

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

**June 5, 2023**

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

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, June 5, 2023, at 6:30 p.m.

**Members Present**

Ms. Kimberly Alcantara  
Mr. Avik Das  
Mr. Keith Dronen, President  
Ms. Courtney McDonough  
Ms. Sally Pofcher  
Ms. Sally Tomlinson

**Administrators Present**

Dr. Paul Sally, Superintendent  
Dr. Christopher Johnson, Associate Superintendent  
Dr. Joanne Panopoulos, Asst. Supt. for Special Ed and Student Services  
Mr. Peter Tragos, Asst. Supt. for Curriculum & Instruction  
Mr. Mike Lee, Assistant Principal for Administrative Services  
Mr. Paul Waechtler, Principal – Northfield Campus

**Members Absent**

Ms. Jean Hahn, Vice President

**Also Present**

Ms. Niki Dizon, Director of Communications; Dr. Renee Zoladz, Director of Human Resources; Ms. Teri Rodgers, Social Studies Department Faculty and Education Association President; Ms. Elizabeth Bennett, Music and Theatre Department Chair; Ms. Amy Branahl, Music and Theatre Department Faculty; Ms. Jackie Gnant, Science Department Faculty; Ms. Dyan Hillhouse, Math Department Faculty; Ms. Beth Dirkes, Administrative Assistant for Curriculum and Instruction; Mr. Jeff Bailey, Technology Department; Mr. Eric Johnson, Technology Department; Mr. Mike Hill, Technology Department; Ms. Lindsey Ruston, Board of Education Secretary; members of the press and community.

**BUSINESS MEETING**

**I. CALL TO ORDER – 4:30 p.m. – C234**

Mr. Dronen called the Regular Meeting of June 5, 2023, of the Board of Education to order at 4:32 p.m. in room C234 at the Northfield campus. Roll call was taken, and all members were present except for Mr. Das and Ms. Hahn.

Mr. Dronen asked for a motion to move to Closed Session. Ms. Tomlinson moved that the Board of Education adjourn to closed session for the purpose of 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; collective negotiating matters between the District and its employees or their representatives, or deliberations concerning salary schedules for one or more classes of employees; and litigation, when an action against, affecting or on behalf of the particular District has been filed and is pending before a court or administrative tribunal, or when the District finds that an action is probable or imminent, in which case the basis for the finding shall be recorded and entered into the closed meeting minutes. Ms. Alcantara seconded the motion. Upon a roll call vote being taken, the members voted as follows:

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

NAY: none

ABSENT: Mr. Das, Ms. Hahn

The motion passed.

**II. CLOSED SESSION – 4:30 p.m. – A201A**

**III. BUSINESS MEETING – Open Session – 7:00 p.m. – C234**

Mr. Dronen recalled the Regular Meeting of June 5, 2023, of the Board of Education to order at 7:06 p.m. in

room C234 at the Northfield campus. Roll call was taken, and all members were present, except for Ms. Hahn.

#### **IV. Minutes and Reports**

##### **\*A. Regular Meeting of May 15, 2023 (open and closed session)**

Mr. Dronen asked for any comments or adjustments on the minutes of the Regular Meeting of May 15, 2023 (open and closed session). There were no requests for changes to the minutes. Mr. Das moved, and Ms. Tomlinson seconded the motion, that the Board of Education approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting of May 15, 2023 (open and closed session). Upon a roll call vote being taken, the members voted as follows:

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

NAY: none

ABSENT: Ms. Hahn

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:

- Adviser Room Olympics concluded with two final events of paper airplanes and knockout with the finale being relay races. The following adviser rooms won first, second, and third places: girls adviser rooms: Ms. Landes, Ms. Hsieh, and Ms. Ward; mixed gender adviser rooms: Ms. Gompers, Ms. Skizas, and Ms. Tallmadge/Ms. Wysocki; and boys adviser rooms: Mr. Collins, Mr. Easton, and Mr. Dane. Mr. Waechtler thanked all those who organized great end-of-year activities.
- Springfest took place on May 25<sup>th</sup>. He thanked the Student Senate for organizing and raising over \$2,000 to donate to Radical Generosity Chicago.
- Displayed in the B lounge are student works from the Art Explorations class. American artist Alexander Calder, sculptor, whose work, like his circus sculpture, often involves moving parts including bent or twisted wire was the inspiration for the students' creations.
- Therapy dogs were on campus before final exams. Mr. Waechtler thanked Ms. Steph Moretta, Academic Assistance Coordinator, and the Academic Assistance Center for hosting this event.
- Students also met with their sophomore adviser for next year.
- Finally, Mr. Waechtler thanked the New Trier Parents Association for providing snacks for students during exams.

Mr. Mike Lee, Assistant Principal for Administrative Services, shared the following student events and program updates from the Winnetka campus on behalf of Mrs. Denise Dubravec, Principal for the Winnetka Campus:

- The boys' baseball team was set to compete this evening in the super sectional in Schaumburg versus Stevenson.
- Mrs. Dubravec hosted a dinner and tour of the east side project for the neighborhood surrounding the Winnetka campus with over 60 neighbors attending. Mr. Lee thanked the school's neighbors for their patience and support throughout the construction project.
- Pitch Night 2023 was a huge success in partnership with the New Trier Educational Foundation (NTEF). The Business Education classes had three competing teams, who delivered impressive pitches. Mr. Lee thanked the judges, volunteers, families and the NTEF for their support.
- The Be Brave, Be Kind, Be Proud initiative began their work last summer in leading their peers. Next year, each group will meet three times. The last meeting will survey data regarding students' experiences in this, with leaders in the program reviewing what is working well and what needs attention.
- The New Trier Science Olympiad team competed at the national tournament along with 59 other high schools across the country. New Trier took eighth place with individuals winning national medals in eight events including one gold medal in environmental chemistry.
- Mr. Lee provided the spring sports wrap-up with tennis taking second place at state. Boys water polo took back-to-back state championships this year. The 4x400 boys track team took fourth place at state. The rowing team competed at the Midwest Scholastic Rowing Championship, where all New Trier boats made finals with five medals and three scholastic national titles.
- The first annual fine and performing arts signing day was held recently honoring 28 seniors who will either major or minor in these programs in college.

- The 2023 Senior Project Exhibition took place at the Winnetka Campus with one of the highest numbers of participants since the program began. Hundreds of students participated and shared their experiences with classmates, parents, and faculty. Many thanks to Ms. Melissa Duffy, Mr. Chris Van Den Berg, and Mr. Dan Hibey for coordinating this program.
- Trevia signing day took place a couple of weeks ago for seniors. They enjoyed breakfast, picked up their graduation tickets and received their yearbooks.
- The 123<sup>rd</sup> Commencement celebrating the class of 2023 was a beautiful and well-run event.
- Mr. Lee thanked the NTPA for providing a safe and fun experience for students at the grad party following the graduation ceremony.

Dr. Johnson gave the FOIA report, noting that there was one request since the last Board meeting, which is in progress regarding survey data.

## V. Communications

Mr. Dronen 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 Mr. Peter Tragos, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction. There were no requests for public comment.

## VI. Special Orders of Business

Mr. Dronen rearranged the order of the items in this section and began with the International Trip Approval for the Choral Music Trip to Spain in 2024.

### **\*C. International Trip Approval - Choral Music Trip to Spain 2024**

Dr. Sally introduced the International Trip Approval - Choral Music Trip to Spain 2024, noting that Ms. Elizabeth Bennett, Music and Theatre Department Chair, and Ms. Amy Branahl, Music and Theatre Department Faculty, would present shortly on this. Dr. Sally noted that international trips are brought to the Board for discussion or questions. Typically, if it is a summer school trip that approval takes place through the summer school new course process, however, with this being a spring break trip, it is being brought to the Board now.

Ms. Bennett thanked Mrs. Dubravec, Mr. Lee, and Ms. Branahl for their work on this. She shared that part of being in a high school musical ensemble is taking what one does outside the walls of New Trier. This past March, some of New Trier's orchestras and bands performed at the Lincoln Center. The goal is to continue to bring these sorts of experiences to students. Choral students in grades 10<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> will all be invited to travel and perform in Spain over our 2024 Spring Break. The trip is not required but is offered to all students and does not coincide with any of the religious observances that are celebrated during this time. The department also wanted to avoid summer as many of their students take summer school. Students would leave on a Wednesday evening, missing two days of school, which is within Board policy, returning the following Friday. Students would have the weekend, plus Monday to recover. This is a cultural experience for students, provides them a chance to perform, and is an opportunity to utilize languages that they are learning at New Trier.

Ms. Bennett directed the Board to the packet which included information on the rationale, an itinerary, as well as cost. The cost has been aligned with the cost of previous trips. Ms. Bennett has also spoken with other districts regarding the cost of their international trips, and this trip is in line with those. Ms. Bennett noted that almost everything is included in the cost, but most importantly, air fare. Fundraising information was also provided in the packet.

Ms. Branahl shared her excitement for the trip, noting that travel opportunities were greatly impacted by the pandemic. The two then invited questions and comments from the Board.

Mr. Das expressed his gratitude that he and his family could go to New York to watch the orchestra at the Lincoln Center. He shared his enthusiasm for this trip as well. Mr. Das inquired if there is a tour company that the department is working with that handles the itinerary as well as how parents might be involved in this experience. Ms. Branahl replied that MCM Arts is the travel company, and they provide tours all over the world. This company allowed for autonomy to bring the entire choral program. Ms. Branahl then replied to the parent question sharing that a shadow trip could be built alongside. Ms. Bennett expanded on that, stating that it would be like the New York trip. Parents would be financially responsible for their own travel but could follow the itinerary. Mr. Das noted that for those parents who were able to attend the New York trip, there was a lot of respect for the faculty and the chaperones, he

then inquired how it is determined who chaperones a trip. Ms. Bennett replied that the teachers of the students would chaperone and beyond that there is a chaperone application and vetting process for the remainder. The department would work with those applicants to make sure that they are the right fit for this group of students.

Ms. Alcantara shared that she thought this was a great idea and it is a culturally enriching program for students. From a musical standpoint it is a great opportunity. She also noted that those who will be juniors and seniors did not get to travel a lot during their early years of high school and this is a great opportunity for these students to close out their high school years with a mind broadening and cultural experience. Ms. Bennett thanked Ms. Alcantara for recognizing this part of it as the choral program was set to travel to New York in 2020, she went on to share other comments around this.

Mr. Dronen seconded Ms. Alcantara's comments, sharing he thinks it is a great opportunity. He noted this was a voting item and asked for a motion. Mr. Das moved, and Ms. Tomlinson seconded the motion, that the Board of Education approve the Choral Music Trip to Spain 2024 as presented. Upon a roll call vote being taken, the members voted as follows:

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

NAY: none

ABSENT: Ms. Hahn

The motion passed.

#### **\*B. New Trier High School Education Association 2023-2028 Agreement**

Dr. Johnson presented the New Trier High School Education Association 2023-2028 Agreement. It represents a fair agreement between the faculty and District that will allow it to continue to recruit and retain high quality teachers. This five-year contract is the culmination of a five-month negotiation process with 100 hours of bargaining over 20 sessions with countless hours of prep time prior to this. The agreement was negotiated using the Interest Based Bargaining (IBB) method, a non-adversarial form of bargaining, and facilitated by an independent mediator during one to two sessions a week, typically after school. The Board team included members Ms. Hahn, Ms. Tomlinson, Mr. Tragos, Mr. Waechtler and Dr. Zoladz as well as the District's attorney from Franczek, Ms. Nicki Bazer. The association team included nine elected members and their IEA rep. Two of their leaders, Ms. Jackie Gnant, Science Department Faculty and Ms. Dyan Hillhouse, Math Department Faculty, were in attendance as well as Association President Ms. Teri Rodgers, Social Studies Department Faculty, who provided support. Dr. Johnson noted that all members on both sides of the table contributed in a variety of ways to the discussion and the ultimate product, thoughtfully listening to each other and problem solving together. It was a chance to discuss a wide variety of topics related to the school and how the District can best support students, particularly as their needs change. Some of these discussions resulted in language changes to the contract, while others focused on continuing to foster healthy working relationships and maintaining the unique New Trier student-focused culture that has served the community for generations. It was an interesting time to negotiate with high inflation and significant changes in education and at New Trier. Dr. Johnson shared that through this process he developed an even deeper understanding and respect for New Trier teachers and their commitment to their students and community. Some of the financial terms include a new 27 step salary schedule, which is an increase from 24 steps, putting the District on par with its peers. It enhances starting salaries for new teachers, as the District prepares to have 25% of its teachers retire over the next six years, this ensures that the next generation of teachers that are hired continue the excellence of the current generation. The agreement continues to provide competitive retirement and health care benefits in a way that is fiscally responsible to the District. The financial components of the agreement have been incorporated into the tentative budget to be presented next month and are consistent with the financial parameters previously reviewed by the Board. Dr. Johnson invited questions and comments.

Ms. Tomlinson shared about the process, noting it was collaborative and not confrontational. The IBB method allowed the two groups to align themselves to solve issues together rather than in an adversarial role. She noted it was quickly evident that the Board wanted to hire and retain the best and the brightest while at the same time, teachers wanted to provide exceptional instruction along with supporting students and one another. Ms. Tomlinson shared that the teachers that were elected to represent their peers spent over 100 additional hours outside of their teaching responsibilities. One concern voiced was the increase time stresses on their jobs and those on the team spent this time on behalf of the collective group. Ms. Tomlinson thanked them for giving their time and talent to the

process as well as for their honesty and passion. She also thanked them for making her a better Board member along the way. Ms. Tomlinson shared her support wholeheartedly for this agreement.

Mr. Dronen read comments prepared by Ms. Hahn, who was unable to attend the meeting. Ms. Hahn shared how proud she was of the agreement the Board has reached with the New Trier Teachers Association. One that recognizes the extraordinary contributions of New Trier's exceptional faculty, affirms the shared commitment to cultivating a collaborative, supportive, innovative professional environment and reflects the Board's continued commitment to attracting and retaining the highest quality teachers in a manner that is both fiscally responsible to the community as well as sustainable for future generations of New Trier students. This agreement would not have been possible without the tremendous efforts of the faculty and Board negotiating teams. She noted that they were generous with their time along with their care, compassion, creativity, courage, honesty, patience, and humor. After additional thoughts, Mr. Dronen continued with Ms. Hahn's comments sharing that the time together was not always easy as the teams attempted to chart a path through the post-covid era. An era characterized by the increasing complex needs of students, volatile economic conditions, and accelerating pace of change. Nevertheless, their deep commitment to New Trier and unwavering devotion to students was evident throughout, each demonstrating a willingness to share openly and honestly and to face criticism graciously and humbly. While a contract can neither eliminate remaining challenges nor anticipate unforeseen obstacles, this agreement serves as a potent reminder that one is stronger and better when they work together toward shared goals. Ms. Hahn's comments concluded by saying that on behalf of the Board, the community as well as current and future students, thank you.

Mr. Das shared that for about 15 years, he was part of the leadership of a public sector union. He was president and also negotiated several collective bargaining agreements, he was also on the management side as the head of the department working with the negotiations. Mr. Das went on to say that it is not during the good times that the relationships matter the most, but rather when times are strained and challenging. He thanked Ms. Tomlinson and Ms. Hahn for their work as well as the administration. Mr. Das also thanked them for representing the perspective of having a strong relationship that has been tested in historical ways. The agreement reflects the principles that build on past relationships and aspirations but sends a signal that people can be stronger together. After additional comments, Mr. Das noted that this exemplifies how a community is kept strong. Those relationships are what the District is investing in with this agreement. The two groups were able to come together and send a signal that this is what is at the heart of New Trier – wonderful relationships committed to a community that is a springboard of excellence for its young people and a point of pride for the community. He shared his congratulations with everyone who was a part of this.

Ms. Alcantara shared that parents, students, administrators, and the community have been through a lot over the past four years, and teachers were on the frontline for those challenges. She recognizes and values all that the teachers have done for their students, the school, and the community. Ms. Alcantara also hoped that this agreement conveys respect and appreciation for New Trier teachers. She thanked everyone that was involved.

Mr. Dronen thanked both the Association's and the Board's negotiating teams. Around 100 hours were spent in over 20 sessions which does not include the prep time. He went on to say that the teams took time away from their families, friends, and other important matters to reach an agreement, which Mr. Dronen believes is fair and equitable to all. He thanked the teachers for their commitment to their students, New Trier, and the community.

Ms. Tomlinson moved, and Ms. Alcantara seconded the motion, that the Board of Education approve the New Trier High School Education Association 2023-2028 Agreement as presented. Upon a roll call vote being taken, the members voted as follows:

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

NAY: none

ABSENT: Ms. Hahn

The motion passed.

Dr. Sally added his thanks for all the hard work that both sides put in, noting it is a great agreement. It brings together what others have said about everyone having been through some tough times and this can be used as a good launch into the future. He also thanked the administrative team of Dr. Johnson, Mr. Tragos, Mr. Waechtler, and Dr. Zoladz for their work.

## **A. Communications Audit**

Ms. Niki Dizon, Director of Communications, presented the communications audit. The process began with the Community Engagement Committee (CEC) about a year ago when Ms. Dizon presented her Annual Plan goals to the committee, noting that those goals should focus on a comprehensive communications assessment. Ms. Dizon went on to present a high-level overview of the results of this assessment.

She shared that measurable progress has been made on the past Strategic Plan goals of engaging with various groups such as families with younger children and alumni. The next group to work on engaging is the set of community members without children in the District. This group is one of the most difficult to engage in a school district as they are not a captive audience. However, it is essential to engage them and the broader community as they support the school with their tax dollars. With a charge from the CEC, Ms. Dizon began to research communications firms and obtained three proposals. She went back to the CEC in September with the proposals and a recommendation for Minneapolis-based firm, CESO Communications that specializes in K-12 communications and conducts audits. Ms. Dizon wanted to ensure that the resources in the Communications Department are utilized in the way that key stakeholders want along with identifying strengths and areas for improvement. Stakeholders are identified as parents, students, the greater community, and staff members. Ms. Dizon also noted that having analytics behind the decision-making was important.

CESO offers three communication audit phases for schools: (1) a Baseline Communication Assessment, (2) a Community Online Survey, and (3) Focus Groups. Wanting a comprehensive analysis, New Trier selected to engage in all three. The Baseline Communication Assessment took place in December 2022, the Community Online Survey occurred from January to February and finally, and Focus Groups met in March of 2023. The report was delivered in April.

For the Baseline Communication Assessment, Ms. Dizon provided CESO with all of New Trier's communication assets and tools such as crisis communication templates, the website, publications, public-facing as well as internal-facing plans and strategies. Ms. Dizon also completed a lengthy survey and conversation with officials from CESO. After their review, they concluded that New Trier's communications efforts are a model for other districts. There were no significant gaps or issues that required immediate attention, which Ms. Dizon was informed is rare. CESO provided action steps or "tweaks" to bolster an already strong program. The themes from the recommendations were similar throughout all three portions of the assessment. One recommendation was to create an ongoing communication assessment plan. Another was to conduct a website survey. Ms. Dizon shared that in 2021 the District website was redesigned and moved to Blackboard. That work was done in partnership with the technology department and involved stakeholder input. It is an appropriate time to see what tweaks might be needed to the website; however, Blackboard was bought by Finalsity and they will only support the current website for another year and a half. There will be a lot of groundwork done over the next year between the Communications and Technology departments to prepare for this transfer, with website needs will be addressed in goals in about a year. CESO also recommended an internal and external communications plan. The external plan should include a plan for residents who do not have students currently at New Trier.

The next step was the Community Survey which included a large public relations push as a postcard containing a QR code with a link to the survey was sent to all 24,000 households in the Township. Information was included in sender schools' and villages' electronic newsletters. Social media and email were also used. There were about 2,100 responses, which is a healthy response for a District that is not in the middle of a controversy or referendum. About a third of respondents were people who do not have students at New Trier.

The conclusion from the community survey showed satisfaction with the amount and method of communication, however there was a desire for more communication from the non-parent/non-staff group. There was a preference for email communication across all groups. Email communication is an area that will need to be addressed as the District does not have a good way to communicate with those who are non-student, non-parent, or non-staff. Other findings included that parents are highly engaged and they were looking for more opportunities to do so. Other recommendations were similar to the baseline assessment. One item that Ms. Dizon did note from these particular recommendations is the need for more storytelling. While this is done in the District's social media and newsletters, telling the story of New Trier in the District's own words is a goal for the department.

Next, Ms. Dizon shared that survey participants were asked to describe New Trier in one or two words and from that word clouds were made from each constituent group. Community members and staff frequently wrote “excellent” to describe the school while current parents and sender school parents used the word “competitive.” While this is not necessarily a bad thing, the District wants to make sure it continues its messaging that every student has a place at New Trier.

The final part of the audit was hour-long focus groups run by Mr. Bob Noyed from CESO. All groups expressed strong support for New Trier as well as providing very strong reputational descriptions. People move to the area so their children can attend New Trier, there is also multi-generational attendance in families. Focus group attendees emphasized that they want New Trier to keep this strong reputation and messaging should reflect that. Some concerns were raised that the District will continue to keep an eye on.

Next, Ms. Dizon presented 2023-2024 draft goals, noting that these goals do not represent all the strategic plan goals for next year in the department such as events like the Alumni Achievement Awards and the opening of the East Side Academic and Athletic project. The first goal is a back-to-school community mailing for which Ms. Dizon provided some details. The second goal is a new mass communication system so the community can subscribe to the District’s e-newsletters and allows Ms. Dizon to stylize them. Ms. Dizon provided details around goals three and four, launch of brand and identity standards and communications content calendar, respectively. Ms. Dizon then thanked the CEC who provided guidance and support during this process. She then invited questions and comments from the Board.

Ms. Tomlinson appreciated all the steps it took to put this together over the past several months. Ms. Tomlinson then shared her concern about the number of survey respondents, 2,100, which seems low in a township of 20,000 residents and 36,000 votes. She also shared concerns that the school is not parsing some of the comments as they are lumped into one group. Ms. Tomlinson noted that it will be important to understand who and what is being measured in the ongoing assessment plans as well as what goals are being set for key constituents.

Ms. Tomlinson brought up push versus pull communications, stating that many of the opportunities seem to be in the area of push communications, which she thinks is important. Referencing the first two goals, she was pleased to see that the department is prioritizing the community mailing as well as inviting people to come in and engage with New Trier. She does not believe that New Trier is resting on its laurels as a participant had warned the District about, but New Trier needs to proactively promote and communicate its major accomplishments, otherwise it will miss an opportunity to build up some good will and reassure the community that they are getting great returns on their investment in the school.

Regarding goal setting, Ms. Tomlinson would like to see a more aggressive approach to branding and promoting the school beyond the community. In terms of branding, to Ms. Tomlinson, it is about who is the District’s customer, who are its competitors, what product is it selling and how can it be distinguished. She noted that a large majority of students go onto college, which is becoming more competitive for them to get into. Ms. Tomlinson shared that the District’s product is the set of amazing students and the school’s unique selling proposition are the *Characteristics of a New Trier Grad* and that interacting with these students is New Trier’s unrivaled brand experience. She went on to say that becoming smarter about what it means to come from New Trier will be important as the marketplace becomes more crowded with more students trying to attend college. She would like to see enhancing New Trier’s branding experience moved up into earlier priorities. Ms. Dizon replied that those were all great thoughts, noting there was a lot of information provided in the reports. Ms. Dizon then spoke to the survey, noting when specific surveys are developed in the future, the District makes sure that it has more parsed data. Ms. Tomlinson inquired if Ms. Dizon was concerned about the quantitative significance of the response rate, or if the information was used to fine tune what was to be done in focus groups. Ms. Dizon confirmed the latter, noting that while this was a part of CESO’s process, it may not be a part of New Trier’s moving forward. Ms. Dizon agreed that a more focused approach toward parsing data is needed. Regarding the branding, Ms. Dizon thinks that getting the assets under control will help so the District is speaking with one voice in the community and beyond. She shared that the District has done a lot of messaging around various initiatives using the same language to strengthen the message out in the community. Dr. Sally added that there are different layers of communication, speaking to Ms. Tomlinson’s point. Where students end up after New Trier and what New Trier students provide those institutions is an important piece and one that needs to be layered into the District’s communication.

Ms. Alcantara is one of the Board’s liaisons to the CEC. She noted that there is a lot of information in these reports and up until now the focus has been on data collection and interpretation of it. The focus now becomes what to do with it and what story New Trier is trying to tell. There are also other items that need to be done, but the overriding next step seems to be figuring out the story the District is trying to tell and what the brand is. Ms. Dizon replied that

much has evolved during her 14 years with the District and shared details around this. She also went on to share thoughts about not having just one story but sharing many stories about New Trier. Ms. Alcantara replied that excellence in belonging in everything that New Trier does stands out to her, which she shared further thoughts on, including showing the way that students find their places and turn out excellent results. Ms. Dizon responded with some thoughts, concluding with the importance that excellence is not just defined by grades or medals, how a student is growing in all areas and how New Trier is helping that.

Mr. Das began that he often encourages constituents to read the strategic plan or the budget documents if they want to learn more about New Trier. He shared his appreciation of the materials presented as they reflected to him the importance of having a person dedicated to the craft of communications. He noted that the Baseline Communications Assessment and the Community Survey helped him to understand the craft, while the word clouds helped him with the content. Mr. Das shared additional comments, concluding that as of now, he does not have a place to point constituents to regarding communications. Regarding the content of the word clouds, he finds himself coming back to the *Characteristics of a New Trier Grad* as an example of where he can point constituents for them to see what they are contributing to and what the District is working towards. Mr. Das thanked Ms. Dizon for educating him on the infrastructure, but he is seeking more guidance on how the school communicates. He is excited to use these infrastructures to say this is what is being communicated via materials or the brand. Mr. Das noted that the word clouds express an opinion about what New Trier is about and that the school can influence that in a positive way and bring a lot of consensus from *Characteristics of a New Trier Grad*. Ms. Dizon replied with some thoughts focusing on the elevator speech, encapsulating it in a way that everyone is speaking in the same way about New Trier, while also sharing different stories about the school and getting those to the forefront.

Mr. Dronen commented that it was an excellent report and looks forward to hearing future reports.

#### **D. Facilities Update: Winnetka Campus East Side Academic and Athletic**

Dr. Johnson provided an update on the Winnetka Campus East Side Academic and Athletic Project (ESAA). Dr. Johnson noted this was the final month of construction as the space is slated to open in July. He shared that there are around 100 construction workers on site daily as the project enters the eighteenth month of work. The project continues to be on track for a substantial completion date of July 1<sup>st</sup>. One risk that is being managed is the air handling units. Twelve have arrived with two still being manufactured and delayed into July. Next week a temporary unit will be installed to allow the District to occupy the space. It will not adversely impact the experience for staff and students in the building and there is no cost to the District for this plan. Dr. Johnson shared that there will be some limited work occurring in July and August such as the high ropes course, ADA accessible ramp, restoration of the north athletic fields, and signage installation. The District will still be able to get students, faculty, staff, and coaches into the building during this work. Dr. Johnson then provided pictures of the current construction progress along with a brief schedule update. There is a change order for the month totaling \$84,000.

Dr. Johnson then moved on to the 15 Year Plan Summer 2023 work. He began with Duke Childs Field which is a project done in conjunction with the Village of Winnetka. The District gave permission for the installation of the large underground detention system that benefits the community and school. This allows the District to reconfigure its fields and add a second softball field. The in-fields will be turfed, and nets will be installed for safety from foul balls, the aging locker room building will be replaced as well. The fields were used for baseball games and with the tanks installed, reduced flooding was already seen from rainstorms. Work begins next week with a completion date of fall with the fields reopening in the spring of 2024.

Next, Dr. Johnson presented on the Transition Center that was opened in Glencoe in August of 2022. The space serves students with transition needs as they prepare for life after New Trier. It was a successful first year in the new site. The first phase of work took place last summer with the One Stop Trev Shop and accessible bathrooms. The second phase of renovations are now underway such as instructional space, a kitchen, and an area to do simulated living activities. Exterior construction began last week with a new accessible ramp and underground electrical service. The project will be complete at the start of school.

The Northfield campus solar project was approved in December 2022. The panels are projected to provide 43% of the power on the campus and installation is on-going. The project will be complete in spring of 2024 when the electrical switchgear arrives.

The Northfield campus classroom modernization is also taking place with enhancements of technology and furniture in classrooms in the C and E buildings. The District is using the Tier II classroom design that was developed during



the Winnetka Campus West Side Project. It includes new whiteboards and projectors, as well as collaborative furniture. Work begins soon and will be completed before the start of the school year.

Finally, the Bickert Gym roof will be replaced. It is the last major roof to be replaced on both campuses. The investments in these roofs should last 20-30 years. After concluding comments, Dr. Johnson acknowledged the hard work of the facilities staff under the leadership of Mr. Dave Conway, Director of Physical Plant Services. He also acknowledged Pepper Construction and Cashman architects. Dr. Johnson then invited questions and comments from the Board.

Mr. Dronen inquired if the neighbors would be notified when the air handlers will be lifted by helicopter for installation. Dr. Johnson shared that neighbors will be notified. It will be done at a time when staff and students are out of the building and should take about a half day to install. Mr. Dronen then noted that the electrical system will be upgraded at the Transition Center. Dr. Johnson replied that the electrical service and plumbing will be upgraded. Mr. Dronen then inquired about the approximate savings regarding the solar panels. Dr. Johnson said that within 14 years they will have paid for themselves. There are a lot of rebates from the state and federal levels and are weighted on the front-end. The District should achieve 40-50% of the estimated savings within the first two years with the remaining 50% paid back over the next 13 years.

## **VII. Administrative Items**

### **A. Treasurer's Report for May 2023 and B. Financial Report for May 2023**

Mr. Johnson did not present the Treasurer's Report and Financial Report for May 2023 as the reports are not yet complete. The bank statements and other documents used to prepare them are not ready as the June Board meeting is earlier than usual. Mr. Johnson noted that they will be attached to Board Docs when they are complete later in the month for Board members and the public to view.

### **\*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 noted that periodically the District issues bonds to fund facilities work. The District's financing plan calls for the issuance of bonds for the 15-year plan work during this school year. The debt service on these bonds is paid from existing revenue sources and does not constitute an increase to taxpayers. A reimbursement resolution will allow the District to reimburse expenses that it incurs after the passage of the resolution. That gives the District the ability to either use the bonds for past work such as what was described for this summer or future work that would occur next winter, spring or summer. It provides the District with the maximum flexibility in the use of the bonds as it does not obligate the District to use the bonds for work that occurred in the past. This is important as the District may have delays again in property tax receipts in the fall, thus, if there is the ability to use these bonds to fund work that occurred this past summer rather than using fund balance, it provides maximum flexibility for the District and Board. Dr. Johnson recommended the approval of this resolution.

Ms. Tomlinson moved, and Ms. Alcantara seconded the motion, that the Board of Education approve 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: Mr. Das, Ms. McDonough, Ms. Pofcher, Ms. Tomlinson, Ms. Alcantara, Mr. Dronen

NAY: none

ABSENT: Ms. Hahn

The motion passed.

## **VIII. Consent Agenda**

- Bill List for Period, May 1 - 31, 2023
- Personnel Report (Appointments, Changes of Status, Resignations, Retirements, Stipends - Appointments, Stipends - Separation and Administrators Contracts)
- Resolution Authorizing Commencement of Social Media Litigation
- Policy Revisions Second Reading - PRESS 111
- North Cook Intermediate Service Center Intergovernmental Agreements for 2023-2024 (NCISC Regional Safe School Program, NCISC Alternative Learning Opportunities Program and NCISC & West 40 ISC High Needs Virtual Alternative Learning Opportunities Program)
- Lease agreement with Providence Capital Network for Technology Equipment

## Approval of security technology and hardware purchases

Mr. Dronen inquired if any members wanted to pull an item off the Consent Agenda, no one chose to do so. Dr. Sally took a moment to highlight one piece of what the Board was going to vote on. He announced a title change for Mrs. Dubravec from Winnetka Campus Principal to Winnetka Campus Principal/Assistant Superintendent. He then shared the information that he would send to staff in the morning about this change.

Ms. Alcantara moved that the Board of Education approve the Consent Agenda, which includes: Bill List for Period, May 1 - 31, 2023; Personnel Report (Appointments, Changes of Status, Resignations, Retirements, Stipends - Appointments, Stipends - Separation and Administrators Contracts); Resolution Authorizing Commencement of Social Media Litigation; Policy Revisions Second Reading - PRESS 111; North Cook Intermediate Service Center Intergovernmental Agreements for 2023-2024 (NCISC Regional Safe School Program, NCISC Alternative Learning Opportunities Program and NCISC & West 40 ISC High Needs Virtual Alternative Learning Opportunities Program); Approve a 3-year lease agreement with Providence Capital Network and authorize the Associate Superintendent to execute the agreement; and Approval of security technology and hardware purchases. Mr. Das seconded the motion. Upon a roll call vote being taken, the members voted as follows:

A YE: Ms. McDonough, Ms. Pofcher, Ms. Tomlinson, Ms. Alcantara, Mr. Das, Mr. Dronen

NAY: none

ABSENT: Ms. Hahn

The motion passed.

### **IX. Board Member Reports**

Ms. Alcantara attended the **New Trier Parents Association (NTPA)** gathering on May 18<sup>th</sup> to commemorate the end of the year.

Mr. Das introduced the new Board liaison, Ms. McDonough, to the **Booster Club** at their meeting. Mr. Das noted a highlight was that the Booster Club had another record fundraising experience with their Booster Benefit. In fact, they were able to cover the entirety of the sports equipment request list that was provided by Athletic Director, Mr. Augie Fontanetta. After additional comments around this, Mr. Das said that the hope is to hear from the Booster Club in the new year about their work.

Mr. Das also attended the **TrueNorth Leadership Council** meeting. The new council was installed, and the group anticipates a presentation of the budget at the next meeting on June 21<sup>st</sup>. Mr. Das is unable to attend that meeting as well as his backup, Mr. Dronen. Mr. Dronen asked Board Members to check their schedules and he would follow-up to see who might be able to attend in Mr. Das' absence.

Mr. Dronen and other Board members attended the Recognition Dinner on May 18<sup>th</sup> which honored tenured teachers and retirees among others. He shared a thank you letter he and the Board received from retiree, Ms. Kathy Rabin.

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

Dr. Sally highlighted the following events:

- The last week of school is this week.
- Summer school begins on Monday, June 12<sup>th</sup>. There will not be summer school on June 19<sup>th</sup> due to the Juneteenth holiday.
- There are five weeks between now and the next Board meeting. Work on the 23-24 Annual Plan will take place during this time in preparation for a presentation at the July meeting.

Mr. Dronen inquired if there were any requests for staff research or future agenda items, of which there were none.

### **XI. ADJOURNMENT**

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

The meeting adjourned at 8:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lindsey Ruston, Secretary

Keith Dronen, President