

# Culture, Climate, Equity, and Belonging

Looking Back and Looking Forward



## Objectives:

- 1) All students should feel like they belong at New Trier
- 2) All students should learn about perspectives different than their own

# Foundational Documents

**NEW  
TRIER**  
HIGH SCHOOL

## Commitment to Equity

**STRATEGIC  
PLAN**



ADOPTED JANUARY 22, 2019  
New Trier District 203 Board of Education

### MISSION:

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

### VISION:

By creating a culture in which  
students discover purpose  
in their intellectual, creative  
social, and interpersonal  
endeavors, we will develop  
in every graduate the skills  
and dispositions to lead  
meaningful, compassionate,  
and impactful lives.

**Critical  
Thinkers**

**Effective  
Communicators**

**Engaged  
Citizens**

**Resilient  
Individuals**

**Problem  
Solvers**



### District Diversity Statement Adopted 2004

On December 13, 2004, the New Trier Board of Education approved a proposed Diversity Statement. The idea for a diversity statement arose from a suggestion that New Trier increase awareness of and support for diversity at the school, and commitment to recruiting and supporting a diverse employee population. The Diversity Statement is as follows:

In service to the democratic ideals of justice and equity, New Trier Township High School District 203 is committed to delivering a progressive educational and work environment for all students and staff in the areas of diversity and social justice. Academic institutions to offer students a diverse set of experiences and perspectives that will better prepare them to successfully navigate the rapidly globalizing world community of the 21st Century. To reflect more holistic and realistic perspectives to actively recruiting, supporting and retaining people of diverse backgrounds across each level of our school district. Providing a diverse experience for our school community is further evidence of our dedication to our motto, "to commit minds to the service of humanity."<sup>6</sup>

A diverse school community includes representation by individuals of varying race, color, religion, national origin gender, sexual orientation, age, ancestry, marital status, and disability.

#### Working Definition of Equity

Educational equity strives for fairness in both expectations and opportunities for success for all students and staff. A school engaged in equity:

- acknowledges that students begin with different resources;
- seeks to meet students' individual needs;
- counters the stereotypes students experience that limit their access to opportunities;
- diminish their sense of acceptance and belonging; or lower their academic expectations; and
- confronts structural and cultural disadvantage based on race, cultural background, gender identity, sexual orientation, ability, socioeconomic status, and other factors.

#### Civil Discourse and Critical Thinking Statement, Adopted October 2020

One of the most important aspects of our mission is to develop critical thinkers who can navigate a complex world. We want all students to feel welcome and free to explore a wide range of ideas. Our firm commitment to this principle is reflected in our commitment to accountability for their actions and treat one another with dignity, compassion, and respect.

### ③ Culture, Climate, and Equity

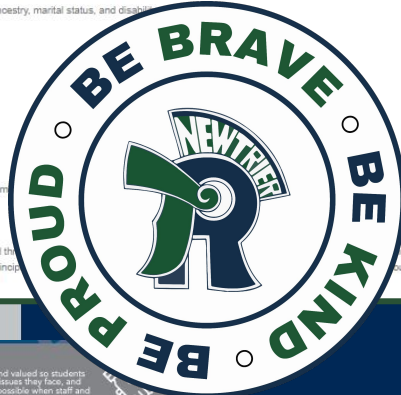
All people at New Trier must be welcomed, respected, supported, and valued so students can learn effectively, develop deeper understanding of the complex issues they face, and become empowered to contribute to the school community. This is possible when staff and students learn from and reflect on their own and others' diverse lived experiences.

#### Core Values

- We believe an equitable, safe, inclusive, and welcoming climate is not only necessary for students to learn and supports student growth, but is ethically in alignment with our mission.
- We believe that an equitable, safe, inclusive, and welcoming climate:
  - creates the conditions that allow individuals to reach their full potential;
  - is built upon respect and the appreciation of differences;
  - holds individuals accountable for their actions and creates access to justice.
- We believe that all students, no matter their race, religion, gender identity, sexual orientation, innate abilities, or academic levels, have the right to equitable opportunities to pursue their interests and have the right to a rigorous and rich curricula and inspiring instruction that promotes intellectual growth, exploration, and risk-taking.
- We believe what makes our school better for the most vulnerable students makes the school better for all students.

#### Goals

- To create a culture of equity that appreciates and celebrates differences across the school by exploring individual identities and the identities of others.
- To create a culture in which students define their identities more holistically beyond academic achievement and level placement.
- To create a culture that reduces stress and teaches students the strategies to effectively manage the stress they experience.
- To create learning environments and curricula that encourage empathy; create interpersonal connections; embrace diverse identities; and explore multiple perspectives.
- To create an environment in which each individual's needs are met and in which every person feels they belong.
- To identify and promote those parts of our culture that enhance learning and a sense of belonging, such as our dedication to service, compassion, critical thinking, and empathy.





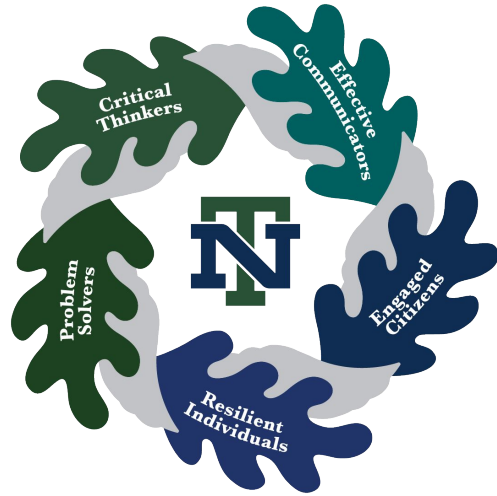
*Commitment to Equity*

## Civil Discourse and Critical Thinking Statement

New Trier Township High School believes that a fundamental aspect of our mission is to **develop critical thinkers** who can navigate a complex world through civil discourse, respectful inquiry, engaged listening and open consideration of multiple perspectives.

Key to fulfilling this charge is the **cultivation of a school environment** in which all students feel welcome and free to explore a wide range of ideas.

Our firm commitment to this principle reflects not only New Trier's obligation to prepare our students for their future but **our belief that the open exchange of ideas lies at the core of a democratic society in which individuals are accountable for their actions and treat one another with dignity, compassion, and respect.**



## Engaged Compassionate Global Citizens

New Trier graduates strive to be informed about historical and contemporary issues, embracing diversity and taking responsibility for improving their local and global communities. They develop the capacity to show respect, acceptance, and empathy for all people so they can optimistically pursue positive change.





# Initiatives 2019-2024

- Department Equity Goals
- Monthly Observances
- Professional Learning
- Student Affinity Groups
- Hiring an Exceptional and Diverse Staff
- Sender School Connections
- Restorative Practices
- Other Initiatives
  - Mixed Gender Adviser Rooms
  - Religious and Cultural Calendar

# Feedback

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- Strong support for our equity work
- Meaningful impact on students in classrooms and hallways
- Student experience is varied
- Expand professional learning offerings for staff
- Expand representation and include more student voice in giving feedback on priorities and direction
- Make the Civil Discourse statement central to this work
- Stronger partnerships with all communities represented at New Trier



# 2024-25 and Beyond

## Continuing Initiatives

- Department Equity Goals
- Monthly Observances
- Professional Learning
- Student Affinity Groups
- Hiring an Exceptional and Diverse Staff
- Sender School Connections
- Restorative Practices
- Other Initiatives
  - Mixed Gender Adviser Rooms
  - Religious/Cultural Calendar

## New Areas of Focus

- Expand representation and viewpoints
- Expand Student Voice
- Support for struggling students in underrepresented groups
- Northfield Initiatives
- Curricular Updates



The crest of New Trier Township High School is a circular emblem. It features a central shield with a building illustration, surrounded by a laurel wreath. The text 'NEW TRIER TOWNSHIP HIGH SCHOOL' is at the top of the shield, and 'PORTA NIGRA' is at the bottom.

# Questions/Discussion