closure. He shared his pride for teachers as well as the administrative team. He also noted his pride for students for their survey feedback, for staying engaged and mentioning areas for improvement.

Mr. McLane thanked the presenting administrators for the rich content and for being able to review the information prior to the presentation. He noted that he has been hearing positive comments while out in his neighborhood, particularly from families who have students in athletics. One question he has been asked is what percentage of normal education will students receive this year and how will they make up the difference in subsequent years so they are caught up. Mr. Tragos stated that if he had to put a percentage on this, there is a 40-50% reduction in content during fourth quarter. Mr. Tragos is confident that students in non-sequential courses have had good exposure to consistent skills and the curriculum, such as in English or social studies, will be able to take those skills and transfer them to other classes within that discipline. In the more sequential courses such as in math, departments are looking at adjustments to curriculum where important content and skills can be aligned for next year. He is not concerned that students will be far behind because during the course of a regular school year, the curriculum is robust and more than just the essentials are taught. He believes that students will still be prepared with good curriculum planning. Dr. Sally clarified that students had instruction in about 75% of the normal school year and it is the last quarter where there will be a reduction of one unit. The decisions being made at the department level involve what is fundamentally important to build the skills that will be needed for next year. For sequential courses, it is about the planning time and summer work that will need to be done in order to adjust courses.

Ms. Hahn thanked everyone who has been working hard to keep the students going and keep the community informed. She also thanked Dr. Sally for the videos he has created, as they come across compassionate and genuine, which the community really appreciates. Ms. Hahn also thanked those working to honor seniors. She then inquired about the students going to college next year and if there has been any communication with higher education. In addition to that question, she inquired if anything was in the works to address what post-high school counseling (PHSC) might look like for either current or rising seniors. Dr. Hayes noted that there was a lot of conversation happening with the PHSC department as they hold a conference call every morning to discuss what they are hearing from families as well as universities. The department is working to put out as much information as quickly as they can about changes as they occur, such as many questions surrounding standardized testing. Higher education is in uncharted territory with concerns centering on having difficulty filling seats. Ms. Jill Cervantes, PSHC department chair, is working to get information to parents, however, the challenge is that universities do not quite know what they will do. They have moved dates and deadlines back to allow more time to determine what they will do, but there is still a lot to work through. Dr. Sally shared additional thoughts, mainly focusing on the fact that the school is asking these important questions, trying to get information and then sending it out when the school can.

Ms. Hahn then inquired, given the popularity of the new block schedule and the possibility of blended learning occurring in the fall, if the school is considering this as its new schedule approach going forward. Dr. Sally responded that the District will need a few contingency plans and that this new block schedule might be a part of a few of those options. The area high school superintendents have begun brainstorming around this as well as other various scenarios. The District is thinking through how to effectively deliver instruction and there will be more to come in June or July and Dr. Sally is hopeful that the planning days in June give the school that time.

Mr. Robitaille had two questions – one for Mr. Tragos and one for Dr. Hayes. He asked Mr. Tragos if the one hour a week per subject matter for office hours is sufficient given the number of students a teacher has as seems it is not enough. Mr. Robitaille then thanked Dr. Hayes as it was helpful to hear about identifying the at-risk students. He noted that Dr. Panopoulos has identified the students with IEPs, 504s, accommodations and resources and will reconfigure those accordingly. He noted that Dr. Hayes mentioned that fifteen students post-COVID have demonstrated some new social emotional concerns or issues. Mr. Robitaille inquired if there are more students out there that the school does not know about and if there are lessons learned from those fifteen students that can be passed along to advisers and teachers to inform them about signs that have been discovered that start to identify students who are struggling in a different way in this environment than was known before.

Mr. Tragos answered that, right now, an hour seems to be enough time for office hours. It is also only one way that students and teachers are collaborating. Some teachers are using it for dedicated drop-in time and open communication via email or Zoom. There is on-going communication not only throughout the grey day, but throughout the week as well and various modes of communication being used. Mr. Robitaille responded that this is what he had hoped to hear. Dr. Sally added that the Northfield campus has the Academic Assistance Center (AAC), which is still providing help to students. Now that in-person school has been cancelled, it is important to make sure

resources are in place. Those include the math resource room, the student tutoring club and the Reading and Writing Center. The school is starting to look at how it gets these online, available and communicates that to students. Mr. Waechtler added that the AAC is looking for business, though students are utilizing them, they are looking to assist more students.

Then, Dr. Hayes responded to Mr. Robitaille's question for him. In looking at those fifteen students, some of them are very specific situations, such as technology difficulties. In other cases, some of these students have difficult home lives and being quarantined together at home has created some challenging situations for these students. Another issue is motivation, if a student has a grade they are happy with, they question the reason for doing the work. Dr. Hayes shared additional comments around this topic.

Mr. McLane inquired, that due to the potential absence of summer camps, internships and other programs, what kind of surge does the District anticipate regarding summer school and how does the school manage a surge, questioning if there is elasticity in the system to take on many more students. Dr. Sally replied that it will be a staffing issue. The school has the capabilities to register students, but the staffing issue has to be solved first to ensure that the education is going to be a good one. Dr. Sally also noted that bringing in a substitute from another district to remote teach a New Trier class is harder than having that person teach a New Trier class in-person. Mr. Tragos agreed with Dr. Sally and noted that administrators are preparing for this potential surge.

Ms. Ducommun found the piece about anxiety around school interesting and questioned if it was grading related. Her hope is that there will eventually be time to reflect on this and there is some learning about that as so much is heard about anxiety from students and parents. If the school could figure that out a bit in this process, then some good would have come out of this. Ms. Ducommun also noted how appreciative she is and is overwhelmed thinking about all that administrators, faculty, staff, parents and students are doing. While she relishes that, she is also saddened that 99% of schools in this country do not have what New Trier has. She hopes that New Trier is able to share some of what has been learned as the school has gone above and beyond.

Ms. Ducommun then commented that in thinking about how classrooms are conducted now, she wanted to know what kind of sharing among teachers or opportunities for sharing best practices are available, along with what guidance about the right balance of the amount of Zoom used, she wondered if there was guidance or if everyone figures it out on their own. Mr. Tragos commented on the sharing of best practices, noting that for teachers, there is an organic nature to their collaborations. Course committees are sharing what they are doing, such as Canvas pages. Departments are still meeting regularly and that is often where best practices are shared. Some information has been collected via the surveys in terms of effective instructional strategies and ones that they are experimenting with. Mr. Tragos also addressed the Zoom portion of Ms. Ducommun's question, by noting that teachers are starting to develop a balance and rhythm of its use. The District's guidance has been to engage students without overwhelming them with the same thing. Dr. Sally added that staff noted in the survey that collaboration with colleagues was one of the more natural things they could do now, although it was more difficult, it was less difficult than other things. Success stories from teachers about what really engaged students were also collected in the survey. Dr. Sally also mentioned that the Instructional Technology Specialist (ITSs) are doing a great job and will use the information from the survey to develop professional development for teachers on those areas of success.

Ms. Ducommun then noted that she was encouraged to hear from Mr. Tragos about conversations happening around grades, as this has been a topic in meeting with the New Trier Parents' Association. She noted that parents expressed concern that the commitment to grades not being negatively impacted would not be applied evenly across the board. She acknowledged that although grades are a tool that teachers use as part of their teaching, she wants to ensure teachers are not contradicting the guidance from the state. Mr. Tragos noted that the District will continue to work on this and bring clarity for teachers and students.

Ms. Albrecht share an observation about starting remote learning with the four days before Spring Break with trying to do the nine period schedule and learning from that, to having a week of Spring Break. She went on to thank the administrators and the layers around them for the heroic effort to completely revise the curriculum and delivery in order to move to the blocked schedule of Gray/Blue/Green days. It was an impressive effort to get to the blocked schedule and to hear such good things about it. From Ms. Albrecht's various interactions with community members, many parents felt like when they hit Spring Break they were treading water as students were home and bored, with no place to go and enforcing social distancing was getting increasingly difficult. When school resumed, parents felt like they had reached land again and students were excited to get back to school to learn and have the social environment.

***C. School Calendar 2019-2020**

Dr. Sally shared that, with the significant changes to the calendar, New Trier would like the last week of school to be four District planning days which is within the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) guidelines. Teachers will bring closure to fourth quarter learning as well as closure for students in a meaningful way. It will also hopefully be less stressful for students while at the same time being a fair judgement and demonstration of what they have learned. Dr. Sally then asked for approval of the June calendar.

Ms. Albrecht confirmed that this was for the planning days for the last week of school in June, to which Dr. Sally confirmed.

Ms. Hahn moved, and Mr. Robitaille seconded, the motion that the Board of Education approve the modified calendar for the 2019-2020 school year as presented. Upon a roll call vote being taken, the members voted as follows:

AYE: Dr. Glucksman, Ms. Hahn, Mr. McLane, Mr. Robitaille, Mr. Dronen, Ms. Ducommun, Ms. Albrecht

NAY: none

The motion passed.

***D. Elections of New Officers for the period April 20, 2020 through the April 21 Regular Meeting**

Ms. Albrecht noted that the next item was for the elections of new officers for the period of April 20, 2020 through the April 21 Regular Board meeting. Ms. Albrecht then turned the meeting over to Board Secretary, Ms. Lindsey Ruston, who presided over the first part of the process. Ms. Ruston opened nominations for the office of Board President for the period of April 20, 2020 through the April 2021 Regular Meeting. Mr. Robitaille moved that Ms. Albrecht be nominated for the office of President of the Board of Education from April 20, 2020 through the April 2021 Regular Meeting. Ms. Hahn seconded the motion. There being no further nominations for President, it was by acclamation that Ms. Albrecht was declared the President of the Board from April 20, 2020 through the April 2021 Regular Meeting.

Ms. Albrecht then asked for nominations for the office of Vice President of the Board of Education for the coming year. Mr. Robitaille moved that Dr. Glucksman be nominated for the office of Vice President of the Board of Education from April 20, 2020 through the April 2021 Regular Meeting. Ms. Hahn seconded the motion. There being no further nominations for Vice President, it was by acclamation that Dr. Glucksman was declared the Vice President of the Board from April 20, 2020 through the April 2021 Regular Meeting.

Ms. Albrecht asked for nominations for the office of Secretary for the Board of Education. Mr. Robitaille moved that Ms. Ruston be nominated for the office of Secretary of the Board of Education for the period April 20, 2020 through the April 2021 Regular Meeting. Ms. Hahn seconded the motion. There being no further nominations for Secretary, it was by acclamation that Ms. Ruston was declared the Secretary of the Board from April 20, 2020 through the April 2021 Regular Meeting.

VII. Administrative Items

A. Treasurer's Report for March 2020

Mr. Johnson presented the March 2020 Treasurer's Report. Cash balances for District accounts totaled \$137,760,957. The weighted portfolio yield dropped significantly to below one percent for short term investments. These are the investments that the District has in order to keep cash on hand to fund expenses on a monthly basis. They are invested for less than a year. There are a large set of investments made in the March timeframe as cash comes in from property taxes and unfortunately those investments are made in a low interest rate environment. Mr. Johnson noted that these are being monitored closely along with the impact on interest income. The District is still above two percent on longer term investments both at MBS and PMA, which are one to three-year ladders and rates were locked in before this low interest rate environment. Receipts were as expected in March with a significant property tax distribution along with continued regular state and federal payments.

B. Financial Reports for March 2020

Mr. Johnson reviewed the Financial Reports for March 2020. Operating revenue was \$110,140,701 for the first nine months of the fiscal year, or 2.61% higher compared to last year. The surplus in Other Local Sources, driven largely

by higher than budgeted interest income, should help keep the revenues on track. The adopted budget has an increase of 2.26%. Operating expenditures were \$79,531,303 through March. Operating expenses are trending slightly higher year-to-date, but they are expected to equalize later in the year and is mainly a timing issue. Overall, the District is anticipating lower than expected expenditures for the last quarter of the year and tracking closer to budget of 2.10%. Mr. Johnson then invited any questions or comments.

Mr. Robitaille noted that during the Finance Committee meeting last week the group discussed the exposure to municipal bonds in the District's portfolio, which was around 8-8.5% of the portfolio at the time. He indicated that it represents \$5.3 million in total exposure and the District was generating 65 basis point premium over a comparable ten-year treasury risk-free yield. Mr. Robitaille asked that Mr. Johnson take a look at the premium it was receiving over a shorter duration compared to other risk free instruments. Mr. Johnson responded that he thought the Finance Committee had a good discussion about reviewing the investment portfolio. The discussion included information on how the District is currently following its own Board Policy as well as the Illinois Municipal Investment Act, which includes having a diverse portfolio. Last month, municipal and other local government were about 8% of the total portfolio, but is now around 5% as the cash balance has gone up with property tax distributions. The District is always monitoring the risk and exposure in its investment area.

The Finance Committee had agreed that the next step is to consider if this policy should be changed and that can be considered this summer as the District reviews and updates all board policies to align them with the best practices from the Illinois Association of School Board's (IASB) Policy Reference Education Subscription Service (PRESS). It will then be decided if any changes are needed. Mr. Johnson will bring more information to the Finance Committee on the yield from these investments so the group can talk about the risk versus reward of this strategy. Historically, there have been no issues in managing the risks, but these are unprecedented times, so it is a wise discussion to have right now. More information on the interest earned on those will also be brought to a future Finance Committee for further discussion. Mr. Robitaille thanked Mr. Johnson for the overview.

Mr. Dronen then shared that that the spread on the one to three years would be less than on the 65 basis points, to which Mr. Johnson noted that he would look further into it. Mr. Johnson used a historical average and it is up right now as interest rates are low and people are trying to sell bonds, but the District is not looking to buy municipals now.

***C. School Calendar 2021-2022**

Dr. Sally presented on the calendar for the 2021-2022 school year. The District brings forward the calendar for the school year after next to the April Board meeting. The community appreciates the school having certain vacations set such as Winter and Spring Breaks as well as the start and end of the school year. Dr. Sally went on to explain the process with the Calendar Committee, which is co-chaired by Mr. Paul Waechtler, Principal of the Northfield Campus, and Ms. Michael Christensen, Social Studies Department Chair. The calendar is also reviewed by the sender schools to ensure that breaks match. Finally, the calendar is brought forward to the Board for their review and approval. The characteristics of this schedule are similar to the schedules in the last few years such as the late August start, there being two weeks after Winter Break before final exams begin for learning and review, the set of holidays, and the early dismissal and late start pairs that are distributed throughout the year.

Ms. Ducommun moved, and Ms. Hahn seconded, the motion that the Board of Education approves the calendar for the 2021-2022 school year as presented. Upon a roll call vote being taken, the members voted as follows:

AYE: Mr. McLane, Mr. Robitaille, Mr. Dronen, Ms. Ducommun, Dr. Glucksman, Ms. Hahn, Ms. Albrecht

NAY: none

The motion passed.

VIII. Consent Agenda

- Bill List for the Period, March 1-31, 2020
- Personnel Report (Tenure, Scale IV Movement, Scale V Movement, Scale IV Reviews, Appointment, Change of Status, Dismissals, Resignation, Sabbatical, Administrator Contract for Director of Special Ed)
- Resolution Authorizing the Honorable Dismissal of Teachers and Recall of Teachers
- Resolution Authorizing the Honorable Dismissal of Teachers
- Resolution Authorizing Notice of Dismissal to Non-tenured Teachers Other Than Final-year Probationary Teachers

- Resolution Authorizing Reduction in Force and Recall of Educational Support Personnel
- That the Board of Education approve the contract with Sentinel Technologies as presented and authorize the Assistant Superintendent of Finance and Operations to execute the agreement.
- That the Board of Education approve the contract with Comcast Business as presented and authorize the Assistant Superintendent of Finance and Operations to execute the agreement.
- That the Board of Education approve the contract with Providence Capital for lease financing as presented, and authorize the Assistant Superintendent of Finance and Operations to execute the agreement.
- That the Board approve the appointment of Mr. Christopher T. Johnson, Assistant Superintendent for Finance & Operations, District Treasurer.
- That the 2019-20 Tentative Amended Budget be approved and that a Public Hearing date be set for June 8, 2020. It is further recommended that the 2019-20 Tentative Amended Budget be placed on public display from April 21, 2020 through the Public Hearing. The Tentative Amended Budget will be placed on display at the same locations used for the regular budget, which include the public libraries and the District's website. We will also arrange to have the Notice of the Public Hearing published in an April edition of the local newspaper.
- That the Board of Education approve the student fees for the 2020-2021 school year as presented.

Dr. Sally shared two comments on items on the Consent Agenda. The first was regarding the freeze on student fees for the 2020-2021 school year. The Board of Education had asked for the District to look at the whole structure of student fees, particularly what is in general fees, which is still on the docket to review. The District now would like to roll back the increase that had been planned for next school year as a way to help families during this time. Second, the honorable dismissals that are on the Consent Agenda are part of the District's normal course of business each year and is not related to the COVID outbreak and school being closed. This is standard operating procedure for this time each year.

Ms. Albrecht clarified that the roll back of fees is for those that the District controls, which Dr. Sally confirmed. The pass-through fees are not fees that will be reduced, such as for transportation as those fees are dependent on their respective contracts. This freeze only pertains to the general and activities fees.

Ms. Albrecht inquired if any Board members wanted to pull an item from the Consent Agenda. Mr. Robitaille requested that the motion to award the prime trade contracts for the 2020 Renovations Project to those contractors as recommended by Pepper Construction, as included in Bid Package 3 be pulled for further discussion.

Dr. Glucksman moved that the Board of Education approve the Consent Agenda, which includes Bill List for the Period, March 1-31, 2020; Personnel Report (Tenure, Scale IV Movement, Scale V Movement, Scale IV Reviews, Appointment, Change of Status, Dismissals, Resignation, Sabbatical, Administrator Contract for Director of Special Ed); Resolution Authorizing the Honorable Dismissal of Teachers and Recall of Teachers; Resolution Authorizing the Honorable Dismissal of Teachers; Resolution Authorizing Notice of Dismissal to Non-tenured Teachers Other Than Final-year Probationary Teachers; Resolution Authorizing Reduction in Force and Recall of Educational Support Personnel; that the Board of Education approve the contract with Sentinel Technologies as presented and authorize the Assistant Superintendent of Finance and Operations to execute the agreement; that the Board of Education approve the contract with Comcast Business as presented and authorize the Assistant Superintendent of Finance and Operations to execute the agreement; that the Board of Education approve the contract with Providence Capital for lease financing as presented, and authorize the Assistant Superintendent of Finance and Operations to execute the agreement; that the Board approve the appointment of Mr. Christopher T. Johnson, Assistant Superintendent for Finance & Operations, District Treasurer; that the 2019-20 Tentative Amended Budget be approved and that a Public Hearing date be set for June 8, 2020. It is further recommended that the 2019-20 Tentative Amended Budget be placed on public display from April 21, 2020 through the Public Hearing. The Tentative Amended Budget will be placed on display at the same locations used for the regular budget, which include the public libraries and the District's website. We will also arrange to have the Notice of the Public Hearing published in an April edition of the local newspaper; and that the Board of Education approve the student fees for the 2020-2021 school year as presented. Ms. Hahn seconded the motion. Upon a roll call vote being taken, the members voted as follows:

AYE: Mr. Robitaille, Mr. Dronen, Ms. Ducommun, Dr. Glucksman, Ms. Hahn, Mr. McLane, Ms. Albrecht

NAY: none

The motion passed.

Discussion then took place on Bid Package 3 for the summer of 2020 construction. Mr. Robitaille noted that he asked for the item to be pulled because while it is not a large amount in and of itself, it is part of a very large dollar amount. He noted that the time should be taken as a Board to make sure they have gotten a little bit of color on it from the administration, discuss it if need be and then hopefully approve it. Mr. Robitaille asked if either Dr. Sally or Mr. Johnson would walk the Board through the highlights of Bid Package 3.

Mr. Johnson noted that last fall, a 15-year facilities plan was reviewed and the first year of work will be during the summer of 2020 that will occur at both campuses. The work is a mix of maintenance work including roof replacements and concrete work at the Northfield campus. At the Winnetka campus, about half of the third floor in the North and Tower Buildings will be converted to match the finishes and the classroom experience that the school has in the new construction. This work will involve moving department offices and creating larger classroom spaces. This work has been bid in three bid packages and this is the last of them and includes audio visual (AV) and concrete. A virtual bid opening took place on Zoom, where a person from Pepper Construction opened the bid envelopes. There was good interest in both bid packages – four bidders for concrete and eight for AV. There were two companies who do not typically bid public work, they were disqualified as they did not have the right bid bonds, documentation and references that were needed. Even though AV is a small part of it, it is something that really needs to go right for the teachers and students in those classrooms. This is why the first two bidders were passed over and the decision was made to use Conference Technology.

The plan for this work was to always start part of it over spring break in terms of asbestos abatement. Some of those classrooms would not have been used during fourth quarter. Work would have been limited during the fourth quarter while school was in session so as not to distract students and teachers, but now that in-person school has been cancelled for the remainder of the school year, the pace of work has increased. Prior to any work taking place, New Trier met with Pepper Construction to ensure that the labor and materials needed would be available in order to complete the work by the fall. Pepper Construction did two weeks of due diligence and confirmed they would have the necessary labor and materials. Now there is an earlier start and a lot of good progress is being made. Contractors are following social distancing guidelines, there are onsite inspections, and workers are separate from New Trier's facilities staff. The District is excited about the work and the benefits it will bring to the students, staff and the community. The school looks forward to showing it off in the fall.

Ms. Albrecht noted that this Bid Package is about \$250,000 under the budget estimates. Mr. Johnson noted that he forgot to mention the following information last month – the original budget was created before the conversions of two more classroom spaces were added to the project. To meet the budget, work on one stairwell was put aside until next year. While not in the original estimate, it was determined that the classroom work could be done this summer. The scope was adjusted to add those after the official fall estimate was done. This is one of the main reasons why the District was tracking tight to the budget. The District is now seeing some relief in the last bid package and will carefully monitor change orders to make sure it hits its targets.

Mr. Robitaille moved that the Board of Education award the prime trade contracts for the 2020 Renovations Project to those contractors as recommended by Pepper Construction, as included in Bid Package 3. Mr. McLane seconded the motion. Upon a roll call vote being taken, the members voted as follows:

AYE: Mr. Dronen, Ms. Ducommun, Dr. Glucksman, Ms. Hahn, Mr. McLane, Mr. Robitaille, Ms. Albrecht

NAY: none

The motion passed.

IX. Board Member Reports

There were no Board Member reports.

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

Since in-person school is cancelled for the remainder of the year, including any events, Dr. Sally noted that it is important to keep connecting with students and celebrating New Trier's seniors. More of that is to come over the next few weeks. The Finance Committee and the Facilities Steering Committee will continue to do their respective work. Dr. Sally also received the draft Policy Manual that the Policy Committee will begin to work on.

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

XI. ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Ducommun moved, and Dr. Glucksman seconded, the motion to adjourn. Upon a voice vote being taken, all members indicated they were in favor.

The meeting adjourned at 9:02 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lindsey Ruston, Secretary

Cathleen Albrecht, President