



**NEW  
TRIER**  
TOWNSHIP  
HIGH SCHOOL  
DISTRICT 203

*To commit minds to inquiry,  
hearts to compassion,  
and lives to the service of humanity*

## All-School Seminar Day FAQs

### What is the theme for this year's All-School Seminar Day?

The theme for this year's All-School Seminar Day is Understanding Today's Struggle for Racial Civil Rights.

### What are the goals of the All-School Seminar Day?

The goals for the day are to help students better understand how the struggle for racial civil rights stretches across our nation's history, that people of diverse racial backgrounds were involved in each chapter in this history, and how previous civil rights movements connect with the issues that we are discussing today.

### What is the overall structure for the day?

Students will begin the day by hearing from the keynote speaker and participating in a common lesson plan with their adviser group. They will attend two workshop sessions on specific topics of their choice and then have lunch. The day will end with students again meeting in their adviser room to reflect on the day with their adviser and classmates.

### Who are the keynote speakers?

We are excited to announce that two National Book Award-winning authors are speaking at this year's seminar day. Our keynote speaker at the Winnetka Campus will be Colson Whitehead, National Book Award winner for *The Underground Railroad*. At the Northfield Campus, students will hear from Andrew Aydin, National Book Award winner for *March*.

### Will parents and community members have an opportunity to hear each of the keynote speakers?

Yes! Working in partnership with the Family Action Network, both keynote speakers will give evening presentations in the area. Colson Whitehead will speak at Evanston Township High School on Monday evening, February 27<sup>th</sup>. Andrew Aydin will speak at New Trier High School on Tuesday evening, February 28<sup>th</sup>. Look for more information about these events to be posted closer to the date at <http://www.familyactionnetwork.net/>.

### What is the common lesson plan?

In addition to hearing one of the keynote speakers, students will also participate in a common lesson session designed to frame the purpose of the day and provide background for the discussion of racial civil rights. For students at the Northfield Campus, this activity will reference *March*, which is being discussed in Social Studies classes this quarter. For students at the Winnetka Campus, the lesson will provide an opportunity to discuss a contemporary issue related to race and civil rights.

# All-School Seminar Day FAQs (Cont'd)

## How many workshop sessions are being offered?

After the keynote speakers and common lesson, students will choose two of more than 100 workshop sessions being offered by New Trier teachers and speakers from our community. Seventy percent of the workshop presenters are New Trier teachers, staff, or students.

## What are the workshop topics?

Workshop topics range from racial housing patterns and Native American civil rights to gospel music and civil rights activism in sports. Workshops led by New Trier teachers will focus on a specific moment in history, the biography of an individual involved in civil rights work, or a discussion of contemporary topics related to racial civil rights. Outside speakers will speak about why they chose to act on a specific topic related to civil rights and how they believe their work will produce a positive change. We are asking that they leave at least half of their workshop time for questions from students and discussion. A complete list of workshops can be found at [www.newtrier.k12.il.us](http://www.newtrier.k12.il.us) by clicking on the workshop catalog for either campus.

## Can parents or community members come to see the keynote speakers or some of the workshops?

No. This is a regular day of student attendance at New Trier. As such, the keynote speakers and workshop sessions are only open to our students and staff.

## Who developed the programming for the All-School Seminar Day?

A committee of more than 30 teachers, administrators, and students planned the day. They began planning in the spring of last year and have met throughout the fall to gather workshop sessions and create the schedule for the day.

## How were the outside presenters selected?

Each outside presenter is engaged in some element of the examination of racial civil rights in our community. The committee gathered recommendations from staff who had heard these presenters in different venues. After a review of the recommendations, committee members then reached out and invited speakers to participate. Thirty-six presenters agreed to participate in the seminar day.

## What will the outside speakers present to students?

Each presenter has been reminded that they will be speaking with students during a school day. Each has been told to use language and content appropriate for high school students. We are asking each speaker to respond to several questions in their workshop presentations. Why did you choose to become involved in the particular issue? What are you doing that you hope will generate a positive change? We are asking presenters to reserve about half of the 50-minute workshop period for students to ask questions and engage in discussion.

## Is the All-School Seminar Day a mandatory day of student attendance?

The All-School Seminar Day is a regular day of student attendance. New Trier High School will follow its normal attendance procedures.

# All-School Seminar Day FAQs (Cont'd)

## What is the budget for the All-School Seminar Day?

The budget for this seminar day is \$30,000. Within this budget, we are paying two nationally known keynote speakers who will each speak twice to our students and once in the evening. The District partnered with Family Action Network to share the costs of bringing such high-profile speakers to our community. We are also offering a small honorarium of \$200 to those workshop presenters from outside of the school. The keynote speakers are being reimbursed for some travel expenses that are also included in the budget.

## What is the schedule for the day?

The seminar day will begin at the same time as a normal school day on both campuses. The day will end at the early dismissal times used for other early release days – 2:05 PM at the Northfield Campus and 2:20 PM at the Winnetka Campus.

## How many staff members are involved in presenting or supporting the day?

All New Trier staff members are involved in the seminar day in some way. They are presenting workshops, chaperoning outside speakers, teaching the common lesson plan, attending workshops, and/or providing support in physical plant services, technology, or security.

## What research or methodology is being used to support the goals and structure of the day?

Significant research supports the idea that discussing race is not only important for students to better understand themselves and others, but also better prepares them for future discussions of race as adults. Given the significant role that race is playing in our national discussion right now, preparation in this area is important. You can find a short bibliography of sources here:

<http://www.newtrier.k12.il.us/Bibliography/>

About 75% of the workshops are being conducted by teachers who have constructed lesson plans for their workshops consistent with standards for their content area and consistent with best instructional practices. Many of them are teaching versions of lessons that they teach in their classes. Those lessons are intended to teach students about a specific time period or specific person's life. Others are designed to be discussions of contemporary issues.

The remaining workshop sessions are being presented by speakers from the community. Those speakers are sharing their personal experiences with a specific topic. We regularly invite outside speakers to share their experiences in our classrooms, and we use this same approach to inform students about a wide variety of topics each year.

## Will the All-School Seminar Day support one political party over another?

The purpose of the seminar day is to help students better understand the history and current status of racial civil rights in the United States, not to promote the philosophy of one political party or another, or to connect a political party to the history of racial civil rights. Every student is entitled to hold personal political beliefs. To that end, the seminar day will not portray any political party as good or bad or promote the views of one party. Such an approach would be just another example of stereotyping and would ignore each party's complicated history with race and civil rights in our country.