

**NEW TRIER TOWNSHIP HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT 203  
REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION  
August 24, 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 at New Trier High School – Northfield Campus, 7 Happ Road, in Room C234 on Monday, August 24, 2020 at 6:30 p.m.

**Members Present**

Ms. Cathy Albrecht, President  
Mr. Keith Dronen  
Ms. Carol Ducommun  
Ms. Jean Hahn  
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  
Mr. Scott Williams, Assistant Principal for Student Services, filling in for  
Mrs. Denise Dubravec, Principal – Winnetka Campus  
Mr. Paul Waechtler, Principal – Northfield Campus

**Members Present Via Phone**

Dr. Marc Glucksman, Vice President  
Mr. Brad McLane

**Also Present**

Ms. Niki Dizon, Director of Communications; Mr. Michael Marassa, Chief Technology Officer; Ms. Renee Zoladz, Director of Human Resources; other administrators, faculty and staff; Mr. Mike Hill, Technology Department, Mr. Eric Johnson, Technology Department; Ms. Lindsey Ruston, Board of Education Secretary; members of the press and community.

**BUSINESS MEETING**

**I. CALL TO ORDER – 5:30 p.m. – C234**

Ms. Albrecht called the Regular Meeting of August 24, 2020 of the Board of Education to order at 5:32 p.m. in room C234 at the Northfield campus. Ms. Albrecht then stated that a full, in-person meeting is not practical or prudent due to the Governor’s declared disaster.

Roll call was taken, and all members were present, except for Mr. Dronen, Dr. Glucksman and Mr. McLane.

Ms. Albrecht asked for a motion to move to Closed Session. Ms. Ducommun moved that the Board adjourn to closed session for the purpose of discussing collective negotiating matters between the District and its employees or their representatives, or deliberations concerning salary schedules for one or more classes of employees and for 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. Ms. Hahn seconded the motion. Upon a roll call vote being taken, the members voted as follows:

AYE: Ms. Ducommun, Ms. Hahn, Mr. Robitaille, Mr. Dronen, Ms. Albrecht

NAY: none

ABSENT: Dr. Glucksman, Mr. McLane

The motion passed.

**II. CLOSED SESSION – 5:30 p.m. – Zoom**

**III. BUSINESS MEETING – Open Session – 6:30 p.m. – Zoom**

Ms. Albrecht called the Regular Meeting of August 24, 2020 of the Board of Education to order at 6:34 p.m. Ms. Albrecht then stated that a full in-person meeting is not practical or prudent due to the Governor’s declared disaster. Roll call was taken, and all members were present. Dr. Glucksman and Mr. McLane participated via telephone.

#### **IV. Minutes**

Ms. Albrecht asked for any comments or adjustments on the minutes of the Regular Meeting of July 13, 2020 (open and closed session), the Special Meeting of July 29, 2020 (open and closed session), the Special Meeting of August 6, 2020 (open and closed session) and the Special Meeting of August 12, 2020 (open and closed session). Ms. Ducommun and Mr. Robitaille had a few changes that were incorporated. Ms. Hahn moved, and Mr. Dronen seconded, the motion to approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting of July 13, 2020 (open and closed session), the Special Meeting of July 29, 2020 (open and closed session), the Special Meeting of August 6, 2020 (open and closed session), and the Special Meeting of August 12, 2020 (open and closed session). Upon a roll call vote being taken, the members voted as follows:

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

NAY: none

The motion passed.

#### **V. Communications**

Ms. Albrecht invited anyone from the audience who wished to address the Board to come forward and fill out a yellow communications request form and give it to Ms. Dizon, Director of Communications. There was one request for public comment. All comments were to be made in accordance with Board Policy 2-230, including keeping to a three minute or less time limit. Ms. Cindy Levine, with the League of Women Voters of Wilmette shared comments on public discourse. Ms. Albrecht then asked Ms. Ruston if there were any comments submitted electronically, to which Ms. Ruston replied that there were none.

#### **VI. Special Orders of Business**

##### **A. Update from Campus Principals and FOIA Report**

Mr. Paul Waechtler, Principal for the Northfield Campus, shared the following student events and program updates from that campus:

- He welcomed the Board to the beginning of another school year.
- Mr. Waechtler also noted that it has been good to see students on campus for athletics.
- Freshmen adviser rooms held meet and greets via Zoom prior to the start of school so everyone could attend.
- He thanked technology and Physical Plant Services (PPS) for their amazing work over the summer. Mr. Waechtler often walked the campus with Mr. Jim Maile, Northfield Facilities Manager, to figure out department office spaces, what classrooms would look like and what signage was needed. The new library on the third floor is almost finished.
- The school has been calling families who have not finalized the enrollment process, so their students are not excluded on the first day. That process was completed today.
- He thanked Ms. Gail Gamrath, Assistant Principal – Northfield Campus and Ms. Natalia Katsinis, Administrative Assistant to Ms. Gamrath, for all their work on the schedule, which is more complicated than ever.
- Today, Ms. Lisa Dublin, sponsor of the Newbies club on the Northfield Campus, and Mr. Waechtler met with Transfer families. There was a presentation and a question and answer for student and families. Then transfer students met with previous transfer students to learn about their experiences and how to get involved at New Trier.

Mr. Scott Williams, Assistant Principal for Student Services, filled in for Mrs. Denise Dubravec, Principal for the Winnetka Campus, who could not attend. He shared the following student events and program updates from that campus:

- Both Mr. Williams and Mrs. Dubravec are excited for the unique beginning of the school year. It has been nice to see staff around the building and they are ultimately optimistic to see students around the school as well.
- Staff have been busy putting together classes and class kits for the more hands-on experiences.
- There is a staff meeting scheduled for tomorrow morning.
- Mr. Williams noted that students are on campus getting ready for Lagniappe-Potpourri as well as participating in athletics.
- Mrs. Dubravec is working on a Canvas COVID Course that all students will complete along with the Trevians Caring for Trevians Pledge. She is also working with Ms. Niki Dizon, Director of Communications, on a “Day in the Life” student video which will show what it will be like to be a student on campus.

- Administrators are also exploring ways to get sophomore students acclimated to the Winnetka campus such as a campus tour.
- Mr. Williams does many of the new registrations with families. They had the option to come in to complete their registration conference and then take a tour.
- Adviser Chairs have done an excellent job and their leadership evident in helping to provide advisers with guidance into standards for the remote environment and the best ways to support their advisees.
- Student mental health is on the forefront of everyone's minds. Mr. Williams and Mrs. Dubravec have partnered with Social Work to think through ways to support students who are struggling in the remote environment. This may include a support group for those students who cannot attend extracurriculars or be hybrid due to a personal or a family medical condition. Mrs. Dubravec has partnered with Ms. Kris Hummel, Student Assistance Program Coordinator, to develop a student group to help inform some of the social-emotional programming that is done as a school.

Mr. Johnson gave the FOIA report noting that there were six requests since the last Board meeting. They have been around two topics; one is for minutes or records related to Board meetings and the other is staffing issues for the school year. Two of the requests are outstanding but will be fulfilled this week.

### **B. Introduction of New Teachers**

Typically, new teachers and their departments chairs attend the meeting for this introduction, but due to the pandemic, this year, teachers and leaders will be introduced by several administrators. Dr. Sally noted it was an unusual welcome for new teachers, but it is important part of bringing people together as part of the team. The District wants to recognize its new teachers and leaders. Dr. Joanne Panopoulos, Assistant Superintendent for Special Education, introduced the Special Education Leaders. She noted that over the past year, there has been a shift in the administrative support structure. Leaders include Ms. Megan Zajac, Director; Mr. Sean Clemenz, Department Chair and Ms. Colleen Koulentes, Educational and Life Skills (ELS) Coordinator. Next, Dr. Panopoulos shared about new faculty. Ms. Katie Lynch joins as an ELS teacher at the Winnetka campus, Ms. Irene Morell is the new psychologist and Ms. Maggie Schmieder joins as an ELS teacher at the Northfield campus. Dr. Tim Hayes, Assistant Superintendent for Student Services, introduced Ms. Susan Antonini who joined the Student Assistance Program and Ms. Anne Marie Ricchio who is the new Health Services Coordinator. Mr. Peter Tragos, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, introduced faculty from three departments. Ms. Lauren Schaefer joins the Applied Arts department as a Family and Consumer Sciences teacher and Ms. Catrina Matos joins the Mathematics department. Three new teachers joined the Science department: Mr. Christopher Anderson, Ms. Hanna Cohen and Ms. Eugenia Kim. All three administrators shared information on each new person, including their time at New Trier, if applicable, education, among other details.

Dr. Sally also warmly welcomed the new teachers.

Ms. Ducommun commented that she missed seeing everyone in-person after all the years of having that as a highlight. She was thankful for the accommodation and looks forward to meeting them in-person sometime.

### **C. Report on New Trier Reopening and Operational Plan for 2020-2021**

Dr. Sally presented an update on New Trier's Reopening and Operational Plan for 2020-2021. Today was the first day for teachers with Wednesday, August 26<sup>th</sup> being the first day for students. Dr. Sally wanted to take a moment to recognize the difficulties and losses the community has experienced with the pandemic before moving on to new beginnings such as the school year. This was similar to the message Ms. Talar Khosdeghian, Music Accompanist and Support Staff Association President, delivered at the staff meeting earlier in the day.

Dr. Sally noted that the District has been working hard to create a solution but knows that no solution is perfect. The District will continue to work towards a great year, but it will take time and continued problem-solving. Teachers are working hard to problem solve, to have a great start to the school year and to connect with students. The partnership with parents and the community is of the utmost importance now as the school works towards in-person learning. Dr. Sally went through the guiding principles and then spoke about starting the year strongly with remote learning, getting students on campus, staff accommodations and changes in practices and procedures.

Mr. Tragos then spoke about a strong start with remote learning, noting that specifics were shared a couple of weeks ago at the Special Board Meeting. The goal is to launch the year with hope and compassion. Mr. Tragos was reminded, as faculty and staff have returned to campus, that schools are hopeful places. To watch students, not

necessarily grow in a teacher's presence, but that educators are optimists at heart as they are working for a future that they do not always get to see. There needs to be hope and compassion for each other, for the circumstances, for students and families, for teachers and administrators to make the year the best it can possibly be during these times. Although it will be a different year, it will still be New Trier with the people and the place that students and the community knows. Mr. Tragos then shared how this strong start is achieved by building community with students, establishing routines, simplifying access to the learning management system known as Canvas, continuing academic and social-emotional supports and finally, flexibility for everyone. Mr. Tragos then spent time reviewing the first day of school, which is a Trevian Day. The day will begin with an extended Adviser Room followed by all nine periods. The purpose of the day is to establish routines and meet teachers. All teachers will have their Canvas pages published by the end of the day on Tuesday along with a Zoom link for each class. Teachers will use a variety of instructional methods during remote learning.

Mr. Waechtler discussed welcoming students to campus and the opportunities available, this will be done as safely and effectively as possible as there are many benefits, such as student engagement and socialization. Athletics is underway with hundreds of students on campus for fall sports. Performing Arts have also begun with Lagniappe underway and other performances will follow. Club sponsors are working hard for activities and intramurals to create safe, socially distanced options on campus. The District continues to explore ways to bring freshmen and sophomores on campus for orientation. Like Mr. Williams, Mr. Waechtler and Ms. Gamrath completed new student registrations. These were done in-person and outside. There has been good success welcoming some students to campus and the District will continue to explore ways to do so.

Dr. Renee Zoladz, Director of Human Resources, presented on staff accommodations. She noted that ensuring there is an adequate number of staff members available to open the school is an important metric to consider in planning. It is most important to ensure that New Trier teachers teach students as much as possible. This summer, as many elementary districts moved to remote learning, the District heard from many working parents about the challenges of having children at home and needing to be in school to teach. Overwhelmingly, teachers want to be here and are committed to New Trier students. These working parents have been collaborating with Human Resources to create schedules that will allow them to teach remotely some days and still be on campus other days. Supervision of older elementary school students has been an issue for some teachers, so the school is opening a Zoom Room for those children that can work independently. Ms. Sabrina Lafevers, Department Assistant for Modern and Classical Languages, Art and Applied Arts at the Northfield Campus, has volunteered to support as well as decorate the room. There are currently 14 children that will utilize the room. The District does not allow a teacher's child to be in the classroom while they are teaching, so this setup will allow for the school to maintain its goal of keeping New Trier teachers teaching students. The District has also been working with the on-site daycare, Bright Horizons, to ensure that working parents have access to daycare. Bright Horizons plans to open the week of September 14<sup>th</sup>. In order to flex teachers' schedules, the District has had to prepare its substitute employees to enter the new world of remote and hybrid teaching. Last week, Human Resources hosted five hands-on sessions with the help of the Instructional Technology Specialists. There will be additional sessions in the coming weeks. Substitute hiring is also taking place.

Next, Dr. Hayes discussed the three changes in the way the school operates. First, the school has centralized its attendance procedures. It is important to have timely, accurate attendance early in the day. The school will also ask parents for more information about symptoms when students are called in sick. This needs to be done in order to track symptoms and the health of students in the school. Second, the District is going to implement the Ruvna health screener. Each morning a person will receive a message to complete the form, once they do the app will give that person a QR code if they have been approved to be on campus for the day. If a person is not cleared to be on campus, they will see instructions to stay home and contact their primary physician. The District is required by the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) to use a daily health screener. For students during this phase of remote learning, they must complete a Google form to participate in extracurriculars. This was started over the summer and will continue until students return to campus for academic learning. At that time, students will begin to use the Ruvna app. Each day parents will receive a message from the app to clear their student for attendance at school that day. Dr. Sally emphasized the need for strong communication with families and students, and it will continue as the situation is fluid. He reminded everyone to visit the website and to use that as a resource for information.

Dr. Sally then shared a few more comments about the path to in-person learning. Many pieces have been discussed extensively and Dr. Sally provided a brief reminder on each. They include the Ladder to Reopening and the Reopening Advisory Board (RAB), which has its first meeting on Thursday. On August 28<sup>th</sup>, the District will launch a webpage to provide more transparent information to families, students and communities in terms of what the school is thinking about in terms of metrics and where those are locally, regionally and in the county. He went on to share

further details about the Target 8 Week Calendar and the frequency in which the RAB will need to meet. Dr. Hayes noted that the year will require flexibility from families. It is possible that a student will need to be remote for a time if they have come into contact with someone who has tested positive for the virus, despite doing everything right. The hybrid plan provides the kind of flexibility that allows a student who is not feeling well or may need to be in quarantine to still be engaged in class and continue their learning at home.

Finally, Dr. Sally noted that the District's goal is sustainable in-person learning, but if it is not done right, it can fall apart quickly. Some area high schools have had difficulty maintaining their in-person plan. The issue was not about contact and transfer in school, but rather the behavior in the community. Loyola Academy and Maine South had similar stories in terms of community transmission outside of school. He noted that community health means community commitment and it starts with the Trevian Pledge. The District has worked hard to keep open the path to in-person learning. Dr. Sally asked for the help of students and families. Everyone is faced with a public health issue and there is no choice but to be in this together. Regarding in-person learning, everyone must stick to the protocols both inside and outside of school. Some disruption and sacrifice are needed by everyone to make this work. Teachers want to be in school as do students and families want their students there too, if this is going to happen, it is this kind of commitment that is needed. This can be done best if it is done together. Dr. Sally then invited questions and comments from the Board.

Mr. Robitaille noted that Ruvna is being used for staff and inquired why it was not being used for students, to which Dr. Hayes replied that with students in remote learning, the number who need to complete the form is small. The school would be asking an overwhelming majority of parents to complete the survey when only a small fraction of students would be participating. The decision was to start with staff and then move to students once they are on campus. Mr. Robitaille noted the counter argument would be to get students in the habit of using the app but took Dr. Hayes' point that they are not in the building. Dr. Sally commented that there are a few technical issues to continue to work through, but for right now, the thought is to get a good start with staff.

Mr. Robitaille then inquired when the Board and the public would hear the outcomes from the Reopening Advisory Board meetings. Dr. Sally said it is his responsibility to make sure the Board is informed, and that Ms. Hahn is the Board representative. The website will be used to communicate information to the community. He noted that the data is out there and the RAB needs to bring it together to represent New Trier, the community, the larger community of staff and the region. The District wants it accessible, so people can see what is happening with the virus as well as motivate them to keep the positivity rate and incidence rate down so the school can move to as much in-person learning as will work this year. Mr. Robitaille encouraged early and often communication about the RAB. He shared that it seems still formative in terms of what it is actually going to do but is a great idea and Dr. Sally has the right representation. Mr. Robitaille also thinks there is misconception about what it is and what it is not. He suggested that the more information that could be published about its findings, it will demystify this for a lot of people.

Ms. Ducommun noted that for the first several weeks the RAB will meet weekly, which Dr. Sally confirmed. In following up with Mr. Robitaille comments, the graphics said that that will then inform what is thought about two weeks hence from there. She went on to note that it was discussed at the last meeting that the RAB would collectively review and make a recommendation to the superintendent, who then makes the decision about what needs to happen. Authority will not be given to the RAB to determine if school is open or not, but rather they will make a recommendation to Dr. Sally and his administrative team. Dr. Sally noted that was correct. There will also be oversight by the Board of Education.

Ms. Ducommun went on to confirm that the RAB will advise Dr. Sally and his team about weeks five and six, which is when special education students are scheduled to arrive on campus. He would also speak with the Board to determine if those students actually do get to come into school in weeks five and six. Dr. Sally confirmed that this was all correct. He went on to note when the information would be shared. Wednesday was selected as the meeting day in order to give the District a couple of days to post the information on Friday to inform people about the coming week or the week after.

Ms. Ducommun asked what will happen between the end of the RAB meeting on Wednesday and when the information is posted on the website on Friday and how that decision is made. Dr. Sally shared that there would be discussion with the administrative team, any specialized discussions and follow up that might be needed with those on the RAB, along with discussion with Ms. Hahn and the Board. At that point, a decision is made and posted on Friday. This will be monitored the following week in case something happens, but it will be established that the school is ready. Between Wednesday and Friday, the Board will have a chance to hear about the RAB's discussion as

well as talk with Dr. Sally and Ms. Hahn. Mr. Robitaille thanked Dr. Sally for outlining the process. Dr. Sally stated that on the one hand, ISBE is putting this decision in the hands of the superintendent, which is explicit. The decision is made in collaboration and consultation with the Board. The discussions with the Board will be an essential part, as they are representatives of the community.

Mr. McLane thanked everyone for their extraordinary amount of work that has taken place. He is pleased to see the progress on what he calls the NTT+ Dashboard. He thinks it is concrete and will be invaluable as a critical tool for the RAB. He looks forward to the first output on Friday. Mr. McLane then asked Dr. Sally to provide more information, progress or nonprogress, on the items that he brought up at the Special Meeting. The first is rapid testing, what is being considered in terms of guiding metrics, contact tracing, and what happens after 3:30 p.m. regarding the activities and behaviors that students and families are engaging in.

Dr. Sally commented that the District continues to pursue and look at all possibilities for establishing universal rapid testing. The capacity is not there right now to make that happen; however, the school has good contacts and continues to work with those who are running this at the University of Illinois. Dr. Hayes has been working with NorthShore University Health System to see what options they have, but right now there are turnaround time and capacity issues, though they are open to working with New Trier. The District has also been in contact with those doing the University of Illinois test, who received emergency Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approval last week. That is the type of test that really is scalable, so the question becomes if they have the ability to take on school districts. There have been several conversations with them, and the District has asked for another meeting.

There are two categories of metrics. The first is operational and if the school able to keep the number of staff and students in the building safe. That will be an ongoing data gathering practice and review by the RAB. The District knows where the bottlenecks will be such as restrooms, lunch, and going in and out of school. These will be modified as needed. The other set of metrics are viral. There are a few organizations who produce school level or area level metrics. Regional metrics will impact the community as well as staff as they live in many places around the area. Other important metrics include the positivity rate as well as the incidence of cases per 100,000 population on average. The impact of quarantine on staffing and the presence of positive cases in the school and may require that the system needs to reset. Analysis has begun regarding what the numbers look like.

Dr. Hayes spoke to the contract tracing piece. It is being done now in partnership with the Cook County Department of Public Health (CCDPH). That is the recommendation from CCDPH, IDPH, and ISBE – to work with the school’s local health department on tracing. Dr. Hayes noted that he has heard some people may be talking about contact tracing when in fact they mean tracking, which is different. Some universities are asking students to download an app onto their phone, and they track where students are and how often they are in contact with one another. The District explored that early on to understand legally if this was a possibility. The legal opinion that was received was that it was not possible due to being a public high school. This speaks to Mr. McLane’s point about how the school makes sure that students are making safe and healthy decisions outside of New Trier. This point goes back to Dr. Sally’s earlier point that the school needs to work in partnership with families and that families are taking this seriously. There also needs to be a consistent message to young people that they must be practicing the best health behaviors, not only while at school, but when they are together outside of school. These behaviors will make the difference between being able to keep school open or needing to stay in remote learning. Dr. Sally noted that the nurse’s office is the center of the school’s contact tracing and communication with CCDPH. There is capacity to expand personnel in that area as needed. If the school needs to do a lot of contact tracing, other metrics will show that the District needs to think about where it is on the ladder. While contact tracing is time consuming, once students are in the building, the school will know where their classes are. Technology is working on a swipe system so the school knows where a student is for lunch and free periods. Students will have some sense of being able to move in the building but will have to select a space to sit for those times. Mr. Michael Marassa, Chief Technology Officer, and his team are working on this piece. Mr. McLane thanked Dr. Sally for the additional details as it shows substantial progress since the August 12<sup>th</sup> Board Meeting.

Mr. Dronen reiterated what Dr. Sally and Dr. Hayes said earlier and that was that the school needs the help of students and families. Mr. Dronen inquired if the health guidance of wearing a mask, social distancing and avoiding large gatherings will be stressed in adviser room, to which Dr. Sally confirmed. He also inquired if this message would be reinforced with parents and conveyed to the community with constant communication. Dr. Sally also confirmed that for Mr. Dronen, noting that the school does need the community’s cooperation to keep school open.

Ms. Hahn inquired if there was anything in place to assess the “Covid slide” or differences in learning and a plan to

address it. Mr. Tragos responded, that on the curricular side, time has been spent aligning fourth quarter and first quarter. Adjustments have been made to first quarter based on what was taught or not during fourth quarter, particularly in sequential courses such as math and modern and classical languages. Teachers are planning early formative assessments in those classes to get a sense of where students are at. Dr. Panopoulos noted that in Special Education, a student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) goals will be used by case managers to assess students. Faculty will also observe as much as possible and will assess from that. The department will also develop remote learning plans, which is separate from the IEP, but is based on it. It reflects the way that the service delivery is happening for those students in both the remote and the hybrid environments. Mr. Tragos then noted that the fourth quarter to first quarter work did not only happen internally, but also with the sender school curriculum directors and assistant superintendents in aligning what they taught in eighth grade to the plans for ninth grade. Information was shared regarding student readiness for ninth grade and much focused on sequential courses. New Trier has adjusted first quarter ninth grade curricula to match what students did in eighth grade.

Ms. Hahn noted that it cannot be said enough that the people in the room and throughout the District, and the amount of extra work that has been done since March to make this happen is truly staggering and an unselfish effort. Everyone has dug deep and given so much more of themselves than they have ever been asked and the community is so fortunate to have the District working for them. She shared her thanks and hopes it can be a model to everyone that if there is an opportunity to do something extra, that it is taken.

Ms. Hahn then inquired if the school knew how many of the students participating in the on-campus experiences are incoming freshmen. Dr. Sally and Dr. Hayes were not sure of the exact number, but Mr. Waechtler noted around 80 students tried out for tennis.

Dr. Glucksman thanked everyone for their thoughtful planning which rivals any educational institution and many corporate institutions as well. He inquired when the work will really end for the RAB. He noted that the school is aiming for week five for a go/no go decision. One must constantly manage all conditions and metrics that are going to be decided upon. Dr. Glucksman asked how the RAB will work after week five. Dr. Sally responded that it will be virus dependent. It may be possible that the RAB may not need to meet that often for a variety of reasons such as the virus is at a low level and the school is doing fine or it is at a high level and the school needs to be remote. In those instances, the RAB will not need to meet frequently as decisions will not have to be made, but there will continue to be constant updating of metrics and observing. The RAB will meet more frequently when the school is trying to make decisions about safety and if the school can be open without increasing the spread of the virus. The medical professionals will provide information about what they are seeing and what the latest research shows. The RAB's work will continue throughout the year. Even when a vaccine becomes available, the school will need even more guidance from the medical professionals.

Ms. Albrecht noted that Dr. Sally included the latest guidance from the IDPH. It is interim guidance from August 20<sup>th</sup>, but it seemed vague to Ms. Albrecht. IDPH strongly recommends that a person be tested or evaluated if they are exhibiting one of the symptoms listed. She hopes that they come out with more guidance and noted this is why the District needs the RAB and local, concrete information to work with. Dr. Hayes noted that IDPH is updating the chart almost weekly, along with the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs). He believes they are trying to get to as much clarity as possible, but agrees with Ms. Albrecht, that there is a lot of room for interpretation and it raises questions. She also noted that there would need to be a lot of tests available if any of the symptoms mentioned required medical evaluation. Ms. Albrecht mentioned how appreciative she was to have the RAB.

Next, Ms. Albrecht mentioned that it was Opening Day for teachers, and she was one of the people to welcome them back. There were around 600 people on Zoom for the opening remarks. She noted the excitement to get back. Some of the demands are the same for this year, but the school is in unfamiliar territory. She went on to share additional comments, noting she is confident that teachers are doing everything they can to build out a program that works under the current conditions. They will continue to refine as needed and make this as perfect of a remote situation as possible. Every part of the hybrid plan requires a strong remote aspect to it. She looks forward to seeing how the year and the programs develop. Her ultimate hope for the end of the school year is that the District develops the perfect remote program, which is packaged up and put on a shelf and not needed again.

Dr. Sally added that New Trier and the elementary districts in the Township are working incredibly closely together. Each sender school is unique and have their own specific way of approaching this. The group meets formally at least weekly and talks almost daily to ensure there is consistency for the community. Sender schools have been invited to be observers of the RAB so they receive the same information and can think how it impacts their families, some of

whom are New Trier families as well. Dr. Sally wanted to make sure that the community heard about the great work, and he went on to thank the superintendents of the elementary schools in the Township.

#### **D. 2020-2021 Annual Plan – Equity**

Dr. Sally presented on the 2020-2021 Annual Plan for Equity, noting that the District is behind on it due to the pandemic. This will be the second year under the Strategic Plan New Trier 2030. Each year, there is an Annual Plan to try and meet the goals that have been established in the Strategic Plan. The goals reside in the six framework areas. Typically, by May of a particular year, the District will have established how the work has gone the year before and what the plan is for the coming year. The overarching goals of the Strategic Plan should be kept in mind, but in a reasonable fashion, given that it is going to be a difficult year. Much of the work we are doing addresses many of the Strategic Planning goals and progress will be made in each area. In September, it will be time to establish a plan and goals in light of the pandemic. Before beginning with the main focus of the presentation, which was summer work that took place around equity, Dr. Sally shared a brief overview of the work and goals of the other frameworks.

Dr. Hayes then presented specifically on the Culture, Climate, and Equity framework. The goal of the 19-20 school year was to have departments work to define goals in each area and pursue those goals. Starting in the spring, it became clear that the school needed to go beyond that in response to concerns with events that were happening around the country as well as the community. Even within the last few days, there have been two incidents where issues of equity are at the center, one was at the beach and the other in Kenosha. There will be continued conversation that the school will need to be engaged in. Over the summer, one large group was brought together to discuss each area and from there seven subcommittees were created to determine how to proceed. Dr. Hayes then went through highlights from each of those committees. It is important to note that this is the brainstorming work of the committees, this has not been discussed or vetted with the areas that may be impacted by each one of these ideas. The next step will be to refine and prioritize these ideas.

Dr. Zoladz was the co-chair for the Climate and Professional Expectations subcommittee and shared the work of that group. They focused on how the climate and culture impacts students and staff and their experiences with equity. The recommendation from the subcommittee is that New Trier should partner with a third-party organization to conduct an equity audit. The goal would be to develop a deep understanding of New Trier's climate and the impact of professional expectations on climate as they relate to equity. The data from the audit would be analyzed in order to create an action plan for growth. The committee particularly focused on this because many members have been close to the equity work that has taken place throughout the District, and the audit would assist in helping to define the next action steps that would have the most impact. In terms of hiring, the recommendation is to work with hiring committees to hone interviewing skills to address implicit biases. Discussions would focus on race and equity and how a candidate's own race may impact their teaching. Professional development was another topic that was discussed, particularly helping people to reflect on their own journey and meeting others where they are at. The subcommittee would like to work with the Professional Development subcommittee to develop school leaders' abilities to engage in thoughtful equity leadership within their departments, specifically by having them attend SEED (Seeking Educational Equity and Diversity) for Leaders. The committee would also like to expand the professional development and onboarding that occurs in the District by engaging all staff in baseline equity training. They would also like to collaborate with athletics, performing arts and activities leadership to develop pathways to ensure that the equity work that is being done during the school day extends into the work that is being done with students outside of the classroom. The recommendation has also been made that the Joint Committee on Teacher Evaluation review the *Characteristics of Professional Practice* to ensure that the equity work and leadership is highlighted in that document. Finally, the committee also wants to give students opportunities to interact with others from backgrounds different from their own. This subcommittee, along with the Restorative Practices subcommittee, would like to consider ways that staff members can participate in these practices as necessary. The committee was excited by the discussions that took place over the summer and the input from others that was contributed.

Mr. Tragos was the chair of the Curriculum and Instruction subcommittee, which looked at the experience of students and alumni in classrooms as it relates to equity. Many students and alumni wrote the school and the Board to share those experiences. These experiences were enlightening for the group, who were then interested in action. Mr. Tragos then shared four goals of this subcommittee. The first is to organize a student advisory council to understand the experience in curriculum and instruction. This will amplify students voices and bring them into curriculum development as co-collaborators. The student advisory council will make and plan curriculum together. Mr. Tragos spoke of a professional development strand. The subcommittee also thought about a student's four-year experience, especially the scope and sequence as the group starts to evaluate texts and topics to ensure that they are

inclusive and provide multiple perspectives. Lastly, the group would like to explore peer-to-peer coaching with staff to enhance curriculum and instructional practices through an equity lens. There are a lot of opportunities to connect with students and alumni as well as staff on this work.

The Policy and Systemic Practices subcommittee was co-chaired by Mr. Johnson. He thanked his co-chair, Ms. Jill Cervantes, Post High School Counseling Department Chair, who did the lion's share of the work on this subcommittee. This group looked at practices and procedures across the institution. This means that there may be areas that were discussed with no specific representation from these areas on the subcommittee. Part of the goal this month is to gather feedback as the group works to refine the following goals. The first is to focus on reporting and to make more information visible to community, staff and students with an equity focus. The extracurricular report as well as the reports done by Mr. Tragos to highlight the differences in equity. The committee believes that some of the best solutions will come from faculty, staff, parents and students. They also recommend that the school continues to address traditions and practices across the institution with an eye on equity. One idea that the subcommittee would like to consider is a pilot of mixed gender adviser rooms for next year's incoming freshmen to determine if the school can better support all students in an inclusive way. This needs more conversation. Another item to think about is the graduation tradition and how it can continue to evolve to preserve the school's tradition and history, but also be open and inclusive to all students. New traditions were developed during the fourth quarter, particularly around graduation. Again, more discussions are needed with those who are directly involved in it.

The Professional Development subcommittee was chaired by Dr. Chimille Dillard, Director of Curriculum and Instruction. This group began by taking into consideration that staff will enter into professional development with a wide variety of experiences. They have proposed a tiered approach so that the school can best match what those previous experiences were with what a person needs now. Tier A is foundational while Tier D is action-oriented work that is discipline specific.

The Restorative Practices and Discipline subcommittee was co-chaired by Ms. Gamrath and Ms. Trish Sheridan, Junior Girls Adviser Chair. This group looked at restorative justice and how that approach impacts the school's work on discipline. Dr. Hayes went on to share additional information about restorative justice. The committee did research on peer-to-peer councils that have been implemented in other schools. They also recommended the school continues to review and revise its communication with New Trier students, staff and community as events arise.

Mr. Waechtler was co-chair of the Student Programming, Awareness and Alternatives to Seminar Day subcommittee. He thanked Ms. Pat Savage-Williams, Equity Coordinator and Special Education Department Coordinator, who also co-chaired the committee. Dr. Hayes also participated in this group. The group stemmed from the comments that Board members received about bringing back Seminar Day. They discussed what types of student programming might be successful, although it is feasible to bring back Seminar Day during a pandemic. The group also deliberated if a one-time event would be as meaningful as something that was more embedded and constant during the school year. Topics for programming and a variety of formats were also discussed. In order for this to be successful, students need to have a voice in it and be able to talk with their peers, so a variety of student groups will be used to facilitate this to make sure it resonates with the students and not just the adults. Lastly, the subcommittee recommended an exploration of opportunities for student groups to bring in speakers for either their group or all students to hear.

The last subcommittee was Student Voice and Creating an Inclusive Community, co-chaired by Ms. Kiran Subhani, English Department Faculty, and Mr. Cory Calmes, Bridges Faculty. Their work focused on the affinity groups that have grown over the past few years that have created a space for students to feel connected to the school and each other and how this structure could be expanded for more entry points for students. Another focus was how these groups will continue to function during the unusual 2020-2021 school year. This group also looked at the inclusivity of the school's physical space. A school's space sends powerful messages about who is welcome, who belongs in a space and the expectations of students at that school. The question becomes how a school makes its space represent its values as a school community.

Dr. Sally shared comments, including that the subcommittees shared important tasks that need to be reviewed and spread out into a longer-term plan. Between now and September, there is going to be significant review in various areas, which Mr. Johnson mentioned, to bring forward an Annual Plan that will make progress for students in this area but done within the bandwidth of the school given the pandemic.

Mr. Dronen commented that this was a good report and given how busy the summer has been, there was time to

delve into some of these topics. Mr. Dronen asked Mr. Johnson for more detail on the mixed gender adviser rooms. Mr. Johnson acknowledged that the subcommittee did not have many experienced advisers on it. The goal for this month is to hear from Mr. Williams, Ms. Gamrath and long-time advisers to understand their history and traditions with the program. The subcommittee conversation focused on two topics, the first was understanding gender roles and if having single gender adviser rooms is reinforcing traditional gender roles. The second is understanding what has been learned about LGBTQ+ issues and students with different gender identities and how it may be difficult for some of those students to be in an adviser room that is tied to gender. Some may consider themselves gender fluid or may consider themselves trans and are in an adviser room that does not match their identity, so it might be helpful for those students to have a program that is not solely focused on gender. There is a lot to talk through and it is important to understand how the tradition informs the program and then next steps. Mr. Dronen inquired what next steps might be, which Mr. Johnson explained would be to vet and discuss these items with those involved and understand how they fit into the institution's priorities. Mr. Dronen inquired if the decision has already been made to transition to mixed gender adviser rooms, to which Mr. Johnson said no it had not. Dr. Sally clarified that this was all brainstorming and administrators are not presenting any particular item for this year's Annual Plan. These are the ideas that emerged from important conversations.

Mr. Williams added that further discussions should not only include experienced advisers, himself and Ms. Gamrath, but most importantly, the leadership of the adviser program. The adviser chairs should be included in any decision making. It is a topic that has come up many times. The program does try to accommodate students who do not identify in traditional ways to meet their individual needs. Cross gender programming is also encouraged between boy's and girl's adviser rooms as well as creating as comfortable an environment that the school can for students. This topic did come up in an adviser program survey that was given a few years ago and results were split 50/50. Mr. Williams noted that it does warrant further exploration.

Dr. Sally highlighted that the school has limited capacity to take on certain issues this year. If it is determined that the school should take this on now, it would be in a study phase first with a lot of information gathering happening. He shared additional thoughts. Mr. Johnson noted that the nice thing about the heading of Policy and Systemic Practices is that it shows that the school is looking at these items across the institution, but one does not know where the discussions may go once they start. This is simply what emerged from initial discussions and more work is needed to process where the school goes next on them.

Mr. Robitaille noted that the word equity is used extensively, his concern is that there is not a common understanding of what the word means. When one Googles this term along with schools, the results are many different perspectives on what it means, such as it being gender based, sexual orientation based, race based, all of these things or something else completely different. Since it used extensively and drives so much of the school's decisions and conversations, if there is any way to reasonably have a common understanding of what equity means in the New Trier setting and he inquired what it means to this institution. He mentioned that he went through the Strategic Plan documents and found what best describes framework three in the brochure. He noted that it was not just equity, but culture and climate as well. After further comments, he noted that he did not have a good understanding of what it means. Dr. Sally shared the working definition of equity that is on the website. Dr. Hayes noted that this came from the work of the Equity Goals Committee during the 2019-2020 school year. The working definition of equity was the first task that the committee did so they had a common understanding about what is being discussed. In its simplest form, equity at New Trier aligns well with the school's belief that it should try its best to meet the individual needs of every student. This working definition was based on what the committee wanted to engage in. It is called a working definition because the committee wanted to acknowledge that as it does its work, they may need to come back to the definition to adjust it. The committee often goes back to the definition to make sure it fits with what the group believes it should be doing. Mr. Robitaille noted that Dr. Hayes' comments were helpful and suggested that the working definition be embedded into these discussions so it can be anchored back to what everyone is talking about. Mr. Robitaille said that while not crystal clear, it is very helpful in understanding the context of what equity means. Dr. Sally noted that this can be found on New Trier's Commitment to Equity webpage.

Ms. Hahn mentioned that the student voice piece is encouraging to hear. As Mr. Tragos noted earlier, schools are about hope and children embody the hope that everyone has for the future. In the voices that have been heard throughout either the racial upheaval in the country or the reopening, New Trier's young alums and students have provided some of the most passionate and effective advocacy. She noted it is so encouraging, and this generation will probably truly save us all. Ms. Hahn encouraged the District to explore even more opportunities for student voice throughout the frameworks as she can see opportunities for a broader range of students to participate. In the coming years, the District should find more ways, not just in the equity or curriculum pieces, but throughout the institution

where students could be brought in.

Ms. Hahn encouraged the District to keep the restorative justice piece at the forefront of the work that is being done. She noted it is much more than behavior management, it is foundational for all the equity work that the school does. The capacity to build relationships and form community when one works with this is important and is perfectly aligned with the mission.

Finally, dovetailing on Mr. Robitaille's comments, Ms. Hahn suggested that the Board think about participating in some form of equity workshop or training. This would perhaps lead to a common understanding and an opportunity to think about what it means to Board members in their roles to be a part of this. Ms. Hahn said it is something to consider and think about and that no decisions are needed on it now.

Ms. Ducommun inquired about the student advisory council and if alums would participate or only current students. Mr. Tragos responded that the council would be current students. A focus group is planned for September which includes alumni and students and is in response to what the District heard over the summer. The outgrowth of that is an advisory council that includes current students only. Dr. Hayes noted that each subcommittee went back to the list of people who submitted their interest in being engaged in the school's equity work and contacted them to talk through their ideas, many of whom are alums. Ms. Ducommun commented that all of those voices were informative, thoughtful and helpful for the Board to see. She had been thinking about how one manages a group of alums and students and noted that the voices of alums will be a strong input.

Mr. McLane noted that it was impressive that the District could muster the energy and focus to address the Strategic Plan and this weighty topic in the midst of a pandemic. He thanked the school and noted it was important to not lose sight of the long-term as this is what guides New Trier to its bright future that can be seen ahead to 2030. He shared his congrats on addressing this and doing it in a way that, for him, helped to further his understanding of the plan. Every step the District takes, Mr. McLane said he becomes better informed and helps him to understand.

Mr. McLane then inquire, to what degree, does this reflect input from other groups, such as New Trier Neighbors or others who might have a different definition or perspective on equity. Dr. Hayes responded that over the years, the District has touched base with various groups from the community. These groups very interested in talking with the school about its work on many topics, including equity. The school listens carefully and take close notes during these conversations about their interests, what they would like to see the school do and would like to see it go. It is then shared with the administrative team as they think about planning. Dr. Sally noted that there is broad representation in the Parent Community Advisory Group for the Strategic Plan and the group needs to be reengaged in the process for the year. In addition, the District engages in dialogue with groups and people that want to speak with it, which is part of what the school does as an important part of the community.

Dr. Glucksman commented that even though it was spoken about the thousands of hours spent on the first pandemic, the District is essentially addressing a second pandemic as well. The second pandemic will not be resolved or mitigated with a vaccine and has been going on longer than most people's lives. He does not want to define equity in such stringent terms, which the student population does not do. Regardless of what their concerns are such as racial injustice, healthcare disparities, among others, it means something different for each student. He is glad that the school is starting to address this with full force because otherwise the District sounds tone deaf and is working in a vacuum. He shared that students have been involved in different organizations this summer such as Chalking for Justice. It is great this is being addressed and it is important to keep pushing, in addition to trying to solve the acute pandemic in terms of reopening.

Ms. Albrecht was impressed by all that these subcommittees have done since May during a pandemic. She shared additional comments, including that the brainstorming points are what they should be, and this is how the District improves. Ms. Albrecht spoke about Seminar Days and how they were meant to be built upon and brought more into the regular curriculum, which has somewhat been done. She thought it would be educational for people to see what has been done. Dr. Sally directed those interested to go to the equity page on New Trier's website. He noted that the District is working on this topic and will continue to do so, and it is important that people are aware that it is being actively worked on in the school. Concluding, Dr. Sally said that overall, in September, the Board will see a proposed Annual Plan and he looks forward to the feedback to ensure the District is focusing on the right pieces and if the school is being realistic about its bandwidth.

## **VII. Administrative Items**

### **A. Treasurer's Report for July 2020**

Mr. Johnson presented the Treasurer's Report for July 2020. This reflects the first month of Fiscal Year (FY) 21. The Fund balances for all District accounts is \$121,465,698. Local revenue was just under \$21 million, a small decrease from \$25 million last year, but on target for the month. The District is pleased that collections are going well in terms of property taxes and local revenue.

### **B. Financial Reports for July 2020**

Mr. Johnson went on to share the financial reports for July 2020. Operating revenue was \$18,757,394 for the first month of the year, about 18% lower than last year. Property tax distributions were lower in July than 2019, and as expected other local sources were slightly lower. The tentative budget for operating revenue is slightly higher than last year. Any funds attributable to 2019-20 that are received by August 31<sup>st</sup> will be recognized last year.

Operating expenditures were \$3,760,000 through July, or 19% lower than last year. Year to year variances for the first month do not provide meaningful data. Variances are due to payment timing of purchases, journal entries, and other year-end processes. The tentative budget for operating expenditures is 2.58% higher than last year. Mr. Johnson and his team are working on bridging the tentative budget to the final budget, which will be brought to the Board in September. They are working to align the District's operating plan for the year with coronavirus with the needs of students. This includes increased expenditures in some areas, such as facilities adaptations, supplies, among others. Decreased expenditures in other areas, such as field trips and professional conferences for staff. The District is also looking at possible grant revenue through the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and other sources. Mr. Johnson is working with the Finance Committee to review these variables in advance of a Board of Education presentation in September, where the District will ask for approval of the budget. The District also continues to work on closing Fiscal Year 20 and the audit process, which Mr. Myron Spiwak, Director of Business Services has been working on full time. Field work has begun this week for the audit. There has been good progress so far and the District is on track to present the Audit and the Annual Financial Report at the October Board of Education meeting. Mr. Johnson then invited any questions from the Board.

Ms. Ducommun commented that property taxes were extended by two months if people chose to do so. They were welcomed to pay on August 3<sup>rd</sup>, but the deadline is October 1<sup>st</sup> before late fees are charged. Ms. Ducommun noted that the District will be seeing those fully coming up to where they need to be over the next two months. Mr. Johnson noted that the District is glad that people have the flexibility if they choose to use it, but early results so far are that many banks who have escrowed funds as well as individuals are paying on time, which is good to see.

### **VIII. Consent Agenda**

- Bill List for the Period, July 1 – 31, 2020
- Personnel Report (Retirement, Changes of Status, Stipends – Appointments, Stipends – Separation, Stipends – Changes, Contract Amendment for Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations)
- NTEF Resolution
- North Cook Young Adult Academy 2020-2021 Intergovernmental Agreement
- Contract Amendment with Quest Food Service for the 2020-21 School Year

Ms. Albrecht inquired if any members wanted to pull an item off the Consent Agenda, no one chose to do so. Dr. Glucksman moved that the Board of Education approve the Consent Agenda, which includes: Bill List for the Period, July 1-31, 2020; Personnel Report (Retirement, Changes of Status, Stipends – Appointments, Stipends – Separation, Stipends – Changes, Contract Amendment for Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations); The Resolution of the Board of Education Providing Operational Resources for the New Trier Township High School District 203 Educational Foundation, as presented; North Cook Young Adult Academy 2020-2021 Intergovernmental Agreement, as presented; Memorandum of Understanding with Quest, as presented and authorize the Assistant Superintendent of Finance and Operations to execute the agreement. Mr. Robitaille seconded the motion. 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.

### **IX. Board Member Reports**

Mr. Dronen noted that the **New Trier Educational Foundation** Golf Outing is Monday, September 14<sup>th</sup>. The dinner will not take place this year, but Dr. Sally will be part of a virtual presentation about what is going on at New Trier as well as the connection between the Foundation and the school and the programs that the Foundation has supported.

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

Dr. Sally highlighted the following:

- Today was the first day for teachers.
- Wednesday, August 26<sup>th</sup> is the first day of student attendance, which is a Trevian Day with remote learning. Thursday will be the first Blue Day and Friday, the first Green Day.
- Monday, August 31<sup>st</sup> is a District Planning Day.
- There are several freshmen and adviser virtual programs during the week of August 31<sup>st</sup>, which Mr. Waechtler confirmed.
- Lagniappe will also provide information on their digital release, probably before the next Board meeting.
- The next Board Meeting is Monday, September 21<sup>st</sup>.
- Mr. Dronen already shared about the golf outing.

Mr. Waechtler answered part of Ms. Hahn's question from earlier about the number of freshmen participating in extracurriculars. Mr. Augie Fontanetta, Athletic Director, shared with Mr. Waechtler that there are 225 freshmen on the teams, out of 1,000 students. Ms. Hahn thanked them for the information.

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

**XI. ADJOURNMENT**

Ms. Ducommun moved, and Mr. Robitaille seconded, the motion to adjourn. 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.

The meeting adjourned at 8:39 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Lindsey Ruston, Secretary

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Cathleen Albrecht, President