

# BOARD BRIEFS

*News from the New Trier Township High School District 203*

*Board of Education Regular Meeting*

*October 16, 2023*

## Proposed Course Changes for 24-25 Include New Civics/Applied Arts Option, Freshman Media, Art Leadership

Students would have another option to fulfill the state's Civics requirement through a hands-on urban design class co-taught by Applied Arts and Social Studies teachers, one of three course revisions presented to the Board of Education for the 2024-2025 school year.

In addition to the Urban Design and Civic Engagement course, the Board also heard about proposed changes for freshman students interested in exploring new media and an option of weighted credit for students acting as leaders in the Art Essentials curriculum.

Assistant Superintendent Peter Tragos told the Board that Social Studies and Applied Arts leaders saw a natural connection between an existing Urban Design class and Civics. The new interdisciplinary course would include hands-on projects as students learn about urban planning, design, technology, sustainability, geography, sociology, economics, culture, and public policy.

The course will use a Human Centered Design instructional framework and would eventually be one of the courses in a Human Centered Design Pathway for students, Tragos said. In this type of learning, students look to solve authentic problems with the user experience in mind.

At the Northfield Campus, freshman students interested in content creation, reporting, and broadcasting would have additional opportunities in a revised New Media Arts course, replacing the existing Freshman Media Production. Students would learn media literacy along with the basics of interviewing, storytelling, photojournalism, social media, and audio and video production. The course would be offered as both single semester and full-year, preparing students for advanced media courses at the Winnetka Campus.

In Art Essentials, a credit revision would allow students selected for leadership positions to earn level 9 weighted GPA credit given the amount of work they do outside of class. Art Essentials student leaders plan and co-create curriculum with the teacher and assist the teacher in implementing content or projects. The Board will vote on the proposals in November. Click for the [New Course Proposals memo](#).

## Board Approves 2024-2025 school year holidays, start and end dates

The Board approved a basic school year calendar for 2024-2025 that includes the school year's start and end dates, school holidays including winter break and spring break, and graduation.

Superintendent Paul Sally said it was important to give families these significant dates now for their planning. The Board will consider a full 2024-2025 calendar in March that will include more details such as institute days, other non-attendance days, parent-teacher conferences, and early dismissal/late start days.

New Trier creates its school calendar each year in collaboration with an internal committee and in consultation with all of the District's sender school superintendents. Click for the [2024-2025 school year calendar](#).

## Other News from the October 16 Meeting

- New Trier's average class size this school year is 22.3, with historical data showing stability in average class sizes around 22 students for the past five years. Assistant Superintendent Peter Tragos told the Board that the District uses the class size report and analysis to demonstrate that its staffing and sectioning meets the District's strategic goals, gives consideration to reasonable teacher loads, and assures that the District is allocating resources appropriately. Each year when the District processes student registration data to build a master schedule, Tragos said, it does so with a goal of maintaining average class size, meeting budget targets, and assuring that variations within and across departments reflect a student-centered approach, such as continuing to provide specialized opportunities for smaller groups of students. The report also includes the median class size, which this year is 23, illustrating a relatively even distribution of class sizes across all departments. Click for the [class size report](#).
- Associate Superintendent Chris Johnson and Director of Business Services Myron Spiwak presented the District's tentative tax levy for 2023, which supports the fiscal year 2023-24 and 2024-25 budgets. The levy is the primary funding source for the District, and the revenue it generates funds New Trier's hiring and retention of high quality faculty and staff, broad and deep curriculum, expansive student services, and extracurricular programs. The levy also helps fund needed facility improvements at both campuses. The District's ability to increase its tax extension is limited by the Property Tax Extension Limitation Act to the Consumer Price Index (CPI) or 5%, whichever is less. The 2022 CPI was 6.5%, which means the levy is capped at 5%, and that capped increase will be used in the calculation of the tax extension (exclusive of new property). Under the tentative levy the New Trier portion of property tax bills should rise by 5% on average for property owners. The Board is scheduled to approve the final levy in November. Click for the [levy presentation](#).

*The New Trier Board of Education generally meets on the third Monday of each month, with the business portion of the meeting beginning at 6:30 p.m.*

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