

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

April 18, 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, April 18, 2022, at 6:30 p.m.

Members Present

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

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

Also Present

Mr. Myron Spiwak, Director of Business Services; Ms. Robyn Ward, Science Department Coordinator; Mr. Jon Lepeska, Math Department Faculty; Ms. Teri Rodgers, Social Studies Department Faculty and New Trier Educational Association President-Elect; Mr. Ed Zwirner, English Department Chair; Ms. Sarah Gompers, English Department Coordinator; Mr. Carlo Trovato, English Department Faculty; Dr. David Noskin, English Department Faculty; Mr. Brett Rubin, English Department Faculty; Mr. Brian Van Mersbergen, Kinetic Wellness Department Faculty; Ms. Vicki Murphy, Speech/Language Pathologist; Ms. Mindy Rotman, English Department Faculty; Ms. Julie Novak, Library Department Faculty; Mr. Matt Temple, Music and Theatre Department Faculty; Mr. Michael Marassa, Chief Technology Officer; Ms. Niki Dizon, Director of Communications; Dr. Renee Zoladz, Director of Human Resources; Ms. Aileen Geary, Social Studies Department Faculty and New Trier High School Educational Association President; Mr. Eric Johnson, Technology Department; Mr. Mike Hill, Technology Department; Ms. Lindsey Ruston, Board of Education Secretary; students, members of the press and community.

BUSINESS MEETING

I. CALL TO ORDER – 5:00 p.m. – C234

Ms. Albrecht called the Regular Meeting of April 18, 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.

Ms. Albrecht asked for a motion to move to Closed Session. Mr. Das moved that the Board 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; the sale or purchase of securities, investments, or investment contracts; student disciplinary cases; the placement of individual students in special education programs and other matters relating to individual students; 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: Mr. Das, Mr. Dronen, Ms. Hahn, Mr. McLane, Ms. Tomlinson, Ms. Alcantara, Ms. Albrecht

NAY: none

The motion passed.

II. CLOSED SESSION – 5:00 p.m. – A303

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

Ms. Albrecht recalled the Regular Meeting of April 18, 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.

IV. Minutes

Ms. Albrecht asked for any comments or adjustments on the minutes of the Regular Meeting of March 21, 2022 (open and closed session). There was one request for a change to the minutes by Ms. Hahn, which was incorporated. Ms. Tomlinson moved, and Mr. Dronen seconded the motion, that the Board of Education approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting of March 21, 2022 (open and closed session), as revised. Upon a roll call vote being taken, the members voted as follows:

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

NAY: none

The motion passed.

V. Communications

Ms. Albrecht 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. Ms. Albrecht reminded those speaking to keep their comments to three minutes or less per Board Policy 2:230. She also asked that the audience refrain from clapping, booing, cheering or any similar actions related to anyone's public comment as well as respect everyone's right to speak. There was one request for public comment.

1. Ms. Wendy Zun, Co-President of the League of Women Voters of Wilmette, spoke on behalf of the League in anticipation of the agenda item: Critical Thinking and Civil Discourse: English Department Presentation. The League of Women Voters of Wilmette advocates for a broad and inclusive curriculum. She noted their support for the work of the administration in recognizing the power of the English literature curriculum. Ms. Zun went on to share additional comments around this.

VI. Special Orders of Business

A. 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:

- State testing for the PSAT9 took place today. It went smoothly thanks to Dr. Chimille Tillery, Director of Curriculum and Instruction, Mr. Alan Pavlik, Testing Manager, and faculty who proctored the test.
- Ms. Colleen Koulentes, current Educational Life Skills (ELS) and Transition Coordinator, was hired as the Special Education Department Coordinator. The committee noted her student-centered approach, collaborative nature, and positive disposition. She began her career as an ELS teacher for NSSD, now TrueNorth, in 2001. She was hired as a resource teacher at New Trier in 2003 and has had a variety of roles since then, most recently spending two years as the ELS and Transition Coordinator at Winnetka. The Northfield campus is excited to welcome her back.
- IGSS students are presenting their Junior Theme Research to freshmen classes. Ms. Gabi Sharifi, student, came to several female adviser rooms and taught a great, interactive lesson on different types of stress.
- There was a Pop-up One Stop Trev Shop at Northfield during the lunch periods. Freshmen students in the ELS program are learning about sales procedures and interacting with customers who in this case were our students.
- The Health Service Office has gone through a redesign. The project improves students' privacy and confidentiality. Additionally, it created a clear path for wheelchair access to the restroom for students.
- March was Jewish American Heritage Month. Staff members did a great job putting the exhibit together at both campuses entitled: *Myth, Reality, Mythology: The Complexity of Jewish Identity*.
- April is Arab American Heritage Month. A variety of resources were created by a mentor and students in the Muslim Student Affinity Group, which included a poster, toolkit and a slideshow that is displayed on the monitors at each campus.
- The Freshman Adviser Room Olympics took place as course selection finished and as a way to build community as freshmen prepare to transition to Winnetka. There was a basketball knockout challenge and Ms. Carolina Rossman, student, was the winner. Also included in the Olympics was a door decorating contest with Ms. Chris Estberg's, Adviser and Science Department Faculty; Ms. Rachel Anderson's, Adviser and English Department Faculty; and Ms. Alicia Landes', Adviser and Art Department Chair, adviser rooms winning the competition.

- Upcoming events include a Spirit Wear challenge, brain puzzles, canned food drive, and relay races as well as Spring Fest.

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

- Spring sports teams are in action.
- She also thanked Dr. Tillery and Mr. Pavlik, along with proctors for their work on the SAT for juniors and PSAT for sophomores.
- The yearly review with Quest Food Service is taking place now, with the Food Service Committee gathering feedback.
- Commencement planning is underway. Mr. Sam Harris, class of 1954, will be the alumni speaker and is in New Trier's Alumni Hall of Honor.
- Prom planning is also underway and will take place on May 14th.
- The Kinetic Wellness (KW) Wellness Week will take place April 25th – 29th and will focus on Healthy Relationships. Wellness Week is an annual program with different topics. Pre-Covid, there was a 5K run and the hope is to get back to that in the next year or so. This year's program addresses feedback from students who asked that the school provide information on healthy relationships. In the fall, administrators met with several students who had concerns about sexual assault that had occurred off campus. The idea was to help ensure that the school could identify supports for students as well as review educational opportunities. Dr. Sally and Mrs. Dubravec, along with Mr. Scott Williams, Assistant Principal for Student Services, met with the students as well as other key players within the school to help plan for various pieces, including Wellness Week. The group started with ten students, with two of them, moving much of this work forward. Throughout meetings this year, the group has looked at current practices, reintroduced a support group called Empower, and a club has been created to raise student awareness. A curriculum audit was done with Mr. Andy Butler, KW Department Chair and Mr. Pete Collins, KW Department Coordinator. The group has worked on moving, Resisting Aggression with Defense (RAD), which is typically introduced during ninth grade, forward in other KW classes. The group has also been instrumental in the planning of Wellness Week. Mrs. Dubravec noted that the group also helped with website changes. She went on to thank Mr. Herschel Levens and Ms. Bella Nash, both students, who met weekly with Mrs. Dubravec to better understand the school's policies and procedures. They helped to identify ways in which the school can also grow and better support students in this area. Mrs. Dubravec then expanded on the website changes that were made, noting that Ms. Niki Dizon, Director of Communications, also helped with where mental health resources should be placed on the website. Although this information was on the website, these changes made it easier to access.
- Ms. Kerri Simons, Modern and Classical Languages Department Faculty, continues community building activities with a staff versus student dodgeball game. Mr. Charles Wood, Lead User Support Specialist, took out most of the opposing team.
- The first annual Trevian March Madness competition recently concluded with over \$2,000 raised for charity. Adviser rooms participated as did departments. The first place Adviser Room was Mr. Paul Newman's, Adviser and Special Education Department Faculty, while the first-place department was Technology. The top three winners in each group chose a charity to donate to.
- Signing day also took place for 37 student-athletes.
- Mr. Charlie Jacobs, student, placed third in the Broadcast News category at the IHSA Journalism sectionals and will move on to State. Mrs. Dubravec encouraged everyone to check out Broadcast Journalism's videos.
- Science Olympiad took second in the State and is headed to Nationals. Mr. Alex Howe, Applied Arts Department Faculty, is the sponsor.
- Mrs. Dubravec noted that Math3 MathWorks Math Modeling Challenge was featured on Fox 32. Three of the six finalists are from Illinois and will travel to New York to compete on April 25th. They have a chance to win \$20,000.
- The Brierly Art Gallery features artwork from New Trier alum, Ms. Nicole Gordon. There will also be a reception on April 21st to honor Ms. Gordon's work.
- The theme for the Grad Party has been released. Mrs. Dubravec thanked parents for their work, particularly over the past few years. The theme is MARVELous Class of 2022, and the party offers a safe place for students to celebrate after commencement. A video was also sent to senior Adviser Rooms.
- Mr. Nick Falk and Mr. George Cahill, students, were invited to the Arcadia Invitational in Los Angeles. Mr. Falk beat his school record and Mr. Cahill ran a 4:16 mile.

- The New Trier Powerlifting Team took first at Nationals again. The team is coached by Mr. Jim Davis, Athletic Coordinator for Strength and Conditioning.

Dr. Sally provided a brief Covid update, noting that the District continues to monitor the virus. The Covid Reentry and Community Wellness Team (CRCWT) also continues to meet. Case counts remain low for students and staff. Changes will be made to the dashboard as Illinois is changing how it is reporting data. Shield testing will also continue for the remainder of the school year.

Mr. Johnson gave the FOIA report, noting that there were ten requests since the last Board meeting, and all but one is closed. The topics related to curricular materials, staff information, bid tabulations, questions about a survey, technology purchases, information related to discipline and copier contracts.

B. Annual Plan Update: Critical Thinking and Civil Discourse – English Department Presentation

Mr. Tragos began the report by reminding everyone that this is the third presentation in the Teaching and Learning series this year. He then spoke to the Critical Thinking and Civil Discourse statement that was adopted in October 2020, noting it is a fundamental concept in enacting many of the frameworks of the Strategic Plan, particularly Intellectual Engagement, Growth and Readiness as well as Climate, Culture and Equity. Mr. Tragos encouraged community members to read the memo he has provided to the Board. He walked through the reasons why departments are making these presentations. Mr. Tragos shared the curriculum development and objectives stem from Board policies. He noted that each English course is aligned to the Common Core, Illinois Learning Standards, state mandates and the New Trier 2030: Strategic Plan. Around 2012, after the state issued the Common Core Initiative Standards, the English department used them as the catalyst to review their course of study and align it. Mr. Tragos then shared the role of the teacher in bringing the curriculum to life.

Mr. Ed Zwirner, English Department Chair, introduced the other presenters, which included Ms. Sarah Gompers, English Department Coordinator as well as English Department Faculty, Dr. David Noskin, Mr. Carlo Trovato, and Mr. Brett Rubin. Another English Department Faculty member who helped prepare the presentation but was unable to attend the meeting was Ms. Annie Kay Taylor. Mr. Zwirner shared the approach of the presentation which included the broad purpose of the English curriculum, noting it is skills-based and that there is a set of developmental themes that undergirds the different grades. For ninth grade, it is the theme of individual identity, the tenth-grade theme is the individual in society, the eleventh-grade theme is the American experiment and the emergence of a pluralistic society and how they function while the twelfth graders focus on world literature. Since the purpose of an English education is skills-based, Mr. Zwirner shared that they are organized in a spiral, so the skills get deeper, more meaningful, and complex over time. The department also looks to engage students with a range of literature from the classics to the contemporary. Teachers want to excite curiosity about fundamental essential questions while assisting students in exploring those questions through research and personal reflection.

Ms. Gompers presented how the department develops critical reading habits in the ninth grade. She noted that there are four domains in the discipline: reading, writing, speaking, and listening with the focus freshmen year on reading. The goal is to have students be close, critical readers who develop close, critical reading habits of all literature. One benchmark experience for freshmen is the reading of *The Odyssey*. Like Mr. Zwirner noted before, identity and identity formation are focused on during the freshmen year, with Ms. Gompers adding, that by second semester, time is spent on storytelling. Students are introduced to various translations in the middle of *The Odyssey* unit. They are vastly different interpretations of the same story at various points through out time. Ms. Gompers shared further details about student expectations when they annotate and read. She also provided examples and details about the shifts in language in the various translations which leads to shifts in interpretation.

Next, Dr. Noskin shared that sophomores build off of their freshmen year with a focus on reading and writing. During this year, students read a non-fiction, full length text. This allows students to develop their reading skills of non-fiction and is a crucial skill that helps them become critical thinkers. Dr. Noskin shared additional details on how this is accomplished when reading a non-fiction text. He also spoke to the importance of developing critical thinking, empathy, and open-mindedness as well as the District's commitment to civil discourse. These skills are developed as students read the book, *Five Days*, by Wes Moore, which tells the story of five days in Baltimore in 2015 through the perspective of eight very different characters. He shared further details as to how the book is taught, including how student's evaluate perspectives in the story for their limitations. Another goal of teaching *Five Days* is to help students develop their research skills and Dr. Noskin explained the project that helps them do so. This project also

includes evaluating the credibility and bias of the sources and Dr. Noskin referenced the Media Bias chart from Ad Fontes Media. He concluded by providing a sample of student work.

Mr. Trovato then spoke about the junior year experience where the research paper is the defining experience for students that year. The research paper allows students to further develop their skills while deepening their understanding and sophistication when it comes to research, reading and writing. Mr. Trovato then walked through the goals of the research project with students defining the question for their paper becoming more self-reliant and independent in their research. Mr. Zwirner then noted that not only is a topic-driven approach used but also a literature-driven one with students selecting their own text. Mr. Trovato shared the student process regarding researching their junior theme.

Next, Mr. Zwirner noted that another important part of the English department's program is the development of student's metacognitive understanding of their own writing skills. Reflective work is done with students by focusing on three areas pertaining to writing: developing of ideas, the flow of those ideas and polishing. This work is often done in one-on-one conferences between student and teacher. Mr. Zwirner further detailed those conferences, noting that when a student knows where they are in the process, what skills they have and those they have not yet developed in a piece of writing is an accomplishment itself and important to the process. Students are often driving these conversations and they do it well because they can speak to their process, where they are stuck and how they plan to move forward.

Mr. Zwirner noted that most of the examples presented came from three level classes, which is the level that 70% of students take. Students get the same experience across all levels; it is about how teachers scaffold the experience. He went on to share about the senior electives program noting the goal is to expand students critical thinking in two ways, either by a world literature focus or a choice of lens. This program provides new challenges and heightens investment for students. Mr. Rubin went on to share about his Literature and Film level three class. This class teaches students to apply the skills they have been honing over the past several years to film. He then noted that one way that units are organized is through the teaching of various genres such as film noir, which he shared a sample from the unit. He then went on to describe other work that students do in the film noir unit. First, they determine a thesis from the film, *Double Indemnity*, that has been discussed and apply it to a text the class is reading, such as Philip K. Dick's *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* and articulate that in a paper. Mr. Rubin then spoke to how this work builds to a student's epigraph essay, which he shared further details about.

Mr. Tragos highlighted the Media Bias chart referred to by Dr. Noskin, noting that the company's mission is to make news consumers smarter and news media better. They are committed to media and news literacy. The chart rates on bias and news reliability and is interactive which is useful for students and teachers, particularly for research. It meets the school's needs for strategic initiatives as well as developing critical thinkers, readers, and writers. The state of Illinois is one of the first to have a media literacy mandate. New Trier's librarians lead and support this effort with teachers. Ad Fontes has also done professional development for New Trier teachers.

Mr. Tragos then spoke to notes he made in the memo about student achievement. Students consistently perform high on standardized tests, which is marked by ACT and SAT scores. There are also consistent anecdotal reports from students about feeling well prepared for the academic rigor of college literature and composition courses. This comes through in alumni surveys where 90% of students rate their writing as the skill area they feel most prepared. Over the last two years, over 80% of New Trier students met or exceeded the ELA benchmarks on the state SAT. This is the highest proficiency rate among non-selective enrollment public high schools in the state. From the class of 2019, which was the last time the District gave the ACT, the average English subscore among all New Trier students was 28.2. Nearly 46% of students scored 30 or higher, placing them in the top ten percent in the nation. This is data for all students across all levels. Mr. Tragos then invited questions and comments from the Board.

Ms. Hahn thanked the group for their presentation. She noted her appreciation for how they explained, as an institution, the value and commitment to the academic freedom that teachers are provided. It is what distinguishes New Trier and makes it an exceptional experience for students, and yet, it is all within boundaries. She appreciated how that was tied to skills, noting there is purpose to what is selected, and it is methodical. Ms. Hahn also appreciated the spiral metaphor for the curriculum. She noted that students are receiving an amazing education and they are engaged in it because of how it is presented with the balance between skill development, classic and modern texts and what students are interested in.

Ms. Hahn inquired about the impact the Critical Thinking and Civil Discourse Statement has had on one's teaching and in the classroom. She questioned if it was more of a thoughtful process about time and what the department has already been doing pertaining this new framework. Mr. Zwirner responded that critical thinking was at the center of the department when he began 23 years ago and was part of it even long before that. After other comments, Mr. Zwirner noted that what has shifted over time are the texts that are used. The department has always desired to freshen the curriculum by looking for texts that speak to unique student experiences and voices or open up new avenues. He noted that many canonical texts stay as they are complex and still engage students but do require a classroom and a context especially so students will question each other as well as the text. Referring to canonical texts, Ms. Hahn noted there is something to cultural literacy and having that in common with others, no matter where they live or what schools they attended. She inquired if the department discusses with other schools to make sure there is a commonality with some of the works that New Trier uses. Mr. Zwirner replied that the department does talk to other schools and department leaders about what they are teaching. He noted that each year there is a wealth of texts published, making it impossible to read through it all, so a crowdsourced approach is helpful. Faculty members, with their broad reading habits, interests, and skills, are always bringing new books to committees for their evaluation. They bring not only full-length texts but shorter works such as poetry, essays, and short stories. They are constantly freshening the curriculum and making it more modern and relevant for students.

Mr. Das echoed admiration for the presentation as well as the work. He continues to be impressed by the opportunities students have with such capable teachers. He noted his appreciation for the presenters sequencing each year and how that builds from previous experience. Mr. Das then inquired about the role of student-to-student interaction in class over the various grade levels. Mr. Zwirner noted its importance and there was a return to it especially coming off the pandemic. Speaking and listening is an entire area of skill that the department works on and much of what they do is based on discussion, either whole, small group or one-on-one. Mr. Zwirner went on to speak further about this, particularly how teachers help students build their confidence to share their ideas and develop those ideas. Mr. Tragos followed up by inquiring about the book *Five Days*, and if the eight perspectives resonate with different students where they identify or empathize with a particular perspective or if the author leads them to one particular voice. Dr. Noskin replied that the author allows the reader to come to their own conclusions. He went on to share additional details, particularly how he will use comprehension questions to gather students' thoughts and aid in discussion during the next class. Dr. Noskin also noted that the course committee spent time discussing how teachers would help students balance their own perspectives with the various perspectives in the book and how the author assists with that as well.

After an initial comment, Ms. Tomlinson wanted to center on critical thinking and civil discourse referring to the English Course of Study. She shared language of how the English department wants to help students clarify and defend claims, or counterclaims or explore deficiencies of an argument, noting how important this is given the world that students live in where technology is rewiring how they acquire and spread information. She noted that students will need the kinds of tools that the department is teaching them to navigate this. Ms. Tomlinson also believes that the school needs to continue to provide brave spaces to help students with this.

In the area of reading, Ms. Tomlinson thought it interesting to hear references of the point of view and helping students develop an objective understanding of divergent or culturally distinctive positions through the books they read. Referencing the alumni survey, Ms. Tomlinson noted that students report being well-prepared with writing, but they feel challenged in the area of working with diverse teams or groups. She is encouraged from a literary standpoint that the department is working to expand students' experiences and perspectives. Ms. Tomlinson noted her appreciation for the presentation as well as the work the department does.

Mr. McLane thanked the group for an edifying presentation and accompanying backup materials. He also found it to be reassuring in terms of how the department is guiding and allowing students to think by opening the door of thought. Mr. McLane noted that he is very supportive of the direction and collective leadership the department has evinced as well as shown in their presentation.

Mr. McLane then inquired if there was a best practice curriculum that every English department uses or if are they more reliant on crowdsourcing and engaging with others. Mr. Zwirner replied that it is easier to find best practice curriculum around writing instruction or how to engage students in different discussion models. He went on to share that reading is more about what one values and is interested in exploring. There is no best practice in terms of titles, and it is more of a skill conversation. Teachers are a great resource for texts and when one is brought forward, it must go through a rigorous test to determine how it will work for students. He noted that piloting a text is a rigorous process where other teachers test it, it is tested against the various skills that it has to work with in the particular

discipline and it is also tested in terms of engagement. Mr. Zwirner noted that many texts do not make it through the process, while others make it into the curriculum, but after a couple years it is determined that the book is not working. Mr. Zwirner noted that the movement between the canonical and modern is, in many ways, best practice as students need a variety of access points to get into literature and one cannot predict what students will be interested in. He shared an anecdote about a student, emphasizing that the department is always searching for texts, for its student-centered curriculum.

Ms. Alcantara began by noting how extraordinarily impressed she was with the presentation. She wanted to emphasize that this sort of presentation may seem like a rote exercise, and the Board has seen other presentations from other departments, but it is not. What was presented and conveyed to the Board and the community is educational, probative, exciting, and profound.

Mr. Dronen spoke to the curriculum development and objectives, noting it was of importance to him that Board policy “supports academic freedom and expresses faith in the faculty’s professional judgement.” He commented that the faculty and administration exercise excellent professional judgement. Mr. Dronen, also referring to curriculum development and objectives is to “align to the philosophy and objectives of the District stated in Board policy including teaching controversial issues,” which he commented the District should never shy away from. This led Mr. Dronen to inquire if a book is ever stalled in the testing process due to a controversial issue. Mr. Zwirner replied that the controversial element does not usually stop a book, the question becomes what will it take for students to unpack this issue and for teachers to do that well.

Mr. Dronen enjoyed Ms. Gompers explanation of the three versions of The Odyssey, noting he was unaware of the Wilson version. Finally, Mr. Dronen noted that in foreign language study, there are great works of literature and inquired if there is any coordination between the English and Modern and Classical Languages (MCL) departments. Ms. Gompers replied that the departments teach the same skills and most recently have worked together on how to teach writing. MCL has adopted the English department’s model of writing as well as the philosophy of reading to benefit one’s writing.

Ms. Albrecht referenced the constant refreshing of texts as well as the alumni survey. The survey results are always high with writing and critical thinking, but the refreshing of texts allows for a comfort to be created with cultural diversity. This has been an issue that alums have struggled with, so it is important to continue to grow and modernize. Ms. Albrecht concluded by noting it was a great presentation.

Mr. Zwirner took a moment to thank the Board and Mr. Tragos for a wonderful partnership which is part of the professional hallmark of this as well as to the amazing English department.

C. 2022-2023 Planning Update

Dr. Sally presented an update on planning for the 2022-2023 school year and began with the school year calendar for next year. The Board has approved the block schedule and in November approved the major holidays and breaks for the 22-23 school year. Several items still remained that the District needed to work through before the calendar could be approved. One item was Institute Days and other professional development time and is important for teachers to have that time together. Dr. Sally noted that the calendar has a good combination of departmental development time and interdepartmental or whole school professional time. Anchor Days will not only provide professional development time for departments, but it also allows extra time for students to manage their busy lives.

Parent-Teacher Conferences are set for early November. Feedback from parent groups has been positive regarding holding conferences remotely. The calendar proposes another year of those due to its popularity. It allows parents and guardians a better opportunity to attend as they can do so from wherever they are.

The District also purposefully considered religious holidays and how it might be able to support students. Teachers also work through how they can accommodate students who celebrate with their families and may not be able to complete homework or need to delay a test. While this has been done for many years, the school started to emphasize it more.

New Trier’s school calendar is 182 days, which is two more than most schools. He noted that November 8th, 2022 is a holiday. Although it may sound odd, the schedule becomes compressed. Mr. Waechtler is co-chair of the calendar committee, which tries to work through how to best structure it. The District will continue to assess and gather feedback on the block schedule and the calendar from students, staff, and parents. This was done in a variety of ways

this year, and much was learned.

Next, Dr. Sally shared the initial planning for the 2022-2023 Annual Plan. The plan will share what the District will focus on next year and its goals. Further details will be shared with the Board at the June meeting, for approval in July. Dr. Sally highlighted a few goals and shared comments on each, including the Characteristics of a New Trier Graduate, Civil Discourse and Critical Thinking, Belonging Through a Culture of Dignity and Evolution of Student Services. He noted that there will be a May or June presentation to the Board regarding the Restorative Justice work the school has begun. Dr. Sally invited questions and comments from the Board.

Ms. Alcantara noted that she loves the color-coded calendar and pointed out that November 9th should be light green.

Ms. Tomlinson noted that when the block schedule was initially discussed it was lighter on professional development versus the non-block schedule. Now that professional development is up six hours, Ms. Tomlinson inquired if that is similar to what the school has provided in the past. Dr. Sally confirmed, with Mr. Tragos adding that it is more than the previous block schedule and even increased over the previous two years before that.

Ms. Tomlinson inquired if teachers are on board with Zoom conferences, which Dr. Sally confirmed. He noted it has worked well as an efficient and effective way to communicate and that more parents are able to attend. Ms. Alcantara agreed, as a user, that remote parent-teacher conferences were much easier, especially for those who may be travelling. She did note that there were some adjustments that should be made such as the length of each session as well as some not arriving on Zoom until a couple minutes into the conference. She is curious to know what other districts are doing with the software, noting some have seven-minute conferences. Dr. Sally responded that the District will take a look at this as well as other difficulties that were noted and hopefully does better next year.

Mr. Dronen inquired how long Election Day has been a holiday. Discussion ensued, and it was noted that the holiday also occurred in November 2020. Mr. Dronen then inquired if this change is permanent. Ms. Hahn replied that it is cycle-to-cycle with the Governor making the decision. Ms. Albrecht commented that many schools are used as voting locations, with Ms. Alcantara inquiring if New Trier is used as a polling place, which Dr. Sally confirmed.

***D. 2022-2023 School Year Calendar**

Ms. Hahn moved, and Ms. Alcantara seconded the motion that the Board of Education approve the 2022-2023 school year calendar, as presented. Upon a roll call vote being taken, the members voted as follows:

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

NAY: none

The motion passed.

E. Facilities Update: Winnetka Campus East Side Academic and Athletic Project and Transition Facility

Mr. Johnson provided an update on the Winnetka Campus East Side Academic and Athletic Project (ESSA) and the Transition Facility. He began with the ESSA project, noting that major demolition activities have concluded. Mass excavation has also concluded which will reduce the number of trucks in the area. The concrete contractor is on site placing footings and foundation walls. Some workdays have been lost to weather, but those will be made up. There is a neighbor meeting on Wednesday and Pepper Construction has shown strong performance in terms of neighborhood interaction. The Monthly Construction Report is on BoardDocs with budget information as well as other details. Mr. Johnson then shared pictures from the construction site. Much progress has been made by the team who continue to work to manage the schedule and project efficiently and safely.

Regarding the Special Education Transition Center, the architect and Transitions team are working on the design, with teachers and staff involved in the process. Renovations will be done in two phases, the first being this summer with work done on the retail space and ADA accessible restrooms. The second phase will take place during the summer of 2023 with general enhancements to the rest of the space. This will allow time to gather feedback from the teachers after the first year of use. The budget for the renovations will be determined and incorporated into the long-range plan. The District is also working to develop partnerships with community groups and Mr. Johnson noted that there is a lot of interest. There continues to be excitement and enthusiasm for how the facility will support students. A more extensive report from Dr. Joanne Panopoulos, Assistant Superintendent for Student Services and Special Education, Ms. Megan Zajac, Director of Special Education, and the team will take place at a future meeting.

***F. Election of New Officers for the period April 18, 2022 through April 2023 Regular Meeting**

Ms. Albrecht moved this agenda item to after the Consent Agenda so as to get through the regular voting items prior to the transition.

VII. Administrative Items

A. Treasurer's Report for March 2022

Mr. Johnson presented the Treasurer's Report for March 2022, the ninth month of the year. Total balances for all District accounts were \$182,644,150. The District is seeing an increase in funds invested based on current cash flow projections. Cash flow is managed very carefully by the District to ensure it has the funds available when needed. This is especially true this year as was discussed at last month's meeting due to the potential delay in the second installment of property tax bills. The District is seeing more investments benefiting from rising rates, although yield for these short-term investments is typically under one percent. Many of these investments will mature between now and December 2022. The investments are short-term in order to align with the District's cash flow needs. The District continues to see strong local, state, and federal receipts as property taxes payments from the state and payments from the federal government remain prompt. Mr. Johnson noted that cash balances are largely mirroring last year.

B. Financial Reports for March 2022

Mr. Johnson presented the Financial Reports for March 2022, operating revenue was \$118,251,007 for the first nine months of the fiscal year, or 15.8% higher compared to last year. This is due to the timely payments at the local, state, and federal levels. The District has received well over 90% of the spring property tax distributions. The adopted budget for revenue is 5.34% higher than last fiscal year. Mr. Myron Spiwak, Director of Business Services, will discuss amending the budget to reflect this higher revenue.

Operating expenditures were \$84,253,470 through March, or about 8% higher than last year. Exclusive of transfers, expenses were 4.45% higher than last year. With three quarters of the year complete, expenses are projected to be close to budget, all nonessential expenses will be monitored for the remainder of the year and there is a slight increase built into the budget. Fund book balances for all accounts were \$184,770,256 through March 31st. This is going well from a budget perspective, while continuing to monitor the expenditures side as the District closes out the last three months of the year. Mr. Johnson then invited questions and comments from the Board.

Ms. Albrecht asked Mr. Johnson to summarize the late tax bills and the effect on cash flow. Mr. Johnson noted that the Finance Committee had a good discussion about this last week. The District continues to monitor the second installment of tax bills. Typically, they are issued in July and are due in August or slightly later. This year, issuing the tax bills is a multiple step process, which Mr. Johnson shared. The assessor's office is undergoing a computer system conversion, and along with Covid, are late in getting assessments done. The assessor and the Board of Review are behind due to these two items; therefore, the tax bills will not be calculated by July 1st. Many different dates are being proposed with some guessing the bill could be issued as late as December. For most people, their taxes are paid from their escrow account, but the impact to school districts, library districts, and villages could be great as the cash flow they were counting on over the summer may not arrive for four or five months. For New Trier, this will all happen within its fiscal year, however the timing question remains. The District begins its heavy spending period when faculty, staff and students return in the fall. It needs to be more careful with its cash flow as it will not have the tax distributions as usual. The District is fortunate as the community has entrusted it with reserves that can be used to meet its cash flow needs in the short-term. One impact for the District is that the funds it typically invests to earn interest income cannot be done as those funds need to remain liquid as the District does not know when the tax distributions will arrive. The District is advocating with Cook County and talking to professional organizations. Mr. Johnson noted that the Board will receive periodic updates on this issue.

Ms. Tomlinson clarified that the District has at least six months' worth of operating expenses in reserve, which Mr. Johnson confirmed. Ms. Tomlinson went on to note that the potential loss of investment income would be part of one percent. Mr. Johnson confirmed that, noting that the amount is in the \$200,000-\$300,000 range. Both agreed that is not an insignificant amount, with Ms. Tomlinson inquiring if there is any remedy for this. Mr. Johnson said there is no remedy and while the District is sympathetic to the challenges Cook County is facing, the delay at these two offices impacts far and wide within Cook County. The District continues to talk with these offices about what the impact is not only for New Trier, but for those districts who may not have the reserves that the school does. Discussion continued between Mr. Johnson and Ms. Tomlinson, with Mr. Johnson noting that it will create confusion

for people as they could see two tax bills within two months as the first installment for next year would be issued in January. It was also emphasized that the District has no choice in this matter.

***C. Tentative Amended FY22 Budget**

Mr. Johnson began by noting that occasionally the District amends the budget. This year, the District is over on revenue primarily due to federal funding. Mr. Spiwak went on to provide an overview of the amended budget. The budget is reviewed for any line items, revenue, or expense categories that might require an amendment. There are three revenue items, an expenditure item and a reclassification that are proposed for amendment. The first revenue item is increasing the District's federal sources revenue budget by \$1,670,000. It is for reimbursements for Covid-related expenses that were received from FEMA. Mr. Spiwak shared additional details, noting that the District has received almost \$1.7 million of the \$2 million it submitted for. Mr. Dave Conway, Director of Physical Plant Services and his team worked hard on the application and submission of it. The second revenue that the District wants to increase is its CPPRT (Corporate Personal Property Replacement Tax). The CPPRT is budgeted at \$1.2 million. The money is based on what is collected by the Department of Revenue throughout the state and is based on how strong the state's revenues are. It is usually unknown what the amount will be until the state starts paying it out to the counties, who then distribute it. Typically, discrepancies are slight, and an amendment is not needed, but this year there has been an unusually large influx of CPPRT money. The budget has already been exceeded by almost \$700,000. The District has collected \$1.9 million, and Mr. Spiwak anticipates a couple more payments as well. The last revenue amendment to be made is a decrease in interest earnings or earnings on investments. This category is budgeted conservatively so as to not rely on earning much interest. The account was budgeted for \$775,000, however, through March only a little over \$300,000 has been collected. It is unlikely that the District will earn the budgeted amount, so Mr. Spiwak has recommended reducing \$200,000 from that budget to more accurately reflect where this budget will end the year. Mr. Spiwak added that if this was the only item the District had a change for, it would not make an amendment for \$200,000, but since there are other changes, it was included.

The expenditure budget amendment is in the debt service fund. As part of the funding for the Winnetka Campus East Side Academic and Athletic Project, the District committed to paying the debt payments on the bond issues out of operating funds rather than issuing a levy. That total is \$2.9 million each year along with a small debt issue that was made several years ago of \$180,000. When the budget for FY22 was done, the transfer of these funds went from the Education Fund (Ed Fund) to the Operations & Maintenance Fund (O&M) to the Debt Service Fund. What is lacking in this fund is the actual expenditures to pay the principal and interest payments of \$3.65 million, so this amendment is putting that amount into the fund balance to ensure there is enough to cover the payments.

The last amendment is a reclass related to bonds. There was a working cash bond sale of \$10 million last fall, so the District takes that and moves it to the Capital Projects Fund for construction project. Illinois code does not allow the District to move funds directly from Working Cash to Capital Projects. The District has it set up in the budget form that the funds go from Working Cash to the Education Fund to Capital Projects. The resolution that the Board passed in January took the funds from Working Cash to the O&M Fund. Mr. Spiwak noted it is a reclass of moving this over one column on the state budget form. It has no impact on the dollar amount but makes sure that the resolution that was passed matches the state budget form.

The tentative amended budget must be on display for at least 30 days before a public hearing. With the timing of the May and June Board meetings, it is necessary to have this on the April agenda. At the June 6th Board meeting, there will be a public hearing, once that is closed, the Board will be asked to adopt the amended budget for FY22.

Mr. Johnson added that the changes are mostly on the revenue side and the others net out to no change. Mr. Spiwak confirmed, noting that as far as operations goes, the net change is increasing the District's bottom line by \$2.2 million. The \$3 million in the bond fund does not affect the District's operating income. Mr. Johnson added that the District is tracking ahead with expenditures and prior to adopting the final amended budget in June, will review them again to see if they need to be adjusted one last time. Ms. Albrecht invited questions and comments from the Board.

Ms. Alcantara thanked Mr. Spiwak for the easy-to-follow presentation. Regarding the change with the increase in revenue to record the receipts of the FEMA proceeds, Ms. Alcantara appreciated the time it took to put the application together and submit it. Ms. Alcantara inquired what expenditures comprised the \$1.67 million. Mr. Johnson replied that it is PPE stock such as masks, cleaning supplies, and supplemental custodial services. Mr. Spiwak noted that the District had to be careful that there was no overlap with the other federal grants such as ESSER 1 and 2 as well as the ARP as any items already written for those grants, had to be excluded such as some of the testing supplies. Mr. Spiwak shared that some technology equipment such as cameras for the classrooms as they were Covid-related were approved for reimbursement. Mr. Johnson stated that it also included Covid signage.

Ms. Hahn moved, and Mr. Das seconded the motion that the Board of Education approve the 2021-2022 Tentative Amended Budget and that a Public Hearing date be set for June 6, 2022. Upon a roll call vote being taken, the members voted as follows:

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

NAY: none

The motion passed.

VIII. Consent Agenda

- Bill List for the Period, March 1 – 31, 2022
- Personnel Report (Appointments, Changes of Status, Leave of Absence, Resignations, Retirements, Stipends – Separation, Administrator Contracts, Amendment to Exempt, Management and Admin Benefit Summaries, Addendum)
- Award contracts to Larson Furniture and Equipment for \$421,344 and The Cashman Stahler Group for \$52,771 for the Bickert Gym Backstop Replacement and design services related to the Winnetka Campus Bickert Gym Backstop Replacement and authorize the Associate Superintendent to execute the agreements.
- The Capital Expenditures over \$50,000 as presented
- The appointment of Mr. Christopher T. Johnson, Associate Superintendent, District Treasurer

Ms. Albrecht inquired if any members wanted to pull an item off the Consent Agenda, no one chose to do so. Mr. Das moved that the Board of Education approve the Consent Agenda, which includes: Bill List for the Period, March 1 – 31, 2022; Personnel Report (Appointments, Changes of Status, Leave of Absence, Resignations, Retirements, Stipends – Separation, Administrator Contracts, Amendment to Exempt, Management and Admin Benefit Summaries, Addendum); award contracts to Larson Furniture and Equipment for \$421,344 and The Cashman Stahler Group for \$52,771 for the Bickert Gym Backstop Replacement and design services related to the Winnetka Campus Bickert Gym Backstop Replacement and authorize the Associate Superintendent to execute the agreements; the Capital Expenditures over \$50,000 as presented; and the appointment of Mr. Christopher T. Johnson, Associate Superintendent, District Treasurer. Ms. Tomlinson seconded the motion. Upon a roll call vote being taken, the members voted as follows:

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

NAY: none

The motion passed.

***F. Election of New Officers for the period April 18, 2022 through April 2023 Regular Meeting**

Dr. Sally began this agenda item by thanking Ms. Albrecht, noting his appreciation for her leadership over the past three years. He shared some of the many items they worked on together. Dr. Sally went on to say that the leadership Ms. Albrecht showed during Covid was absolutely essential for the school, as a community, to successfully navigate all the challenges. Dr. Sally noted he was glad that Ms. Albrecht will still be on the Board for another year and looks forward to working with whoever is elected as President and Vice President. Dr. Sally presented Ms. Albrecht with flowers and the gavel she has used while President. Ms. Albrecht thanked Dr. Sally, noting that the administration is amazing, and it is a great privilege to serve the District and work with Dr. Sally, and his team, including Mr. Johnson.

Board Secretary, Ms. Lindsey Ruston, opened nominations for the office of Board President for the period of April 18, 2022 through the April 2023 Regular Board Meeting. Mr. McLane moved that Mr. Dronen be nominated for the office of President of the Board of Education from April 18, 2022 through the April 2023 Regular Meeting. There being no further nominations for President, it was by acclamation that Mr. Dronen was declared the President of the Board from April 18, 2022 through the April 2023 Regular Meeting.

Mr. Dronen asked for nominations for the office of Vice President of the Board of Education for the period of April 18, 2022 through the April 2023 Regular Board Meeting. Ms. Alcantara moved that Ms. Hahn be nominated for the office of Vice President of the Board of Education from April 18, 2022 through the April 2023 Regular Meeting.

There being no further nominations for Vice President, it was by acclamation that Ms. Hahn was declared the Vice President of the Board from April 18, 2022 through the April 2023 Regular Meeting.

Mr. Dronen asked for nominations for the office of Secretary of the Board of Education for the period of April 18, 2022 through the April 2023 Regular Board Meeting. Ms. Albrecht moved that Ms. Ruston be nominated for the office of Secretary of the Board of Education for the period April 18, 2022 through the April 2023 Regular Meeting. There being no further nominations for Secretary, it was by acclamation that Ms. Ruston was declared the Secretary of the Board from April 18, 2022 through the April 2023 Regular Meeting.

IX. Board Member Reports

Mr. Das had no report as the **Booster Club** was scheduled to meet tomorrow.

Ms. Hahn shared that the **New Trier Educational Foundation (NTEF) Liaison Committee** met and reported out on the Gala. The event netted over \$80,000, which was beyond what was budgeted. The Gala will return in two years, possibly one, but that is yet to be determined. NTEF will also host the 2nd Annual Day of Service on Saturday, April 23rd and those interested in participating are still able to register. The day has expanded nationwide to where young alum are located, such as Los Angeles, to encourage stronger participation.

Mr. Dronen shared that the **Finance Committee** met on April 11th. A number of the items were discussed earlier in the meeting such as the budget update and the amendments for FY22 as well as preparing for the FY23 budget, including capital expenditures. Regarding the Transition Center and the application for the federal grant, the school is working with its U.S. Representatives and Senators to acquire federal money for the project.

On April 13th, Mr. Dronen attended the **TrueNorth Educational Cooperative 804** meeting. Several districts have committed to engaging in a service called Bridging. It supports successful and sustainable transitions from TrueNorth back to the student's home district. There will be a financial townhall on April 20th. Recently, TrueNorth hired three new teaching assistants and has seen an increase in applications for this position since the increase in the position's hourly rate. Ms. Alicia Hughes has joined TrueNorth as their new chief financial officer. Finally, TrueNorth is also working on their strategic plan.

Mr. McLane provided highlights from the **Facilities Steering Committee (FSC)**, noting that there were 50 excavation dump trucks leaving the construction site daily, but only one complaint over the past five to six weeks. He noted that thousands of gallons of rainwater have been pumped into the stormwater system as a large pool of water formed in the construction space. It did not impact the neighborhood, which it would not have happened anyways, as the rain would have drained to the same place. Lastly, Mr. McLane noted that the boom on the crane that will hoist the steel, will be 300 feet tall. It will be the tallest edifice in Winnetka for the few months that it is in place, taller than the church steeple at Winnetka Congregational Church.

Ms. Alcantara noted there was a **New Trier Parents' Association (NTPA)** meeting on April 7th. She submitted her report in writing as they had a significant amount of business to attend to that day.

Ms. Alcantara noted there was not a **Policy Committee** meeting or **Community Engagement Committee (CEC)** meeting since the last Board meeting. Mr. McLane added that the May meeting will have many agenda items for CEC.

The **Environmental Committee** met on April 5th and Ms. Hahn attended in Ms. Tomlinson's absence. There were four items that were discussed. The first is the desire to improve the awareness and participation of students and parents in the composting program. Ms. Tomlinson provided ideas of how this might be done. Second, the East Side Academic and Athletic Project is on track to achieve silver LEED status, if not gold. Third, the Environmental Club will sell flower and herb seeds from Sophie's Greenhouse on Friday. Ms. Tomlinson noted that this could be added to the Transition Center's retail space. Finally, there is interest in the Environmental Club presenting at a Board Meeting next year, possibly in April.

Ms. Tomlinson shared that the **New Trier Fine Arts Association (NTFAA)** met on April 13th. They presented their new slate of officers and Ms. Kim Ronan is the new president. Almost 30 applicants have applied to the NTFAA's Summer Scholar Program and about \$16,000 is budgeted for the program. Ms. Tomlinson noted that the highlight of these meetings is when the Summer Scholars present. As Mrs. Dubravec mentioned, Ms. Nicole Gordon is the visiting artist sponsored by the NTFAA who did an interactive exhibit in the Brierly Gallery. She is an alum and is

giving her second day of gallery talks tomorrow. Finally, there were some students who participated in the Northern Illinois Art Show, which is one of the state's biggest and most preeminent shows. Students took home the gold for Senior Portfolio and Ceramics and a bronze in Ceramics with seven students offered multiple scholarships to colleges as well.

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

Dr. Sally highlighted the following:

- He encouraged everyone to review the Performing Arts calendar over the next several weeks as it is a wonderful time of the year for students' final performances.
- The Recognition Dinner will take place on May 13th at 5:30 p.m. at the Renaissance Chicago North Shore Hotel.
- The next Board meeting is May 16th. Dr. Sally noted that Board members should attend the May committee meetings they are a liaison to and any changes to those assignments will take place at the May Board meeting.

Mr. Dronen inquired if there were any requests for staff research or future agenda items. Dr. Sally commented that a note had been made about Ms. Tomlinson's comment about having an Environmental Club presentation next year.

Mr. Dronen thanked Ms. Albrecht for her service as a Board officer. He echoed Dr. Sally's comments, noting Ms. Albrecht is a great leader, has a sense of passion for the office, grace, dignity, and a good sense of humor. Ms. Albrecht thanked Mr. Dronen, sharing he was an excellent vice president.

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 8:38 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lindsey Ruston, Secretary

Keith Dronen, President