



To: Board of Education
From: Paul Sally, Superintendent
Re: Operational and Instructional Plan for 2021-2022
Date: August 11, 2021

Introduction

The faculty, staff and administration are excited to welcome our students back to school for the 2021-22 school year. We have worked diligently to plan for a school year that returns us to as close to normal as possible and to maximize in-person learning, while also taking into account federal and state directives to maintain a healthy learning environment. We have a strong foundation that includes an over 90% vaccination rate for students and staff, and proven mitigation measures that will allow us to increase opportunities for our students safely. We will also continue to monitor and reevaluate our plans in consultation with the Board of Education, our Covid Reentry and Community Wellness Committee, and our students, staff and parents.

Transitioning Back to School

The transition to the school year has already begun, with the goal of reacclimating students to an in-person learning environment. Each campus is welcoming students with self-guided QR code tours. Picnics are organized for incoming 9th and 10th graders to allow them to build camaraderie in person with their adviser groups, and a picnic is also planned for transfer families. Next week, the District will host two Parent Webinars on Transitioning Back to New Trier (August 16th - Winnetka and August 17th - Northfield). The extracurricular program has also begun, with all typical fall athletics and Lagniappe-Potpourri.

Instructional Return to Learning Plan

The Curriculum and Instruction Department has also worked with Department Leaders and teachers on a return to student learning. The plan is grounded in the idea that we will meet students where they are, academically and emotionally, after five quarters of pandemic learning. Meeting students where they are is a yearly practice that our teachers use to make informed curricular decisions to help their students learn and grow. This year is substantially different from previous years since students have had a great variety of learning experiences over the last year and half and understanding where they are in their learning will take a more concerted and consistent approach. The plan, summarized in Appendix I, targets several themes including a focus on growth mindset, formative and diagnostic assessments, multi-tiered systems of support, communication, new student support options, and enhancements to staffing.

Operational Plan

The goals of the Operational Plan are to allow us to resume school operations in as normal a manner as possible that maintains the safety for all members of our school community and reduces risk factors that could interrupt instruction or extracurricular activities for our students.

The District will follow the Governor’s Executive Order, which requires mandatory indoor masking. In addition, we will have routine COVID-19 testing available through the University of Illinois Shield program, keep 3-ft social distancing for students when possible, and continue the enhancements to our cleaning processes and ventilation systems. The details of the Operational Plan are in Appendix II.

Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund - American Rescue Plan

The ESSER Act was passed to provide grant funds to local school districts with resources to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on school operations, staffing, and student learning. The District has \$796,939 allocated through what is expected to be the third and final installment of Federal relief funding for the COVID-19 pandemic. A total of 20% of the funds must be allocated to address learning loss that may have resulted from the pandemic. The funds can also be used for all authorized pandemic-related expenditures from March 13, 2020 through 2024. The table below specifies how we will use these funds to address learning loss, and how others will be allocated to past and future qualifying expenditures.

Assessments				
Department	Assessment			Cost
English	Renaissance STAR Reading Assessment and My Path Intervention, Renaissance			\$14,790
Math	Edmentum Exact Path Diagnostic and Intervention			\$28,649
MCL	ACTFL Assessment toward Performance and Proficiency in Languages (AAPPL)			\$48,000
Staff				
Campus	Position	FTE	Role	Cost
Northfield	Mathematics Instructional Assistant	1.0	- Support students and teachers in the classroom - Deliver targeted interventions to students in MTSS	\$40,000
Winnetka	Mathematics Instructional Assistant	1.0	- Support teachers and students in the classroom - Deliver targeted interventions to students in MTSS	\$40,000
Winnetka	MTSS Instructional	1.0	Support students in the	\$40,000

	Assistant		Reading & Writing Center ● Deliver targeted interventions to students in MTSS	
Winnetka and Northfield	Social Work Services	1.0	● Oversee drop-in center social work services ● Support immediate needs of students	\$50,000
Other Supplies and Services				
Winnetka and Northfield	Cleaning, testing, and other qualified expenditures during ESSER-eligible period			\$535,500
TOTAL				\$796,939

Recommendation

During the Board of Education meeting on August 11th, the Administrative Team and I will provide an overview of the plan and then we will ask for public comment. Following public comment, we will have a separate item in which I will recommend that the Board approve the plan, which is required for us to receive the funds.

Appendix I

2021-2022 Instructional Plan - New Trier High School

Introduction

Each New Trier staff member is eager to return to some semblance of normalcy and familiarity in the 2021-2022 school year. New Trier provides our students and staff with a sense of community and fulfillment, both of which were disrupted by COVID-19. Teachers are most excited to see their students in school five days per week and return to building relationships and inspiring learning that comes from the full in-person classroom experience. After five quarters of pandemic teaching and learning, returning to “normal” school will be an adjustment, however. Students, in particular, may be anxious about being in the building daily or feeling like they are not prepared to learn or fear they have suffered “learning loss” because of the pandemic.

We are prepared to allay their anxieties and reframe learning loss to help students make a successful transition back to the new school year. Department leaders and administrators have been collaborating since last spring on how to make a positive re-entry to school and support student learning, and the result is a multi-faceted instructional plan to support students.

Instructional Plan to Return to Full Day, In-Person Learning

Our instructional plan is grounded in the idea that we will meet students where they are, academically and emotionally, after pandemic learning. Every year teachers meet students where they are in order to make informed curricular decisions to help their students learn and grow, but this year is different from all previous years, in that students have had a significant variety of different learning experiences over the last year and half and meeting them where they are now will take a more concerted and consistent approach.

The highlights of the plan are described below and will continue to evolve under the leadership and guidance of our department leaders, and on-going collaborations among department leaders and administrators.

1. Growth mindset language

Students need narratives of hope in school to build confidence, form relationships, and activate engagement. The language of the school and classroom is important to convey our beliefs about the potential of each student. It is especially important this year to convey the message that students are ready to learn and take on the joy and challenge of learning. Though students may have some gaps in learning, acknowledging that the things they did learn and develop -- like resilience, adaptability, independence, resourcefulness, and perseverance -- are all skills and dispositions that will help them be successful this year. Lastly, assuring students that gaps in learning are a normal part of the learning process, and that each teacher has a plan for supporting student learning and success is a critical part of communicating with students this year.

2. Formative and diagnostic assessments

Every year teachers assess where their students are academically and emotionally to inform their curricular decisions to help students be successful in their courses. This

year will be more formalized than previous years because of the vast array of learning experiences students had over the last year and half. In targeted content areas in English, Math, and Modern and Classical Languages, teachers will administer a criterion-referenced diagnostic assessment to determine what students know and can do, measured against a set of learning objectives. In all other courses, teachers will administer a teacher/course committee-designed formative assessment. These assessments are for informational purposes only, to help teachers in making curriculum decisions to best meet the needs of a whole class and/or identify differentiation strategies to help individual students be successful. These assessments will not be graded or used for level placement purposes. Low stakes, formative assessments will be a key assessment strategy early in the semester to prioritize feedback for growth and support students' transition to in person learning

3. Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS)

Over the past year, the Student Services team has enhanced academic and social-emotional support for students through the MTSS program. As we return to full in-person learning, we know students and families will need additional support to help students adapt to the daily routines and rigor of daily in-person learning. Of course, we will continue to prioritize the individual teacher-student relationship, where students meet with teachers outside of class for individualized help in their classes. The new Winnetka Academic Assistance Center is a place that centralizes academic support for students by providing drop-in tutoring in the Reading and Writing Center, Math Resource Center, and MCL Resource Center. Additionally, students identified with greater needs for support will have access to targeted interventions in reading and math. To prepare to meet student needs next year, a robust array of supports have been developed or enhanced, and resources allocated, to plan for a successful transition:

- Two Math Instructional Assistants (Winnetka and Northfield Campuses)
- One MTSS Instructional Assistant (Winnetka Reading & Writing Center)
- Targeted interventions in math and reading
- 9th grade Trevian Success, executive functioning instruction for all freshmen
- 9th grade Strategic Studies, targeted academic and executive function support for pre-identified students in need of support
- Social Work Drop-In Center (Winnetka and Northfield Campuses)
- Winnetka Academic Assistance Center
- Northfield Academic Assistance Center
- Ongoing Professional Development in classroom-based differentiation strategies
- Ongoing Professional Development in best practices in MTSS

4. High Level of Communication

Communication is always a critical component of the learning process. The remote/hybrid learning environment demonstrated the need for an even higher level of open communication among teachers, students, parents, advisers, case managers, department and adviser chairs, post high school counselors, administrators - all stakeholders in each students' education. Maintaining a high level of communication will be critical to support students in the coming year. Designing and maintaining robust Canvas courses was key to the success of instruction and communication with

students who were in-person, hybrid, remote, or quarantined last year, and it is a practice we will continue. Though we will have all the benefits of in-person instruction and communication with students, maintaining robust Canvas courses will continue to support our commitment to a high level of open communication among all stakeholders.

We are excited to have students back in school full time and get back to teaching in a more typical environment. The relationships and care our teachers and staff take with students will be most important in helping students transition back. The plan provides multiple avenues of support for students to help them be successful.

Appendix II

Operational Plan Summary 2021-2022

Topic	Changes for 2021-2022
School Attendance	• All students in school five days per week • Students and staff should stay home if they have symptoms
Social Distancing	• Students can be as close as three feet apart in the classroom, allowing classroom capacities to return to normal
Instruction	• All learning activities can be used, creating a more engaging classroom environment, similar to the pre-COVID classroom • Use of formative assessments to inform curricular decisions to meet students where they are, academically and socially-emotionally
Masking	• No masks are required outdoors • Universal indoor masking as mandated by State of Illinois • Will monitor guidance and recommendations from state/local health departments
Indoor movement	• No need to check into spaces within buildings • Typical movement allowed on each campus • To reduce quarantine possibility, students need to monitor six foot distance outside the classroom, especially if unvaccinated
Lunch	• Will continue “Eat up, mask up, clean up” messaging • Students may eat in expanded areas • No requirement to check into areas • To reduce quarantine, social distancing of six feet should be monitored, especially if unvaccinated
COVID Screening/ Testing	• Students in extracurriculars who have no vaccination record on file will be required to test weekly • Unvaccinated staff required to test weekly • Other unvaccinated students are strongly encouraged to test • All others may participate if they wish
Quarantining	• New close contact definition and quarantine protocols will result in fewer students missing school
RUVNA	• Additional guidance from CCDPH is needed before we determine if we will implement Ruvna this year.
Other Mitigation Efforts	• Continued use of high quality HVAC • Continued widespread availability of hand hygiene stations • Requirement to stay home when sick • Regular cleaning and sanitizing of all spaces • Cleaning of desks before and after use will be optional for students

2021-2022 Operational Plan - New Trier High School

Introduction

As we enter the 2021-2022 school year, we will adopt an approach that seeks to maximize in-person learning for all students while keeping all students and staff safe. This operational plan is designed to communicate the mitigation strategies and safety measures that we will use and the reasons behind using those layered prevention strategies. At the core of the plan is running full in-person classes for all students every day. The strategies in the plan are based on science, advice from medical professionals, and guidance or mandates from local, state, and national public health institutions. The science of the pandemic and the variants continues to develop. All procedures are subject to change, and we expect that they will change as the pandemic and the science continue to develop. Our goal is to keep all students and staff safe on campus. We appreciate your work in helping us achieve that goal.

In-Person Full Day, Every Day

New Trier is committed to in-person instruction for a full day, every day. We believe strongly that in-person learning is essential for the academic and social development of high school students. We also believe that with our mitigation efforts, we significantly reduce the risk for both vaccinated and unvaccinated individuals in the school building. By employing these strong mitigation factors, we will reduce quarantining and keep the most students learning at school.

Positive School Community

It is exciting that we will be back to full in-person school everyday. With all that the school community experienced during the past year, we know that it is important we support each other as we transition back to a more normal year. In doing so, we must respect the decisions others have made that might be different from our own, as long as everyone abides by the school rules. For example, even though masks are not required outside, some students and staff may feel safer wearing a mask in that environment. Respect that choice. Even though most of our students and staff are vaccinated, some have chosen not to do so. Respect that choice. Please be clear that teasing, bullying, or harassment of any kind will not be tolerated and will be subject to discipline.

Mitigation Strategies

It is important that we continue many of our mitigation strategies from last year to minimize the spread of COVID in the school. We upgraded our ventilation systems last year, have COVID-safe cleaning protocols, and will continue to promote good hand hygiene and offer widespread hand sanitation stations. The other mitigation strategies are listed below; some are subject to change, particularly as our community metrics change.

1) Stay home with symptoms

All students and staff must stay home if they are symptomatic. We are continuing to monitor new guidance from local and state health departments, so we are working with our Health Services department to determine whether we will use Ruvna this year.

2) **Vaccinations**

The most important way for students and staff to keep themselves healthy and to protect the health of others is to get vaccinated. The higher the vaccination rate in our community and school, the less disease we will see in our school, the fewer quarantines we will have, and the less we will need to rely on other mitigation strategies.

We encourage all families with students who have not received the vaccination to consult with their physician, if they have not already done so, and consider getting the vaccination as soon as possible. If we do not have a record of your student's vaccination, we will assume they are unvaccinated, and they will need to follow the guidelines for unvaccinated individuals outlined in this document.

3) **Social Distancing**

Our social distancing in school will be reduced as compared to last year. We will maintain three feet of social distance in classrooms when possible, and we ask students and staff to maintain the social distance designated in each area. We will have ample seating for lunch for those students who want to ensure increased social distancing when eating. Unvaccinated students should pay particular attention to social distancing due to quarantine rules that are more strict for unvaccinated individuals.

4) **Mask Wearing**

Mask wearing is a proven mitigation strategy. The State of Illinois has mandated mask wearing for all individuals inside schools, regardless of vaccination status, to begin the school year. All students, staff, and other individuals riding a school bus or shuttle must wear a mask while on board. Masks are not required to be worn outside. Masks should be well-fitted and kept over the nose and mouth at all times. Gaiters, bandannas, and masks with ventilation valves are not allowed.

5) **COVID Testing**

During the 2020-2021 school year, we were able to reduce the occurrence of COVID in our school community with our strong mitigation factors, including COVID screening. While studies show that vaccinated students can catch and spread COVID, our unvaccinated students and staff are at higher risk. We will be providing free weekly COVID testing through University of Illinois' Shield Program for students and staff in the following categories:

Required Participation
Students who have not provided proof of vaccination and are participating in any extracurricular activity.
All staff who have not provided proof of vaccination.
Strongly Encouraged
All students who have not provided proof of vaccination
Vaccinated students who have been exposed to a COVID-positive individual (test between 3 and 5 days after exposure)

Optional Participation
All vaccinated students and staff who live with a vulnerable population or would feel safer participating in weekly testing

More information will be sent to families in the near future about the testing program, including information about how families can opt their student out of the testing program if they do not want them to participate.

Quarantine

Quarantining is an effective public health strategy to interrupt the spread of a disease. Students who test positive for COVID-19 must quarantine in accordance with Cook County Department of Public Health guidelines. Other students may need to quarantine after exposure to COVID-19, depending on factors such as vaccination status and the use of masks by both parties. The most recent quarantine procedures are on our COVID dashboard.

Students who are quarantined may not come to school for any reason. Students will get support from faculty/staff while in quarantine to keep up with classwork, but they will not have remote access to the classroom. Teachers will maintain robust Canvas courses so students can easily access course materials and assignments, while keeping pace with the class during quarantine. Lines of communication will be open to teachers, advisers, and case managers via Canvas, email, and Zoom when necessary, if students need help.

COVID Dashboard

New Trier will establish a 2021-2022 COVID-19 Operational Dashboard which will contain the following information:

- 1) Current status on:
 - a) Masking protocol
 - b) Testing protocol
 - c) Quarantine procedures
- 2) New Trier Township Zip Codes positivity rate and new cases per 100,000
- 3) New Trier High School COVID-19 testing data
- 4) Data on student/staff quarantines
- 5) Vaccine Percentages

Additional Resources

- 1) [CDC Guidance July 9, 2021](#)
- 2) [CDC Guidance July 27, 2021](#) (guidance for fully vaccinated individuals)
- 3) [IDPH Guidance July 9, 2021](#)
- 4) [IDPH Guidance July 27, 2021](#) (guidance for fully vaccinated individuals)
- 5) [CCDPH Guidance](#)
- 6) [ISBE/IDPH Revised Public Health Guidance for Schools Part 5 August 2021](#)
- 7) [ISBE/IDPH FAQs August 9, 2021](#)