

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

January 21, 2025

**New Trier Township High School
7 Happ Road, Room C234
Northfield, IL 60093**

*Full videos of Board meetings are available online at <https://nths.mediaspace.kaltura.com/category/BOARD+OF+EDUCATION/>
Information about Board of Education members, upcoming meetings, agendas, minutes, and other documents are available at
<https://www.newtrier.k12.il.us/boardofeducation>. Please refer to these webpages if you would like more information on an item.*

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, January 21, 2025, at 6:30 p.m.

Members Present

Ms. Kimberly Alcantara
Mr. Avik Das
Mr. Keith Dronen
Ms. Jean Hahn, President
Ms. Sally Pofcher
Ms. Sally Tomlinson, Vice President

Administrators Present

Dr. Paul Sally, Superintendent
Dr. Christopher Johnson, Associate Superintendent
Dr. Joanne Panopoulos, Asst. Supt. for Special Ed and Student Services
Dr. Peter Tragos, Asst. Supt. for Curriculum & Instruction
Mrs. Denise Dubravec, Principal – Winnetka Campus/Assistant Supt.
Mr. Paul Waechtler, Principal – Northfield Campus

Members Present via Phone

Ms. Courtney McDonough

Also Present

Dr. Renee Zoladz, Director of Human Resources; Mr. Myron Spiwak, Director of Business Services; Ms. Niki Dizon, Director of Communications; Ms. Molly Lombardi, Social Studies Department Faculty and Teachers' Association President; Mr. Scott Williams, Assistant Principal; Mr. Chris Mitchell, Associate Principal for Student Services; Ms. Trish Sheridan, Assistant Principal; Ms. Gail Gamrath, Associate Principal for the Northfield Campus; Mr. Darrin Jeziorski, Assistant Principal; Mr. Dan Paustian, Assistant Principal; Mr. Greg Sego, Adviser Chair; Mr. Ted Koulentes, Adviser Chair; Ms. Kerri Simons, Adviser Chair; Mr. Mike Hill, Technology Department; Mr. Eric Johnson, Technology Department; Mr. Jeff Bailey, Technology Department; Ms. Lindsey Ruston, Board of Education Secretary; members of the press and community.

BUSINESS MEETING

I. CALL TO ORDER – 5:45 p.m. – C234

Ms. Hahn called the Regular Meeting of January 21, 2025, of the Board of Education to order at 5:45 p.m. in room C234 at the Northfield campus. Roll call was taken, and all members were present except for Ms. Alcantara and Ms. McDonough. Ms. Hahn asked for a motion to move to Closed Session. Mr. Das moved that the Board of Education adjourn to closed session for the purpose the appointment, employment, compensation, discipline, performance, or dismissal of specific employees, specific individuals who serve as independent contractors, or specific volunteers of the District or legal counsel for the District, including hearing testimony on a complaint lodged against an employee, a specific individual who serves as an independent contractor, or a volunteer of the District or against legal counsel for the District to determine its validity; the placement of individual students in special education programs and other matters relating to individual students; and the discussion of minutes of meetings lawfully closed, whether for purposes of approval by the body of the minutes or semi-annual review of the minutes as mandated by Section 2.06. Ms. Tomlinson seconded the motion. Upon a roll call vote being taken, the members voted as follows:

AYE: Mr. Das, Mr. Dronen, Ms. Pofcher, Ms. Tomlinson, Ms. Hahn

NAY: none

ABSENT: Ms. Alcantara, Ms. McDonough

The motion passed.

II. CLOSED SESSION – 5:45 p.m. – A201A

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

Ms. Hahn called the Regular Meeting of January 21, 2025, of the Board of Education to order at 6:30 p.m. in room C234 at the Northfield campus. Roll call was taken, and all members were present, except for Ms. McDonough who joined after roll call and was present via phone.

IV. Minutes and Reports

***A. Regular Meeting of December 9, 2024 (open and closed session)**

Ms. Hahn asked for any comments or adjustments on the minutes of the Regular Meeting of December 9, 2024 (open and closed session). There were no requests for changes to the closed session minutes. Mr. Das moved, and Ms. Tomlinson seconded the motion that the Board of Education approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting of December 9, 2024 (open and closed session). Upon a roll call vote being taken, the members voted as follows:

AYE: Ms. Pofcher, Ms. Tomlinson, Mr. Das, Mr. Dronen, Ms. Hahn

NAY:

ABSTAIN: Ms. Alcantara

ABSENT: Ms. McDonough

The motion passed.

B. Report 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:

- Northfield Dance Ensemble Showcase and Dance Day at Northfield took place last week. The Ensemble welcomes all dancers who want to perform original student choreographed dances. For Dance Day, a variety of dance classes performed for students.
- The Northfield Student Art Exhibit is up for viewing in the B Commons and is a great display of talent and creativity from various freshmen art classes.
- Much of the focus on campus has been the work regarding incoming freshman with Academic Life Sessions recently taking place. He thanked Ms. Lori Worth, Eighth Grade Transition Coordinator; Ms. Sarah Struebing, GCT Assistant Principal; Ms. Gail Gamrath, Associate Principal at the Northfield Campus; and Dr. Tragos. Level recommendations for the Class of 2029 are also being made with new English scoring for the writing portion. New Trier hosted professional development for 37 English, Social Studies, and ELA teachers from the District as well as the sender schools who completed a norming exercise and scored the essays. All About Electives is tomorrow and individual conferences will take place at each junior high in the near future.
- Class Period Clubs such as Tri-Ship, Student Council, and Pep Club presented to freshman about board applications for their clubs for next year.
- A student recognition program took place on December 13th with advisers selecting students who demonstrate the Be Brave, Be Kind, Be Proud motto. Adviser chairs Mr. Mark Howard and Ms. Sue Ellen Haak along with Mr. Scott Williams, GCT Assistant Principal ran a great event celebrating these students.
- Thank advisers and teachers for working with current freshmen on course selection for next year.

Mrs. Denise Dubravec, Principal for the Winnetka Campus/Assistant Superintendent, shared the following student events and program updates from the Winnetka campus:

- She thanked advisers, adviser chairs, and other members of the GCTs for their work on preparing for course registrations.
- She then highlighted December student and staff connections such as a holiday sweater contest and designing gingerbread houses.
- The senior class, which includes Ms. Struebing and adviser chairs, Mr. Greg Segó and Ms. Kerri Simons, have partnered with Midwest Veterans Closet for their service project. Administrators and students volunteered over break. The school is looking forward to continuing this partnership with the class of 2028 over the next three years.
- Student work is displayed in the Brierly Art Gallery and includes a variety of work from various art classes.
- Recently, alumni Mr. Will Pullen returned to New Trier to visit Theatre 3 classes.
- The Student Belonging Council had two professors from the Spertus Institute join a meeting to work on connection and belonging. The Staff Belonging Council will do the same activities at their upcoming meeting.

- Choral classes partnered with the choirs from the sender schools for a concert. Mrs. Dubravec thanked Ms. Amy Branahl, Music and Theatre Department Faculty, for her work and coordination with the sender schools on this event.

Mrs. Dubravec then shared about Lagniappe Potpourri, its evolution, and next steps with the program. Ms. Nina Lynn, Music and Theatre Department Faculty and sponsor of Lagniappe, explained the evolution and the history of the program over the many decades that it has existed. She also shared comments about how Lagniappe nurtures and highlights student leadership. Based on discussion and planning, the decision was made to shift the Lagniappe Potpourri student board leadership experience to the production of the school's annual freshmen-sophomore musical. In this model, students will continue to direct, conduct, choreograph, design, and build as they did in Lagniappe. The long-standing Lagniappe mentorship system will continue ensuring that every leader is paired with an adult with experience and expertise in their assigned area. Ms. Lynn also shared how student writing will continue to be created and showcased in the classroom. Discussions will continue with rising juniors and seniors who would like a performance opportunity next year and are not eligible for the freshmen-sophomore musical in terms of the kinds of experiences they would like to explore next year as the school transitions to its revised model. The performing arts staff believes in this revised Lagniappe Potpourri's potential to foster an experience that is more authentic in terms of what students will actually be doing beyond New Trier while honoring its values. A timeline and the expectations for next year's Lagniappe will be shared at the end of February with the intention of beginning this process in spring, which is in line with what has been done previously.

Ms. Pofcher noted that through the presentation, she had heard a number of different reasons but asked for clarification as to what problem is being solved with this change. Mrs. Dubravec asked to finish with her comments from conversations she has had with alumni who have expressed interest in better understanding the District's decision. Mrs. Dubravec also addressed a couple of other pieces of information that she was asked for and shared with alumni. She noted that, financially, the District is fortunate to have the resources that allow it to explore and expand the student experience. These include resources to hire costumers for plays as well as full time accompanists who not only work with classes, but also with individual students when requested. Another question alumni asked Mrs. Dubravec about was that the idea of satire is not allowed at New Trier, which she noted is not accurate. New Trier welcomes student voices and creativity including writing satire. This occurs in other courses beyond performing arts and will continue. There is even a club that produces a satirical newspaper that pokes fun at New Trier called *The Near True News*. She went on to note that in relation to these experiences in Lagniappe and other courses there are also checks and balances in place to ensure that the material is appropriate. This is not new and has always been a responsibility of the adult sponsors working with a student. Understanding one's audience and what is happening in the world is incredibly important to what and how a topic is presented. The school also values the experience that a student can have with this writing form under the guidance of adult mentors.

Ms. Hahn thanked Ms. Lynn, who is retiring at the end of the school year, for her contributions. She also shared her appreciation for the careful thought and consideration that has been put into the evolution of the Lagniappe Potpourri experience for students. Ms. Hahn also thanked the community who were in attendance as well as those who wrote the Board. She went on to share additional comments, concluding with a request that the Board continue to be kept up to date with changes and informed of the work that takes place in February.

Mrs. Dubravec added that she reviewed area high schools as well as the ones in the consortium and New Trier offers more classes and performances which speak to the breadth and depth not only in the classroom but also in the extracurricular opportunities for students.

Dr. Johnson gave the FOIA report, noting that there have been four requests since the last Board meeting, all of which are closed. Two were for a copy of a program for a student event, one was for a contract, and one was for a summary of a bill.

V. Communications

Ms. Hahn 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. Niki Dizon, Director of Communications. Ms. Hahn stated that due to the number of issues which must be considered at the Board Meeting, commenters should limit their statement to three minutes per Board Policy 2-230. Likewise, if a comment requires a response, either Ms. Hahn or an administrator will contact the commenter in the days following the meeting. Questions and comments should address the Board of Education as a whole only. No comments should be directed to an individual Board member, audience,

principals, or other staff members. No complaints against individual employees are allowed during a Board of Education Meeting. She also asked that the audience refrain from clapping or a response of any kind regarding people's comments. There were 12 requests for public comment.

1. Mr. Ethan Epstein, student, shared comments about Lagniappe Potpourri.
2. Ms. Wendy Epstein, parent, shared comments about Lagniappe Potpourri.
3. Mr. James Paul, alum, shared comments about Lagniappe Potpourri.
4. Ms. Jennifer Zulic, alum, shared comments about Lagniappe Potpourri.
5. Mr. Sam Grossman, parent, shared comments about Lagniappe Potpourri.
6. Ms. Wendy Gale, parent, shared comments about Lagniappe Potpourri.
7. Ms. Barbara Lincoln, parent, introduced her daughter Ms. Clementine Lincoln, student, who shared comments about Lagniappe Potpourri.
8. Ms. Mary Kelly, parent, shared comments about Lagniappe Potpourri.
9. Ms. Marcia Hartigan, alum, shared comments about Lagniappe Potpourri.
10. Mr. Robert Kamins, alum and parent, shared comments about Lagniappe Potpourri.
11. Ms. Alex Kamins, student, shared comments about Lagniappe Potpourri.
12. Ms. Kate Ring, student, shared comments about Lagniappe Potpourri.

Ms. Hahn thanked the commenters for their thoughtful and informative perspectives.

VI. Special Orders of Business

A. Updated 2025-26 School Year Calendar*

Dr. Sally also thanked all those who came to share their thoughts on Lagniappe, he then went on to present the updated 2025-26 school year calendar. The Board, earlier in the school year, approved a skeleton version of next year's calendar. The full calendar is then created and is processed through several committees to determine the placement of parent teacher conferences, late start days, and institute days. Mr. Waechtler, co-chair of the calendar committee, shared that the District is working with Hanover Research who have conducted several surveys regarding the various elements of the calendar. There will also be a more comprehensive survey conducted this spring that will provide information for the 26-27 school year calendar.

Mr. Das moved, and Ms. Tomlinson seconded the motion that the Board of Education approve the updated 2025-26 school year calendar as presented. Upon a roll call vote being taken, the members voted as follows:

AYE: Ms. Pofcher, Ms. Tomlinson, Ms. Alcantara, Mr. Das, Mr. Dronen, Ms. McDonough, Ms. Hahn

NAY:

The motion passed.

B. Graduating Class Team Update

Mr. Williams, Assistant Principal for the Class of 2028, began the update on the graduating class team. After sharing introductory comments, Mr. Williams then shared a variety of anonymous quotes from students about their experiences with some of the interventions available to them. He outlined the consistent process that happens when a student is in a place of needing steady support – with a plan being devised with input from the student, while the team works collaboratively to monitor student growth and ensure that the student is supported. The partnership with parents and guardians is vital to the work of the GCTs. Each GCT has nine members: two adviser chairs, an assistant principal, two MTSS coaches, school psychologist, social worker, post-high school counseling and a special education liaison. The student's adviser also joins the team which Mr. Williams went on to share additional information about.

Mr. Darrin Jeziorski, Adviser Chair, spoke about the theme of personalization, community, and connection related to an activity that was done with a group of advisers. The GCTs met with their advisers to provide inspiration, guidance, and to help establish goals for adviser rooms. Each team created presentations and activities for their groups with these objectives. The class of 2026 used the work of South Korean artist Do Ho Suh as a catalyst for these discussions. His work focuses on explorations of belonging and identity. Mr. Jeziorski further explained the artist's work, noting that he encourages his audience to examine the significant and substantial relationship between a single individual's identity and the power of a group. He went on to explain the connection of this to the work that advisers do with students. He also shared that each member of the GCT has their own unique lens on a child, and collectively these various perspectives are used to inform their work with each student. A video was then played that provided additional perspective from various members of the GCTs.

Mr. Greg Sego, Adviser Chair, provided historical background on supports provided for struggling students over the years. He also shared the limitations of what was done in the past and how models changed over time leading to the creation and benefits of the GCTs. The practices and protocols of the new GCTs will continue to be developed. He then shared concluding comments about the adviser program.

Ms. Trish Sheridan, Assistant Principal, shared celebratory comments in honor of Mr. Sego's retirement at the end of this school year.

Mr. Chris Mitchell, Associate Principal for Student Services, hoped the presentation showed the balance between the art and the science of what these teams do, and the power of the relationships between teams, with families, with students and within the team itself. He, and Ms. Gail Gamrath, Associate Principal for the Northfield Campus, then invited questions and comments from the Board.

Ms. Tomlinson loved the analogy with the artist who reminded her of Mr. Chuck Close. Where Mr. Suh encouraged viewers to get close, Mr. Close encouraged viewers to step back from his work. She also loved hearing about their ability to standardize some of their interventions as well as the ability to talk about best practices. Ms. Tomlinson noted the level of support that the GCTs provide students is truly remarkable. Noting that the presentation spoke of the balance between science and art, Ms. Tomlinson shared that she usually leans towards science and encouraged the continued review of the data to ensure that the school is helping students to move out of interventions faster or need fewer of them. She thanked the team for reminding her that the art is the harder of the two as it is brought every day in the face of a child with unique needs.

Ms. Hahn thanked the team for an amazing presentation. She shared a couple of anecdotes about prom based on Ms. Sheridan's comments in working with Mr. Sego to host prom during covid, thanking them for their work. Noting that the Board was not provided with longitudinal data on interventions, Ms. Hahn shared that the numbers, however, would almost be like comparing apples to oranges and what she heard in the presentation is that they are better quality than they were in the past. Mr. Mitchell replied that he wanted to make sure to honor the work that occurred prior to the GCTs. He then also shared his appreciation for Ms. Hahn's comments that numbers do not always mean better. He noted an unintended consequence of the standardization is that the way the school tracks progress looks different than what was previously done. So while the same work may have been happening, there was not a standardized way to see that progress over time. The hope is that will now happen and Mr. Mitchell went on to share additional comments.

Ms. Hahn referenced the national teacher shortage and inquired if the District is talking about the GCTs when out recruiting and if it is something that new teachers are excited about. Dr. Renee Zoladz, Director of Human Resources, replied that while at job fairs they share about the adviser program and the supports that are in place for students. Applicants are impressed with the level of support for students and the collaboration that takes place amongst many groups in the school. While there has not been specific focus on the GCTs, the work they do is mentioned when explaining the programming and support the school has for students.

Lastly, Ms. Hahn noted that this feels like human centered design in action as there are various people from different disciplines coming together to address the human needs of students. It has been wildly successful so far and the Board looks forward to hearing how it continues to evolve. Dr. Sally added that with those in attendance from the GCTs, almost all disciplines were represented, and they bring the different perspectives they learned in their respective disciplines to this human centered endeavor.

C. Policy Revision – First Reading – PRESS 117

Dr. Sally shared information about the policy revisions for PRESS 117. The District receives policy revisions several times a year from the Illinois Association of School Board's (IASB) PRESS service with their suggestions. Administrators review the suggested edits with the District's lawyers reviewing them as needed. The policy committee then convenes to determine whether the changes should be accepted or if there are any others that are needed. Ms. Hahn, Board liaison to the committee, noted that it was a straightforward batch.

VII. Administrative Items

A. Treasurer's Report for December 2024

Dr. Johnson provided the Treasurer's Report for December 2024 and began with an update on a recent bond issue, which was closed in December. The District sold bonds to fund a portion of the Winnetka Campus North and Tower

Building Project and Health Life Safety (HLS) Projects at both campuses. It was pleased once again to receive a Aaa rating for Moody's on the debt, only one of about 90 school districts in the country to receive this recognition. This contributed to a favorable competitive sale process with 13 bids from eight bidders on the two sales, with \$20.5 million in proceeds from the alternate revenue bonds and \$4.5 million for the HLS bonds and rates of 3.7% and 2.9% respectively, which is very favorable in today's market. The bond proceeds from the December sale are posted in the capital projects and life safety funds on the treasurer's report, and Dr. Johnson looks forward to sharing more about the construction as bidding continues this winter and spring.

Moving on to the December Treasurer's Report, the District saw typical revenue disbursements, with receipt of some additional first installment property tax revenue and state funds. Federal payments slowed for the month but are expected to resume in January. Interest income is trending higher than last year at \$2.5 million year-to-date. Interest rates for short-term investments are 4.43%, this is primarily cash; 4.15% on long-term investments at PMA and 4.29% on long-term investments with 5/3. The balance for all accounts is \$125,509,425.

B. Financial Report for December 2024

Dr. Johnson then provided the Financial Report for December 2024. Operating revenue for the first six months of the fiscal year was \$70,653,000, or about 12% higher compared to last year. At this halfway point of the year, revenue has been fairly predictable and should continue to trend at or above the adopted budget, which is 4.2% higher than last fiscal year.

Operating expenditures were \$54,600,000 or 9.71% higher than last year. Purchased Services and Supplies and Materials are still trending a bit higher than the budgeted increase, but the timing of payments is affecting the variance, which only compares year-to-date expenses. The District will monitor this carefully for the next six months of the year and adjust as necessary so that the expenditure budget comes in where it needs to. Fund book balances for all accounts were \$130,204,000.

***C. Consideration and action on a resolution expressing official intent regarding certain capital expenditures to be reimbursed from proceeds of an obligation to be issued by the District**

Dr. Johnson then presented this resolution, noting periodically the District issues bonds to fund facilities work, including the bonds he discussed earlier. The District is embarking on a project to modernize the portions of the North and Tower Building at the Winnetka Campus, improving instructional and student support spaces. The first portion of the debt for this project was issued in December 2024 and the remaining debt will be issued in early 2026. In order to maximize the potential uses of these funds and reduce potential arbitrage costs that are associated with investment income on tax exempt bonds, Dr. Johnson recommended that the Board approve this reimbursement resolution, which will allow the Board to use the bond funds to reimburse work before the bonds are issued, meaning that work that is occurring now can be reimbursed by the 2026 issue. The District has successfully used this method in the past and it has helped to manage its arbitrage costs. This resolution also does not obligate the District to move forward with any bond issuances, it simply allows the District to reimburse the expenditures if it does.

Mr. Dronen moved, and Mr. Das seconded the motion that the Board of Education adopt the resolution expressing official intent regarding certain capital expenditures to be reimbursed from proceeds of an obligation to be issued by Township High School District Number 203, Cook County, Illinois. Upon a roll call vote being taken, the members voted as follows:

AYE: Ms. Tomlinson, Ms. Alcantara, Mr. Das, Mr. Dronen, Ms. McDonough, Ms. Pofcher, Ms. Hahn

NAY:

The motion passed.

***D. Budget Assumptions and Parameters for 2026-27**

Dr. Johnson presented the budget assumptions and parameters for 2026-27. Each January, the Administration begins to prepare the budget for the next school year, using information contained in the five-year projections and the tax levy approved at the November Board meeting. The projections have been updated based on actual expenditures from the previous year and include parameters that will be used to build the 2026-27 budget. The calendar proposes the approval of a Tentative Budget at the July 2025 Board Meeting and the final budget at the September meeting. The budget assumptions and parameters have been reviewed by the Finance Committee. Once approved, Dr. Johnson will begin discussions with administrators and departmental budget-makers regarding their budget needs. This is a

primarily student driven process as it is based on what students are requesting for course requests. The District looks to align its staffing and resources, so a program is created that is based on student interest.

The Administration will closely monitor national policy and economic factors that may impact the District, including inflationary trends, tariffs, and changes that may impact any federal funding it might receive. The plan continues to reflect more realistic budget assumptions, with adjustments on both the revenue and expenditure areas of the budget to more closely align with actual year end results. Dr. Johnson shared that next year's budget is projected to have a surplus of operations of \$4.9 million. Once transfers for debt are accounted for, a small surplus of \$130,000 is anticipated. If no other major variables change, Dr. Johnson anticipates being able to present a balanced budget for approval this summer as estimated information is updated with actual costs as information becomes available. The District will continue to monitor inflation and other pressures on expenditures.

Dr. Johnson also shared the new enrollment study that was conducted by Dr. McKibbin. The study shows remarkably stable enrollment, with an increase of nine students next year, then a cumulative drop of 102 students over the following three years. The stable enrollment is driven largely by national census trends, and an increasing number of empty nesters in the community as well as a limited amount of new housing. With the ten-year projections for enrollment, the District ends this period with just 121 more students than it has now. Currently, New Trier has 3,662 students and the estimate in ten years is 3,783. This is a study that is done every year as the District's budget is 80% salary and benefits, and the District wants to ensure that it knows what the enrollment trends are, so it can make plans to be staffed effectively to meet student needs.

Ms. Pofcher moved, and Mr. Das seconded the motion that the Board of Education approves the budget calendar as presented and authorizes the administration to begin the budgeting process. Upon a roll call vote being taken, the members voted as follows:

AYE: Ms. Alcantara, Mr. Das, Mr. Dronen, Ms. McDonough, Ms. Pofcher, Ms. Tomlinson, Ms. Hahn

NAY:

The motion passed.

VIII. Consent Agenda

- Bill List for Period, December 1 - 31, 2024
- Personnel Report (Appointment, Changes of Status, Resignations, Retirements, Stipends - Appointment, and Stipends - Separation)
- Board of Education Meeting Schedule for 2025-26
- Closed Session Minutes Review
- Approval of Student Fees for 2025-26
- Approval of Glenview District 34 Withdrawal from TrueNorth Educational Cooperative
- AllTown Transportation Renewal - Special Education (2025-26)
- Safeway Transportation Renewal - Special Education (2025-26)
- Vestis Towels Contract Renewal
- Acceptance of FY 24 Audit
- Faculty Laptop Purchase (FY 26)
- Asbestos Abatement Bid Approval and Consulting Contract
- Amendment to Contract with Performance Services for Solar at the Winnetka Campus
- Resolution abating the taxes heretofore levied for the year 2024 to pay debt service on the General Obligation School Bonds (Alternate Revenue Source), Series 2021A, of Township High School District Number 203, Cook County, Illinois.
- New Trier Scholarship Trust Fund Allocation Approval

Ms. Hahn inquired if any members wanted to pull an item off the Consent Agenda. First, Mr. Dronen commented on the approval of student fees for 2025-26, he thanked the Finance Committee and administration for not increasing the general fee which encompasses curricular items. He noted the importance of keeping that number frozen, as it has been for the past four years.

Mr. Dronen then asked to pull the Approval of Glenview District 34 Withdrawal from TrueNorth Educational Cooperative and the New Trier Scholarship Trust Fund Allocation Approval.

Ms. Pofcher moved that the Board of Education approve the Consent Agenda, which includes: Bill List for Period, December 1 - 31, 2024; Personnel Report (Appointment, Changes of Status, Resignations, Retirements, Stipends - Appointment, and Stipends - Separation); Board of Education Meeting Schedule for 2025-26; The destruction of the Closed Session Meeting tapes of January 2023 through June 2023; Approval of Student Fees for 2025-26 as presented; Extend the Safeway Transportation and Alltown Bus Service agreements for the 2025-26 school year and authorize the Associate Superintendent to execute the agreements; Extend the contract with Vestis through August 31, 2026, and authorize the Associate Superintendent to execute the agreement; Acceptance of FY 24 Audit; Approve the contract with Connection Inc. for equipment as presented and authorize the Associate Superintendent to execute the agreement; Award a contract to EHC Environmental for \$220,000 for the first phase of asbestos abatement and a contract to Hygieneering, Inc. for \$195,208 for environmental consulting services for services related to the Winnetka Campus North and Tower Building Renovation Project and the Health Life Safety Plumbing Project; Approve the contract price amendment as presented, subject to attorney review; and the Resolution abating the taxes heretofore levied for the year 2024 to pay debt service on the General Obligation School Bonds (Alternate Revenue Source), Series 2021A, of Township High School District Number 203, Cook County, Illinois. Mr. Das seconded the motion. Upon a roll call vote being taken, the members voted as follows:

AYE: Mr. Das, Mr. Dronen, Ms. McDonough, Ms. Pofcher, Ms. Tomlinson, Ms. Alcantara, Ms. Hahn

NAY: none

The motion passed.

Mr. Dronen asked for more information to be provided on the Consideration and Action upon a Resolution Approving the Petition for Withdrawal from TrueNorth Educational Cooperative 804 filed by Glenview District 34. He noted that the administration is considering at some point looking at its relationship with TrueNorth and reevaluating that. Dr. Johnson provided information about this request by Glenview District 34. He then went on to share historical and current information regarding New Trier's partnership with TrueNorth. Ms. Pofcher shared her respect that other districts have a right to make their own decision, however, she noted that the implication for New Trier is that it will cause its annual costs to go up by \$50,000, so from around \$400,000 to \$450,000. Dr. Johnson confirmed this and went on to share additional information. Mr. Dronen recommended that if the administration comes back to the Board with a memo regarding TrueNorth, that it includes a funding formula and how New Trier's part of it is affected. Mr. Dronen also noted the importance of inclusion and to the extent that a student cannot be offered the services at New Trier, that inclusion could be the next closest community versus going out of state.

Ms. Pofcher moved, and Mr. Dronen seconded the motion that the Board of Education approve the consent agenda which also includes the Consideration and Action upon a Resolution Approving the Petition for Withdrawal from TrueNorth Educational Cooperative 804 filed by Glenview District 34. Upon a roll call vote being taken, the members voted as follows:

AYE: Mr. Dronen, Ms. McDonough, Ms. Pofcher, Ms. Tomlinson, Ms. Alcantara, Mr. Das, Ms. Hahn

NAY: none

The motion passed.

Mr. Dronen had no comments on the scholarships for the 2025 graduation class, simply that he would like to abstain from this item. Ms. Pofcher moved, and Mr. Das seconded the motion that the Board of Education approve the consent agenda which will also include approval of a maximum allocation of \$273,962 for scholarships for the 2025 graduation class. Upon a roll call vote being taken, the members voted as follows:

AYE: Ms. McDonough, Ms. Pofcher, Ms. Tomlinson, Ms. Alcantara, Mr. Das, Ms. Hahn

NAY: none

ABSTAIN: Mr. Dronen

The motion passed.

Dr. Johnson thanked Mr. Rick Drake, the District's financial advisor, for the scholarship trust fund. Once again, there were wonderful returns that slightly beat the Vanguard Balanced Index Fund, which is the benchmark for this. This

item has also been moved up a month so there is a longer application period for students. Ms. Hahn shared that Mr. Drake is very generous with his professional expertise.

IX. Board Member Reports

Ms. Alcantara noted that there have been two New Trier Fine Arts Association (NTFAA) meetings since the last Board meeting. At the December 11th meeting, the group discussed grants, fundraising, marketing, signs, summer scholars, and Lagniappe. On January 8th, Ms. Tomlinson attended in Ms. Alcantara's place. Ms. Tomlinson noted that Art Department Chair, Ms. Alicia Landes, provided an update with Mrs. Dubravec sharing about the Brierly Gallery and Mr. Waechtler sharing about an exhibit in the B lounge. The exhibits in these galleries will provide students with an idea of what various art classes have to offer as they register for classes next year. Metal, Jewelry, and Sculpture Arts will now be a one semester class, which parents appreciated and allows for students to experiment without committing to a full year class. NTFAA also hit its financial appeal goal, raising \$40,000, which will help pay for the 50 summer scholar awards of \$300 each. Ms. Tomlinson also shared about a summer scholar who presented to the group. Jazz Fest is February 8th.

On January 9th, Ms. Alcantara, along with Ms. Hahn, attended the **Policy Committee** meeting. Information from that meeting was shared earlier.

Also on January 9th, Ms. Alcantara attended the **Facilities Steering Committee** meeting. The Winnetka Campus North and Tower Building project to improve science labs, student services and administrative spaces were discussed. The group also discussed the health life safety projects that will take place at each campus.

Mr. Das noted that he is attending the **TrueNorth Leadership Council** meeting tomorrow.

Ms. Hahn shared that the **New Trier Educational Foundation (NTEF)** met on December 12th. The foundation is doing a lot of work to clean up their database which allows them to reach alumni and raise funds. During the fall grant cycle, NTEF awarded 8 grants for a total of \$11,000. They are even starting to think of the alumni gala that will be held in 2026.

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

Dr. Sally highlighted the following events:

- On January 28th, the Parent Community Advisory Group will meet about Future Programming. Based on the progress of the committee, Dr. Sally anticipates an April presentation to the Board about Future Programming.
- The Kinesis Dance Concert in the Cornog will take place on February 7th and 8th.
- Jazz Fest will take place on February 8th at the Winnetka campus.
- There will be a Township-wide Institute Day on February 14th.
- The next Board meeting will be on Tuesday, February 18th.

Ms. Hahn inquired if there were any requests for staff research or future agenda items, of which there were two. The first is to hear about Lagniappe as it evolves. The second is a future Board report about TrueNorth.

XI. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Das moved, and Mr. Dronen seconded the motion, to adjourn. Upon a voice vote being taken, all members indicated they were in favor.

The meeting adjourned at 8:44 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lindsey Ruston, Secretary

Jean Hahn, President