

**NEW TRIER TOWNSHIP HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT 203  
SPECIAL MEETING OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION  
August 6, 2020  
New Trier Township High School  
7 Happ Road, Room C234  
Northfield, IL 60093**

A **Special Meeting** of the Board of Education of New Trier Township High School District 203, Cook County, Illinois was held, virtually, via Zoom on Thursday, August 6, 2020 at 5:00 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  
Mr. Christopher Johnson, Assistant Superintendent for Finance & Operations  
Mr. Peter Tragos, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum & Instruction  
Dr. Renee Zoladz, Director of Human Resources

**Also Present**

Ms. Lindsey Ruston, Board of Education Secretary; other administrators, faculty and staff, members of the press and community.

**BUSINESS MEETING**

**I. CALL TO ORDER – 5:00 p.m. – Zoom**

Ms. Albrecht called the Special Meeting of August 6, 2020 of the Board of Education to order at 5:01 p.m., virtually, via Zoom. Ms. Albrecht then read the following statement: This meeting will be held virtually, in compliance public Act 101-0640, which allows for virtual meetings during a disaster declaration. On July 24th, the governor extended the disaster declaration for an additional thirty days. In person attendance and physical presence at the meeting location is not feasible, safe or practical due to the disaster, and we are providing members of the public to hear the discussion and all aspects of the meeting contemporaneously via Zoom.

Roll call was taken, and all members were present.

Dr. Sally added that the Special Board of Education meeting next week will be in-person. The posting and the communication to the public will be clear. The building needs to be ready for students and the Board meeting. Final preparations are in place to make sure that it is safe for the meeting scheduled for Wednesday, August 12<sup>th</sup>. Seating will be limited and there will also be a livestream that people can view. Ms. Ducommun inquired if people will know the protocol for open seats. Dr. Sally noted that there will be seats in satellite locations. Attendees can watch the livestream in those spaces or at home. There will be limited seating in the Board Room, C234, and there will be as few people in there as possible. This will be similar protocol to what was done for the March Board Meeting.

**II. Communications**

Ms. Albrecht explained that, due to the remote Board meeting, public comments needed to be submitted to the Board of Education secretary by 3:00 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 42 public comments submitted. Ms. Ruston read 17 of them into the record as Ms. Albrecht exercised her authority as Board of Education President to limit reading of comments to thirty minutes. All public comments will be sent to Board Members and will be available once the Board approves the minutes from this meeting on August 24<sup>th</sup>.

Mr. Dronen inquired if comments would be read in the order that they were received, which Ms. Albrecht confirmed.

Comments focused on the reopening of school, particularly sharing whether one thought the school should begin the year in the planned hybrid model or remotely; there was one additional comment that was about social equity.

Ms. Albrecht thanked those who sent in their comments.

Dr. Sally then categorized the comments, noting that some were hard to determine which category to place them. Generally speaking, of the 42 comments, there were 30 that were remote, though some advocated for a ramping plan;

eight were for in-person and four were on other positions or topics. Dr. Sally confirmed that they will all be available and placed into the public record.

Dr. Sally went on to share a few words as follows:

*Thank you for all of those comments. I hear the passion from all of you – we all do. One of the greatest strengths of our community is our collective commitment to our community. Part of that is a passionate commitment of parents, students, teachers, staff, alumni, Board, and community members to New Trier and our mission. Most of us can recite that mission by heart – we heard it cited many times within those letters. We have also received many emails from parents and community members – we hear the passion in those messages as well. Again, thank you. We hear you. We hear all of you. Really appreciate it.*

*In our community, a lot is going on right now. My fear is that the passion, the anxiety, the fear is dividing us when the only way for us to persevere is for us to be in this together. This year will not be normal for anyone – students, families, teachers, and staff – and I am saddened by that having been at New Trier for over 25 years.*

*After those 25 years, I know our students and I know our staff. I have been in many schools across the state and across the country and let me be clear about two things. First, I would put our students up against those in any other school when it comes to inquiry, compassion, and service. They are second to none. Second – again, I have been in many classrooms and seen many teachers teach across the country –and I would put our teachers up against those in any other school when it comes to building relationships, engaging students, and helping them reach their potential. We are truly blessed to have the community we are in. We are truly blessed to have the teachers that we do. They, too, are second to none.*

*In this time when what was once familiar to students, parents, and staff is now odd and strange and what was once predictable is now uncertain, I want to refocus us for a moment on something that must withstand the test of time, trials, and tribulations – and that is compassion. We must have compassion to get through these difficult times. We will get to the other side and we must be the community and school we cherish when we do. We truly are all in this together. We may have different opinions about the best path for educating our students with so many uncertainties surrounding this pandemic, but if we focus on compassion for each other and truly listening, we will be a community that is stronger together, rather than standing apart. That has been the hallmark of our discussions and problem solving with the Teachers Association as we try and tackle these difficult issues.*

*There are legitimate concerns and fears that we must address - concerns about protecting health and safety on our campuses and concerns about the toll the extended period of isolation and remote learning is taking on our students. We are all concerned about these issues, regardless of whether we think getting kids back in school or continuing to learn remotely is the right decision at this moment. There are no perfect decisions here, and I ask everyone to have an open mind and treat each other with the respect and compassion - these are the hallmarks of our New Trier community.*

*Next week I will present a plan to the Board built around a Ladder to Reopening. This ladder outlines a path back to in-person learning and the many careful, considerate steps we must take to get there. We are working on this plan with the backing of science and data, but also with our commitment to compassion and to listening to all of you. We must have a plan that has a path to get our students back into classrooms. We also must have a plan that will protect the health and safety of our students and staff. Our plan must be flexible, as the situation this year changes as we go to different places on the ladder based on circumstances we cannot predict. We are committed to in-person instruction AND we are committed to health and safety for all. The path to achieving both is not easy, nor is it clear. I ask for your compassion as a community as we all work together toward these common goals.*

Ms. Albrecht thanked Dr. Sally.

### **III. CLOSED SESSION – 5:00 p.m. – Zoom**

Ms. Albrecht asked for a motion to move to Closed Session. Dr. Glucksman 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; 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 and the placement of individual students in special education programs and other matters relating to individual students. Ms. Hahn seconded the motion. 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.

**IV. BUSINESS MEETING – Open Session – 5:00 p.m. – Zoom**

Ms. Albrecht recalled to order the Special Meeting of August 6, 2020 at 6:48 p.m. Roll call was taken, and all members were present except for Mr. Robitaille.

**V. 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 6:49 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Lindsey Ruston, Secretary

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Cathleen Albrecht, President