

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

**November 14, 2022**

**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, November 14, 2022, at 6:30 p.m.

**Members Present**

Ms. Cathy Albrecht  
Ms. Kimberly Alcantara  
Mr. Keith Dronen, President  
Ms. Jean Hahn, Vice President  
Mr. Brad McLane

**Administrators Present**

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

**Members Absent**

Mr. Avik Das  
Ms. Sally Tomlinson

**Also Present**

Mr. Michael Marassa, Chief Technology Officer; Ms. Niki Dizon, Director of Communications; Dr. Renee Zoladz, Director of Human Resources; Ms. Teri Rodgers, Social Studies Department Faculty and Education Association President; Mr. Jason Boumstein, Applied Arts Department Chair; Ms. Sara Burnett, Business Education Department Faculty; Mr. Chris Van Den Berg, Social Studies Department Faculty; Mr. Mark Bowers, Art Department Faculty; Ms. Julie Bar, Math Department Faculty; Ms. Audra Spicer-Lee, Math Department Faculty; Dr. Chimille Tillery, Director of Curriculum and Instruction; Ms. Liz Mayer, New Trier Educational Foundation (NTEF) Executive Director; Mr. Pon Angora, NTEF staff; members of NTEF board; 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 – 5:00 p.m. – C234**

Mr. Dronen called the Regular Meeting of November 14, 2022 of the Board of Education to order at 5:00 p.m. in room C234 at the Northfield campus. Roll call was taken, and all members were present, except for Mr. Das and Ms. Tomlinson.

Mr. Dronen asked for a motion to move to Closed Session. Ms. Albrecht 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 the placement of individual students in special education programs and other matters relating to individual students. Ms. Hahn seconded the motion. Upon a roll call vote being taken, the members voted as follows:

AYE: Ms. Alcantara, Ms. Hahn, Mr. McLane, Ms. Albrecht, Mr. Dronen

NAY: none

ABSENT: Mr. Das, Ms. Tomlinson

The motion passed.

**II. CLOSED SESSION – 5:00 p.m. – A201A**

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

Mr. Dronen recalled the Regular Meeting of November 14, 2022 of the Board of Education to order at 6:37 p.m. in room C234 at the Northfield campus. Roll call was taken, and all members were present, except for Mr. Das and Ms. Tomlinson.

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

#### **A. Regular Meeting of October 17, 2022 (open and closed session)**

Mr. Dronen asked for any comments or adjustments on the minutes of the Regular Meeting of October 17, 2022 (open and closed session). There were no requests for changes to the minutes. Ms. Hahn moved, and Ms. Albrecht seconded the motion, that the Board of Education approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting of October 17, 2022 (open and closed session). Upon a roll call vote being taken, the members voted as follows:

AYE: Ms. Hahn, Mr. McLane, Ms. Albrecht, Ms. Alcantara Mr. Dronen

NAY: none

ABSENT: Mr. Das, Ms. Tomlinson

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 Rooms participated in a Tug of War contest with Mr. Tom Lau's boys' adviser room, Ms. Robyn Ward's girls' adviser room and Ms. Kathleen Tallmadge's mixed adviser room all claiming victory.
- Monthly Observances continue to impact the campus with October as LGBTQ+ History Month and this year's theme was "The Arc is Long." Many adviser rooms have utilized the resources provided.
- Service opportunities continue with Tri-Ship's Annual Canned Food Drive and many adviser rooms are fundraising for NUSH (Northwestern University Settlement House).
- Mr. Waechtler shared pictures from the Halloween parade run by the daycare. Pep Club also had a giant skeleton in the courtyard to add to the holiday fun.
- The HeartSmart EKG Screening recently took place. Mr. Waechtler thanked Ms. Gail Gamrath, Northfield Campus Assistant Principal, Ms. Analia Elizalde, School Nurse, and the Kinetic Wellness department for their work on this as EKGs were provided to about 600 students. Five students had additional testing done based on their results with two of them referred to Lurie Children's Hospital for a second opinion.
- Parent-Teacher Conferences took place last week and Mr. Waechtler thanked teachers for all of their work. He noted that the Meet the Teacher software is popular with families and teachers for the flexibility it provides.
- The Class of 2026 received a welcome letter in October. Eighth grade placement testing took place on November 12<sup>th</sup> and will take place on December 3<sup>rd</sup> as well.

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

- She displayed pictures from the ceremony honoring Veteran's Day which Student Council organized.
- The Mosaic concert took place on November 3<sup>rd</sup> that Ms. Elizabeth Bennett, Music and Theatre Department Chair and her team, specifically, Mr. Peter Rosheger, Music and Theatre Department Faculty, put together. The concert featured music from underrepresented composers of color. The music teachers worked with some of the composers of the music. Mr. Nic Meyer, Music and Theatre Department Faculty, is friends with Mr. Oliver Nelson, Jr. and students performed a piece that his father wrote. Mr. Nelson also joined the performance and played the piccolo.
- Mrs. Dubravec provided statistics from parent-teacher conferences, noting that 81% of students had at least one conference scheduled and of the total scheduled conferences, 3,030 or 96%, attended it. This is in line with what has occurred in the past. Next steps include surveying and reviewing the system and structure as well as the overall experience for families. She and Mr. Waechtler met with the New Trier Parents' Association about a year ago to gather feedback, which included an appreciation for the flexibility that virtual conferences provide, such as alleviating parking issues and trying to find classrooms.
- Debate competitions are still taking place, while this past weekend, New Trier hosted the ILMEA (Illinois Music Education Association) festival. Many students will be going on to compete in Peoria.

- Other happenings around the school include Night League through the Booster Club, the Tri-Ship Annual Canned Food Drive and the play *She Kills Monsters*. The Fine Arts Association also distributed information about summer scholarships. The WNTH radiothon returned this year and was held this past Saturday.
- Fall sports have officially concluded. Girls' field hockey and girls swimming won their state championships which are back-to-back championships for both sports. Girls field hockey coach Ms. Stephanie Nykaza, won her 14<sup>th</sup> state title. Girls' tennis placed second in state. Boys' soccer won their sectional but lost the following game while girls' volleyball were regional champs. Boys' cross country placed tenth in state. Boys' rowing placed 5<sup>th</sup> and girls' rowing placed 6<sup>th</sup> in their Head of the St. Charles race.
- Fall College Signing Day recently took place with 27 students signing their intent to play their sport at the collegiate level. Those students who participate in a sport outside of New Trier but will play at the college level will be invited to a similar event in December.
- New Trier often has visitors from schools around the country wanting to know more about its Adviser Program, Restorative Practices, Academic Supports, Post High School Counseling and the Scale System. Today, guests from Pascack Valley Regional High School in New Jersey visited while at the end of last year, guests from Norman North High School in Oklahoma visited.
- Both campus principals are part of a large high school consortium and New Trier hosted their most recent meeting. There are nine schools including New Trier and all of them have at least 4,000 students with Allen High School having around 7,000 students. The schools share several similarities, and the group will eventually visit each school to understand their programs and structures.
- Mrs. Dubravec shared that Dr. Lisa Damour recently visited New Trier to speak with students, staff and parents. Her book, *The Emotional Lives of Teenagers*, comes out in February. In March, there will be a parent and student book club, respectively, with Dr. Damour.

Mr. Tragos shared that Institute Day took place last Friday, which is professional development time for faculty and staff. These days focus on strategic initiatives and the day was dedicated to reengaging and rebuilding understanding around *The Characteristics of a New Trier Graduate*.

He then provided a brief report on summer school. The numbers of individual students taking courses was up for the summer of 2022, while enrollment was down, so fewer students taking multiple courses or activities. There was a spike in the number of students taking courses during the summers of 2020 and 2021, but this year, those numbers have returned to pre-pandemic levels. Regarding financials, the summer of 2022 essentially broke even with a small deficit of \$1,700. The registration fee was eliminated for this past summer which will continue. For summer school 2023, the program will return to using both campuses instead of just Northfield as was the case this summer due to construction at the Winnetka campus. There are two holidays this summer – July 4<sup>th</sup> and Juneteenth, so each semester will be 16 days compared to previous years where each was 17 days.

Mr. Johnson gave the FOIA report, noting that there were three requests since the last Board meeting, and all but one is closed. One was regarding a bid tabulation, which is still open. The two that are closed include another request for bid tabulation results and one related to OSHA programs.

## 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 Mr. Peter Tragos, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction. Mr. Dronen reminded those speaking to keep their comments to three minutes or less per Board Policy 2:230. He also asked that the audience refrain from clapping, or a response of any kind in regard to people's comments. There were two requests for public comment.

1. Ms. Audrey Moy, former New Trier parent, shared comments around the AP African American Studies course.
2. Ms. Cindy Fey, New Trier parent, began with comments about the Mosaic concert and then shared comments about the AP African American Studies course.

## VI. Special Orders of Business

### A. **Presentation, Innovation Hub: Human Centered Design at New Trier**

Mr. Tragos presented on the Innovation Hub: Human Centered Design at New Trier. He acknowledged the following people, who have spent countless hours researching, developing, and meeting about the Innovation Hub: Ms. Sara Burnett, Business Education Department Faculty, Mr. Chris Van Den Berg, Social Studies Department Faculty, Mr. Mark Bowers, Art Department Faculty, Ms. Julie Bar, Math Department Faculty, and Mr. Jason Boumstein, Applied Arts Department Chair. Ms. Liz Mayer, New Trier Educational Foundation (NTEF) Executive Director, has been an

instrumental partner as has Ms. Stacy Beran, professor at Loyola University – Chicago. Mr. Tragos laid out the agenda for the presentation in three parts, the first was to provide background and an update on the Innovation Hub, next he explained what design thinking and human-centered design is and lastly, he explained why New Trier is pursuing this direction. The inspiration for the Innovation Hub came from the 2030 Strategic Plan. Prior to the Strategic Plan, design thinking and its principles, were happening in small pockets throughout the school such as in Business Education and Applied Arts. These classes were already working closely with community and industry partners where design thinking was already happening in the real world. Due to the positive feedback from these partners, it sparked an idea to connect it to New Trier 2030 and the goals that were set by the plan. The vision is “to empower students with skills and mindsets to thrive in a complex world by applying human-centered design principles to solve authentic problems.” These are typically problems that are complex and do not have easy solutions. Next, Mr. Tragos shared the why behind using the human-centered design thinking method. The world is changing rapidly along with what colleges, universities and employers desire which is evolving just as fast. Mr. Tragos noted that in 2016, the World Economic Forum, issued a report on the future of jobs, predicting that 65% of children entering elementary school in the fall of 2016 will enter the workforce in jobs that do not exist yet. Research concludes that the shelf life of a set of skills is around five to seven years and the most in demand skill and disposition is the ability to adapt and to learn how to learn. He continued to share information from the World Economic Forum and skill needs. Human-centered design is the right approach for solving problems with no obvious answers, it does not, however, replace other types of thinking. Mr. Tragos then shared a video of New Trier alum and parent, Mr. Shailesh Patel, who has also been a partner to the human-centered design team. He shared his experience of human-centered design within corporations and as a consultant.

Mr. Tragos further explained the principles of human-centered design, noting it has its own set of methods, mindsets, and contexts. It is an approach for solving problems, leading with empathy, and is not a replacement for the other types of thinking that one does such as critical thinking or the scientific method. He then provided a definition from Stanford’s d.school, which is the gold standard and led the way in design thinking and design schools. He shared three parts to the definition. First, it is “a process, mindset, and approach to identify meaningful challenges and creatively solve complex problems.” Second, it is a method that “guides practitioners to understand and respond to the needs of specific people.” This part of the definition points to a type of problem that involves people, as well as systems and structures that involve people. Finally, it is “an invaluable approach for bringing about meaningful and creative change in the world.” At its core, there is a big sense of mission and idea that it can solve problems for and with people.

New Trier is partnering with the University of Illinois’ Siebel Center for Design and their scholars have put together the method for problem-solving. Mr. Tragos then walked through graphics displaying this. He also noted that human-centered design is collaborative by necessity, especially with others who have multiple perspectives or different life experiences as well as different academic backgrounds. The outcome is a tangible solution or system.

Human-centered design is being used by Samsung, Apple and Google as well as Newell Brands, Salesforce, the U.S. government and healthcare. It is taught at the University of Illinois, Stanford, Northwestern, Illinois Institute of Technology, Rhode Island School of Design and Loyola University – Chicago. Mr. Tragos then shared a video from New Trier’s partners at the University of Illinois – Ms. Rachel Switzky, Director of Siebel Center for Design and Ms. Gail Rost, Senior Scholar with a focus on K-12 integration.

Mr. Tragos shared the timeline of how the District arrived at this point. He also acknowledged that what is not apparent on the timeline is countless hours of thought, research, meetings, creativity, and commitment of the teachers who worked on a human-centered design Project of Excellence (POE). The POE included research, virtual and in-person site visits, professional development, and networking. Over the past few years, several retreats have taken place and the idea has transformed to its current state during Retreat 4.0. This retreat included Ms. Tomlinson and Ms. Hahn as well as four administrators, four university partners, five POE faculty leaders, eight students, eight industry/community partners, and 14 faculty members. Past retreats have included various other people as well. Mr. Tragos shared pictures and stories from the two-day retreat.

Next, Mr. Tragos noted the importance of the informal partnerships made through business and industry connections as well as community partners. The New Trier Educational Foundation (NTEF) has been a partner from the beginning by making connections with alumni as well as undertaken a capital campaign. Another important partnership is with the University of Illinois’ Siebel Center for Design and Mr. Tragos shared a video with Ms. Switzky and Ms. Rost talking about this collaboration. The next step is to work on a Memorandum of Understanding between the two schools. Mr. Tragos then shared remarks from Ms. Amy O’Keefe, who is a New Trier parent and

participated in two retreats. She is also faculty at Design Innovation at Northwestern University's Segal Center for Design which is part of their engineering school.

Next steps for New Trier include creating a human-centered design advisory board which will be multidisciplinary and include staff, industry, community, and university partners. Second, a human-centered design pilot will be implemented in February 2023. The pilot will take a couple of classes at each campus and pilot human-centered design principles around authentic content and the questions that emerge. It will provide feedback about the experiences of teachers and students and how it enhances learning. The MOU with Siebel Center for Design will need to be finalized, which Mr. Tragos provided further details on.

Dr. Sally asked Mr. Tragos to provide further details on the pilot. The teachers who led the retreat will partner with those who participated to find a class that is able to devote a few weeks in February or March to integrating human-centered design principles as a way to teach something that is already being taught in that class. Students will learn human-centered design principles, identify a question that is authentic to the content area and then use those principles to solve the problem. Dr. Sally noted that the pilot will include university partners with Mr. Tragos noting that community and industry partners at the retreat are eager to collaborate.

Ms. Alcantara thanked Mr. Tragos for the presentation and shared she was astounded by the amount of work, time, effort and resources that has gone into this. Ms. Alcantara reiterated the pilot information and noted that on a broader scale when this was first introduced discussion focused on an Innovation Hub. She inquired if that has evolved to where this type of thinking would be infused into certain courses across the curriculum as opposed to a physical, more discrete place. Mr. Tragos replied that the pilot is not discrete in that way and the concept has morphed over time. Having a space is important, but it not yet needed in order to conduct the pilot. The opportunity to use design thinking principles in the context of a class or curriculum looks to be the direction and more will be known after the pilot. Mr. Tragos also noted that a class might be in a different learning space than their classroom as it invites a different kind of thinking with different tools in the space to do so. Ms. Alcantara summarized that the pilot will identify a module or project within existing courses next semester that can be implemented with this type of thinking. On a longer-term basis, she inquired if Mr. Tragos envisions entire classes adopting this type of thinking or parts of them. Mr. Tragos replied parts of courses with other courses fully adapting human-centered design principles. Ms. Alcantara noted that a physical space would be part of this at some point because this type of thinking is implemented in a certain space, which Mr. Tragos confirmed.

Mr. McLane noted that he loved the thinking and process while boldly and excitedly looking towards the future and anchoring to the 2030 plan. He then inquired about the trade offs and why other types of thinking were not used and instead the commitment made to human-centered design. Mr. Tragos also noted that this type of thinking is new and novel in high schools. The scientific method and critical thinking have been part of New Trier and are important parts of the thinking that is done. Mr. Tragos sees human-centered design as complementing those other ways of thinking and is appropriate in a particular class or course. Mr. Tragos shared other comments around this. Dr. Sally added that decisions are made all the time about curriculum so as this initiative moves forward, departments and teachers will be thinking about where this enhances their curriculum. The curriculum will develop locally in classes but will also develop in entire courses in the future. These choices are made thoughtfully by teachers and departments.

Ms. Hahn thanked Mr. Tragos and the POE team for including her and Ms. Tomlinson in the retreat. She noted it was an opportunity to bring together many stakeholders – educators, academics, industry leaders, parents, community leaders, and students. They worked together to imagine the future of learning and how to enhance human flourishing. She noted that the highlight was working with students, sharing it was a potent reminder that they are why everyone is here. Ms. Hahn noted there were a few themes that should be kept top of mind as this evolves. The first was how students very clearly expressed a desire to fashion an experience that is not compromised by the anxiety of grades and testing. She noted the challenge will be how assessments are designed to have accountability while at the same time foster an environment where students feel they have the freedom to take risks and collaborate. Ms. Hahn noted that the academics had interesting models for how they handle this. Next, she mentioned that Mr. Brian Lowery, New Trier Learning Center faculty was her table mate and she wanted to make sure that the Innovation Hub is implemented in an equitable manner. She went on to say that this would include a diverse spectrum of learners with a wide range of interests and not just students who are interested in Applied Arts and are on that track already, but that everyone at New Trier gets some exposure to this. She went on to share other comments and concluded that feedback from academics and industry leaders was the exceptional job the team did leading the retreat.

Ms. Albrecht thanked the NTEF for fundraising and moving the project forward. After initial comments including that New Trier has always been on the cutting edge of education at the high school level, Ms. Albrecht inquired what this does for students in the post-high school world. Mr. Tragos replied that the experience of human-centered design or this type of learning develops a set of skills and mindsets that are highly desirable. He went on to share that this is an opportunity to differentiate students from a competitive pool of peers, not only locally, but nationally and not only for college, but in future careers. He shared additional details around his thinking.

Next, Ms. Albrecht noted that most classrooms are collaborative, and she inquired, in this pilot, about what looks different. Mr. Tragos replied that there will likely be multiple people in the classroom adding that some of it will be finding the authentic questions to ask in the content area. He then provided an example one might find in a civics class. Mr. Tragos noted that industry partners, university partner, the teacher and a human-centered design teacher will join the pilot class.

Mr. Dronen thanked the stakeholders, the tremendous work the teachers have done as well as the foundation. Mr. Dronen noted given the modules and block schedule, if there will be sufficient time as he shared it seemed more appropriate to have an entire course built out and devoted to the concept versus pulling out a piece of the course. Mr. Tragos replied that it would be ideal to build out an entire course, but the school is not there yet. The thought process is to try it on a small scale with teachers who have the flexibility in their teaching and curriculum to do so at a scale that is manageable enough in a two-to-three-week window. Dr. Sally added that the answer may be both, that while the school is not ready to launch a class, as teachers experience this type of thinking along with the type of questions, he believes that this will be seen in classes all the time. He noted it will be a way that teachers select as a way to approach certain content they have. He then anticipates courses being designed specifically for this.

Referencing Ms. Hahn's comments about distribution in an equitable manner, Mr. Dronen inquired if the pilot program would be one initial module or a number of modules, to which Mr. Tragos replied that it will be one initial module by selecting courses that will have the broadest range of students. He also noted that the school is committed to equitable access to the course. Dr. Sally added that the pilot is figuring out how this will work with students and how they will respond. As this expands to next year, the question becomes what types of classes are drawn to this such as some elective classes. Equitable access will become a focus next year to ensure it is done for the long-term.

Dr. Sally thanked Ms. Burnett, Mr. Van Den Berg, Mr. Bowers, Ms. Bar, and Mr. Boumstein for the great work they have been doing. After further comments, he also thanked the NTEF for their support of these efforts. Mr. Rob Faurot, Vice-Chair, Mr. Larry Dickman, Mr. John McGuinness, Directors, as well as Mr. Pon Angara, NTEF staff and Ms. Liz Mayer, Executive Director were in attendance.

## **B. New Course Proposal: AP African American Studies**

Dr. Chimille Tillery, Director of Curriculum and Instruction, presented the AP African American Studies pilot course proposed for the 2023-2024 school year. New Trier was selected by College Board as a second-year pilot school. Despite only being in the pilot stage, colleges and universities recognize AP African American Studies as an AP course and will decide individually how to give students placement or credit based on their score just as they do now with other AP courses. Dr. Tillery will work with Ms. Michael Christensen, Social Studies Department Chair, to select one or two teachers for the course who would attend the AP Summer Institute. It is proposed that the course is open to juniors and seniors who have taken U.S. History. It is a multidisciplinary course that examines the breadth of African American experiences through direct encounters with rich and varied sources drawing from the fields of literature, the arts and humanities, political science, geography, and science, among others. The course is based on rigorous research by College Board, including, but not limited to, a review of syllabi from over 100 colleges, including 11 Historically Black Colleges and Universities, all eight of the Ivies, and 26 state flagship institutions. College Board has also had conversations with 133 college faculty about the scope of the course, instructional resources and plans for teacher training. There was also an advisory board and writing team of scholars and teachers to help shape the overall arching vision of the course and draft models of the course framework. Finally, there was a higher education symposium where around 200 college faculty members gathered to review and provide feedback on the course, framework, and exam design with an eye towards aligning to college courses with a goal to secure credit and placement for the exam. Dr. Tillery then tied the implementation of this pilot to New Trier's Strategic Plan, noting it expands opportunities for students to access rich and rigorous curriculum while including diverse and curricular perspectives. Dr. Tillery then invited questions and comments from the Board.

Ms. Albrecht noted that the College Board authorizes the courses for potential college credit and includes a strict curriculum that a school must follow, which Dr. Tillery confirmed. Referencing that each college decides the credit

to give, Ms. Albrecht asked for additional details on this piece as to how New Trier students obtain credit for this course. Dr. Tillery replied that it varies by college and university which is what occurs now with any AP course. Ms. Albrecht then inquired if the State of Illinois was involved in this, to which Dr. Tillery stated they were not. Ms. Albrecht confirmed that the course will roll out officially for the 24-25 school year, which Dr. Tillery confirmed. Referencing credit for the course, Ms. Albrecht inquired how it works for the pilot versus the official roll out. Dr. Tillery replied that since it is the second year of the pilot and the exam will be administered in 2024, those scores will be just as valid as any other AP test score. She went on to share a few more details.

Ms. Hahn asked if Dr. Tillery could share about the plan to communicate this with students and teachers. She also inquired where the school is at in terms of gauging interest in the class. Dr. Tillery noted that 20 students are needed for the pilot. She also noted that teachers have been sharing this with their students. Ms. Hahn inquired if Post-High School Counseling would be included to help families determine course selection and how they should think about this course. Dr. Tillery responded she and others will work closely with current sophomore and junior advisers as they work with their advisees.

Mr. McLane thanked Dr. Tillery for championing this. He also thanked Ms. Moy and Ms. Fey for their support as well as their questions and challenges. He then shared an anecdote.

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

Mr. Johnson provided an update on the Winnetka Campus East Side Academic and Athletic Project (ESSA). There is substantial work being done by many trades on-site. Concrete work and structural steel are substantially complete. Mr. Johnson then provided pictures of the current construction progress and provided details of them. This month's change orders to date total \$67,000 and projected future change orders have increased slightly and will be monitored. Mr. Johnson noted that a tour was offered to the Facilities Steering Committee and others. Board members and administrators had an opportunity to sign one of the final steel beams installed. Mr. Das was the last to sign and had the opportunity to do so by being taken up to the ceiling on a lift.

Next, Mr. Johnson shared that planning and bidding are underway for the 15-Year Plan Summer 2023 work. Bids are presented in the consent agenda for portions of two projects. The first is one of two packages for Duke Childs Field which is for precast concrete for the outbuilding, totaling \$611,000. The initial budget, several years ago, before inflation, was \$336,000. Other design changes also impacted the bid including heating of the building. This bid is early due to a long lead time for materials. There were only two bidders, which was expected, as it is a specialized trade. The second package is for the Bickert Gym Roof with bids totaling \$1,625,000, with the initial budget prior to inflation at \$1.2 million. This is the last roof replacement at the Winnetka Campus with all roofs having 30-year warranties. There were a limited number of bids due to shortages of roofing materials and overall industry demand. The remainder of bids will be presented in December and January. While disappointing that the District is over the initial budget, it is not unexpected as it was set before this inflationary period with construction being hit particularly hard. The District has made sure that adequate funds are available to complete the projects as planned. Mr. Johnson then invited questions and comments from the Board.

Mr. Dronen, referring to the Duke Childs Field project, noted that the Village of Winnetka is ahead of schedule, but the District's work will not begin until after baseball season. Mr. Johnson confirmed that work would begin in the summer, immediately after the season concludes. At a future meeting, Mr. Johnson will share pictures of the work done at Duke Childs. Mr. Dronen also noted that it is a good example of cooperation between two governments. He then inquired when the District's work would be complete, to which Mr. Johnson replied it would be done in the fall with fields being replanted at that time for use the following baseball season. Under the current schedule, New Trier will not lose a baseball season. Any type of fall baseball played there will be lost, however Athletics has a plan for any facility rentals or practices to use other facilities.

Regarding the Bickert Gym roofs, Mr. Dronen noted that it was the same roofing contractor who installed it initially. Mr. Johnson responded that he was correct - it was the same contractor who installed the roof 30 years ago. In a competitive bid process, they have won the majority of bids over that time. They value the partnership with New Trier as the District pays on time and the facilities staff provides the support needed for the work.

Ms. Albrecht asked about an update on the LEED certification for the east side project. Mr. Johnson noted that the project is maintaining the points it has while looking at those points that could get the project to the next level. Mr. Johnson added there will be about ten EV charging stations at Winnetka and about 5-10 stations at Northfield. While it does not count towards LEED certification, it models to the community and provides access for students and staff.

Mr. McLane inquired as to what type of charging stations they will be, to which Mr. Johnson replied that details are still being worked on. Ms. Hahn inquired if users would pay to charge their cars or if it will be free. Mr. Johnson replied that is also still being worked on and it is possible the District would want to not make a profit but recoup its costs.

## **VII. Administrative Items**

### **A. Treasurer's Report for October 2022**

Mr. Johnson presented the Treasurer's Report for October 2022. Short term investment yields rose slightly but continue to be low as the District awaits property tax receipts. There is good investment income on the Winnetka Campus East Side project of about 3.5% for the unspent bond funds to date. Total balances for all accounts are \$107,481,114. It is expected that property tax bills will be issued tomorrow and due December 31<sup>st</sup>. This means the District will likely start to receive property tax receipts possibly by the end of the month, but certainly in the first couple of weeks of December. Cash flow has carefully been monitored by Mr. Myron Spiwak, Director of Business Services, and the Business Office. The District continues to meet its obligations, while avoiding short-term borrowing that some other districts and taxing bodies had to do at high interest rates.

### **B. Financial Report for September 2022**

Mr. Johnson presented the Financial Report for October 2022. Operating revenue is very low, at \$5.84 million, without property tax receipts for the first four months of the fiscal year, or 89% lower compared to \$54 million last year. Property tax distributions are likely to begin in December. Other revenue categories are nearly 23% higher than last year, driven primarily by Corporate Personal Property Replacement Taxes (CPPRT) receipts once again. It is a small part of the budget, but the District receives a portion as state revenue is up. The tentative budget for operating revenue is 1.13% lower this fiscal year. This will normalize as property tax revenue comes in, but last year, the District also had one-time revenue sources with Covid funding from the state and federal governments.

Operating expenditures were \$27,700,000 through October, or 4.32% higher compared to last year. The variance across these expense categories is within acceptable ranges for this point in the fiscal year. The tentative budget for operating expenditures is 3.52% higher than last year. The District is trending slightly above budget right now, which is being monitored, as the District sometimes has larger variances earlier in the year. Mr. Johnson invited questions and comments from the Board.

Ms. Hahn noted for the second year in a row, CPPRT had increased, she inquired what that might be attributed to or if it is a trend being seen. Mr. Johnson noted it is a trend as general state receipts are up as the state is doing better financially than in the past. He shared further details about CPPRT. Ms. Hahn noted that it is still small enough that it does not impact the budget, which Mr. Johnson confirmed, noting that it does not change the District's budgeting plans either.

Ms. Albrecht inquired as to the timing of when Cook County will receive the property tax funds and disburse to the District. Mr. Johnson replied that they disburse very quickly and anticipates within ten days of bills being released, the District will start to see its first payments. Discussion continued between Mr. Johnson and Ms. Albrecht around this topic.

### **\*C. 2022 Preliminary Tax Levy**

Mr. Johnson presented on the 2022 Preliminary Tax Levy, which is filed in December and is for taxes collected by the District in 2023. It is a two-step process, with the approval of the preliminary levy at this meeting and the approval of the final levy at the December Board meeting. The levy is based on the extension from the previous year times the 2021 CPI of 5% plus the value of tax revenue from new property. It funds portions of the 2022-23 and 2023-24 school years. Mr. Johnson then shared information about tax caps and the consumer price index, noting that the levy abides by the Property Tax Extension Limitation Law (PTELL) and limits the increase to the lesser of 5% or CPI. This year the December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2021 CPI measurement was 7%, therefore the District is asking for a 5% increase due to the cap. The District will work within its budget and the 5% increase even though some expenses are rising greater than 5%. The value of new property is unknown until June and must be estimated so the proposed levy is slightly higher than 5% to capture taxing on new property. This year, the projected increase to the levy is 5.55% which includes new property, and the final amount is determined by the county once new property is known. The debt service will be updated based on the bonds the District has issued. Due to the PTELL, the average homeowner should experience an increase of 5% for the New Trier portion of their tax bill. Mr. Johnson noted it is important to remember that while the value of one's home may increase, particularly in a reassessment year, the District's levy



does not increase by that amount. The District's tax rate will fall as the value of property rises. Once complete, the county clerk extends the taxes for 55% of the tax bill, typically issued in January with the balance due in July.

Levy dollars support many items, such as the education of New Trier students, the 2030 Strategic Plan, a continued commitment to excellence in education, a deep and broad curriculum tailored to individual student interests and needs, strong student services and supports, the extracurricular program and competitive salaries to attract and retain top faculty and staff. Mr. Johnson shared further details on each of the aforementioned areas.

The District is proud to have a strong history of balanced budgets. After the 2003 referendum, the Board committed to five years of no operating rate referendums. That commitment has been extended 19 years. The District carefully manages expenditures and instituted cost containment to continue to meet the needs of students while working within the resources the community has provided. The District has also made substantial facilities improvements through the levy by using the funds provided through it. Bond funds have also been carefully managed with the 2014 referendum debt refinanced in 2022 at the historically low interest rate of 1.79%, thereby decreasing the amount levied for the remaining years of those bonds for the community. Last week, \$9.5 million in bonds were sold in a competitive sale with multiple bidders and a rate of 3.96%. In today's market, to sell bonds at this percentage is remarkable and a testament to the District's fiscal stewardship.

The District also has appropriate reserves which allows it to fund operations between tax payments. These reserves are important given the delay in property tax receipts. Mr. Johnson noted that the property taxes are 91% of the school's revenue. If half of those are delayed from July to December, it is important to have six months of reserves to continue to fund operations to avoid high-cost borrowing. Appropriate reserves also help to maintain the District's Aaa bond rating to ensure it has access to the best rates.

Mr. Johnson reviewed key points of the levy and went on to thank the Board and community for their support. It takes the support of the entire community to sustain the level of excellence that previous generations of New Trier students have experienced. The school is committed to doing the same for current and future students while being excellent stewards of the resources the community provides. Mr. Johnson then invited questions and comments from the Board.

Ms. Albrecht inquired how the delay in taxes impacted the calculation of new property. Mr. Johnson explained the process, noting that the new property number is \$23 million this year and is the lowest that he has on record from the past twenty years. The ten-year average is \$38 million. The \$23 million is for property that was online as of December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2020, so he believes there could be a pandemic aspect to it. He went on to share further details and discussion continued between the two.

Mr. Dronen emphasized the importance of reserves so as to avoid issuing tax anticipation warrants.

Ms. Hahn moved, and Ms. Albrecht seconded the motion, that the Board of Education approve the 2022 Tentative Levy in the amount of \$120,110,341 and that a Public Hearing be held at the December 19, 2022 regularly scheduled Board Meeting. Upon a roll call vote being taken, the members voted as follows:

AYE: Mr. McLane, Ms. Albrecht, Ms. Alcantara, Ms. Hahn, Mr. Dronen

NAY: none

ABSENT: Mr. Das, Ms. Tomlinson

The motion passed.

### **VIII. Consent Agenda**

- Bill List for the Period, October 1 – 31, 2022
- Personnel Report (Appointments, Resignations, Retirements, and Stipends - Appointments)
- New Course Proposals
- Contract with Cashman Stahler Group for architectural services for Bickert Roof project
- Approve and award contract to Mid-States Concrete Industries Plant for \$611,325 for the Duke Childs Field project and further authorize this contract to be assigned to the winning general contractor to be selected at a later date.

- Approve and award contracts to Bennett and Brosseau Roofing for \$1,625,000 and The Cashman Stahler Group for \$118,873 for the Bickert Gym roof replacement and design services related to the Winnetka Campus Bickert Gym Roof Project.

Mr. Dronen inquired if any members wanted to pull an item off the Consent Agenda, no one chose to do so. Ms. Alcantara moved that the Board of Education approve the Consent Agenda, which includes: Bill List for the Period, October 1 – 31, 2022; Personnel Report (Appointments, Resignations, Retirements, and Stipends - Appointments); New Course Proposals; Contract with Cashman Stahler Group for architectural services for Bickert Roof project; Approve and award contract to Mid-States Concrete Industries Plant for \$611,325 for the Duke Childs Field project and further authorize this contract to be assigned to the winning general contractor to be selected at a later date; Approve and award contracts to Bennett and Brosseau Roofing for \$1,625,000 and The Cashman Stahler Group for \$118,873 for the Bickert Gym roof replacement and design services related to the Winnetka Campus Bickert Gym Roof Project. Ms. Hahn seconded the motion. Upon a roll call vote being taken, the members voted as follows:

AYE: Ms. Albrecht, Ms. Alcantara, Ms. Hahn, Mr. McLane, Mr. Dronen

NAY: none

ABSENT: Mr. Das, Ms. Tomlinson

The motion passed.

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

Ms. Alcantara attended the **New Trier Parents Association** meeting earlier in the month. The co-chairs for the various classes are moving forward with different projects, including hosting Pie Day at both campuses for teacher and staff appreciation.

Mr. McLane noted that the **Community Engagement Committee** recently met, and the communications audit is underway. He noted, with Ms. Dizon, Director of Communications, confirming, that baseline reports will be ready by the end of November or early December. Alumni engagement was discussed as well as general communication around events.

Mr. McLane noted that the **Facilities Steering Committee** had a great tour of the east side project.

Mr. Dronen shared Ms. Tomlinson's report of the **New Trier Fine Arts Association** (NTFAA) in her absence. The Frosh/Soph musical and winter play are in production and performances are scheduled for December. The Brierly Gallery features a quilt that was created through a collaborative effort from artists around the country as well as a collective effort amongst 20 adviser rooms. The 105<sup>th</sup> Winter Music Festival is Sunday, December 18<sup>th</sup> with two separate concerts, the first at 2:00 p.m. and the second at 4:00 p.m. In between concerts will be a community outreach event. NTFAA is supporting the Strategic Plan through community engagement and inclusion such as The Mosaic Concert featuring music by conductors in groups generally underrepresented in the field. Applied Arts has been offering an Anchor Art Squad on Anchor Days where any student can drop in during periods four and five to paint or do other activities. NTFAA is moving away from First Thursdays to a new fundraising effort, entitled Spotlight Days. They will occur three times a year and will encourage the New Trier community to patronize those businesses who have committed to donating 20% of that day's proceeds to NTFAA. The first is scheduled in Winnetka on December 6<sup>th</sup> when The Book Stall and Local 501 will donate 20% of proceeds from that day. There will also be a raffle for \$275 in gift cards from other Winnetka businesses.

Mr. Dronen shared on Mr. Das' behalf that he attended the **TrueNorth Cooperative** meeting on November 9<sup>th</sup>. A draft of their strategic plan will be shared with the leadership council in December for approval in February of 2023. The leadership council also approved the use of \$2.7 million for phase one of the Red Oaks campus renovation project. Finally, TrueNorth has been awarded the Elevating Educators Special Education Grant in the amount of almost \$220,000. The funds will be available on a reimbursement basis during the 2023 and 2024 fiscal years and will be used to analyze and support special education teacher retention rates.

Ms. Hahn shared that **New Trier Educational Foundation** held an alumni happy hour on November 1<sup>st</sup> at Steak 48 and Mrs. Dubravec attended. There will also be events in Florida and Arizona and is part of linking alumni across the country while keeping a connection with the school.

Ms. Albrecht noted that the **Environmental Committee** meeting was postponed.

Ms. Albrecht also shared a few details about the tour with the **Facilities Steering Committee**.

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

Dr. Sally highlighted the following events:

- Next week is Thanksgiving and it will be a great time for all to enjoy the break with their families.
- December is a busy month for the various committees that Board members attend.
- There are also a lot of performing arts events coming up, including the Winter Music Festival on December 18<sup>th</sup>.
- The next Board meeting is Monday, December 19<sup>th</sup>. This is also the last week before break and the last one of first semester. Exams will take place on Monday and Tuesday.

Ms. Hahn inquired where the winter concert will be this year, to which Mrs. Dubravec responded it will be in the Gaffney.

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

**XI. ADJOURNMENT**

Ms. Albrecht moved, and Ms. Hahn 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,

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Lindsey Ruston, Secretary

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Keith Dronen, President