

BOARD BRIEFS

News from the New Trier Township High School District 203

Board of Education Regular Meeting

November 14, 2022

New Trier Selected to Pilot AP African American Studies in 2023-2024

New Trier will offer AP African American Studies as a new course in the 2023-2024 school year after the Board approved the District's inclusion in the second year of a pilot by the College Board.

Chimille Tillery, Director of Curriculum and Instruction, told the Board that New Trier was selected by the College Board for the pilot after submitting an interest form in September. This school year about 60 schools across the country are offering the new AP course, expanding to about 350 schools next year.

The multidisciplinary course, offered to juniors and seniors who have completed U.S. History, will examine the breadth of African American experiences through the use of rich and varied sources, drawing from the fields of literature, the arts and humanities, political science, geography, science, and more. As with other AP courses, students will have the opportunity to take an exam that can lead to college credit or placement.

Tillery said the course directly connects to the District's strategic planning goals, expanding opportunities for students to access a rich and rigorous curriculum while including diverse curricular perspectives. The College Board developed the course based on extensive research, including a review of more than 100 college syllabi; conversations with 133 college faculty; and a higher education symposium where nearly 200 college faculty reviewed the course framework and exam design and gave feedback to align with college courses for credit and placement.

Next steps include identifying one or two teachers for the course, who will participate in the AP Summer Institute. In addition, the District will reach out to students to encourage them to take advantage of the new course and include it in next year's Program of Studies. Click for the [AP African American studies memo](#).

New Trier Embraces Design Thinking in Pilot Program

New Trier will launch a design thinking pilot program this February and partner with the University of Illinois as the District explores ways to help students approach real-life complex problems and develop skills and mindsets that are highly desired by colleges and employers.

Design thinking, also known as "human-centered design," is a problem-solving approach in which participants identify the unmet needs of a population to design solutions collaboratively and across disciplines - all with the end user in mind. This type of thinking asks people to design solutions to problems where there is no obvious solution or precedent.

Assistant Superintendent Peter Tragos told the Board that a design thinking approach aligns closely with many of the District's strategic planning goals in the framework of Intellectual Engagement, Growth, and Readiness. He noted that a World Economic Forum report in 2016 found that 65% of students entering kindergarten that year would work in jobs that did not yet exist. Those students are New Trier's Class of 2029, and providing them with durable skills like adaptability, collaboration, and learning how to learn will serve them well in the future.

The District has been refining ideas for a human-centered design program at New Trier since 2019, when a small group of teachers from different departments proposed an all-day workshop to present ideas for a design thinking school. Tragos said the group has since had four successful retreats bringing together teachers, staff, students, parents, the New Trier Educational Foundation, alumni, community members, and industry professionals.

After considering numerous approaches to bringing a design thinking concept to New Trier, the working group has recommended three immediate action steps. Starting in February, a few courses at each campus will take on a problem unique to the content of the class and then use design thinking principles to develop solutions. For example, a Civics class could use design thinking to come up with ways to address low voter turnout.

In addition, the District will form an advisory board of New Trier staff, industry, community, and college/university partners to propose a design thinking program and will formalize a partnership with the University of Illinois' Siebel Center for Design to support professional development, curriculum development, and research tools. The New Trier Educational Foundation has been an important partner in the process, committing to a fundraising campaign that will support the University of Illinois partnership and an endowed leadership position to work across departments. Click for the [Design Thinking memo](#).

Other News from the November 14 Meeting

- Associate Superintendent Chris Johnson presented the District's tentative tax levy for 2022, which supports the fiscal year 2022-23 and 2023-24 budget. The levy is the primary funding source for the District, and the revenue it generates funds New Trier's excellent faculty and staff, broad curriculum, student services, and extracurricular programs that are the cornerstone of New Trier's reputation for excellence. The levy also helps fund needed facility improvements at both campuses. The District's ability to increase its tax extension is limited by the Property Tax Extension Limitation Act to the Consumer Price Index (CPI) or 5%, whichever is less. The 2021 CPI was 7%, which means the levy is capped at 5%, and that capped increase will be used in the calculation of the tax extension (exclusive of new property). This increase will allow the District to continue to meet its obligations amid rising costs in areas including Special Education, energy, transportation, and supplies. Johnson reported that he expects the New Trier portion of the property tax bill to rise by 5% on average for property owners. The Board is scheduled to approve the final levy in December. Click for the [levy presentation](#).
- Exterior work on the East Side Academic and Athletic Project at the Winnetka Campus is approaching completion as the District prepares for the next phase of interior construction. Associate Superintendent Chris Johnson told the Board that concrete and masonry work is nearly done, with window installation and roofing scheduled for completion at the end of the month. In December, workers will install mechanical equipment and the exterior facade will be substantially completed. Click for the [November Construction Update](#).

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>