

BOARD BRIEFS

News from the New Trier Township High School District 203

Board of Education Regular Meeting

June 5, 2023

Board Approves Five-Year Faculty Contract

The Board approved a five-year faculty contract that contains District costs while still keeping New Trier competitive in retaining and hiring high-quality teachers.

Teachers approved the contract last week following more than 100 hours of negotiations over 20 sessions between January and May. Representatives from the faculty, administration, and Board participated in the collaborative bargaining sessions, which were facilitated by an independent mediator.

The agreement will increase teachers' base salaries by 4.3 percent in 2023-24 and by 4 percent in 2024-25. The increase in 2025-26 will be set by the December 2023 Consumer Price Index (CPI), with a floor of 2 percent and a ceiling of 4 percent. Increases for the 2026-27 and 2027-28 years will be set by the December 2024 and December 2025 CPI, with a floor of 1.5 percent and ceiling of 3 percent.

"I'd like to say how proud I am of the agreement the Board has reached with the New Trier Education Association," said Board Vice President Jean Hahn, "an agreement that recognizes the extraordinary contributions of our exceptional faculty; affirms our shared commitment to cultivating a collaborative, supportive, innovative professional environment; and reflects the Board's continued commitment to attracting and retaining the highest quality teachers in a manner that is both fiscally responsible to the community as well as sustainable for future generations of New Trier students."

Teachers who have not yet reached the top of their lane also will receive annual step increases. The contract adds three steps to the current 24-step schedule, putting it more in line with neighboring districts. The total salary schedule increases come to 5.72 percent in 2023-24 and 4.99 percent in 2024-25, with the schedules in the remaining years to be determined by CPI.

Retirement benefits will change for Tier II (hired on or after Jan. 1, 2011) Teachers' Retirement System participants. These teachers will receive \$1,500 annual District contributions to a 403(b) plan (similar to a 401(k) in the private sector), with the option of an additional \$1,000 annual match.

The contract also works to continue to manage healthcare costs by capping the maximum District increase in medical and dental costs.

Communications Goals to Focus on Community Outreach, Branding

Community members are strongly supportive of New Trier High School and want to assure that its reputation for excellence remains at the forefront of school initiatives and messaging, Communications Director Niki Dizon told the Board in presenting the results of a months-long communications assessment.

The assessment process began in May 2022, when Dizon presented the idea of a communications audit to the Community Engagement Committee. Stated goals of the audit included determining the communications preferences and effectiveness of New Trier's communications with key audiences including parents, students, staff, sender school parents, community leaders, and community members who do not have children attending New Trier.

After receiving proposals from several firms, the District hired Minnesota-based CESO Communications to conduct a three-part independent assessment. CESO engaged with Dizon to gain access to communications plans, tools, and strategies for a Baseline Communications Assessment, followed by an online survey of the entire community in late January through early February 2023 and nine focus groups of key stakeholders in March 2023.

Several themes and recommendations emerged in each step of the assessment process. In general, community members described New Trier in strong reputational terms, said New Trier was a reason people moved to the community, and expressed satisfaction with the school's communication and engagement with different stakeholders. All groups preferred email for communication from New Trier, and those without students currently in the school said they would like more opportunities to receive information and come to school events.

Dizon said the information provided in each step of the process will inform the District's communication planning for years to come. She presented draft short-term goals including creation of a new back-to-school mailing to all residents in September that would include invitations to school events, performances, and other opportunities to get involved with the school. This mailing will be in addition to the District Annual Report to residents in February.

The Communications and Technology Departments also will partner to explore new mass communication systems that will make it easier for interested community members to subscribe to specific newsletters, such as the Board of Education Briefs. The current system is limited to current parents, students, and staff, and given the preference for email among all groups, the District would like to accelerate the process for finding a new system.

Other goals include a branding effort that will both standardize New Trier visuals (logos, colors, fonts) and create messaging around the unique value of a New Trier education, tied to the *Characteristics of a New Trier Graduate*. The District also will begin exploring improvements to its website in advance of a transition to a new vendor at the end of the next school year. Click for the [Communications Assessment presentation](#).

Summer Construction: East Side Project, Duke Childs, Transition Center

Summer is construction season for New Trier High School, as the District undertakes significant facilities improvements at both campuses, Duke Childs Field in Winnetka, and the Transition Center in downtown Glencoe.

Associate Superintendent Chris Johnson updated the Board on the many facilities projects planned over the summer.

At the Winnetka Campus, the East Side Academic and Athletic Project is on track for substantial completion by July 1, after which the District can move forward with occupying the space. Some limited work will continue after July 1, including installation of the high ropes course, an ADA accessible ramp, signage, and an air handling unit, along with restoration of the north athletic fields and work on the southeast parking lot.

At the Northfield Campus, installation of solar panels has begun. The project is projected to provide 43% of the power on campus after completion in spring 2024. Other Northfield projects include the modernization of classrooms in the C and E Buildings with new technology and furniture.

New Trier's portion of the Village of Winnetka Stormwater Project is about to begin following the completion of the village's work on the Duke Childs Field site. The District gave permission for the installation of a large underground detention system beneath its land to benefit the community and the school. New Trier will now reconfigure its baseball and softball fields, add a second softball field, upgrade its facilities and safety measures, and install turf infields. The fields are scheduled to reopen for play in spring 2024.

This summer also brings the second phase of construction work at the Glencoe Transition Center, which serves young adult students with transitional needs as they prepare for life after high school. The center opened in August 2022 and included accessible bathrooms and the One Stop Trev Shop. This summer the District will upgrade the center's instructional spaces and install an accessible ramp. Click for the [Summer Construction presentation](#).

Other News from the June 5 Meeting

- The Board approved a New Trier Choral Program trip to Spain in March 2024, giving interested choral students the opportunity to perform in venues across the country and to collaborate with young Spanish musicians. The last planned choral trip in 2020 was canceled due to the pandemic. Music & Theatre Department Chair Elizabeth Bennett and Choral Director Amy Branahl said the trip will immerse students in the rich cultural heritage of Spain, discovering the country's impact on art, literature, food, architecture, and music. The trip is optional, and students will have fundraising and scholarship opportunities to help defray the cost to families.
- Superintendent Paul Sally announced a title change for Winnetka Campus Principal Denise Dubravec to Winnetka Campus Principal/Assistant Superintendent. Sally said that while Dubravec's main role will remain Principal, the new title brings to the forefront her strategic role in developing coordination of schoolwide programs such as the Graduating Class Teams, the use of restorative practices, the evolution of the Adviser Program, and New Trier's commitment to service. He praised her work amplifying student voices, partnering with parents to improve the school's connection with families, and mentoring and developing leaders throughout the school.

The New Trier Board of Education generally meets on the third Monday of each month, with the business portion of the meeting beginning at 6:30 p.m.

Full videos of Board meetings are available online at
<https://nths.mediaspace.kaltura.com/category/BOARD+OF+EDUCATION/>

Information about Board of Education members, upcoming meetings, agendas, minutes, and other documents are available at <https://www.newtrier.k12.il.us/boardofeducation>