

BOARD BRIEFS

News from the New Trier Township High School District 203

Board of Education Regular April 17, 2023

Meeting

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NTEF Grants Support Innovative Programs and Projects

Since 2004, the [New Trier Educational Foundation \(NTEF\)](#) has supported small projects with a big impact through its grant program, allowing faculty to submit proposals for ideas that the not-for-profit organization can fund outside of the District's budget.

NTEF Executive Director Liz Mayer told the Board that the grants, renamed the Marran Grants in honor of late veteran social studies teacher and New Trier leader Jim Marran, are an important part of carrying out the organization's mission.

The NTEF was founded in 2001 during New Trier High School's centennial celebration. Its mission is to provide private funding for exceptional educational opportunities and special projects that are not funded - or are funded only in part - by the District. While the Foundation works closely with the District, it is an independent 501(c)(3) organization.

In recent years, the NTEF has opened two grant cycles each year - one in the fall and one in the spring. Teachers are encouraged to submit applications for funding for projects that they believe are good candidates for grants. The Foundation Board and applicants then meet to discuss the applications in more detail. Finally, the NTEF Grant Committee makes recommendations based on criteria including alignment with the District's strategic plan, *New Trier 2030*; measurable impact on students; unique partnerships or enhancements; and input from the administration.

The Foundation has funded more than 200 teacher-driven grants through the program since its inception in 2004. Mayer said recent examples of grant-funded projects include the Go Baby Go partnership - in which Applied Arts students design and modify PowerWheel cars for children with mobility challenges - and training for therapy dog Gracie, a calming resource for New Trier students facing anxiety and mental health issues.

In addition to the Marran Grants, the NTEF also funds special projects that may require a multi-year campaign and a larger funding commitment, such as the development of an Innovation Hub at both campuses focusing on implementing Human Centered Design in parts of the curriculum. The organization also sponsors events to bring the New Trier community together, such as Alumni Happy Hours in different parts of the country and an annual Day of Service for alumni, students, parents, staff, and community members. Click for the [NTEF presentation](#).

New Trier Continues to Strengthen Commitment to Safety, Security

New Trier's approach to safety and security at its campuses and facilities is continually evolving, Superintendent Paul Sally and Winnetka Campus Principal Denise Dubravec told the Board in an update on the school's multi-layered approach to security.

Sally noted that while New Trier has made several changes to strengthen physical security and safety procedures in recent years, the school also revisits those procedures regularly, including after local and national school safety incidents.

New Trier's layers of security include physical barriers such as fences and buzz-in systems staffed by security personnel, strong partnerships with local law enforcement and social service agencies, emergency planning and preparedness with students and staff, prevention measures focusing on mental health, and relationship-building so students are connected and supported.

Dubravec said one of the most important layers of safety and security is building strong relationships with students and making them feel that they belong. Connected students are less likely to threaten harm to themselves or others. Connections include adviser rooms, extracurricular programs, clubs and affinity groups, student supports such as Social Work, and schoolwide initiatives like "Be Brave, Be Kind, Be Proud."

New Trier has strong partnerships with local law enforcement and community-based support networks. The school also conducts regular security reviews with local partners and consultants.

One change this year is the hiring of New Trier's first Director of Campus Safety, Raimond Pavely. While campus safety was always part of the job of administrators, the new position allows better coordination of safety efforts through a position that has a singular focus on safety.

Pavely, a 21-year veteran of the Wilmette Police Department and longtime school resource officer, told Board members that since joining New Trier in February, he has spent time building relationships with staff, students, and parents, acclimating himself to technology and systems, and reviewing current school safety and security plans. His goals include additional professional development for security staff, updating all-staff training on emergency procedures, and conducting tabletop exercises with administrators in the near future.

Sally said parents, students, and staff should feel confident that New Trier is well-prepared and vigilant. He said relationships with students and continual communication and partnership with parents will continue to be the most important step to ensure school safety. Click for the [Prevention, Safety, and Security presentation](#).

Other News from the April 17 Meeting

- Assistant Superintendent Joanne Panopoulos told the Board that the District's Attendance Committee plans to send an attendance letter to families soon. Parent focus groups and the committee believe making parents aware of the importance of regular attendance and the impact of parent-excused absences will help families better understand when students may need support in attending school.
- Associate Superintendent Chris Johnson updated the Board on the significant progress toward completion of the [East Side Academic and Athletic Project](#). The project is on

track to open as scheduled for use at the beginning of next school year. Exterior work has essentially been completed and interior progress continues at a rapid pace, with carpet already installed in most classrooms and offices, painting underway, and athletic flooring contractors on site. Click for the [East Side Project 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.

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>