

**NEW TRIER TOWNSHIP HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT 203
REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION
December 13, 2021
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, December 13, 2021, 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, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum & Instruction
Mr. Paul Waechtler, Principal – Northfield Campus
Mr. Scott Williams, Assistant Principal for Student Services

Also Present

Dr. Renee Zoladz, Director of Human Resources; Ms. Niki Dizon, Director of Communications; Ms. Aileen Geary, Social Studies Department Faculty and New Trier High School Educational Association President; Mr. Scott Williams, Assistant Principal for Student Services; Ms. Leanne Atwell, Social Work Department Faculty; Mr. Jamie Atwell, Social Studies Department Faculty; Ms. Jill Cervantes, Post-High School Counseling Department Chair; Ms. Jenny Lim, English Department Faculty; Mr. Bob Cummings, Modern and Classical Languages Department Coordinator; Ms. Marissa Rubin, Modern and Classical Languages Department Chair; Mr. Matt Ravenscraft, Modern and Classical Languages Department Faculty; Ms. Anne Salisbury, Modern and Classical Languages Department Faculty; Ms. Judy Weiss, Modern and Classical Languages Department Faculty; Mr. Gary Schubert, Modern and Classical Languages Department Faculty; Ms. Rachel Rescorl, Speech/Language Pathologist; Mr. Charles Wood, Lead Support Specialist; Mr. Mike Valadez, Network Engineer; Mr. Andrew Schmitt, Network Engineer; Mr. Anthony Catalano, Hardware, Software Engineer; 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 December 13, 2021 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. Ms. Hahn moved that the Board adjourns to closed session for the purpose of the placement of individual students in special education programs and other matters relating to individual students. Mr. Das 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 December 13, 2021 of the Board of Education to order at 6:30 p.m. in room C234 at the Northfield campus. Roll call was taken, and all members were present. In between closed and open sessions, the Board participated in the Board Recognition Program in the Cornog Auditorium.

IV. Minutes

Ms. Albrecht asked for any comments or adjustments on the minutes of the Regular Meeting of November 15, 2021 (open and closed session). There were no requests for changes to the minutes. Mr. Dronen moved, and Ms. Hahn seconded the motion, that the Board of Education approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting of November 15, 2021 (open and closed session). 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.

IV. 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 to Mr. Peter Tragos, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction. There were two requests for public comment. Ms. Albrecht reminded those speaking to keep their comments to three minutes or less per Board Policy 2:230.

1. Ms. Betsy Hart, member of New Trier Neighbors, shared information on a FAIR (Foundation Against Intolerance and Racism) webinar.
2. Ms. Adrienne Sassaman shared comments on an email sent pertaining to Mr. George Floyd.

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:

- The canned food drive has concluded with 16,000 pounds of food collected which translates to 12,000 meals. This is all-time high which was brought in by the campus' clubs, sports team, and adviser rooms.
- The staff holiday luncheon took place where attendees enjoyed music from the freshmen choral groups.
- The Frosh-Soph musical "Working" took place on December 7th, 8th, and 9th.
- The Identity Project took place last week which highlighted students understanding their own identity and how their values go along with that as well as working on empathy. Mr. Waechtler shared information about a gallery walk that is part of the program.
- Work continues on the adviser gender structure in preparation for next year. A video will be created for Academic Life Night to assist families with their decision. Collaboration will continue with the junior high principals as they will receive questions. The 15-minute conferences in February where incoming students and families are selecting courses for next year will be another opportunity to discuss the adviser gender structure. During the spring and summer, professional development and collaboration opportunities will be determined for current and new advisers. Input is being gathered from advisers to see what they are excited about as well as what questions or concerns they have with this shift. Mr. Waechtler went on to speak further about the adviser program.

Mr. Scott Williams, Assistant Principal for Student Services, shared the following student events and program updates from Winnetka Campus on behalf of Mrs. Denise Dubravec, principal, who could not attend the meeting:

- The classes of 2023-2025 will receive communication about the adviser gender structure change beginning with the class of 2026. The current structure will remain in place for the classes of 2023-2025. The basis for this is the foundational component of the adviser program with the four-year experience in building community. The school recognizes that for some students, the current structure is not optimal. For the majority of students, the current model has served them well. Work will continue with individual students to meet their individual needs. Students will also have a chance to connect with affinity groups during adviser room. The school will continue to explore ways to have integrated experiences between adviser rooms.
- On December 4th, one of the *December to Remember* events took place honoring the Gates Gym. Ms. Ashley Rasch, secretary to the Winnetka Campus Principal and sponsor of the Student Ambassadors group, coordinated tours of the space.
- The One Stop Trev Shop did Trev on the Wall as a way to encourage people to visit the store.
- Last Thursday, a staff lunch was held.
- The concert choir performed last Wednesday on the second-floor landing for all to enjoy.
- Ms. Gardiner O'Kain, Art Department Faculty, displayed art from time she spent on sabbatical.
- The food drive also took place at the campus.

- The 104th Winter Music Festival took place on Sunday in the Gates Gym.
- Mr. Williams thanked those staff members who have been involved in the planning of the national monthly observances. The next monthly observance is Black History Month in February.
- Student Council worked with staff to put together a holiday story, *'Twas the Night Before Break, 2021 Edition* which was recorded by various administrators, faculty and staff.

Dr. Joanne Panopoulos, Assistant Superintendent for Special Education and Student Services shared information on a new bill that was signed into law at the end of July and goes into effect in January. It allows students to take up to five mental health days per school year. It is similar to the process that the school has already for excused absences with students. This law will benefit other schools who may not have as many mental health support and counseling services that New Trier does. If a parent chooses to excuse their child for a mental health day and should a second or third day be used, schools can reach out to students and provide additional supports for them. New Trier naturally has a nice support system in place for students, but the District is working on internal measures to ensure it can support students if parents indicate their child is taking a mental health day.

Mr. Johnson gave the FOIA report, noting that there were four requests since the last Board meeting, all have been closed. They include requests regarding collective bargaining agreements, cell tower leases and two regarding roof replacement.

B. Annual Plan Update: Critical Thinking and Civil Discourse – Modern and Classical Languages Presentation

Mr. Tragos began the presentation on the Annual Plan Update on Critical Thinking and Civil Discourse – Modern and Classical Languages (MCL). He noted that its part of the Teaching and Learning series that has been done over the course of the 2021-2022 school year. Mr. Tragos shared the *Critical Thinking & Civil Discourse* statement along with background details that was adopted by the Board in October 2020. Mr. Tragos then shared why the District was making these presentations as well as details about curriculum development and objectives. Mr. Tragos shared that the presentation would focus on the purpose of language learning, the skills, and dispositions of language learning, learning targets for novice, intermediate, and advanced learners as well as developing global citizens.

Ms. Rubin, Modern and Classical Languages Department Chair, introduced those faculty presenting: Mr. Bob Cummings, Modern and Classical Languages Department Coordinator and Latin teacher; Ms. Anne Salisbury, French teacher; Mr. Matt Ravenscraft, Spanish teacher; Ms. Judy Weiss, French teacher and Mr. Gary Schubert, Spanish teacher. For decades, the MCL department has offered seven languages: Chinese, French, German, Hebrew, Japanese, Latin and Spanish. The department has undergone a tremendous amount of change in vision, unit, and lesson design, as well as focus and assessment in the last decade. Ms. Rubin shared traditional methods that were previously used and their limitations. Now the goal in an MCL classroom is to use real life language to communicate real life information with real people. While there is still an emphasis on the development of conventional competence and structures, the focus has turned to the acquisition and eventual production of real language in context, meaningful exchange, negotiation of information and the development of a cultural world view.

Ms. Salisbury shared how the MCL department develops global citizens and cultural competency. Mr. Ravenscraft then shared a graphic of a student's journey towards ever-increasing competency. The graphic also displayed the communication and collaboration within the department in terms of articulating what is best practice. The department takes its cue from the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Language (ACTFL), which is an organization that has driven research into best practice and defining what a language classroom should look like. Mr. Ravenscraft shared comments around the novice and intermediate stages of proficiency, noting that most students spend the majority of their time at New Trier in the intermediate phase. The journey as a department over the past several years has not only led to greater collaboration within a language but across them. Mr. Ravenscraft went on to share about the State Seal of Biliteracy which is a recognition given by a district or school to graduating high school students who have demonstrated a high level of proficiency in English as well as in reading, writing, listening, and speaking in another language. New Trier has offered the seal for the past five years. Illinois was one of the first states in the country to offer the seal with New Trier being one of the first schools to do so in the state. He detailed how students are able to earn the seal. State universities are recognizing this achievement and providing college credit in the language of study. This opportunity is not only offered in the seven languages available at New Trier, but it is offered for students who may speak a different language at home. Nearly 150 students from the class of 2021 were able to earn the seal.

Mr. Ravenscraft provided another graphic of the dynamics one would see if they visited an MCL classroom. Students would be engaged in the three modes of communication: interpretive, interpersonal, and presentational. They would also be engaged in what the department calls the five C's: communication, cultures, connections, comparisons, and communities.

Next, Mr. Cummings shared what this looks like as a student begins their language journey. He shared benchmarks that the novice level programs strive for with a focus on acquisition and cultural competency. He went on to share that culture is at the core of curricular and instructional decisions. At the novice level, this begins with the interpretive mode of communication. Mr. Cummings then went on to share about grammar as vocabulary, literacy, cultural products, and practices at the novice level and gave examples of each.

Ms. Weiss spoke about intermediate learners, teachers continue to build on the foundation that has been developed, while broadening the range of topics that students explore. At this level, the complexity of what students read and listen to is increased. Units with practical and cultural elements that are common in an intermediate class include food, environmental problems and city living, which Ms. Weiss shared various ways these topics are explored in an MCL classroom.

Mr. Schubert shared that in more advanced classes, students continue to develop their language skills by broadening their vocabulary, improving their ability to describe items with increased detail while continuing to refine previous learned elements of language structure. He went on to note that often these advanced classes often parallel a humanities class where students learn about the challenges of societal issues that affect the people of that language of study. Mr. Schubert provided examples of what students may experience in a fifth- or sixth-year class.

Ms. Rubin shared that a question that is often asked in MCL by parents is why should their child take a language, which she went on to share multiple reasons and then gave some with concluding remarks.

Ms. Albrecht asked for any questions or comments from the Board. Mr. Dronen began that it was a great presentation and went on to inquire what impact, if any, does the block schedule have on the language program. Mr. Cummings noted that while there have been some growing pains, the 85-minute block allows students to engage deeply. He noted that in an 85-minute block, teachers are able to cover two of the three modes of communications that were shared during the presentation. It also allows time for teachers to offer feedback and coaching to students.

Mr. Dronen inquired of Mr. Tragos when the last a language was added to the department and if there was any consideration about adding or subtracting any languages. Both Dr. Sally and Mr. Tragos responded it has been a long time since a language was added or removed. Mr. Tragos did note that there have been requests to add other languages even including American Sign Languages. While they are topics of conversation, there are no plans to add a language at this time. Dr. Sally replied that the seven languages provided are robust programs and serving student needs. Mr. Dronen then shared comments about Ancient Greek. Mr. Cummings responded to Mr. Dronen noting how Ancient Greek appears in activities in Latin classes as well as Latin club.

Ms. Hahn thanked the group for their presentation and noted her support for the balance between language acquisition and cultural competency. She shared that one can overcome the obstacle of not knowing the same vocabulary, but to be able to make a connection and hear someone else's story and help them with their story requires true understanding of who they are and where they come from and how they see the world. She applauds this work that the department does with students. Ms. Hahn also noted how she was struck by the interdisciplinary approach, particularly in the advanced classes. Finally, Ms. Hahn shared that when she observed a language class recently, she was able to pick up on the various communication modes. She went on to share additional comments as well.

Mr. McLane noted his appreciation for contextualizing the languages such as understanding the cultures, humanities, and broadening it beyond the language. Then Mr. McLane and Ms. Rubin discussed authenticity and that it refers to material that is used for a speaker of a particular language, it is not made for learners of the language, but yet still makes the material approachable and accessible for all students.

Ms. Albrecht confirmed that the policy is still in place that once a student starts a language at New Trier, they get to see it through all four years, which was affirmed. She noted that a more natural time to change a language is when a student goes from middle to high school, however, she inquired how often the department sees changes in high school. She also inquired how it impacts class size and interactive learning. Ms. Rubin responded that a student

making a change is infrequent once they have started at New Trier. She noted that the changes are often driven by university requirements. Ms. Albrecht inquired about class size and interaction among students with a small class size and how it impacts interactive learning. Mr. Cummings shared comments as he has had languages classes with a smaller population. He provided an example of the Latin 5 Capstone class and how a change in programming led to keeping classes at a more appropriate size. Mr. Tragos added that thanks to the leadership of the MCL department, in order to maintain seven languages and continuation of student experiences, they have been creative with the capstone classes and the sequence of them. Mr. Tragos continued on with additional thoughts. Ms. Albrecht commented that from year-to-year, the department is reforming lesson plans to accommodate class size and interest.

C. 2022-2023 Block Schedule Update

Mr. Tragos presented an update on the 2022-2023 Block Schedule. Informal and formal feedback has been continuously collected from all constituents. Currently, the District is in the middle of the formal survey in partnership with K12 Insight, a leading communications and research firm with great experience in educational research and surveying. The survey closes on December 21st, but as of this morning, 36% of students, 46% of staff and 15% of parents have participated. Mr. Tragos shared some emerging themes which included time to meet and get help from teachers as a challenge, but on the positive side, students felt that they could schedule time when needed. Managing make-up work and workflow along with student life is a challenge. Staff collaboration is another emerging theme as well as unscheduled time as a way to help students, staff and families manage school life. Learning within the block has been a positive response. The length of the block and passing period has emerged so those responses are being worked through. Finally, there are many suggestions for improvement that still need to be waded through. The data will be analyzed in collaboration with K12. Information will be brought back to the Board for a recommendation at the January Board meeting. Mr. Tragos then invited comments and questions from the Board.

Ms. Hahn inquired if the deadline to complete the survey would be extended given how busy this time of year is. Mr. Tragos shared that it will not be extended, but the minimum target has been hit and is the standard in the industry according to K12 Insight. Reminders will continue to be sent as well. Dr. Sally inquired how many responses 15% represents, to which Mr. Tragos replied 960. Ms. Albrecht confirmed that in January, meetings will be held with staff and parents to gather more feedback, which Mr. Tragos confirmed. Ms. Alcantara inquired if feedback is received from both parents. Mr. Tragos responded that each parent/guardian received an email with an individual link to the survey. If they have multiple children at New Trier, they could choose to take the survey once or request additional links to respond in regard to their other children. While it is 15% of parents, the email is to multiple people in a household, so Dr. Sally noted that there could be a higher percentage of households represented.

Ms. Albrecht inquired if Mr. Tragos is hearing anything different in the survey versus the focus groups. Mr. Tragos replied not so far, though there are some unique features from what students are saying. They note that the 85-minute periods can seem long and is made better when students talk about their experiences with multiple activities. Mr. Tragos notes that some of this is just an adjustment to the length of the period. Students do report in focus groups that only preparing for two to three classes per day due to the alternating days schedule is a huge benefit to them. Ms. Albrecht noted that by January, focus groups and the survey will be complete. Mr. Tragos replied that the analysis will also be complete, and the District will have heard many suggestions and ideas for modifications and improvement. He noted that not all will or need to be implemented.

Ms. Alcantara inquired to what extent specific feedback has been received from parents, students, and teachers in the area of performing arts and the difficulty of fitting classes into a student's schedule. Mr. Tragos replied that he has heard some feedback on this as has Mrs. Dubravec. There will be representatives at the parent focus group scheduled for after the new year. The feedback is similar to previous feedback of the challenge of scheduling everything a student wants to do. The school is addressing this and hopes to have some solutions in the modifications of the block schedule to help this. Mr. Tragos does not hear it at a greater frequency than he did with the 9-period day.

Ms. Alcantara wanted to confirm that the Board will hear about some examples that relate to the block schedule that will be covered in the next presentation on the 21-22 school year, which Mr. Tragos confirmed.

Ms. Hahn requested that that Board hear about any discrepancies from the survey between what parents and students are experiencing. Mr. Tragos replied that he has taken a brief look for that and there are some interesting ones that he also wants to know more about. That information will be shared in January.

D. 2021-2022 School Year Update

Dr. Sally presented an update on the 2021-2022 school year. He began by sharing that the District will be taking snow days if needed by using its emergency days first. The District, however, will not modify the blue/green calendar day, it would remain as is.

Dr. Sally then provided a Covid update. In the state and local area, cases are increasing, the same is true for cases at New Trier. The District is looking closely for connections between cases to ensure it is doing its best at keeping the buildings safe. There does seem to be some cases that appear to be linked within one close contact sport. The District is working with Cook County Department of Health (CCDPH) on the appropriate response. The District's goal has been to sustain in-person learning and keep activities running all year while keeping students and staff safe. This was the focus of the Covid Reentry and Community Wellness Team (CRCWT) meeting regarding how the District could increase its efforts and some of its mitigations during this surge. One theme that emerged was the proper wearing of masks, especially having students comply when asked by their teachers. There will be a booster clinic in January. The District is encouraging everyone to get their booster shot as well. All students will be required to complete Shield testing the week of January 3rd. Families do have the option to opt out. Testing will take place over the course of the week through Kinetic Wellness classes. By spreading testing out, it helps the community catch cases that may not have been caught earlier. The District will require winter sport athletes, intramurals, dance team, special Olympics, and cheer team to test weekly. There is no opt out option for these activities.

Next, Dr. Sally shared information about the rotating support block which has emerged from student and staff feedback around trying to support students during this school year. That support looks like time, with students reporting that they need it to manage their school lives. Teachers reported finding it difficult to meet with students. The District values the connection made between students and teachers outside of class, which Dr. Sally spoke further about. Students generally have three half-blocks per week unscheduled based on their science block. Students use their lunch to accomplish various tasks such as making up a test or seeing a teacher. Providing this extra time will allow students to have time for lunch, which the school also values, while having the flexibility to take care of what they need to. Dr. Sally shared that with the rotating support block, approximately two additional free half-blocks can be added each week for students, increasing from three to five per week. On each Blue Day/Green Day pair, one department will provide students with personalized learning time. Teachers will teach during the first half of class, so the contact day remains, while the second half of class can be used to get help with the class they are in, see another teacher who is free, make up a test or schedule an appointment with other support services. Dr. Sally then provided a sample month of the rotating support block schedule, noting that each department will provide a half block to students about every three to four weeks. Benefits include most classes remaining a complete block, minimizing disruption to teachers' plans, spreading students out over all eight periods, avoiding overcrowding in teacher offices and the test makeup center, students having a better chance at an uninterrupted lunch and more of them will be able to see their teachers for individual help and other supports. The drawback is that there is some loss of instructional time, but no reduction in contact days. At the Northfield Campus, students are not voicing the same concerns, therefore, the campus leadership is still discussing how this might look. Dr. Sally then invited questions and comments from the Board.

Ms. Tomlinson walked through the monthly example Dr. Sally provided for when students will have available time, noting it would change weekly and then a student would have to marry that with when a particular teacher is free. She inquired if anything could be done from a technology standpoint to help with this. Dr. Sally shared comments, noting that an app is in development to help students manage this, that there will be posters in classroom as well as templates. He shared that case managers will help special education students on how to use their time, with advisers also being helpful for students. Ms. Tomlinson then inquired if a student would be able to make an appointment to see their teacher, which Dr. Sally replied they would in the same way they are able to now. She then inquired if there was a way to automate this which Dr. Sally said may be possible. Ms. Tomlinson shared her concern that it is a lot of moving parts with each week being different. Discussion continued between the two. Mr. McLane added his observation of what his senior daughter has experienced, noting this is a great solution.

Ms. Alcantara noted that Shield testing will be required for all athletics and extracurriculars and inquired why that does not include performing arts. Dr. Sally said there are three categories of extracurricular programs, the first are clubs who meet in a classroom setting, second are theatrical productions and the third are athletics that have high close contact. He noted that the school has not seen the same need in the theatrical productions as athletics. Mr. Johnson shared comments, noting that this is where the school is starting and may add other extracurriculars if needed. Ms. Alcantara then inquired about intermurals, which Dr. Sally replied that Night League and Spike League have been postponed for the week and will resume when testing is implemented the week of January 3rd.

Regarding the block schedule, Ms. Alcantara noted that students will have 2 40-minute blocks each week and inquired how the half block was determined, for instance, if it is the time needed to make up a quiz. Dr. Sally responded that often it is the time needed. Mr. Tragos noted that the 40 minutes is conventional for the school and is enough time to see a teacher or make up a quiz. Ms. Alcantara then inquired where students will go who do not use these blocks. Dr. Sally shared that they could stay in the classroom, while some may go to the library or concourse. She inquired if the cafeteria seating will be open, which Dr. Sally confirmed. He noted that it will be about 350 students per period that will be free, so crowding will be watched.

Ms. Alcantara inquired when the app would be ready, to which Dr. Sally replied by the start of second semester, which is when the rotating support block will begin. She then inquired if the app would be available to parents, which Dr. Sally confirmed.

Ms. Hahn clarified that this is not only meeting with teachers but meeting with social workers or any outside class experience, which Dr. Sally confirmed. She then inquired if students are allowed to go home if their block falls at the end of the day, which Dr. Sally also confirmed.

Ms. Hahn inquired if the booster clinic would be a student one. Mr. Johnson shared comments, noting that the clinic will be for students and staff, while also urging everyone to get their booster independently. He noted that the school has received booster cards from a high number of staff.

Ms. Hahn shared on her observations from the CRCWT meeting last Wednesday, and although it is a small number of staff and students, she noted some of their exhaustion came through along with their frustration about the lack of compliance. Ms. Hahn took a moment to acknowledge the tremendous efforts of the entire New Trier staff, particularly teachers and support staff who are working side by side with students daily and all that has been accomplished in the first half of this school year. She went on to note they were tasked with addressing the academic and emotional needs of students along with keeping them physically safe all while adapting to a block schedule and navigating their personal anxiety and uncertainty with this virus. Ms. Hahn shared that they did this with the customary professionalism, grace, compassion, and good humor that has characterized New Trier teachers which is what makes this an institution that everyone values. Ms. Hahn wanted to take a moment as a Board member and parent to express her gratitude for their work and noted that students are benefitting from it.

Ms. Albrecht noted the additional time to meet with teachers regarding individual needs and inquired if the school has seen general learning losses such as writing skills and if they are being addressed in the classroom. Mr. Tragos spoke to this, noting that the school is not seeing it in a measurable way such as students are one year behind. Writing has been the priority in English classes and went on to share additional comments regarding this. He noted that the District will know more at the semester and again at the end of the school year, some of the feedback is anecdotal while some is quantifiable in terms of grades and those have been positive when looking at first quarter grades. Dr. Sally added that teachers in each department understand what the priorities for student learning are right now and they are planning and creating lessons around those priorities.

Ms. Albrecht noted that the school report card did not happen last year but will this year and inquired if there will be a presentation on it at a future meeting. Mr. Tragos noted that it will take place at the January meeting. Mr. Tragos shared a summary of the report, noting that the last data the school has on students meeting the proficiency benchmarks in English reading and writing (ELA) scores was 82% in 2019 and 80% this year. In mathematics, students meeting the proficiency benchmarks were 81% in 2019 and 77% this year. The District is seeing a slight dip and in talking with his counterparts at other schools, they are all seeing dips, approximately like New Trier. In analyzing statewide data, Mr. Tragos notes that the District has the highest proficiency rating in ELA and mathematics among open enrollment public high schools. The District does trail five selective enrollment schools in Chicago Public Schools. Discussion continued between Mr. Tragos and Ms. Albrecht on this topic.

Ms. Albrecht referred to the extra time for help, inquiring how the school has connected with its peer schools that have had the block schedule for several years as well as those peer schools who recently went to the block schedule like New Trier. Dr. Sally noted there has been some discussion. The school culture around seeking help and developing the one-on-one relationship with teachers looks different at New Trier than at other schools. He went on to share additional comments around this.

E. 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) as well as other pending facilities work. For the ESSA project, there has been a demolition contractor change as the first company that had won the bid was not able to perform the work. Johler Demolition was the second bidder who will now be the demolition contractor. Their fees are still below the District's demolition budget as well as the overall budget for Bid Package 2. They have been working with the District and are ready to get started on January 10th when demolition begins.

Mr. Johnson noted that at this Board meeting, the plan was to open bids for Bid Package 3. The date has been extended to December 16th and gives the District time to have additional bidders in several trades including electric and plumbing. The District has 24 different packages going out and wants strong coverage as it gives the District the most competitive price. Bids will be presented to the Board for approval in January. Finally, the start of construction begins December 18th with abatement over break and demolition scheduled for January 10th.

Mr. Johnson shared post Winter Break logistics, noting that with the start of construction, there will be changes on campus. The full Kinetic Wellness (KW) and Athletics programs will be maintained during construction. The District's most important goal is to ensure student safety and minimize disruptions. There will be changes to student drop-off areas and entrances, so students and families are routed away from the construction. The District asks for flexibility as students and parents adjust to these changes. The District also thanks its students, parents, and community members as it works to improve the campus. Mr. Johnson went on to share specific details about the drop-off areas and entrances, noting that the Essex Road public entrance, also known as the tennis court entrance, will be closed after break. Essentially that entrance will be move to the west side of campus off of Woodland Avenue, however, there will not be student drop-off or pick-up on Woodland. This will be communicated to parents and this door will not be a student entrance after the project is finished. Mr. Johnson also provided a map detailing these changes.

Other projects include the North building roof bid that is presented for the Board's approval. The bid came in approximately \$350,000 under budget. Also presented for approval is the contract for project architectural services with Cashman Stahler group. When the 15-Year Plan Year 3 projects for the summer were approved, one of those six approved projects was an outdoor walkway project at the Northfield campus. The plan was to replace half of them, but upon further study the decision was made to postpone that work until another year as summer school will be taking place at Northfield and the work is very loud and would be disruptive to students and teachers. Mr. Johnson then invited questions and comments from the Board.

Ms. Alcantara asked to go back to the slide with the traffic flow pattern. She inquired how one would get to Trevian Way from the north or the south, which Mr. Johnson explained.

Mr. McLane inquired if there were any impediments to the demolition date, to which Mr. Johnson said no and that the District was on track. The new demolition contractor is up-to-date, and the District will have all required permit by the end of the week.

Ms. Hahn confirmed that the live feed of the demolition will be on New Trier's website, which Mr. Johnson validated.

F. Technology Infrastructure Presentation

Mr. Johnson began the presentation on technology infrastructure, noting that Mr. Michael Marassa, Chief Technology Officer, and Mr. Rich Williams, Network and Operations Manager, were regrettably unavailable to attend. They along with their team prepared the presentation. Mr. Johnson noted that technology is a critical piece of teaching and learning for students as well as for supporting faculty, support staff and administration in their daily work. Behind-the-scenes is the network infrastructure and staff that support all the technology services at New Trier. The presentation team included Mr. Mike Valadez, Network Engineer; Mr. Andrew Schmitt, Network Engineer; Mr. Charles Wood, Lead Support Specialist; and Mr. Anthony Catalano, Hardware and Software Engineer.

Mr. Valadez spoke about the department's vision of network security, in particular the systems and practices that have been implemented to help secure those systems, data, and users from common exploits such as data extraction, fraud, among others. Mr. Valadez went on to share strategies that are being used to protect data, systems, and users.

Next, Mr. Schmitt spoke about network reliability. The department has focused on improving the uptime of critical

data systems such as storage and backups, disaster recovery and moving systems such as PowerSchool and email off premise. Mr. Schmitt shared information about another component of network reliability which is redundant designs. Reliable networks also mean reliable support staff and the team attends various professional development opportunities. Additionally, there is remote monitoring of critical infrastructure as well as security monitoring of District-owned laptops.

Mr. Wood then shared about network performance, noting that there are approximately 12,000-14,000 active devices on New Trier's network. As having multiple devices per person continues to grow, updated equipment and technology will be needed to support this growth.

Mr. Schmitt spoke to the hardware items needed for specific roles so that the District can have the highest level of security, reliability, and performance.

Mr. Catalano then shared an overview of the current infrastructure. He noted that one goal is to standardize data closets which is easier to do at the Northfield Campus, than at Winnetka.

Mr. Valadez noted that the District will be upgrading its internal technology infrastructure by adding new switches and connectivity between spaces at the Winnetka Campus. The addition of these switches and cabling will mean data will be able to travel much faster between these locations. The wireless access points that will put in place will be support a higher level of bandwidth to users.

Mr. Johnson shared that the financial proposal for the network switches and data cabling are both on the consent agenda for approval. This project is scheduled for the summer of 2022. Mr. Johnson shared about a federal technology funding program the District will utilize known as E-Rate. The program allows schools and libraries to receive grant dollars for the cost of equipment, installation, and maintenance services. In January, Mr. Johnson and Mr. Marassa will bring forward a recommendation for the second phase of the project for contracts for these two technologies. Firewalls will be installed in the fall of 2022 while the wireless access points will be installed in December 2022. Funding for these projects will be part of the capital expenditure process for the next fiscal year.

Mr. Johnson then thanked Mr. Marassa, Mr. Williams and the team who presented for their work on these projects. He then invited questions and comments from the Board.

Mr. Das commented how he is excited by the idea of broader, physical, and technological infrastructure. He inquired how future proof the upgrade is as it was mentioned during the presentation certain technology infrastructure dated back to 2008. Mr. Valadez responded that the department is going to position itself for a minimum of half a decade. There are a number of factors that go into this such as the support life of the products purchased. The firewall and switches have a life of around five to seven years, while the cabling and wireless access points have a longer shelf life. Mr. Johnson summarized this information as well. Mr. Das followed-up by inquiring if the package the team has assembled represents their highest aspirations or if compromises were made. Mr. Valadez shared comments around this, noting that the team is on the top end of some of the models they are requesting and right where they should be with others. Mr. Johnson shared that the District wants to invest taxpayers' money wisely as it leads to a more reliable experience for students and staff. Mr. Schmitt shared his experience at his previous district where time was spent patching and repairing, while this proposed plan is looking toward the future.

Ms. Hahn noted her appreciation for the thoughtfulness, purpose and attention that has been given to this instead of patching or reacting to problems. She then asked the team to explain what work would be done at Northfield and the differences between it on each campus. Mr. Valadez noted that this is a holistic answer to the networking environment and an equivalent amount of work will be done at the Northfield campus. He noted that this work is looking at the District as an entity instead of simply going into new construction spaces like what has been done recently at the Winnetka campus. Mr. Valadez went on to share additional comments.

Ms. Alcantara noted the speed and connectivity issues at the Winnetka Campus and that they will be improved, which was confirmed. She then inquired that once the work is done at Winnetka, if the entire building will have the level of wiring and switches that is wanted thus eliminating the single closets in classrooms, which Mr. Valadez confirmed. She then confirmed that the East Side project will have this new technology built in, which is correct. Mr. Johnson shared additional details.

Ms. Albrecht and Mr. Johnson conversed briefly about Wi-Fi and internet connectivity pertaining to the Winnetka

campus. Ms. Albrecht then noted that for the network switching, one of the bonuses is that the cost, of around one million dollars, will be spread out over the next five years at a zero percent interest rate. Mr. Johnson noted the District has a competitive price from Cisco, payment would be spread out over five years and takes the place of other leases making this very manageable in the operating budget. The cabling will be paid for over two fiscal years. These two items are on the consent agenda as well for approval.

Dr. Sally added his thanks to the group who presented as well as to other technology staff for their efforts behind-the-scenes to make sure the technology works. He thanked them for their thorough work and a vision that will serve New Trier students well. Mr. Johnson added that this work has been more important than ever over the past year when school was virtual.

VII. Administrative Items

A. Treasurer's Report for November 2021

Mr. Johnson presented the Treasurer's Report for November 2021. The District has started to see property tax disbursements which are normalized and caught up to last year. State and Federal payments are consistent with prior years. The first Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) payment was received in December and will be reported on next month's report. Mr. Dave Conway, Director of Physical Plant Services (PPS) and the PPS staff worked hard not only to adapt the buildings, but to submit for reimbursement and now the District is starting to see the federal funds. The total fund balance for all accounts is \$163,246,756.

B. Financial Reports for November 2021

Mr. Johnson presented the Financial Reports for November 2021. Operating revenue was \$54,935,524 for the first five months of the fiscal year, or 7.21% higher compared to last year, so revenue is catching up. Other local sources will have a year-long positive variance now that normal operating revenue such as transportation and parking fees have resumed. The adopted budget for operating revenue is 5.34% higher than last year.

Expenditures were \$44,682,028 through November, or 4.41% higher than last year, including interfund transfers. The primary difference is the normal timing of the extracurricular program as last year many fall sport and activities had to be delayed which also deferred compensation for those staff members. The comparisons between the two years will be slightly different for the year. The fund book balance for all accounts was \$165,278,861 as of the end of November. Mr. Johnson then invited questions and comments from the Board.

Ms. Albrecht noted the chart on the historical cash balances and how the large drop will be seen for this year from July through October until property taxes caught up. Mr. Johnson confirmed that a couple of years will be noted for years to come as outliers such as those taxpayers who paid early due to the tax law change and this year with the late tax bill. Ms. Albrecht asked if footnotes could be added to the report, Mr. Johnson replied that he would ask Mr. Myron Spiwak, Director of Business Services to add them.

***C. Public Hearing: 2021 Tax Levy**

Ms. Albrecht called to order the public hearing on the 2021 tax levy at 9:05 p.m. and Mr. Johnson presented on it. The preliminary levy was reviewed at the November 15th Board meeting. The levy was placed on display and the District completed the requisite notices. Once approved, the levy will then be sent to the county clerk. The levy is based on the 2021 extension times the 2020 CPI of 1.4% plus the estimated value of tax revenue from new property. The 2021 levy funds the second half of the 2021-22 school year and the first half of the 2022-23 school year. Mr. Johnson then shared details about tax caps and the Consumer Price Index (CPI). He went on to share information relating to new property. The proposed levy is higher than the actual levy to ensure that the new property can be appropriately taxed. The projected increase in the levy is 3.16% with the final amount determined by the county once new property is known next summer. The debt service levy will also be updated based on current outstanding debt. The average homeowners should see an increase of about 1.4% for the New Trier portion of their tax bill.

The levy supports the District's ability to continue to offer an excellent education to current and future students. It supports a deep and broad curriculum tailored to individual student interests and needs, a robust student services program, an extracurricular program that encourages high levels of student participation, and competitive salaries to attract and retain top faculty and staff.

The District is proud to have a strong history of balanced budgets. After the 2003 referendum, the District committed to five years of no referendum, a commitment that has extended to 18 years. Mr. Johnson noted that the District also has appropriate reserves and shared the benefits of them. The levy increase will help the District to fund expenses

that have increased. The levy will play a key part in allowing the District to present a balanced budget for next year as well as allow for the District to continue to provide excellent student programming and support while being strong stewards of taxpayer dollars. Mr. Johnson thanked the community and the Board for their continued support as well. He then invited questions and comments. Ms. Albrecht asked if there were any public comments, of which there were none.

Mr. Dronen moved, and Ms. Hahn seconded the motion, that the Board of Education move to adjourn the Public Hearing on the 2021 Tax Levy. 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.

***D. 2021 Tax Levy Approval**

Ms. Tomlinson moved, and Mr. Das seconded the motion, that the Board of Education adopts the resolution approving the 2021 Levy in the amount of \$113,900,095 to be distributed as follows:

Fund	Amount
Educational	\$97,042,881
Operations and Maintenance	\$11,390,010
Transportation	\$1,480,701
Municipal Retirement	\$1,662,941
Social Security	\$2,323,562
Total Extension:	\$113,900,095

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, November 1 – 30, 2021
- Personnel Report (Appointments, Changes of Status, Resignations, Stipends - Appointments and Stipends - Separation)
- Resolution abating the taxes heretofore levied for the year 2021 to pay debt service on the General Obligation Refunding School Bonds (Alternate Revenue Source), Series 2016B, and General Obligation School Bonds (Alternate Revenue Source), Series 2021A, of Township High School District Number 203, Cook County, Illinois.
- Approval and award contracts to Bennett and Brosseau for \$670,000 for the North Building roof replacement
- Cashman Stahler Group contract for architectural services for Winnetka Campus Roofs
- Cashman Stahler Group contract for architectural services for Backstops
- Contract for network hardware switch purchase with CDWG and associated lease with Key Government Finance
- Contract with Crow Communications for data cabling materials and professional services as presented and authorize the Associate Superintendent to execute the agreement
- The revision of the previous award of Bid Period #2 of the Winnetka Campus East Side Academic and Athletic Project by canceling the approval of American Demolition Company due to their bid withdrawal and subsequently approving Johler Demolition as the next low responsive bid and the corresponding adjustment to the Construction Contingency

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, November 1 – 30, 2021; Personnel Report (Appointments, Changes of Status, Resignations, Stipends - Appointments and Stipends - Separation); Resolution abating the taxes heretofore levied for the year 2021 to pay debt service on the General Obligation Refunding School Bonds (Alternate Revenue Source), Series 2016B, and

General Obligation School Bonds (Alternate Revenue Source), Series 2021A, of Township High School District Number 203, Cook County, Illinois; Approval and award contracts to Bennett and Brosseau for \$670,000 for the North Building roof replacement; Cashman Stahler Group contract for architectural services for Winnetka Campus Roofs; Cashman Stahler Group contract for architectural services for Backstops; Contract for network hardware switch purchase with CDWG and associated lease with Key Government Finance; Contract with Crow Communications for data cabling materials and professional services as presented and authorize the Associate Superintendent to execute the agreement; and the revision of the previous award of Bid Period #2 of the Winnetka Campus East Side Academic and Athletic Project by canceling the approval of American Demolition Company due to their bid withdrawal and subsequently approving Johler Demolition as the next low responsive bid and the corresponding adjustment to the Construction Contingency. Ms. Hahn 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.

IX. Board Member Reports

Mr. Das shared that the **Booster Club** met for the last time this year and the next meeting is in January. He noted that they are looking for others to join as there is turnover in the club. The sports guide, which comes out three times a year, is a nice keepsake celebrating the school's student athletes. The club is on track with their fundraising efforts and thank those who have supported their events and fundraisers.

Ms. Hahn shared that the **New Trier Educational Foundation (NTEF)** continues to collaborate with the District on the Innovation Hub as well as assisting with the fundraising logistics for the Duke Childs project. Planning is also underway for the Alumni Achievement Awards Gala which will take place on March 11th at the Renaissance Place. All are invited and encouraged to attend.

Mr. Dronen shared that the **Finance Committee** met on December 6th. The committee discussed the Winnetka Campus West Side refunding bonds which Mr. Johnson and Raymond James continue to monitor. The Winnetka Campus East Side project was covered earlier in the meeting. Also discussed was the 15-year capital planning and how the District is in strong financial shape. The committee discussed prioritizing academic and learning spaces for capital improvement. The five-year plan for 2022-2023 budget parameters were discussed.

Mr. McLane shared that the **Community Engagement Committee** met which is led by Ms. Niki Dizon, Director of Communications. He shared thoughts about the *December to Remember* tagline for the Gates memorialization. There was also a neighborhood zoom. There is a construction web cam which will show the work taking place on the East Side Academic and Athletics project. Work has been ongoing with alumni and community engagement as related to the strategic plan. There has been impressive involvement with alumni as well through the New Trier Educational Foundation. Finally, the committee did a compare and contrast of the District's Annual Report against other schools.

Mr. McLane noted that the information from the **Facilities Steering Committee** was already shared during Mr. Johnson's presentation.

Ms. Alcantara provided an update from the **New Trier Parents' Association (NTPA)** meeting on December 4th. Ms. Alcantara and Mrs. Dubravec provided updates to the group. The group discussed the block schedule and adviser system as well as the fundraising objectives of the Booster Club and Fine Arts Association. Covid numbers and mitigation efforts were also discussed. Each of the class presidents delivered reports which included a class of 2022 coffee that was held. Ms. Jill Cervantes, Post-High School Department Chair, presented to those parents in attendance. There are also events coming up for the parents of the classes of 2024 and 2025. EKG testing will take place in May for the class of 2024 who were not able to participate in it as freshmen.

Ms. Tomlinson reported that the **Environmental Committee** took place on November 16th. Mr. Tragos presented on how New Trier's curriculum incorporates environmental concepts across disciplines. The "G" gyms at Winnetka have received LED lighting and the pool lighting is scheduled next. Both campuses continue to work on communicating about composting and recycling, particularly during events such as athletics. The Environmental

Club promoted a fast fashion project to create awareness of the environmental impact of disposable fashion. They are working with the Trev store to encourage people to turn in spirit wear that can be resold at lower prices.

Ms. Tomlinson shared information from the **New Trier Fine Arts Association (NTFAA)** which met on December 8th. The group heard from Ms. Luciana McConnell who was a summer scholarship recipient. She is a visual artist who took a figurative portrait drawing class through the North Shore Art League. The NTFAA also founded a visiting artist who taught students about stage combat which will be useful for the winter and spring plays that involve sword play and fights. The band, debate and dance groups have all begun reaching out to the sender schools to promote their groups.

Ms. Albrecht shared about the *December to Remember* first community event which was a nice opportunity to thank the neighbors for their support on the construction project. Dr. Sally added that alumni and retired teachers also attended. He noted that the Winter Music Festival on Sunday was fantastic and another way to honor the Gates Gym. Finally, this Thursday, the Athletic Hall of Honor will take place along with girls and boys basketball games. Ms. Albrecht shared that Mrs. McGee, widow of Mr. Ralph McGee, former principal, attended the community event with her daughter and son-in-law. Mrs. Dubravec shared items with the family from Mr. McGee's time at New Trier.

Ms. Hahn shared that there was a good example of why the District needs updated Wi-Fi when the mic went out at the Winter Music Festival due to connectivity issues.

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

Dr. Sally highlighted the following:

- Already covered were the remaining events for the *December to Remember*.
- Dr. Sally wished students and families a restful Winter Break. Ms. Alcantara confirmed that it begins on Friday, December 17th which Dr. Sally affirmed.

There were no requests for Staff Research and Future Agenda Items.

XI. ADJOURNMENT

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

The meeting adjourned at 9:21 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lindsey Ruston, Secretary

Cathleen Albrecht, President