

**NEW TRIER TOWNSHIP HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT 203  
REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION  
March 18, 2024  
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, March 18, 2024, at 6:30 p.m.

**Members Present**

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

**Administrators Present**

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

**Also Present**

Dr. Michael Marassa, Chief Technology Officer; Dr. Renee Zoladz, Director of Human Resources; Ms. Niki Dizon, Director of Communications; Ms. Elizabeth Bennett, Music and Theatre Department Chair; Ms. Deb Kind, New Trier Learning Center Department Chair; Jeff Bailey, Technology Department; 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 – 4:30 p.m. – C234**

Mr. Dronen called the Regular Meeting of March 18, 2024, of the Board of Education to order at 4:30 p.m. in room C234 at the Northfield campus. Roll call was taken, and all members were present, except for Mr. Das, Ms. Pofcher, and Ms. Tomlinson. Mr. Dronen asked for a motion to move to Closed Session. Ms. Alcantara moved that the Board of Education adjourn to closed session for the purpose of the appointment, employment, compensation, discipline, performance, or dismissal of specific employees, specific individuals who serve as independent contractors, or specific volunteers of the District or legal counsel for the District, including hearing testimony on a complaint lodged against an employee, a specific individual who serves as an independent contractor, or a volunteer of the District or against legal counsel for the District to determine its validity; collective negotiating matters between the District and its employees or their representatives, or deliberations concerning salary schedules for one or more classes of employees; 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. Hahn seconded the motion. Ms. Tomlinson joined the meeting at 4:32 p.m. Upon a roll call vote being taken, the members voted as follows:

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

NAY: none

ABSENT: Mr. Das, Ms. Pofcher

The motion passed.

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

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

Mr. Dronen called the Regular Meeting of March 18, 2024, of the Board of Education to order at 6:44 p.m. in room C234 at the Northfield campus. Roll call was taken, and all members were present.

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

##### **\*A. Regular Meeting of February 20, 2024 (open and closed session)**

Mr. Dronen asked for any comments or adjustments on the minutes of the Regular Meeting of February 20, 2024 (open and closed session). There were no requests for changes to the minutes. Mr. Das moved, and Ms. Hahn seconded the motion that the Board of Education approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting of February 20, 2024 (open and closed session). Upon a roll call vote being taken, the members voted as follows:

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

NAY: none

The motion passed.

##### **B. Report from Campus Principals and FOIA Report**

Mr. Paul Waechtler, Principal for the Northfield Campus, shared the following student events and program updates from that campus:

- The solar panels installation is almost complete. The panels are being tested now and will be on the campus' power grid by the end of April. He thanked the Physical Plant Services (PPS) department for their work in collaboration with the contractors.
- Mr. Waechtler was invited by the Washburne PTA to give a presentation, noting it was a good opportunity to partner with the junior high, provide information about New Trier, and dispel myths.
- The monthly Adviser Room Olympics recently took place with the invented Iditarod where five students "walked" on planks down the football field. The competition required cooperation and teamwork.
- Girls Club wrote letters to veterans as part of their Honor Flight experience. Honor Flight provides veterans with a multi-day trip to Washington, DC to visit various memorials. On the way home, veterans receive letters to read that thank them for their service.
- Mr. Waechtler shared that Go Baby Go happened on both campuses and he was excited to see freshmen working hard to customize the cars for families.
- Students in the Educational and Life Skills (ELS) program were invited to Shred415 in Northfield for a workout. This was an opportunity for students to learn the importance of movement and exercise and how integral they are to a healthy lifestyle.
- The Frosh/Soph Play was *Junie B. Jones is Not a Crook*. This play was chosen specifically to interest a younger audience. They had two performances on Saturday as well as traveled to elementary schools in Glenview and Wilmette. The show was double cast with 25 total students with four students in crew and/or leadership positions. Ms. Anne James-Noonan, Music and Theatre Department Faculty, was the director and Mr. Anders Jacobson, was the technical director. It was a great way to give back to the community while getting younger Trevians interested in the performing arts.

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

- On March 8<sup>th</sup> the Gala for the Hall of Honor Inductees for 2024 took place. The evening was well attended to celebrate and honor the eight alumni inducted into the Alumni Hall of Honor. Special thanks to Ms. Niki Dizon, Director of Communications, Ms. Laura Cravens, Communications Specialist, and Ms. Liz Mayer, Executive Director of the New Trier Educational Foundation (NTEF) and her team for organizing the evening. Honorees also spent time in classes talking with students. She thanked teachers for opening up their classes for this.
- On Friday, the PESO Special Olympics basketball game took place against Lake Forest. Classes came to watch and cheer on the New Trier team.
- The staff versus students basketball game recently took place with staff winning. This game is organized by Student Council.
- Each adviser room donates \$20 to participate in the March Madness Charity Fundraiser. They select the winning women's and the men's teams and those adviser rooms who place first, second, and third receive breakfast and are able to choose which charity they would like the funds to go to.
- The Winter Carnival recently concluded and earned a record breaking \$25,738. This money will support the senior service project with Embarc. There were a variety of activities that students created, and the community is able to attend the event. She thanked the class of 2024 for their work on the carnival.
- Mrs. Dubravec shared about Go Baby Go done in partnership with Applied Arts teachers, the NTEF and Sunrise Medical. Go Baby Go empowers children with disabilities through independent mobility. She thanked Mr. Jason Boumstein, Applied Arts Department Chair, and the Illinois Spina Bifida Association.

- New Trier debate hosted about 125 people at the Winnetka campus for the varsity state policy debate tournament. Mr. Magnus Lee and Mr. Avi Shah defeated Glenbrook North to be crowned the 2024 state champions. Mr. Lee was named to the all-state team and for the second year in a row, Mr. Shah was named the captain of the all-state team. This designation is for the highest ranked individual named to the state team.
- The 20<sup>th</sup> annual Lit Festival was recently held which is organized by the English department. A variety of speakers attend and seniors self-select the activities they want to participate in.
- The 4<sup>th</sup> annual Grow the Game also recently took place which included teams from around Illinois as well as outside of the state. Ms. Teri Rodgers, Social Studies Department Faculty and Girls Head Basketball Coach, organizes the tournament which is all about supporting the female program. Female coaches and referees also participate.
- A DECA competition took place in Rosemont over the weekend with 19 students scoring in the top ten for the their respective competitions categories. Ten students qualified for the International Competition in Anaheim next month.
- Choir Opera recently performed *Footloose*.
- Boys basketball placed third in the state for the second year in a row. Mrs. Dubravec noted that eight buses full of students went down to the game.
- Science Olympiad's regular season culminated with the Oakton Regional competition on Saturday March 9<sup>th</sup>. New Trier competed with a varsity and two junior varsity teams, and won first place in the Varsity Category and first and second place in the JV category. Out of 23 events, New Trier won 18 1<sup>st</sup> place medals, four 2<sup>nd</sup> place medals, and one 3<sup>rd</sup> place medal in the Varsity category. They qualified to compete at the state competition at the University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign on April 20<sup>th</sup>.
- The Science department chair and coordinator are working with staff so students can see the solar eclipse on April 8<sup>th</sup>. Some science classes will also travel to Indianapolis to view the eclipse.
- Two juniors presented their research on cosmic rays at the American Association of Physics Teachers winter meeting in New Orleans this January, where they took second place among mostly college students for their poster presentation. Ms. Aitak Mosen Harzandi and Mr. Garrett Chong worked with Academic Assistance Center (AAC) tutor Mr. Nathan Unterman, who assisted the duo with their research, publication, and presentations.
- March is Disability Awareness Month and Mrs. Dubravec shared two different displays about it.

Mr. Tragos shared an update from Curriculum and Instruction about state testing. The state's current six-year contract with the College Board will expire at the end of June. The state went out to bid for its new accountability assessment contract, which was awarded to ACT. They underbid College Board by 15% and were awarded the contract for the next three years with a three-year contract renewal. Mr. Tragos noted that the contract has not been finalized. Switching to the ACT will have a major impact on schools and districts across the state. This does not just impact the 11<sup>th</sup> grade assessment; it can be a four-year sequence. New Trier intends to use the PSAT 8/9 for its incoming 9<sup>th</sup> grade placement test. There is also the PSAT 9 and PSAT 10; all these assessments are aligned and assist New Trier and other districts in tracking student growth. It also helps the District to meet proficiency targets. A change now would derail much progress that has been made over the past six years. Mr. Tragos went on to say that College Board has followed the appeal process. A group that Mr. Tragos is part of, the Chicago Area Directors of Curriculum and Assessment (CADCA), is activated and has a long track record of effective advocacy in Springfield through their local representatives. New Trier's local peer districts are also concerned and are making those known. They have been collaborating as well as working with their local representatives in Springfield. Dr. Sally and Mr. Tragos sent a letter to state superintendent Tony Sanders as well as chairman of the board Steven Isoye. The letter stated the District's concerns as well as advocating for the continuation of the SAT suite of assessments. Mr. Tragos noted that he will keep the Board updated and that the Illinois State Board of Education's next board meeting is April 17<sup>th</sup>.

Ms. Pofcher wanted to clarify that the District was ACT up until six years ago, to which Mr. Tragos confirmed that the state of Illinois was an ACT state. She then inquired if the District was desirous of the shift to SAT or if it simply accommodated that and had made progress. Mr. Tragos replied that the District has made great progress. The state has also been more aligned with the SAT in terms of the three-year sequence as well as with the school report card.

Mr. Dronen inquired about the distinctions between the SAT and ACT. With the SAT, Mr. Tragos replied, that the primary distinction is that there is a three-year sequence where the school can track student growth toward proficiency. This linked series of assessments tests greater critical thinking and higher order whereas the ACT does not. The SAT is also a digital and adaptive format. Not only is it shorter than the old SAT, it is also shorter than the three hour ACT. This is a big difference for many students, as their test taking experience at their sender schools for

Illinois Assessment of Readiness or MAP testing, were all digital. The ACT remains a paper and pencil test and they are not prepared to go digital. The ACT also is thought of as only an eleventh-grade test.

Ms. Hahn inquired, if schools are unsuccessful in their efforts to change this, when this goes into effect. Mr. Tragos noted it would go into effect for next school year.

Mr. Dronen shared a concern that ACT may make the argument that they are effectively barred from doing business in Illinois if this position is taken.

Dr. Johnson gave the FOIA report, noting that there have been seven requests since the last Board meeting. Four are closed, including emails about training, purchased services budget, special education outplacement, and Township math. An additional three remain open pertaining to student records related to a parent issue and two for professional conferences.

Dr. Sally shared that former superintendent Dr. Hank Bangser passed away last week. He was superintendent from 1990-2006. He was a social studies teacher and coach at New Trier in the 1970s. Dr. Bangser was an amazing leader and had a tremendous positive impact on both the institution and hundreds and hundreds of educators that he mentored. Dr. Sally shared that Dr. Bangser will be greatly missed.

Second, Dr. Sally shared an update with the Board and community about the work related to the 24-25 Annual Plan for Culture, Climate, Equity and Belonging. Dr. Sally, along with his administrative team, continues to listen and learn from students, parents, and others. Several administrators recently took part in a full-day workshop led by the Spertus Institute at Bernard Zell Day School on combating antisemitism in high schools. Administrators also participated in a workshop at Marie Murphy School on Friday, March 15<sup>th</sup>. They discussed culturally competent leadership which was led by Dr. Michael Allen, best selling author and school administrator. Dr. Sally noted that work in this area is tremendously important because if students and staff do not feel as if they belong or as if they matter, they will not be able to thrive here. If students do not learn about cultures and identities that are different from their own, they will not be able to thrive in their future. The District's commitment remains to be a school where students are seen and celebrated for their own identity, ability, gender, sexual orientation, race, religion, and culture. He went on to say that as part of this work, the District is committed to teaching students to be critical thinkers and to engage in civil discourse in the classroom and beyond. He said that it is only through these efforts that the school will be able to ensure that all students, staff, and families feel like they belong and are valued at New Trier while combating biases and hateful speech and acts wherever they may occur. Dr. Sally shared that there will be more to come for the Board and community in the near future. He noted that it takes time to create thoughtful and actionable plans, he thanked the community for their understanding of this as well as their continued input and feedback as the District moves forward in this critical area.

### **Communications**

Mr. Dronen invited anyone from the audience who wished to address the Board to come forward and fill out a yellow communications request form and give it to Mr. Peter Tragos, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction. Mr. Dronen shared the following guidelines: Comments should be limited to three minutes per policy 2-230. Questions and comments should address the Board of Education as a whole only. No comments should be directed to an individual Board member, audience, principals, or other staff members. No complaints against individual employees are allowed during a Board of Education Meeting. There were two requests for public comment.

1. Mr. Kamran Hussain, parent, shared that it is important to learn about history and how it impacts people today. He then shared comments and concerns pertaining to Dr. Sally's statement that was shared at the February Board meeting.
2. Ms. Tracy Wolfe, parent, shared comments about the danger that DEI (Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion) presents solely as it relates to antisemitism.

## **VI. Special Orders of Business**

### **A. Student Voices: Juniors – Reflection on their journey through New Trier**

Mrs. Dubravec began the presentation on Student Voice: Juniors - Reflection on their journey through New Trier. This is the second of four presentations with sophomores presenting in April and freshmen in May. She shared that student voice stands out as one of the most vital sources of information available to the school enabling it to better understand and extend assistance to students as they navigate their high school journey. Their input is essential in

shaping the District's decision-making processes. It provides valuable insights and perspectives that guides the District towards creating a more responsive and student-centered educational environment.

The school prides itself on students having a deep sense of connection and belonging to the school community. After sharing further comments, Mrs. Dubravec highlighted two graphics that represent the larger outcomes, skills, and dispositions New Trier seeks to develop in each student. The first, *Characteristics of a New Trier Graduate*, are the non-academic outcomes or 21<sup>st</sup> century skills that the school seeks to develop in its graduates. The second graphic, Be Brave, Be Kind, Be Proud, is being used with the school's extracurricular programs. It represents the actions, behaviors, and relationships that the school wants students and staff to aspire to and model within the extracurricular programs, so they feel as though they belong to that community. Student presenters shared their challenges, opportunities, and significant moments of personal growth. Their stories hold the power to inform and inspire both current and future students as they navigate their own unique paths through high school. New Trier strongly encourages its students to share their transformative experiences that have shaped their identities today. Additionally, the District welcomes any constructive feedback or suggestions that can help enhance the overall school experience. Mrs. Dubravec introduced Ms. Honor Dold, Ms. Mabel Ciske, Mr. William Karr, and Mr. Thomas Rossman. These four juniors will share their own unique story of being a student at New Trier. One that goes beyond their transcript, that provides a fuller picture of who they are, what they have done, what they can do, what they have learned about themselves, and what skills they possess to differentiate themselves from others in a competitive world.

Ms. Mabel Ciske shared her apprehensions about starting high school. She joined the orchestra and dance team her freshman year. She auditioned for symphony orchestra but was told she would not be able to participate during her sophomore year. While discouraging, Ms. Ciske credits this as being the most important moment of her high school career as it inspired her to work harder. She shared opportunities she took advantage of during her sophomore year and also auditioned once again for symphony orchestra and this time was accepted into the class for her junior year. She continued with various music opportunities as a junior and feels like she has found her place. Ms. Ciske shared her aspirations for her senior year and would like to major in music in college. She shared challenges about being a student at New Trier such as living up to the expectations of the school, feeling like she is flying under the radar, and making the decision to choose music over dance due to time constraints. However, this allowed her to dive further into music which was ultimately beneficial for her.

Mr. William Karr shared introductory comments, after which he noted that his passion at New Trier has been for writing. Freshman year, he joined freshman media production, and the course provided an opportunity for him to interview people. He shared his experiences of interviewing an opinion columnist from the New York Times as well as the mayor of Evanston. Mr. Karr continued to pursue his passion for journalism during his sophomore year as a staff writer for the New Trier News. He went on to share that based on an editorial he wrote which pushed for student representation at the Board level, what ultimately came out of that were these student voice presentations. After additional comments, Mr. Karr shared his concern about students comparing themselves to others. He urged administrators and Board members to add to the Annual Plan goal of tracking the "number of students participating in extracurricular activities to better understand those students with no connection to the school" which is part of the Student Personal Growth, Engagement, and Well-Being framework. He encouraged the District to see if they are making meaningful connections, and if so, encourage students to continue as long as they feel passionate about it. He went on to say that true growth can only happen when one's passions and interests are encouraged by others. Mr. Karr shared that New Trier can play a large role in making sure students and their passions are supported.

Ms. Honor Dold began her presentation by noting that she was nervous about how to stand out at New Trier with so many amazing students and opportunities. She entered her freshman year as a soccer player, and when she arrived at the Winnetka campus as a sophomore many more opportunities opened up for her to get involved. Ms. Dold joined DECA and Student Council. Outside of school, Ms. Dold joined Lurie's Bridges Teen Leadership Board and soon took on an executive position as advertising director. She also was awarded member of the year. This year, Ms. Dold became the community outreach president for the Bridges Teen Leadership Board. Working with the eighty other board members, they raised over \$106,000 for the patients and families at Lurie's. Ms. Dold was also recently elected as Student Council president for next year. She also joined the DECA leadership team this year and placed third in the Illinois DECA state competition qualifying for nationals in Anaheim. She noted that a lesson she learned was time management and went on to share concluding comments.

Mr. Rossman shared that not much changed between middle school and ninth grade where he focused on swimming, while adding in water polo. He felt that his high school experience began his sophomore year. Mr. Rossman joined Model UN. He made the varsity swim and dive team. He found it difficult to manage his evolving interest in politics

with what a varsity athlete needs to commit to during both the season as well as the off-season. As a junior, he decided to quit swimming, but reframed that by saying he had replaced swimming with other opportunities, such as leadership positions with a few clubs. He also joined a Model UN program with others across the country. As an incoming senior, he looks forward to passing down what he has done for Model UN. His advice to incoming freshmen is to put in the hard work to utilize New Trier's many opportunities early-on to find their passion and home in on that.

Mrs. Dubravec thanked the students for their presentation, while Mr. Dronen invited questions and comments from the Board.

Ms. Hahn thanked the students for their presentations, particularly Mr. Karr who drove this initiative. She shared it is important to hear from students as that is reason why everyone is here. Ms. Hahn also noted that there have been many times since the seniors presented that their words have resonated as Board members sit in different venues making decisions. Ms. Hahn noted that she heard from these presentations an exploration of genuine pursuits as well as about challenges for students in managing their time and all their options. She encouraged the students to continue to explore as their journey does not end when they leave New Trier. Ms. Hahn noted that a person can be in their career and change careers and find a different interest and passion. She reminded the students that they do not need to have it all figured out by senior year and went on to congratulate them on all they have accomplished, being true to themselves, and taking some risks.

Ms. Alcantara thanked the students for their presentations as hearing student perspectives reminds the Board why they are here. It also reinforces Ms. Alcantara's admiration that she has for students and the student body as a whole. She thanked the students for their willingness to be open about the challenges and the progress they have made over the years.

Ms. Pofcher underscored the vulnerability that the students showed when they talked about moments where they had to make choices such as resigning from a sport or finding ways to feel a sense of self or the courage it takes to speak up for a different policy position. As a parent to two grads and one who will eventually attend New Trier, she shared it can be hard when one's child finds a different activity or is not feeling like themselves, and it is exciting to hear about students finding different paths. Ms. Pofcher went on to share that measures of engagement are looked at as well as ensuring students are engaged, but to assess whether a student is filling their bucket of finding a sense of place and identity is a harder thing to figure out.

Ms. Tomlinson thanked the students for their presentations. She heard a couple of times the students say they felt intimidated and shared that they are exceptional. After additional comments, Ms. Tomlinson noted how impressed she is with how students figure out their journey and the challenges that they face.

Mr. Dronen shared that the Board loves hearing from students about their experiences and learning about their growth. He noted that it is great that New Trier offers so many opportunities, highlighting the reference that Mr. Rossman did not quit swimming, but rather developed more interests.

#### **\*B. 2024-2025 Full School Year Calendar**

Dr. Sally presented the 2024-2025 full school year calendar. The skeletal calendar which included the beginning and end of the school year as well as major vacations was approved earlier in the year. Now included are parent-teacher conferences, professional development time, among others. Dr. Sally noted that first semester exams will once again be prior to Winter Break. He shared that virtual parent-teacher conferences will move to the week of Thanksgiving as it aligns with the sender school districts. The calendar also includes around 60 professional development hours and the District will continue to use late start days for professional time for teachers. The benefits of utilizing this time were shared during last month's Professional Development presentation. Dr. Sally noted that the school will gather information on various parts of the calendar throughout next year as it looks to the 25-26 school year. Mr. Waechter co-chairs the calendar review committee who will gather necessary information.

Ms. Pofcher inquired if Dr. Sally could articulate the rationale regarding the consecutive late arrival days and the shift from the Friday/Monday early dismissal/late arrival wraparound days. Dr. Sally replied that the early dismissal on Friday is not ideal for teachers. He noted that the block schedule also creates some difficulties, but there are also attendance issues. The issues around the early dismissal/late start days were more significant, with Mr. Waechter clarifying that students may leave on Thursday and miss all of Friday. Dr. Sally also shared that the question comes up about why the school cannot put the two days' time together and have a full day. The Illinois State Board of

Education (ISBE) has certain rules about the number of days that students must be in school that the District must comply with. Dr. Sally acknowledged the feedback received around this and by continuing to gather that in a second year will help the District work through the pros and cons of the decisions.

Ms. Hahn moved, and Mr. Das seconded the motion that the Board of Education approve the 2024-2025 school year calendar as presented. Upon a roll call vote being taken, the members voted as follows:

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

NAY: none

The motion passed.

**\*C. Contract with Physical Plant Services Association (FY 25 – FY 29)**

Dr. Johnson presented the contract with the Physical Plant Services Association (PPS) for fiscal years 2025-2029. The District has negotiated a 5-year agreement with the Physical Plant Services Association, which represents the employees who clean and maintain its campuses and grounds. These 65 staff members fill important roles such as custodians, grounds, general and skilled maintenance as well as cleaning and maintaining its campuses for the benefit of students and the community. Their work occurs on three shifts on a 24-hour basis, spanning the Northfield and Winnetka Campuses, the new Transition Center in Glencoe and the two off-site athletic facilities, Fox Meadow and Duke Childs Field. The new agreement will continue to allow the District to recruit and retain a highly qualified staff in a time when the labor market is more competitive and the systems that run the buildings become more technically complex, including new heating and cooling systems, solar energy, and EV charging stations.

The new agreement raises starting wages and provides cost of living and experience increases each year that are tied to the consumer price index. It also adjusted some fixed dollar payments that had not been changed since the last contract five years ago and had lost value due to inflation. The agreement shifted to a new salary schedule model, similar to the Educational Support Personnel, which provides predictability for employees and the District and flexibility to recruit for hard to fill positions. This new agreement is fair to the employees and to the District and was within the financial parameters presented to the Board as part of the January 2024 five-year financial plan. Every person who works for New Trier plays an important role in the success of students, and Dr. Johnson was pleased to be able to recommend that the Board adopt this agreement that recognizes these important members of the District's staff. New Trier is fortunate to be in a position where all three of its bargaining units are on 5-year agreements, which is a testament to the relationships maintained with each of these employee groups and the care and thought that is taken in the bargaining process. Thanks to the administrators involved in the negotiation process, as well as Ms. Alcantara who represented the Board, and the members of the PPS negotiating team.

Ms. Alcantara reiterated that a financially sustainable agreement was reached for the District. She shared that the process of complying, evaluating, interpreting, and negotiating a collective bargaining agreement is arduous and requires a great deal of behind-the-scenes resources, time, and skill. Ms. Alcantara acknowledged Dr. Johnson's leadership on the team along with his knowledge and commitment. She also thanked Mr. Myron Spiwak, Director of Business Services, Mr. Jim Maile, Assistant Director of PPS, and Dr. Renee Zoladz, Director of Human Resources, who were instrumental on the team and whose contributions to this process must be commended. Ms. Alcantara also thanked the PPS negotiating team for their collaboration – Mr. Bill Franz, Mr. Kaul Baumann, Mr. Erwin Manlongat and Mr. Terry Moore.

Mr. Dronen thanked Ms. Alcantara for her work as well.

Ms. McDonough moved, and Mr. Das seconded the motion that the Board of Education approve the New Trier Physical Plant Services Association FY 25 – FY 29 agreement. Upon a roll call vote being taken, the members voted as follows:

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

NAY: none

The motion passed.

## VII. Administrative Items

### A. **Treasurer's Report for February 2024**

Dr. Johnson presented the Treasurer's Report for February 2024, the eighth month of the fiscal year. Dr. Johnson was pleased to see significant disbursements of the first installment of 2024 property tax bills which are a month earlier than last year. Interest income continues to be significant with the District earning 5.3% on its cash at PMA while long-term investments that are less than year are at 5.2%. Long-term investments with 5/3 are at 3.12% and tick up as they mature and are replaced when possible with newer investments. Dr. Johnson noted that state and local receipts are typical and the balance for all accounts is \$98,002,915.

### B. **Financial Report for February 2024**

Dr. Johnson presented the Financial Report for February 2024. Operating revenue was \$85,732,000 for the first eight months of the fiscal year, or 37.31% higher compared to last year. Property tax distributions resumed this month, whereas last year the larger payouts began in March, which is a month ahead of schedule compared to last year. The other local sources category is higher due to investment earnings, a trend likely to continue all year. The adopted budget for operating revenue is 6.51% higher than last fiscal year.

Operating expenditures were \$89,700,000 through February, or 10% higher than last year. Exclusive of transfers though, the expenses are 6% higher than last year. Preliminary projections show the District trending close to budget at this point, which will be monitored closely as the year progresses. The adopted budget for operating expenditures is 5.61% higher than last year.

## VIII. Consent Agenda

- Bill List for Period, February 1 - 29, 2024
- Personnel Report (Scale IV Movement, Scale IV Review, Appointments, Changes of Status, Dismissals, Resignations, Retirements, Retirement Agreement, Stipends - Appointments, Stipends - Separation)
- Resolution Authorizing the Honorable Dismissal and Recall of Teachers
- Resolution Authorizing the Dismissal of Teachers
- Resolution Authorizing the Reduction in Force and Recall of Educational Support Personnel
- Board Action on Suspension Appeal
- IHSA Renewal 2024-2025

Mr. Dronen 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 Period, February 1 - 29, 2024; Personnel Report (Scale IV Movement, Scale IV Review, Tenure, Appointments, Changes of Status, Dismissals, Resignations, Retirements, Retirement Agreement, Stipends - Appointments, Stipends - Separation); Resolution Authorizing the Honorable Dismissal and Recall of Teachers; Resolution Authorizing the Dismissal of Teachers; Resolution Authorizing the Reduction in Force and Recall of Educational Support Personnel; Based upon and after the Board's consideration of the hearing officer's report regarding the suspension of Student A and pursuant to Board Policy 2:700, *Suspension Procedures*, that the Board of Education accept the hearing officer's recommendation to affirm the suspension; and IHSA Renewal 2024-2025. Ms. Hahn seconded the motion. Upon a roll call vote being taken, the members voted as follows:

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

NAY: none

The motion passed.

## IX. Board Member Reports

Ms. McDonough shared that the **New Trier Fine Arts Association (NTFAA)** met last week. She encouraged the Board to check out the performing arts calendars. There are also a couple spring break trips coming up including the choir travelling to Spain and the jazz band headed to New Orleans. She also acknowledged the work that the department is doing to reach out to the sender schools and community.

Ms. McDonough shared that the **Booster Club** meets tomorrow.

Ms. Alcantara noted that on March 7<sup>th</sup> there was a **Facilities Steering Committee** meeting. There was an update on the East Side Academic and Athletic project and Summer 2023 project close-outs. There was also an update on the 15-year plan as well as the Summer 2024 projects. Additional discussion centered around planning for the 15-year

plan such as projects and funding for the next five years. Dr. Johnson added that he will look for a new April meeting date as it is the same date as the rededication for Duke Childs Field.

Ms. Alcantara attended the **New Trier Parents Association (NTPA)** meeting on March 5<sup>th</sup>. She provided an update from the last Board meeting and each of the class co-president teams and program chairs gave updates on their respective areas. The upcoming graduation party was also discussed. The next meeting is April 2<sup>nd</sup>.

Ms. Hahn noted that on March 11<sup>th</sup> the **Finance Committee** did their part of planning for future facilities projects.

Ms. Hahn shared that on March 8<sup>th</sup>, the **New Trier Educational Foundation (NTEF)** held its Alumni Achievement Gala. It is held every two years and was sold out this year. They honored a diverse set of alumni from philanthropists, entrepreneurs, scientists, musicians, educators, and human rights advocates. The Foundation meets on Thursday and Ms. Hahn anticipates a recap of the funds they were able to raise.

Mr. Das shared that **TrueNorth Leadership Council** met on March 13<sup>th</sup> and will meet again on April 10<sup>th</sup>. Their work is focusing on projecting what FY25 might look like as well as the overarching value and cost arrangements that is shared by the collective. Mr. Das will keep the Board updated on their deliberations. TrueNorth Leadership Council is also following legislation that brings to light how members participate in TrueNorth as a collective and the extent to which members might withdraw from it. It will be reviewed to see how it impacts the structure and the future sustainability of the council.

Ms. Pofcher also attended the **Facilities Steering Committee** on March 7<sup>th</sup> which Ms. Alcantara recapped. She thought the funding for the next five years was pragmatic, making sure the District is on top of infrastructure.

On March 13<sup>th</sup>, Ms. Pofcher attended the **Community Engagement Committee**. Frustrations and challenges were shared by Ms. Dizon, Director of Communications, in trying to get a more efficient email system for the school. Many of the providers have consolidated and there are not vast improvements available, but she continues to search for options.

On March 14<sup>th</sup>, Ms. Pofcher was one of six on a Women's Club of Wilmette panel about local women in government. The focus was to engage a broader set of the community in questions about how to get involved and what it means to participate in local government.

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

Dr. Sally highlighted the following events:

- Spring Break begins Saturday, March 23<sup>rd</sup>.
- School does not resume until Tuesday, April 2<sup>nd</sup>.
- There will be a grand opening for Duke Childs Field on April 4<sup>th</sup>.
- State testing will take place in April.
- The next Board of Education meeting is April 15<sup>th</sup>.

Mr. Dronen inquired what time the event at Duke Childs Field begins, to which Dr. Sally replied 4 p.m.

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

Ms. Alcantara followed up to Ms. McDonough's NTFAA report, noting that the choirs leave for Spain on Wednesday evening. Since covid, there has not been a lot of this kind of travel. She thanked the faculty for all their efforts with the trip, wishing them a happy and safe one.

#### **XI. ADJOURNMENT**

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

The meeting adjourned at 8:02 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Lindsey Ruston, Secretary

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Keith Dronen, President