

**NEW TRIER TOWNSHIP HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT 203
SPECIAL MEETING OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION
November 4, 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 on Wednesday, November 4, 2020 at 6:00 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, Associate Superintendent for Finance & Operations
Mrs. Denise Dubravec, Winnetka Campus Principal
Dr. Tim Hayes, Assistant Superintendent for Student Services
Dr. Joanne Panopoulos, Assistant Superintendent for Special Education
Mr. Paul Waechtler, Northfield Campus Principal

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 – 6:00 p.m. – Zoom**

Ms. Albrecht called the Special Meeting of November 4, 2020 of the Board of Education to order at 6:00 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, except for Ms. Hahn.

Ms. Albrecht asked for a motion to move to Closed Session. Dr. Glucksman moved that the Board adjourns to closed session for the purpose of the appointment, employment, compensation, discipline, performance, or dismissal of specific employees of the District or legal counsel for the District, including hearing testimony on a complaint lodged against an employee or against legal counsel for the District to determine its validity and collective negotiating matters between the District and its employees or their representatives, or deliberations concerning salary schedules for one or more classes of employees. Mr. Robitaille seconded the motion. Upon a roll call vote being taken, the members voted as follows:

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

NAY: none

ABSENT: Ms. Hahn

The motion passed.

II. CLOSED SESSION – 6:00 p.m. – Staff Dining Room

III. BUSINESS MEETING – Open Session – 6:30 p.m. – C234

Ms. Albrecht called the Special Meeting of November 4, 2020 of the Board of Education to order at 6:38 p.m. Dr. Glucksman and Mr. McLane participated via telephone. Roll call was taken, and all members were present.

IV. 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 either Ms. Niki Dizon, Director of Communications or Mr. Peter Tragos, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction. There were ten requests 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.

1. Ms. Jen McDonough, Applied Arts Department Faculty and New Trier High School Educational Association President spoke on behalf of association members regarding their concerns for resuming hybrid learning.
2. Mr. Tony Gudwien, English Department Faculty, shared thoughts about comments made at a previous Board Meeting by a Board member.
3. Dr. Eric Hungness, community member, shared his thoughts in support of in-person learning based on infection rates and the saliva screening.
4. Ms. Helen Oushana, parent, alumna, Health Services Department Assistant, and Co-Vice President of the New Trier Educational Support Professionals Association, thanked Health Services staff, Administration and Physical Plant Services (PPS) staff for their work to ensure the safety of staff and students. She went on to share concerns and thoughts about resuming in-person learning next week.
5. Mr. Ted Dabrowski, parent and representative of Open New Trier, which is a group of 400 members who are advocating for in-person learning. He shared thoughts around this.
6. Ms. Judy Weiss, Modern and Classical Languages Department Faculty, shared her concerns on resuming in-person learning next week and thoughts on the metrics.
7. Mr. Pat Quinn, parent, shared comments on the availability of teachers for in-person learning.
8. Ms. Shelley Shelly, parent and member of Open New Trier, shared comments on her children's experiences with remote learning and the need to resume in-person instruction.
9. Mr. Dave Weston, Social Studies Department – Speech and Debate Faculty and the New Trier Educational Association's Faculty Senate President, shared comments about the saliva screening program.
10. Ms. Kathleen Tallmadge and Ms. Laura Bean, both Social Studies Department Faculty, shared comments on delaying the return to in-person instruction until core indicators recommended by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the Reopening Advisory Board (RAB) show it is safe to do so.

Ms. Albrecht thanked them for their comments.

***V. Special Orders of Business**

A. Metrics, Screening and Return to In-Person

Dr. Sally presented on the metrics, screening and returning to in-person learning. He thanked those who shared their comments. This Special Meeting was requested by the Board of Education to revisit the current plan and the direction that the school should be going. Dr. Sally went on to share the agenda which included the Student, Staff and Parent Survey, Successful Hybrid Instruction at Other Schools, More Accurate Covid-19 Risk Assessment through Covid-19 Screening, and the Potential Schedule for November and December. These would be followed by discussion of questions and next steps.

Mr. Tragos shared survey information that was gathered last week from students, staff and parents. He provided an overview of the surveys, a summary of their findings and shared next steps to process results with all stakeholders in order to make changes. Mrs. Dubravec, Principal at the Winnetka Campus, shared themes found in the responses to the student survey on these days, while Mr. Waechtler, Principal at the Northfield Campus, shared themes found in the responses from parents on Trevian Days. All three also shared information on the level of stress faced by students, parents, staff and faculty. Mrs. Dubravec shared student themes regarding what is working and what needs attention, Mr. Waechtler shared themes from parents on each of these items, while Mr. Tragos shared staff themes. Finally, Mr. Tragos provided next steps for this data and feedback.

Dr. Sally acknowledged the concerns heard at the meeting as well as the ones heard in the surveys. He noted that everyone has the best interest of students in mind, but there are different opinions on how to accomplish this. It is clear that the school is not meeting the academic and social-emotional needs of all students with the current model as it is difficult to replace the exemplary in-person experience teachers create in the classroom. This is not possible within this environment due to restrictions that the school will continue to abide by within the building, while the hope is for this one day, it will not be in the near future. The concerns of faculty are important, and the school needs to support them in all the ways it can so they can deliver the highest level of instruction that New Trier teachers are known for. A core piece has been to make sure that New Trier teachers are teaching New Trier students.

Dr. Sally went on to share that successful in-person experiences are occurring at the elementary districts as well as several neighboring high schools. New Trier will continue to use mitigation techniques, which these schools do as well and have had no reports of on-campus transmission per the superintendents that Dr. Sally has spoken with. Those

superintendents are also reporting that attendance is lower than set capacity limits. He shared the list of area schools that the District is working with, if they are hybrid or remote, and if hybrid, the percentage of students who are in. All schools are bringing in students who have significant needs. Two of the districts are bringing students in half days as a way to deal with the lunch issue. These schools are also operating without the Covid surveillance program that New Trier is instituting.

He spoke about the use of metrics and the screening program, noting that 90% of students and 70% of staff have opted into the program. He went on to discuss safety measures in the building such as personal protective equipment (PPE). The key question is, does the District's infection control measures effectively mitigate the potential risk of exposure in the building. The best estimate before the screening was the New Trier Staff and Township Zip Code metrics. The screening program along with Ruvna and quarantine help a great deal. Additionally, much more has been learned about the success of running in-person classes from other schools. Dr. Sally shared a series of graphics beginning with reducing the risk of Covid exposure in the building by using PPE and having those who feel sick stay home, the next graphic added the layer of Ruvna and Quarantine. Many schools are operating successfully in this way. The next graphic showed the addition of the screening program, which will capture asymptomatic or pre-symptomatic positives. A high level of participation is needed for this to be most effective. Dr. Sally also noted that there is no path to zero risk.

Finally, Dr. Sally shared the potential schedule for November and December. He recommended that for the remainder of first semester, Trevian Days will become Grey Days. These days will be for student support, asynchronous learning with departments even using the days to bring in students for different experiences. Struggling students may continue to be in the building on these days as well. During the week of November 30th, the Administration, RAB and Board of Education will access how it has been to have 25% of students in and determine if there is a chance to bring in more students based on the information gathered during this time.

Mr. Johnson, Associate Superintendent for Finance and Operations, spoke about the cost to the District, noting it is an extraordinary year. Expenses are being watched carefully and dollars spent judiciously on the items that keep the school environment safe and benefit students. The screening test is \$11 each, much less expensive than others. The District is watching the costs it may incur as well as the cost savings. The hope is that between this year with Covid and last year, when the two years are netted together, the District breaks even or is ahead. The District is looking, when possible, that the increased expenditures are offset by reductions in other expenditures. Mr. Johnson noted that the audit will be presented at the Regular November Board of Education meeting and the District did have a surplus due to the shutdown period.

Dr. Sally shared details on staff accommodations and he encouraged staff to take advantage of the Zoom Room for their own children. Board discussion would then focus on the role of the screening program, the relationship of screening, participation levels, and existing metrics as well as the question to restart 25% hybrid on November 10th.

Mr. Robitaille began that there was an impression that the screening test is not proven or reliable in some way. His understanding is that it is meant to trigger another test and is an indicator that there is an issue and a PCR test is needed. Discussion ensued with Dr. Sally noting that those who are presumed positive in the screening are not allowed in the building until results are obtained from the diagnostic PCR test.

Dr. Sally clarified that the screener is not an antigen test but is rather an RT-LAMP test which is an RNA amplifier and is a long-standing method of detecting the presence of viruses. Ms. Ducommun mentioned that this is the same thing that a PCR test does, with Dr. Sally noting that it is not as sensitive as a PCR test. He also stated that he is not claiming that the screening, Ruvna, and quarantine are an impenetrable barrier and is why the District will continue with its established mitigation measures. Ms. Ducommun explained further details about the handling, processing and history of the PCR test as well as the cycle threshold. She also shared detailed information about the rates of detection with PCR tests versus RT-LAMP tests, RT-LAMP tests find around 85-90% of cases that PCR tests find. This could mean that the PCR tests are finding dead virus material. The RT-LAMP has a great statistical success rate and for New Trier, there is the additional layer of the required PCR test. Dr. Sally shared additional pieces from the company that the school is working with on the screening, including their positivity rate of about 0.5% over the last seven days as well as there have been no false positives.

Ms. Albrecht inquired of Ms. Hahn, who is the Board liaison to the RAB, how many screening tests have been done as Ms. Albrecht thought it was between 7,500-10,000 tests, to which Ms. Hahn agreed. Ms. Hahn then added that by doing the screening, it does not mean that the school goes back to business as usual, the screening test will remove those who are infectious, but mitigation measures will continue within the building. She stressed that with 25% of students in, that

equates to 6 students at maximum in a classroom who are wearing masks and social distancing. Ms. Hahn referenced the survey from staff noting that there was minimal non-compliance from students. When all these items are put together with the screening, the school can operate safely. Ms. Hahn noted that this resonates with the medical professionals who are on the RAB. They note the screening is fantastic as a supplement to all the other measures. She does not believe anyone is saying to replace the metrics with the screening, but the screening is more precise, and the metrics will guide the District if it stops having high participation if its not proving effective.

Mr. Dronen inquired if the RAB has met since the introduction of the screening, to which Dr. Sally responded that it has twice. He then inquired if there was a conversation happening on the RAB regarding refining the metrics to reflect more in building issues. Dr. Sally stated that was a big question, especially amongst staff. He is confident that the participation rate will be high, but that it is a fair question for the staff to understand what the relationship might be. To be clear, there are high schools in the area who do not have this screening but are running successfully. Dr. Sally noted that it has been learned that schools are not places of student to student and student to teacher transmission and it is because of all the protection measures that are taken, and this screening adds another level of protection. He acknowledged that much of what is going on in the state is worrisome and he does not like where Illinois is at, but in showing the graphics earlier, he wanted to show how the screening methods help the District to understand what is in the building in a way that the zip codes and other data outside the building does not.

Mr. Dronen then shared what he heard from the public comments, that it is a good screening, but there are still other metrics and the school needs to follow the science. He shared other comments and then inquired if there are going to be additional metrics that are reviewed by the RAB. Mr. Dronen gave the example of moving from having 25% to 50% of students in and what the metrics might be for that. He believes in the screening, that students should be in school, and science, but the school needs metrics and perhaps this is something that the RAB can discuss. He went on to give the example that perhaps zip codes outside of New Trier are no longer needed but questioned if there are other metrics that need to be looked at so the school can ramp up or ramp down. Dr. Sally agreed that was a good question and these will be some of the items that the RAB needs to discuss.

Ms. Ducommun shared that she had the same question as Mr. Dronen. She is anxious to get to the next level of bringing students in and would like to know what learnings, procedures and discoveries that will enable the school to feel comfortable to do so. Ms. Ducommun would like to see goals that need to be accomplished in the three weeks between starting at 25% and moving to 50% to ensure the school gets there. Mr. Dronen then inquired if the District was being too aggressive with the November 9th date and asked Dr. Sally for his thoughts on that. Dr. Sally responded that he feels the school is in a good place, he feels comfortable with the pilot screening and the procedures that are in place. He briefly responded to a piece of Ms. Ducommun's question, noting that some time is needed to watch different pieces of students being back in such as the screener, among others. Discussion continued between Ms. Ducommun, Dr. Sally and Mr. Dronen. Dr. Sally then responded to Mr. Dronen's question if area schools have density issues like New Trier. Dr. Sally also explained that the area schools that have 50% of students in are finding it is a lower percentage of students actually in for a variety of reasons. He also acknowledged while some problems have been solved around social distancing, there are others that remain hurdles. Ms. Albrecht added that she and Mr. Dronen toured when 25% of the students were in and she believes that percentage is necessary in order to get people trained on the new way to be in the school building.

Mr. McLane shared comments and provided them for inclusion in these minutes:

I feel very comfortable with the steps we have taken, and I had every intention of attending tonight's meeting in person, however I need to quarantine as the result of effective contact tracing.

Overall: Back in July I was the "no" vote. We were not ready. However, today, I am impressed with the progress we have made on the key reopening parameters that have been of concern to me over the past six months. Today's presentation is very helpful, factual, and actionable. [Thank you, Paul, Peter, Denise, and Paul.] I am fully supportive of next steps to reopen. With that said, I have a boatload of questions and concerns, some of which can be answered for all to see in a revised FAQ. I will also submit these for inclusion in the minutes.

- The Dashboard is very good, and by comparison to other neighboring high schools, it is "best in class" as it should be. There remains some fine tuning which I will note in a moment.
- Our SafeGuard testing program is excellent and another "best in class". It will greatly improve RUVNA self-reporting when we go "live" next week.
- Contact tracing and tracking seem adequate for now. Of course, I would prefer a more automated process.
- "After 3:30" is still out of our control, but the testing program will help (especially with the extracurricular requirement).
- FAQ needs updating. More in a moment.

- Hybrid Logistics: I want to better understand why we are opting for a "random" alphabet approach to students on campus as opposed to a more "needs based" approach (e.g., teachers identifying their students who are struggling with remote and should have first dibs in returning to campus).

Follow up on questions and concerns --

Dashboard:

- Keith touched on this. We need to clearly explain the threshold "moving targets" that a number of public commenters addressed. Let's pin down the full suite of metrics so that we can better see next steps. We need to be clear about the value and weight of SafeGuard testing in conjunction with and as a subset of the other metrics.
- Need to clean up URL note at top and infographics at bottom (blue/green does not tell the good/bad story, and the good/bad are inverted on the two graphs).
- I still think it would be helpful to include hospitalizations per CCPHD.
 - More importantly would be to apply a lagging math function that would show the ratio of cases to hospitalizations over ten day lagged period, and on a rolling basis. This would clearly indicate severity in our area. When I did a quick estimate I noted that April "severity ratio" was 15% and current "severity ratio" is 10%. That could be viewed as good news. The data is there, let's use it.
- We need to include the building/room ventilation data CFM data on the RAB page, or FAQ. See more detailed questions in FAQ section below.

SafeGuard Testing:

- I am hoping that the high student opt-in (90%+) will lead to high usage and a timely data stream.
- Thank you for confirming that the student testing provides timely results, triggers the RUVNA QR entry code before the student gets to campus, and causes a presumptive positive to get a diagnostic PCR test.

Contact tracing:

- I would welcome an update on how this is going, and what additional steps we have made towards "appifying" or otherwise automating contact tracing

After 3:30:

- I do not have any new insights, just the same concerns.

FAQ:

1. Other schools are open, why not NTHS?
 - a. Show status of neighboring comprehensive HS, differentiate from feeder districts
 - b. Show status of cohort schools in similar phase (metrics like ours) --
 - i. **We are on the right path with tonight's presentation, just don't leave it buried there.**
2. Why did only two threshold numbers cause the pause?
 - a. Provide rationale for metrics,
 - b. Explain how surveillance testing will help,
 - a. Compare RT-LAMP testing vs. antigen
 - c. Justify threshold changes.
 - d. Share analytics that support SafeGuard accuracy
3. Why be so conservative when COVID does not kill/infect/sicken kids?
 - a. Provide facts for ages 14+, discuss unknowns re long-term effects
4. Why are you harming my kids by keeping them out of school?
 - a. Need to address this, perhaps in context of 16.0MM other HS students in US being in essentially the same boat.
5. Why are you caving-in to the teachers' union?
 - a. Definitely need to address this.
6. Why were there no teachers in my student's classrooms?
 - a. Provide the actual # of teachers in school on an average day, explain proctor role
7. Why are athletic programs being allowed to meet?
8. **What is the air quality in the buildings and the rooms?**
 - a. **Share specific CFM, turns per hour, fresh air ratio, MERV, and CFM per person information**
 - b. **What are the right metrics for this? 45 CFM per person?**

Mr. McLane noted that he was interested in hearing a response regarding hybrid logistics such as students attending based on where their last name falls within the alphabet versus needs based for those students who are struggling. Dr. Sally responded that the District continues to develop programs for struggling students and those students have been in the past few weeks. They are not attending every class period as they are receiving support services, including support to Zoom into their classes. It has been successful, and Dr. Sally thanked the faculty and staff that have been a part of making sure the school is serving those students. It is difficult for Dr. Sally to draw the line as to who the next set of students should be in school. He went on to share additional thoughts on this topic. Mr. Tragos shared his perspective on this piece as well. He noted that the school

has certain items they look at to determine who may be struggling such as attendance patterns or work completion, there are also students who are meeting all those benchmarks but are still struggling in ways that are more invisible. It serves all students best to start to bring them in.

Dr. Glucksman wanted to share why he feels good about this and prefaced it by sharing that his lab and research center does PCR, RT-LAMP and research on SARS-CoV-2. He began that science and medicine are not leaps of faith but are evidence-based. Additionally, all metrics are not weighted equally and the one metric that is specifically relevant to New Trier's situation and reopening to hybrid learning is the saliva surveillance screening assay. It is the most accurate of all metrics to quantify what exactly is going on in in what the microcosm of the high school environment is with students, teachers, staff and administrators. As Dr. Sally mentioned, Dr. Glucksman reiterated that it is the asymptomatic positives that are the most insidious. This is most specific to New Trier more so than other metrics such as zip codes. He also noted what Mr. Robitaille mentioned earlier that this is not the end-all and be-all as there is a confirmative PCR test. The school is considering a presumptive positive to be positive until it is confirmed. In general, the screening is like a security gate and is another outer layer of protection and first line of defense. It does not substitute or mitigate any of the enormous precautions that the school has taken such as social distancing and PPE, among others. The other reason that Dr. Glucksman feels good about this is it is predicated with the buy-in of the school's partners, parents with their students opting in, teachers, staff and administration to get as close as possible to 100% weekly testing. He mentioned this screening is done, first and foremost, so there can be in-person learning, students and staff are protected in the building with the added value that everyone can protect their families better and protect the greater community as well. He feels more comfortable with this as New Trier is doing more substantial protection schemes than any of the school's cohort high schools that have been open or plan on opening immediately.

Ms. Hahn added that she gets the sense that the medical consultants on the RAB feel similarly to Dr. Glucksman and are supportive and confident to go forward. Ms. Hahn then shared the following comments for inclusion in these minutes: I support the decision to systematically and cautiously return small cohorts of our students to in-person learning next week. While the recent surge in new cases, positivity rates, and hospitalizations is concerning and should not be dismissed, I am confident that the plan outlined tonight by Dr. Sally and his team represents a responsible approach to addressing the academic, social and emotional needs of our students as we navigate the current public health crisis. From the outset, we have made three fundamental commitments with respect to our response to the Covid-19 pandemic – we will prioritize the safety and well-being of our school community, we will adhere to the science, and we will adapt in the face of evolving information.

In March, our almost complete ignorance of the virus necessitated the drastic measure of shuttering school to protect the health of our students, staff and community. But over the course of the ensuing 8 months, our understanding of the virus and how to respond to it has expanded exponentially. I am not suggesting that we have all the answers and admittedly important questions - particularly about the long-term effects of this disease - remain unanswered. But we have learned a great deal about the steps we can take to protect ourselves from transmitting the virus – steps like mask wearing, social distancing, hand washing, enhanced cleaning, and ventilation system improvements. We've learned how to reduce the risk of exposure to the virus through the implementation of screening procedures like Ruvna and reference to community-based metrics. And now, with the roll out of our surveillance testing program next week, we have added an additional and even more sophisticated weapon to our arsenal that more precisely identifies potentially infectious individuals and keeps the virus out of our buildings.

But beyond developing a more sophisticated understanding of the virus and how to protect ourselves from spreading it, we have gathered empirical evidence that strict adherence to these infection mitigation and exposure reduction strategies is not only feasible but effective in the school setting. Even before the introduction of testing, we have been able to safely provide in-person experiences for our students over the summer and throughout the fall - we have brought students and staff back to campus to participate in athletics, extracurriculars, our ELS and transition programs, summer school, and even a week of our 25% hybrid learning. And we have done so without any reports of in-school transmission of the virus. Moreover, we have observed how other schools on the north shore and indeed across the nation have been able to bring students back into the classroom without endangering students, staff or the wider community.

New Trier prides itself on being an institution that values relationships – relationships built on mutual respect, trust and the shared goal of helping every student realize their potential. Ultimately, the relationships between our families, our staff and the administration are what make New Trier exceptional – not our facilities, not our abundant resources, and not our impressive test scores. If we hope to one day return to a New Trier that resembles the school we left last March, we will need these relationships to remain intact. So while we may not all agree on the path we need to follow, I am confident and I hope that we can all appreciate that everyone here tonight (virtually or in person) is committed to achieving the same goal. The systematic, measured return to in-person learning detailed here tonight is a decision aimed at prioritizing the academic, social

and emotional needs of our students without departing from our fundamental commitments to protect our community, follow the science, and adapt to changing circumstances.

Ms. Ducommun then shared her comments for inclusion in these minutes:

I am voting in favor of reopening New Trier for all students. While I support the administration's plan to begin with the 25% hybrid model, I am impatient to get to the next, 50% level. It is important that we understand the impediments to getting to these higher levels and the actions and learning that must take place to make this happen quickly.

I support in-person learning because we have worked hard to create a safe environment for our students and staff. We have modified the building and classrooms, created new procedures for moving throughout the building and, most importantly, have committed significant financial resources and time to implementing a Covid-19 testing process that has been shown, both in other schools and in our own trial program, to be highly effective.

Testing for COVID is highly important because, unlike other viruses, COVID is typically most infectious 2 days prior to showing symptoms and up to 5 days after symptoms appear. The scientific community has worked hard to come up with an efficient and scalable testing program for large applications like our own – with 4,500 or more people – and supports a test like RT-LAMP as a valid way to understand the level of infections in our school community. The RT-LAMP test, combined with a follow-up PCR test for people who test positive in the school test, are effective in identifying those who are sick and reducing the spread of infection across a community.

We are fortunate to have the financial resources to support our testing program, as well as the commitment from the students and staff to provide the samples and from the parents to do the labor-intensive work of handling our samples securely and safely.

All of this represents a significant effort on the part of our school community and it reflects the urgency and the need to get our students back in school. There is a myriad of reasons the stay-at-home model isn't working and, trust me, we have heard from many parents about why this model, despite our teachers' best efforts, has not been successful for their students. The letters, frankly, are heart breaking and should concern anyone in this community to know what our students are suffering.

There is no substitute for being in a classroom with our talented and dedicated teachers, which this COVID crisis has proven loud and clear. We have always talked about the excellent education that New Trier students receive, and to which I personally can attest having three New Trier graduates in my family. We need to get these students back in the classroom so they TOO get to experience the advantages of a New Trier education, and for this reason I support the plan to reopen New Trier.

Mr. Robitaille built on Ms. Ducommun's comments, noting his impatience with getting students back in the building. His impatience was significantly tempered by the great uncertainty of what being back in the building would mean to everybody who is in the building. That uncertainty followed through the summer as the school tried to come back, and chose, what he believes was the correct path at the time, which was to start remote and see what mitigation strategies could be employed. About a month into the school year, the District tried to reopen, and it was done in a way that was extremely successful. What is different now is that the Board is being asked to consider the same model that was adopted in July and August, in an environment of high uncertainty, when now much more is known. Not only that, but the data and studies of what being in school means and the transmission rates of being in school support that New Trier can operate safely. Given that more is known and there is another layer of security in the screening test, which is unique among peer schools, adds more to the imperative to return to in-person school. He has heard the pleas from parents and students and that the learning taking place is a significant discount from what in-person learning is. There are mental, emotional and social challenges that students are having that are significant and undeniable. To continue to operate in a remote fashion, when the District knows it can operate safely in-person, he believes is dereliction of duty on the part of the Board. It is owed to the community, mostly to students, to be back in school, knowing that it can be done safely for teachers, staff and students. Mr. Robitaille added that it also seems that the District has a set of metrics that appear to be outdated or potentially superseded by other, more precise metrics. Perhaps the other metrics should not be completely abandoned but use these to better inform the school by using a more precise set of tools. The risk to the school's population remains low, many schools around New Trier are figuring it out and doing so successfully. He reiterated that parents and students are calling out for action to reopen. He believes there is a moral and community imperative to return students to an environment where they learn, grow and thrive.

Ms. Albrecht shared her comments, noting that she was most impressed with the screening's ability to determine a presumptive positive and there were no false positives when people went on for the PCR test. It is a strong test and students are submitting it before they come back to school. It is a massive logistical effort and she thanked the 125 parents who put

the kits together. This test gives New Trier a picture of the healthy environment within the school versus in the zip codes. Isolating people who may be positive helps their families, friends and the broader community.

Ms. Albrecht then went on to summarize, in general, what most Board members had said:

We have heard tonight that students are missing important academic and social-emotional development by not having in-person instruction. We understand the stress and uncertainty we all have about how to move forward with the school year. We know that our faculty and other staff are working tirelessly to adapt their curriculum and support students. The uncertainty has taken its toll on students, families, and staff and maintaining the status quo is not working. To address this, we must implement a safe and responsible in-person plan to move forward to in-person learning, as we do not know when the pandemic will end. We know much more than we did from our own successful experiences through the summer and the first part of the school year and also from our peer schools, especially those who have moved forward in executing hybrid in-person plans. We are confident that we can run school effectively with our safety measures and the screening process, which provides an additional level of security. The District will start prioritizing the Covid Saliva Screening and will continue to assess its ongoing effectiveness with the screening within the school. It will also continue to use other metrics to monitor risk in the environment. The District will continue to consult with local health officials and the Reopening Advisory Board as the situation changes both outside and inside the school.

Ms. Albrecht hopes for patience from the entire school community as this is moved forward. This is not a normal school year and mostly likely will not be. She again asked for patience as teachers are teaching remotely while others are in their classrooms, with students who need remote learning.

Ms. Ducommun moved, and Mr. Robitaille seconded the motion, that the Board of Education direct the Superintendent to resume hybrid learning the week of November 9th, as presented. Upon a roll call vote being taken, the members voted as follows:

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

NAY: none

The motion passed.

***VI. ADJOURNMENT**

Ms. Ducommun moved, and Ms. Hahn seconded the motion, to adjourn. Upon a roll call vote being taken, the members voted as follows:

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

NAY: none

The motion passed.

The meeting adjourned at 8:58 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lindsey Ruston, Secretary

Cathleen Albrecht, President