

# Board Report to the Community

February 2003

New Trier Township High School District 203

## A message from the Board of Education: Residents will vote on New Trier tax rate referendum on April 1, 2003

*By Onnie Scheyer, President  
Board of Education*

On November 17, 2002, the New Trier High School District 203 Board of Education unanimously agreed to ask the community to support a tax rate increase, the first sought by this district since 1976.

While the specifics of the referendum may be new to you, the decision to seek the increase at this time can be traced to several issues over the last few years.

### More than 10 years of increasing student enrollment

Enrollment at New Trier High School has been on a steep rise for more than a decade. Numbers rose so significantly

that the Board of Education, with staff and community members, engaged in a series of studies to determine the best way to serve these students in today's world of education.

### Providing excellent education for more students in a fiscally prudent manner

The ultimate decision — to re-open the Northfield Campus (formerly known as New Trier West) for freshmen and to house upperclassmen at the Winnetka Campus — has enabled the District to provide an excellent program for our students. We have done this in a way that recognizes evolving educational expectations and increasing demands on space, while maintaining a fiscally sound enrollment model.

The cost to re-open the Northfield Campus was covered by an \$11 million capital referendum passed in 1998 (resulting in an additional \$5 per \$1000 in your total taxes) and an \$11 million matching expenditure of District funds from reserves. However, the cost to accommodate the large number of students on both campuses has significantly reduced the remaining reserves available to the District.

### "Tax cap" limits access to funds

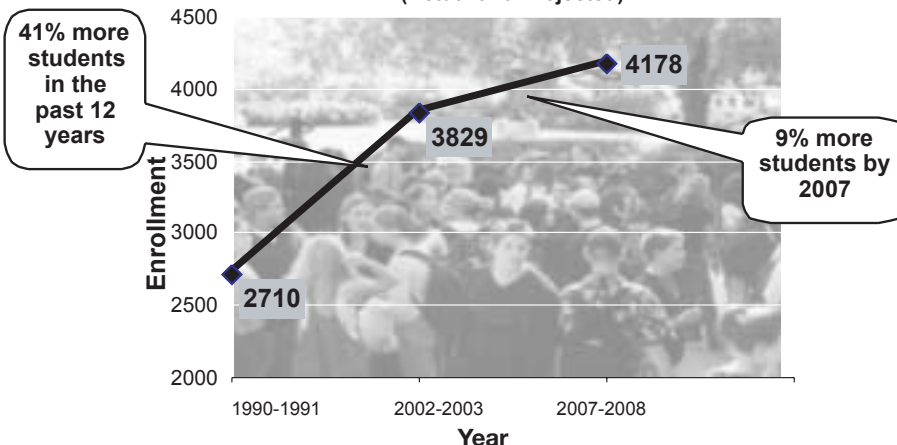
In addition to the increasing student population and the redefining of our enrollment model, since 1995 the District has been constrained by what is referred to as the "tax cap," legislation which confines school districts to annual tax increases of 5% or the increase in the Consumer Price Index (CPI), whichever is lower in a given year.

The result has been that while New Trier enrollment increased at an annual rate of almost 4% in the last 7 years, New Trier's average annual increase in new property taxes over those same 7 years was about 3.0% — just slightly higher than the 2.6% average inflation rate.

### If passed, New Trier will not seek another referendum until 2008 or later

Before our decision in November, the Board of Education looked at many ways to (continued on next page)

**New Trier Student Enrollment**  
(Actual and Projected)





## 102-year tradition of excellence

- Internationally recognized programs
- Expert, innovative, caring staff
- 32 National Merit semifinalists in 2003
- College acceptances at exceptional rate
- High participation in sports (64%) and clubs (over 40%)
- Individualized attention in a large school of opportunities

## Enrollment growth substantial

- 1990-1991: 2710 students (lowest since 1955)
- 2002-2003: 3829 students
- 2007-2008: 4178 students (maximum in this decade)
- 2017-2018: 4169 students (final year of projections)

## New Trier tax rate referendum

(continued from page 1)

present this referendum to the community. We wanted to find the right balance between the need to be fiscally prudent — thus maintaining an appropriate fund balance for budgetary needs — and the need to engage community support. We also sought to achieve an amount that would allow the District to operate at that level for at least five years.

This means that if this referendum passes on April 1, 2003, the District does not foresee a need to seek additional funding beyond the normal increases allowed by inflation until 2008 or later. Of course, a delayed passage of the referendum will undoubtedly result in a diminished educational program and will position the District in a less secure position financially, which will cause us to schedule the next tax rate referendum more quickly.

### New Trier recognized for excellence

Residents of the New Trier Township High School District are justifiably proud of our

high school. Having the state's highest test scores year after year and receiving many state and national accolades tell only part of the story of the success. Graduates have benefited from the many opportunities the school has afforded them, regardless of where their paths have led since leaving New Trier.

### Students should have same access to excellence as graduates

This Board of Education is dedicated to ensuring that present and future students will have the same access to excellence their predecessors had. That means maintaining manageable class sizes, continuing to develop programming, hiring and retaining outstanding personnel to accommodate the continuing growth in enrollment, and ensuring financial stability in a time of increased demand for our school district.

### Provide your feedback through phone calls and web site

Please read this report carefully and ask questions so you understand the issues involved. Look at such important figures

as New Trier's per pupil expenditure and the spending level for faculty.

Feel free to call Hank Bangser, our superintendent, at 784-6109 or e-mail him at [bangserh@newtrier.k12.il.us](mailto:bangserh@newtrier.k12.il.us). Your questions will be answered no later than the next day.

In fact, the March edition of the Board Report to the Community will feature frequently asked questions (with our answers) about the referendum. Your involvement in the next two weeks will help us structure these questions to produce the most effective public communication.

Log on to New Trier's website, [www.newtrier.k12.il.us](http://www.newtrier.k12.il.us), to learn more about the referendum as well as to familiarize yourself with some of the wonderful things that are happening at the high school — opportunities we want to continue to offer to future students.

### Most important, exercise your right to vote on April 1.



## Retaining a competitive edge

- Attracting and keeping quality staff amid the worsening teacher shortage
- Maintaining and improving academic programs
- Offering students a variety of participation and leadership opportunities

**Exceptional schools are the pride of the New Trier communities.**

## In deficit spending mode

- 2002-2003 revenues of \$54 million
- 2002-2003 expenditures of \$62 million
- 2003-04 deficit will be \$10 million, with revenues of \$55 million and budgeted expenditures of \$65 million to accommodate the year's 3% enrollment increase

## Not enough funds to cover expenses

- Increase in revenues averaged less than 1% for 3 years and less than 2% for 6 years
- From 1995-2002, New Trier per pupil expenditure increased at annual rate of 0.8% while inflation rose 2.6%
- Limited to small annual increases in property tax revenue
- Almost 90% of revenues are from property taxes
- Rising expenses from growth cannot be met

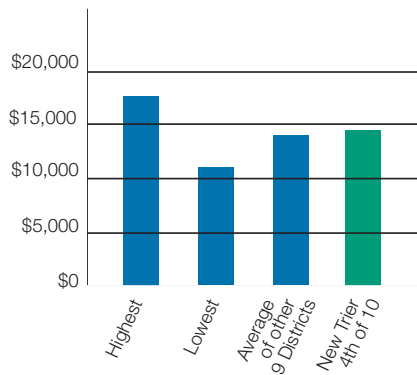
## If the April 2003 referendum passes, New Trier will:

- maintain a fund balance equaling about 4-1/2 months of expenditures -- the minimum recommended by auditors
- reinstate financial stability with a tax rate increase of 5-6% and no new tax referendum for at least 5 years
- hire 10 more teachers and 4 staff to support enrollment growth
- maintain present class size
- keep current access to resources
- retain present level of individual attention for students

## How New Trier compares

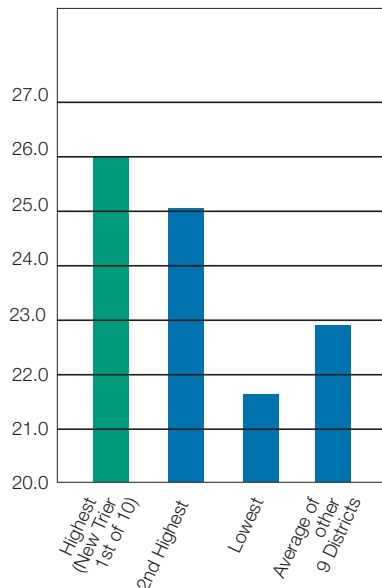
The graphs below indicate how New Trier compares with the nine other high school districts in north Cook and south Lake Counties (Arlington Heights, Evanston, Glenbrook, Highland Park-Deerfield, Lake Forest, Maine Township, Niles Township, Palatine-Schaumburg and Stevenson). Information relates to the 2001-02 school year. Data for Operating Expenditure Per Student obtained from business official in each district; other data obtained from Illinois State Board of Education, Fall 2002 School Report Card.

Operating Expenditure Per Student



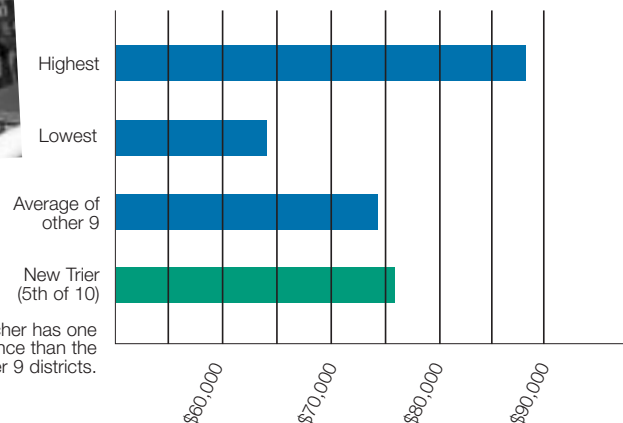
ACT Performance

(average score of almost 90% of seniors on a national standardized test for college/university admissions)



ACT composite highest in state and ACT mean among highest 1% in nation

Average Teacher Salary of 10 Area Districts



The average New Trier teacher has one more year of teaching experience than the average teacher in the other 9 districts.



## If the referendum fails, \$3 million will be cut from the projected 2003-2004 budget. New Trier will:

- freeze hiring (will not hire staff shown above)
- increase class size
- eliminate some special programs
- limit schedule changes
- experience waiting lists in courses "capped" in size
- purchase fewer library materials
- cancel plans to purchase additional new computers
- reduce staff development
- cancel plans to hire additional post-high school counselor
- cut some stipended positions and related student opportunities
- freeze athletic, intramural, performing arts and activities programs at the current level
- initiate "user fees" for some extracurricular programs
- implement additional fees for classes with labs

## If the April 1 referendum fails,

New Trier will remain on the State's "financial watch list," an alarming reality since 2002. The District also will be forced to borrow money to pay expenses in 2004-05.

## Facts about the New Trier Referendum on April 1, 2003

The challenge for New Trier is to deliver the same high-quality programs and services to each student in an environment of more students, higher costs and limited resources.

### Maintaining excellent programs and services for a growing enrollment

### Reinstating financial stability

These are the challenges facing New Trier — challenges that affect students, the school and the quality of the community. They also are the needs that cannot be met with current funds available.

On April 1, New Trier Township voters will consider what they value and how it impacts the future of the community and of New Trier High School when they vote on the District's first tax rate referendum since 1976.

### Why is the Board of Education seeking a referendum?

"Growth" is the reason the Board is seeking a tax rate increase. New Trier has experienced 41% more students in the past 12 years and will see another 9% more by 2007. Increasing enrollment resulted in expanded facilities (opening the Northfield Campus), more staff and higher expenses.

### What will the April 1 referendum ask voters?

The Board is asking the community to support an increase of 41 cents in the District tax rate. If the referendum is successful, the tax rate of New Trier citizens will increase between 5 and 6% (approximately \$56 per \$1000 presently paid in total taxes), depending on the elementary school district in which the taxpayer resides. For a taxpayer with a \$7000 tax bill, this yearly increase would be approximately \$1 per day. If the referendum is successful, another tax rate referendum will not be needed for a minimum of five years.

If the referendum passes, New Trier will maintain its present programs for the growing student population — programs in which students are achieving at levels among the most outstanding in the nation. Future students will benefit from the same exceptional quality of education that their older brothers and sisters — and previous generations — received at New Trier.

### Questions about the referendum?

Get them answered within 24 hours on the New Trier web site:

[www.newtrier.k12.il.us](http://www.newtrier.k12.il.us)

or contact Superintendent Hank Bangser:

**(847)784-6109** or

[bangserh@newtrier.k12.il.us](mailto:bangserh@newtrier.k12.il.us)

Your input is important. Questions and comments will help construct next month's issue of the Board Report.



## New Trier Township High School District 203

Board of Education  
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Winnetka, IL 60093-4295

New Trier Township High School District 203 serves Chicago's North Shore suburban communities of Glencoe, Kenilworth, Wilmette and Winnetka, most of Northfield and parts of Glenview and Northbrook.

# Board Report to the Community

Produced by the New Trier Township High School District  
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