

## **BOARD BRIEFS**

*News from the New Trier Township High School District 203  
Board of Education Regular Meeting  
January 22, 2024*

### **Update on Graduating Class Teams**

The introduction of Graduating Class Teams that get to know and support students and families during all four years at New Trier has already yielded success, administrators told the Board in an update about the first semester under the new structure.

Graduating Class Teams are composed of an Assistant Principal, two Adviser Chairs, Advisers, a School Psychologist, a Social Worker, a Post-High School Counselor and two multi-tiered support coaches, many of whom will stay with each graduating class as they move through high school. The teams strengthen the most important idea behind New Trier's Adviser Program - the Adviser at the center of the school/family/student connection - while assuring families have consistency as they partner with the school to help students.

Associate Principal for Student Services Chris Mitchell told the Board that the teams got off to a strong start determining key roles and responsibilities, and they began partnering with advisers on communication with families and students. The teams have had an immediate impact using student data and meetings with advisers to identify programming that could benefit all students as well as to respond to students who may have specific academic or social-emotional needs.

The teams hold regular data review meetings that include analyzing trends in both overall and individual student behavior, attendance, grades, and social-emotional issues. An extensive communication and intervention plan around attendance, for example, helped lead to a large decrease in chronic absence - from 31% during first semester 2022 to 9% during first semester 2023, said Dan Paustian, Assistant Principal for the Class of 2027.

Problem-solving teams look at targeted solutions for individual students who are at risk in certain areas, including academic performance or attendance. These teams include the adviser and student services faculty, who recommend specific interventions and partner with the student and family on support, said Sarah Streubing, Assistant Principal for the Class of 2025.

Another focus this year has been on restorative practices, with a goal of fostering a positive and inclusive environment at New Trier. Restorative practices aim to promote growth and development of accountability and responsibility among students, so they can address and repair harm when it occurs.

Administrators said they will build on the success of the teams in the second semester and then spend the summer analyzing the structure and making adjustments to continue to improve. Click for the [Graduating Class Teams presentation](#).

## Long Term Financial Projections Show Strong Management, Future Needs

New Trier has spent the last several years investing annual taxpayer resources in programs, staffing, and facilities that will benefit students and the community for generations to come, with the District in a strong financial position in the short term to meet District obligations, Associate Superintendent Chris Johnson told the Board.

As the District looks to the end of the decade, however, changes in enrollment and ongoing facilities needs in aging buildings are areas of focus that could require resources beyond the District's typical levy increases.

Johnson presented the District's budget parameters for 2024-2025, which show the District on track for a balanced budget in the coming year. He also discussed the District's projections for long range financial planning.

New Trier receives most of its revenue from local property taxes, issuing a levy each year in line with the consumer price index (CPI) and the state's tax cap law. With CPI growing rapidly over the last few years and the law capping levies at 5% (less than CPI), some expenses have outpaced revenues. Due to strong fiscal management, the District has been able to manage those increasing expenses while still aligning spending with strategic goals.

Some recent accomplishments achieved with existing resources include investment in student support and the Graduating Class Teams, increased Special Education and Student Services staffing, and maintaining low student/teacher ratios. The District last asked the community for an operating rate referendum in 2003, extending its five-year no-referendum commitment at that time to 21 years this year.

The District also has invested more than \$122 million in facilities upgrades over the past five years without the need for a referendum, including the opening of the East Side Addition at the Winnetka Campus, classroom renovations and the installation of solar panels at the Northfield Campus, opening of the Glencoe Transition Center, and improvements to Duke Childs Field in Winnetka. All of these improvements have had a direct and positive impact on students, teachers, and the community.

While the investment has been significant, the District's long range facilities plan includes a substantial amount of work yet to be completed. About 55% of the Winnetka Campus has been renovated, meaning 45% remains - largely in buildings constructed in 1934 and 1957. Pools at both campuses also are inadequate and require immense maintenance, and the District currently does not have a funding source for the bulk of this work. Johnson said the District continues to consider its financial options for long range needs. Click for the [Long Term Financial Projections presentation](#).

*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.*

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