

**NEW TRIER TOWNSHIP HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT 203  
REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION**

**October 17, 2022**

**New Trier Township High School  
7 Happ Road, Room C234  
Northfield, IL 60093**

A **Regular Meeting** of the Board of Education of New Trier Township High School District 203, Cook County, Illinois was held at New Trier High School – Northfield Campus, 7 Happ Road, in Room C234 on Monday, October 17, 2022, at 6:30 p.m.

**Members Present**

Ms. Cathy Albrecht  
Mr. Avik Das  
Mr. Keith Dronen, President  
Ms. Jean Hahn, Vice President  
Mr. Brad McLane  
Ms. Sally Tomlinson

**Administrators Present**

Dr. Paul Sally, Superintendent  
Mr. Christopher Johnson, Associate Superintendent  
Dr. Joanne Panopoulos, Asst. Supt. for Special Ed and Student Services  
Mr. Peter Tragos, Asst. Supt. for Curriculum & Instruction  
Mrs. Denise Dubravec, Principal – Winnetka Campus  
Mr. Paul Waechtler, Principal – Northfield Campus

**Member Absent**

Ms. Kimberly Alcantara

**Also Present**

Mr. Michael Marassa, Chief Technology Officer; Ms. Niki Dizon, Director of Communications; Dr. Renee Zoladz, Director of Human Resources; Ms. Teri Rodgers, Social Studies Department Faculty and Education Association President; Mr. Jon Lepeska, Math Department Faculty; Ms. Gail Gamrath, Northfield Campus Assistant Principal; Ms. Dyan Hillhouse, Math Department Faculty; Ms. Mary Lappan, Mathematics Department Chair; Mr. Don Kim, Mathematics Department Coordinator; Ms. Danah Ouimette, Student Support Coordinator; Ms. Erika Immel, Library Department Chair; Ms. Katherine Linsenmeier, Mathematics Department Faculty; Mr. Marty Laffey, Mathematics Department Faculty; Ms. Kris Kelsh, Mathematics Department Faculty; Mr. Leif Gamrath, Kinetic Wellness Department Faculty; Mr. Matt Stuczynski, Library Department Faculty; Ms. Kerry Brennan, Social Studies Department Faculty; Mr. Dan Paustian, Social Work Coordinator; Mr. Spiro Bolos, Social Studies Department Faculty; Mr. Myron Spiwak, Director of Business Services; Mr. Eric Johnson, Technology Department; Mr. Mike Hill, Technology Department; Ms. Lindsey Ruston, Board of Education Secretary; members of the press and community.

**BUSINESS MEETING**

**I. CALL TO ORDER – 5:30 p.m. – C234**

Mr. Dronen called the Regular Meeting of October 17, 2022 of the Board of Education to order at 5:30 p.m. in room C234 at the Northfield campus. Roll call was taken, and all members were present, except for Ms. Alcantara.

Mr. Dronen asked for a motion to move to Closed Session. Mr. Das moved that the Board of Education adjourn to closed session for the purpose of the appointment, employment, compensation, discipline, performance, or dismissal of specific employees, specific individuals who serve as independent contractors, or specific volunteers of the District or legal counsel for the District, including hearing testimony on a complaint lodged against an employee, a specific individual who serves as an independent contractor, or a volunteer of the District or against legal counsel for the District to determine its validity; collective negotiating matters between the District and its employees or their representatives, or deliberations concerning salary schedules for one or more classes of employees; the setting of a price for sale or lease of property owned by the District and litigation, when an action against, affecting or on behalf of the particular District has been filed and is pending before a court or administrative tribunal, or when the District finds that an action is probable or imminent, in which case the basis for the finding shall be recorded and entered into the closed meeting minutes. Ms. Hahn seconded the motion. Upon a roll call vote being taken, the members voted as follows:

AYE: Mr. Das, Ms. Hahn, Mr. McLane, Ms. Tomlinson, Ms. Albrecht, Mr. Dronen

NAY: none

ABSENT: Ms. Alcantara

The motion passed.

## **II. CLOSED SESSION – 5:30 p.m. – A201A**

## **III. BUSINESS MEETING – Open Session – 6:30 p.m. – C234**

Mr. Dronen recalled the Regular Meeting of October 17, 2022 of the Board of Education to order at 6:45 p.m. in room C234 at the Northfield campus. Roll call was taken, and all members were present, except for Ms. Alcantara.

## **IV. Minutes and Reports**

### **A. Regular Meeting of September 19, 2022 (open and closed session)**

Mr. Dronen asked for any comments or adjustments on the minutes of the Regular Meeting of September 19, 2022 (open and closed session). There were three requests for changes to the minutes from Ms. Hahn that were incorporated. Ms. Hahn moved, and Ms. Albrecht seconded the motion, that the Board of Education approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting of September 19, 2022 (open and closed session), as revised. Upon a roll call vote being taken, the members voted as follows:

AYE: Ms. Hahn, Mr. McLane, Ms. Tomlinson, Ms. Albrecht, Mr. Das, Mr. Dronen

NAY: none

ABSENT: Ms. Alcantara

The motion passed.

### **B. Report from Campus Principals and FOIA Report**

Mr. Paul Waechtler, Principal for the Northfield Campus, shared the following student events and program updates from that campus:

- Parent Adviser Meetings took place at the end of September and early October where parents had the opportunity to sign up to meet with their child's adviser.
- Today was the deadline for families to have their student's physical completed. Thanks to the great work of the Health Services Department, as there were about 100 students who were outstanding, there were zero freshmen excluded from school today.
- Mr. Waechtler shared Homecoming campus decorations pictures. There was also a department decorating contest with the theme, *California Dreaming*, which the Library won. Mr. Waechtler's office area also was decorated with Mr. Dan Paustian, Social Work Department Coordinator and a couple of his advisees singing for the student judges.
- There was also a Homecoming Rally and Mr. Waechtler thanked Ms. Stacy Kolack and Mr. Tim Hayes, Student Activities Coordinators, for their work. He shared pictures, including one where Ms. Gail Gamrath, Assistant Principal at Northfield, pushed him in a hamster wheel relay race.
- The Freshman Mixer took place on Tuesday. He thanked the Freshmen Adviser Chairs, Mr. Mark Howard and Ms. Sue Ellen Haak, along with Mr. Hayes for their work on the evening. It was well attended, and students enjoyed food and games.
- Freshman Go-to-School Night was Wednesday and provided families with a snapshot of their child's school day. He thanked teachers for their work making it a great evening for families.
- Mr. Waechtler shared a couple of unexpected occurrences with the first being a water main leak. He thanked Mr. Jim Maile, Assistant Director of Facilities, Mr. Dave Conway, Director of Physical Plant Services (PPS) and PPS staff for coming in on Saturday to fix it so school could be open on Monday. Second, a parakeet was found in the hallway and PPS captured it. Ms. Lia Fahs, Communications Coordinator, used social media to find the owners who picked up the parakeet this afternoon.

Mrs. Denise Dubravec, Principal for Winnetka Campus, shared the following student events and program updates from that campus:

- Multiple alumni tours have taken place for the classes of 1952, 1965, 1970, 1971, 1972, 1977, and 1981 with the class of 1952 coming every five years. Student Ambassadors lead the tours. Mrs. Dubravec noted that one of the best parts is hearing all the stories from the alums time at New Trier. She proceeded to share a story from an alum and New Trier parent whose daughter had Ms. Robyn Ward, Science Department Coordinator, as an adviser.
- Homecoming was wonderful and Student Council did a great job working with Pep Club, Tri-Ship and Girls Club.

- Several students were selected for the All-American D-Day 2023 Honor Band. These students will travel in June to Normandy and participate in a number of festivities. They are five out of a group of 125 that will attend and include: Ms. Charlotte Caukins, Ms. Roxanna Jafari, Mr. Hadad Dion, Ms. Nikita Kovolov, Ms. Sophia Wong and Mr. Tyler Wong.
- *The Importance of Being Earnest* took place in the Black Box Theatre. Students are also participating in the Illinois Music Education Association's competition.
- Ms. Melissa Duffy, Career Services Coordinator, hosted Career Day on September 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup>. Around 22 businesses attended in order to connect students with jobs in the community.
- There was recently a mum sale for Sofi's Greenhouse sponsored by the Transition students. There is also beautiful lavender near the Greenhouse.
- Fall sports are concluding with the boys' golf team taking first place and, in the group, Mr. Johnny Creamean won the individual first place medal. The girls' golf team placed sixth with Ms. Amy Beanblossom placing fifth individually. Boys' and girls' cross country won the Central Suburban League. Cross country, swimming and field hockey have state matches coming up.
- Mrs. Dubravec shared how the rowers practice outside her office window. Mr. John Selby broke the school's eleven-year record for the 6,000-meter finishing in 19 minutes and 54.4 seconds to beat it by six seconds.

Mr. Johnson gave the FOIA report, noting that there were three requests since the last Board meeting, and all but one is closed. One was regarding security materials, which is still open. The two that are closed include email information about curriculum materials and survey results.

## V. Communications

Mr. Dronen invited anyone from the audience who wished to address the Board to come forward and fill out a yellow communications request form and give it Mr. Peter Tragos, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction. Mr. Dronen reminded those speaking to keep their comments to three minutes or less per Board Policy 2:230. He also asked that the audience refrain from clapping, or a response of any kind in regard to people's comments. There was one request for public comment.

1. Mr. Sam Grossnor, parent, congratulated the school on doing a great job. He went on to say that he does wish he had more of a connection with the teachers and ability to see them.

## VI. Special Orders of Business

Mr. Dronen noted that the Fiscal Year 2022 Audit Report would be moved to the first special order of business.

### **\*F. FY 22 Audit Report**

Mr. Johnson welcomed Mr. Andy Mace, auditor from auditing firm Wipfli. Mr. Mace worked with Mr. Myron Spiwak, Director of Business Services, as well accounting consultant RSM to prepare the fiscal year 22 financial reports. The annual comprehensive financial report is submitted to the Association of School Business Officials International's and the Government Finance Officers Association's report award programs. It has won those awards for the past 17 years. Only about 50 of the 800 school districts in Illinois go to the effort of doing this as it is the highest level and best practice of financial reporting. Mr. Mace noted that it is a clean audit opinion and only about 25% of Illinois school districts have this opinion.

Mr. Mace highlighted the District's fund balance management. The District has several alternative revenue source bond issues outstanding, meaning there is not a tax levy behind them, and they are paid with operating funds. The District is also making transfers out of the funds to fund capital projects without issuing debt. Mr. Mace noted this is not often seen. This also saves taxpayer money as the District is not paying interest. Operationally, the District continues to employ best practices and it has an excellent organizational approach towards internal controls. There were no management letter comments.

Mr. Johnson thanked Mr. Mace and his team along with Mr. Spiwak and his team, who have spent months working on this to allow the District to have a smooth audit process. Mr. Johnson then referenced a brief summary chart, noting that originally the District had a revenue budget of \$121 million and thanks to a few variables, the District came in almost \$7 million over the initial revenue budget. For expenditures, the District came in slightly higher than the initial budget as it worked to address the needs of all students, which included staffing needs. The initial plan was to take \$7.6 million from District reserves to fund its ongoing facilities initiatives, however, the end results from the year showed that about \$250,000 went back into reserves from operating funds. Mr. Johnson concluded that it was a very strong year financially.

Ms. Albrecht inquired about the process to obtain the 18<sup>th</sup> year of certificates of excellence from finance authorities, which Mr. Johnson shared, noting it does take a number of months to review as it is a comprehensive review of the reports, and the District receives comments next spring.

Ms. Hahn moved, and Mr. Das seconded the motion, that the Board of Education accepts the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report and other related reports for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2022. Upon a roll call vote being taken, the members voted as follows:

AYE: Mr. McLane, Ms. Tomlinson, Ms. Albrecht, Mr. Das, Ms. Hahn, Mr. Dronen

NAY: none

ABSENT: Ms. Alcantara

The motion passed.

### **A. Civil Discourse and Critical Thinking Presentation: Math**

Mr. Tragos introduced the Math Department's Civil Discourse and Critical Thinking presentation. This is the first presentation this school year in the Teaching and Learning series that began last year. He displayed the Civil Discourse and Critical Thinking statement that was adopted by the Board in October 2020. He then shared the reasons as to why the District is making these presentations, the curriculum development and objectives along with the Board policies that support them.

Ms. Mary Lappan, Math Department Chair, introduced Mr. Don Kim, Math Department Coordinator; Ms. Dyan Hillhouse, Ms. Katherine Linsenmeier and Mr. Jon Lepeska, Math Department Faculty. Mr. Kim began by presenting The Handshake Problem which is a question posed to Geometry level two classes for the Thinking and Habits of Mind unit. He shared that class discussion would focus on what methods to use to approach the problem. Mr. Kim then shared about math instruction in the past and Ms. Lappan went on to share about current classroom instruction and the improvements that have been made over time. The department believes that taking risks and learning from a discussion are all valuable skills beyond the math content that students should possess as they graduate. Three years of math are required for graduation, but almost all students take four, with some taking two math classes in a year. Teaching, reasoning, problem solving, and critical thinking are the main pieces that the department focuses on.

Ms. Hillhouse displayed the goals from the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM) and how the department has aligned its goals with those of NCTM. Although the goals are math focused, at the core, these statements can serve as universal conditions for learning. She shared about an activity that was done during the department's opening day meeting regarding values, noting many teachers took this one step further and did the same activity in their own classrooms. After additional comments, Ms. Hillhouse noted that the department believes that the most authentic learning occurs when a student can face a challenge, persevere with supports provided by teachers, and feel success when greater understanding is achieved. She then introduced Mr. Lepeska and Ms. Linsenmeier who spoke about what this looks like in the classroom.

Mr. Lepeska displayed a graphic of "The Learning Pit" and how it describes the kind of problem solving that is done in class. Mr. Lepeska's classes at Northfield are willing to jump in on a problem, but issues occur when students hit "the bottom" and can be confused about how to solve a problem. Teachers build appropriate supports to help them climb out of the pit. Mr. Lepeska noted that the goal is to be comfortable with being uncomfortable. They work to climb out of the pit and that is when they feel success and achieve deep learning. To him, students are building persistence and resilience and having productive struggle happen in the process. He provided a more specific example using "anchor problems". These are problems that one would typically find at the end of a unit where students would use their new skills. These problems are, instead, often brought in at the beginning of the unit and students are asked to work on them. This promotes critical thinking, communication, modeling, effective technology use and productive struggle. He then provided an example from *Algebra 1*.

Next, Ms. Linsenmeier spoke about *Intro to Finite Math and Statistics*, which is a level two senior course. There are about 40 students across two sections as most senior students in level 2 math classes take pre-calculus. This course was developed for those students who took pre-calculus as juniors at level two, so they would have an option for a fourth-year math class. This course poses real world math problems, including questions about equity. To develop

these questions, Ms. Linsenmeier and the department consulted with social studies teachers as they are well versed in teaching students how to bring multiple perspectives into discussions. She then walked through the topics in the course.

Ms. Linsenmeier then posed a traditional basketball problem from the course's Probability 1 unit that is solved using a tree diagram. She went on to share details from another lesson and how she builds upon the basketball problem. Ms. Linsenmeier noted that this is a longer lesson compared to the basketball one but shared the many advantages such as students being invested in the answer, better conceptual understanding, connections to the real world as well as being comfortable with being uncomfortable. She shared that one of her goals, and a theme of the course, is that mathematics does not tell you what decision to make, but without understanding the mathematics, you cannot make an informed decision.

Ms. Lappan then highlighted other courses in the department such as *Geometry, Design and Construction* which is a team-taught class between the Applied Arts and Math departments. She displayed pictures and shared details about some projects students do in class. Next, she highlighted technology that is used in the classroom. She went on to share about Computer Science, noting that over the past few years the department has collaborated with the Business Education and Applied Arts departments. They also look forward to what the Innovation Hub may bring to *Geometry, Design and Construction*.

Mr. Kim shared the department's two equity goals, the first is encouraging faculty to participate in professional development opportunities. The second is to develop lessons around math and social justice issues. The department also supports the monthly observances with various displays. Mr. Kim then shared details about *the English Learners (EL) Math Resource* class, where one of the teachers is from the school's EL program. The teacher provides support for emergent bilingual and multilingual students who are not only learning a second language, but math content as well. The teacher also collaborates with other math teachers to help them support EL students in their classes.

Other student supports include the Academic Assistance Center (AAC) at Northfield and the Math Resource Room at Winnetka. Much of this support is individualized to meet student needs and includes student tutors, instructional assistants, and teachers. Ms. Hillhouse shared images of the math offices at both campuses as student support also occurs in these spaces. She shared details about the new math office at Winnetka, noting there were two priorities for the design – one was an open and unobstructed layout to promote communication amongst students and staff and the other was to have several different and flexible arrangements that would facilitate working one-on-one or in small groups. Ms. Hillhouse shared final comments about the department as it works collaboratively, models curiosity, welcomes challenges and displays empathy.

Ms. Lappan finished by sharing comments from student surveys at the end of the year that speaks to the work that the department is doing. Mr. Dronen then asked for questions and comments from the Board.

Ms. Tomlinson noted her appreciation for the approach taken in these classes as students are being taught more than just math, but are also learning collaboration, bravery, and to fail. She shared an anecdote from when her daughter was a junior in math class, noting that when one has to explain how and why they are doing something, it helps seed the concept much better.

Ms. Albrecht noted it was a great presentation and such different math than when she was in school. She also shared comments around "learning to forget."

Ms. Hahn shared that when she speaks to parents regarding math, they often say that the math looks different, and they cannot help their child with it. After additional comments, Ms. Hahn noted her appreciation for what the struggle and the need to figure a problem out will give to students, she inquired, however, how teachers help students and parents figure out when the struggle is part of the process and when the student might need help. She noted that one can appreciate the resilience and characteristics that this approach builds, yet this is a performance-based society so if a student's grade is reflecting struggle, that failure will not sit right. Ms. Hahn added that she would like to know what homework looks like and what that role plays. Ms. Lappan replied to the Ms. Hahn's first question, noting the benefit of the structure of the class, where students are talking, and the teacher is walking around listening and observing students. Students are also encouraged to ask questions as well as seek help from the various supports available. Ms. Lappan noted that the relationship part is the important piece in discovering a student's struggle. Alternatively, Ms. Lappan noted that students also struggle when they receive a grade lower than an A and that is worked through as well. Mr. Kim added that it is the skill of the teacher to know when it is time for them to teach the

student the math behind the problem. He shared additional comments, noting that every teacher wants to meet with struggling students to support them, but it can also be hard to get students to come in for that help. Regarding homework, it is approached not as a task, but an opportunity for learning. Mr. Kim noted that many teachers have opportunities for students to correct their work and earn 100% of their homework credit. Ms. Lappan added that in the Program of Studies, there is a department statement about homework, what it is for and its role, along with the student's role with it. Ms. Linsenmeier then responded to Ms. Hahn's question about how a student deals with the struggle when there is an assessment at the end that matters. She often tells students that the work will feel harder in class, but by not telling them exactly what to do, come test time they should be able to answer the questions because they know how to be a flexible thinker. She noted that separating the learning process from the assessment process is an important one.

Ms. Hahn then inquired how the block schedule impacted a teacher's ability to form relationships with students. Ms. Lappan replied that there is the same amount of contact time with students, so the same skills can still be taught even if the periods were shorter. The block has allowed for problems and discussions to play out in a single day or two versus being chopped up into little bits over several days. She noted it has also challenged the department to change the content of the courses to fit the scheduling and tasks. From a relationship standpoint, the amount of time is the same, but there is flexibility to extend a discussion or have multiple ways to look at a problem that has been beneficial for several classes. Ms. Hahn thanked them for their efforts to work with the new schedule.

Mr. McLane commented that it was a superb presentation, and they contextualized their approach well. He was not sure how they were going to tie it to the Strategic Plan, particularly around critical thinking, but noted they illuminated it beautifully. His only question was similar to Ms. Hahn's about embracing the pit versus wallowing in it, which he now better understands.

Mr. Dronen noted his appreciation for the presentation. Referencing his time on the Board in District 39, it seemed every year for the New Trier Math Program that girls would test just as well, if not better, but the program would be 70% boys and 30% girls. He inquired if the department is seeing as many girls now interested in a career in math as boys due to the way it is being taught. Ms. Lappan replied that her classes are balanced, and the girls talk about studying engineering or science. There are some classes where there are more boys than girls simply because of opportunities given and decisions that were made in middle school or even earlier. She also mentioned that the middle school girls often choose not to join the program because of a connection they have at the middle school that is more important to them. Finally, Ms. Lappan noted that there are still more boys than girls in *AP Computer Science*, but there are girls in every class working hard and enjoying the work.

Mr. Dronen, referencing Mr. Tragos' memo, shared Board Policy 6:210, Instructional Materials, noting it recognizes "the freedom of the faculty to select textbooks, library books, and other instructional materials is a professional privilege. Board of Education policy supports academic freedom as basic to both democracy and public education. The Board expresses good faith in the faculty's capacity to select educational materials using professional judgement." He noted that the group hit it on the head with their presentation.

### **B. New Trier 2030 – Freshmen Success**

Mr. Waechtler began the presentation on Freshmen Success, which is a program that was created to successfully help students transfer to high school. He thanked teachers who have adjusted their curriculum to incorporate these lessons and concepts. Ms. Gail Gamrath, Northfield Campus Assistant Principal, shared that students come to New Trier with a variety of skill sets. She provided a historical overview of training and skills students have received such as iPad summer training, study skills, school routines and expected behavior. Last year, Ms. Danah Ouimette, Student Support Coordinator, and Ms. Steph Moretta, Academic Assistance Coordinator, created executive functioning lessons that were taught during study hall. Students noted in their feedback that study hall was not a good venue for these lessons. Time was spent in leadership meetings to determine how to make the delivery of this information more intentional. The new plan includes teaching various skills in specific academic areas. For instance, Technology Modules are now taught in Social Studies and Science classes with a thorough Library orientation. English and Math classes are teaching executive functioning skills like what was taught last year in study halls. The aim is to have all lessons completed by the end of September; however, the Social Emotion Learning (SEL) and Resiliency Training in the Kinetic Wellness classes lasts all of first quarter. Lastly, Adviser Room continues to cover a variety of items.

Ms. Danah Ouimette then shared about the executive functioning lessons which include how to use a Trevian Tracker, how to annotate, breaking down big assignments and preparing for tests with all of these falling under the umbrella of time management. Ms. Ouimette then provided a visual of the Trevian Tracker planning notebook and

went into depth about the five items every Trevian Tracker should have such as listing all classes every day, checking off submitted work, and highlighting “big deals” such as tests or projects. A student’s Trevian Tracker should also include after-school commitments. Next, she shared a detailed example of breaking down a big assignment. Finally, Ms. Ouimette presented on how to prepare for a quiz or test along with a variety of study strategies. The goal is for students to select strategies that fit their learning style and the class as well as map out their preparation, so it does not all take place the night before the test. Ms. Ouimette then tied all of this back to the Trevian Tracker. Not only does writing their assignments in one help them remember compared to a digital platform, but it allows anyone who is supporting them to also see what is going on. By doing all of these items, the hope is that students feel less stress and anxiety.

Next, Mr. Paustian, Social Work Department Coordinator, presented the work on a Tier One intervention that is part of Freshmen Success and focuses on Social Emotional Learning. Mr. Paustian shared details about the Panorama survey pilot with ninth and eleventh graders, noting it is an asset based SEL screening tool that helps the school get a sense of what a student’s perceptions are of their abilities in eight categories. Students indicated that, relatively speaking, they felt confident in their abilities. However, there are some students who struggle, even in areas where they are reporting success. It is when the level of intensity reaches a certain point that other strategies are needed. The school wants to make sure it was providing all students, from the start, the opportunity to have access to curriculum and strategies that might help them.

The six Stress and Anxiety Management Strategies (SAMS) lessons came out of Tier Two work being done with students who were already demonstrating a higher level of need regarding stress and anxiety. A pilot around what a Tier One version of this could look like was trialed in two different Adviser Rooms during fourth quarter last year. Feedback was gathered and discussed with the Northfield Campus leadership. Mr. Paustian thanked Mr. Pete Collins, Kinetic Wellness Department Coordinator, for helping to implement this. He also noted that the six lessons were wrapping up for every Freshman and students will have an opportunity to self-select if they would like to be a part of a Tier Two group. Students may also be invited to a Tier Two group as well if greater support is needed. One item learned from last year’s pilot was to make the SAMS lessons more active and engaging, providing an opportunity for research as well as implementation and practice of the skills. The SAMS units include the brain, the stress bucket, executive functioning and emotions, thoughts, emotions, behaviors, mindset and identifying your motivational strategy. He provided details on each. Mr. Paustian further elaborated on lesson four, mindset, by providing an example about a situation and walking through the thoughts, feelings, and actions that a student might have.

Mr. Waechtler shared the next step of gathering student and teacher input which will be used in a leadership discussion in order to improve for next year. He then invited questions and comments from the Board.

Ms. Hahn commented that it was a great presentation, and in typical New Trier fashion, work that needs to be done is identified, it is piloted and the school listens to student voice and adjust to improve it. Regarding student input, since the whole class has gone through this intentional training, Ms. Hahn inquired if there were any quantitative measures that will be watched with this class as they move through New Trier. Mr. Waechtler replied that it is complicated, however, there is data such as if students are turning in work on time that would reflect this. He went on to note that general trends will also tell the school if this has been successful as the items that were problematic for freshmen are less so. Ms. Hahn then inquired if Panorama would potentially show student anxiety and feelings of confidence. Mr. Waechtler replied that longitudinal data could be used over time and would provide information not only on executive functioning, but also SEL. Mr. Waechtler added that some students walk in with many of these skills, but they still benefit from this, while others come in with some deficits in these areas and it helps them.

Ms. Tomlinson referencing the air traffic controller analogy that Mr. Paustian mentioned during his part of the presentation. She noted an article similar to this of prioritizing tasks and staying focused which referenced a Harvard study linked executive functioning skills to academic success. She noted that the other areas of work are important but if the school can help students with this part of their lives, it will free them up to work on other problems that might arise. Ms. Tomlinson shared her appreciation that students are being given tools to select from instead of specific steps to follow as they are then able to select the strategies that will work for them. Mr. Paustian spoke further to the air traffic controller metaphor which brings out an awareness of many components to a situation as well as normalizing one is not alone along with what skills a student possesses that could help.

Ms. Albrecht inquired as to how freshmen are adjusting to the block schedule with an Anchor Day in the middle of the week. Ms. Ouimette shared that by adding Anchor Day, it has helped to balance students. Students have also been taught how to logistically handle that day within the week. By managing their time throughout the week and

tackling assignments a little bit at a time, it has helped lower students stress and anxiety. Ms. Albrecht then inquired if the routine is making sense to students, to which Ms. Ouimette replied that it is, noting that first quarter is a gentle start for freshmen, so they will see work start to pick-up and the routine will be helpful.

Mr. McLane shared that there are some wonderful life lessons that can be internalized and acted upon. He also appreciates that freshmen are able to experience this. Mr. Waechtler shared that these are skills that students can continue to hone for a long time.

Mr. Dronen thanked the group for their excellent presentation.

#### **\*C. School Calendar 2023-2024**

Dr. Sally presented the 2023-2024 school year calendar. Key dates include August 17<sup>th</sup> when teachers return and August 21<sup>st</sup> as the first day of student attendance. Other major dates are included with Dr. Sally noting that other non-attendance days will be determined once the school finishes first semester exams before winter break. The school is committing to having final exams prior to winter break again next year in order to provide enough time to study the issue. The last day of student attendance will be June 6<sup>th</sup>. Winter and spring breaks are coordinated with the sender schools. Dr. Sally anticipates having a complete calendar in March 2023.

Ms. Hahn moved, and Mr. Das seconded the motion, that the Board of Education approves the 2023-2024 school year calendar as presented. Upon a roll call vote being taken, the members voted as follows:

AYE: Ms. Tomlinson, Ms. Albrecht, Mr. Das, Ms. Hahn, Mr. McLane, Mr. Dronen

NAY: none

ABSENT: Ms. Alcantara

The motion passed.

#### **D. New Course Proposals**

Mr. Tragos presented the new course proposals, noting there were four new ones and 19 courses that were submitted for revision or modification. He also acknowledged Dr. Chimille Tillery, Director of Curriculum and Instruction as well as his assistant, Ms. Lisa Brown for all of their work on these proposals. All submissions were refined and not all proposals were recommended for approval.

Mr. Tragos went on to provide highlights of the courses, noting that major revisions were made to senior curriculum and course offerings in the English department. It is the culmination of a project, dating back to 2019, to bring greater coherence to the scope and sequence as well as skills and content of the 9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade English curriculum. After describing the work done to get to this point, Mr. Tragos noted that there are three major changes to choices for seniors. One is moving to a three-tiered level system for seniors – level two co-taught, level nine and level four. This would be a move from the four levels the department currently has – two versions of level two, level three, level four, and level nine. The recommendation is to combine level two into level nine honors curriculum. Mr. Tragos shared it is developmentally appropriate and ladders up the rigor for seniors after three years at New Trier and most of whom are college bound. It continues to meet the needs of students who need the setting of a co-taught level two class and also those at the high honors. It also reduces the number of singletons and doubletons that are in the master schedule making staffing and sectioning more efficient and flexible and provides more choices for those students in level two. This is also similar in practice to what the Social Studies and Science departments have. There is also a revision of electives options in the department. They revised nine courses and created one new level nine course by combining content and methodology from three long-standing courses to create *Cultural Crossroads in Literature*. Lastly, there is a world literature focus which allows students a wide range of choices, which will now unify course offerings with this theme. There is still work to do around communication to students, staff and parents about these changes.

There are three other new course offerings and Mr. Tragos briefly shared details of each with the first from Applied Arts, entitled, *Urban Design and Development*, which will replace Civil Engineering. The second offering is from the Art department, entitled, *Leadership in Art Essentials* with the third from the Music and Theatre department, called, *Introduction to Acting*.

Major course revisions are proposed for *Geometry, Design, and Construction* as well as redesigning one or two sections of *Resource Seminar*. Mr. Tragos also provided details pertaining to both revisions.

Next month, the Board will vote on these offerings and revisions. Mr. Tragos then invited questions and comments from the Board.

Ms. Hahn asked Mr. Tragos what the change with the senior English classes looks like for grades and perceived rigor. She noted that starting to think about that for students and parents would be helpful. Mr. Tragos replied that the impact of levels two and three into level nine is generally positive. It will give students who typically take a level two course in English more options their senior year. It also benefits those students who would typically take a level two class senior year to advance to a level nine class senior year shows growth and rigor over time. It maintains the rigor of students who take a level three class or level nine as they are both honors level. Including a set of students in the level nine class raises the rigor without diminishing it for others. To support and maintain the rigor, teachers are working on that now and will also do so through a summer grant. Teachers have committed to differentiating instruction for a mixed level class, which is not unfamiliar to the school. Regarding GPA, it will slightly increase the weight of grades as there will be more students taking courses at honors level three. It has a higher weight on the weighted scale than it does at level two. When looking at grade distributions, Mr. Tragos anticipates seeing an increase for all students. He noted there are also not a limited number of spaces, so students will not drop out of that and will maintain their GPA as they have had it at levels three and nine.

Ms. Albrecht inquired if the new courses would have an impact on the class size report on the low or high ends. Mr. Tragos noted that specifically regarding the English department changes, ideally there will be fewer smaller class sizes because there will be fewer singletons and doubletons. It should bring the classes more towards the class average. Ms. Hahn, referencing the report, noted that this will help students to not have scheduling conflicts since with fewer singletons and doubletons, it helps a student to get the schedule they want. She noted it was a concern of the block schedule, so hopefully this alleviates some of that pressure, to which Mr. Tragos agreed.

### **E. Class Size Report**

Mr. Tragos presented the class size report which provides the Board and public a perspective on the District's class sizes and allocation of resources while internally helping the District to monitor staffing levels and evaluate staffing allocations to make informed decisions about staffing and sectioning for the following school year. The 2022-23 school year staffing and sectioning was based on maintaining the current class average and meeting budget targets while making strategic allocations in special education, social work and student services to meet students academic and social emotional needs. Based on McKibbons' demographic projections, it was predicted that the school would have 3,819 students. As of October 1<sup>st</sup>, the official enrollment is 3,780 students, down 39 fewer students than expected for a net decrease of 108 students compared to last year.

Mr. Tragos highlighted a few items, noting the class enrollments per department are relatively consistent in the number of students in the District. Referencing a chart in the report, it shows the percentage of students taking a course and the total number of enrollments in a particular department as compared to the total number of students in the District. For example, enrollment in the English Department is 101%, meaning that some students are taking more than one class in the department.

The average class size is the same as last year at 22.1. The percentage of large classes, consisting of 30 or more students, decreased for the third consecutive year to 0.1%. The percentage of small classes, consisting of 14 or fewer students, increased from last year from 4.9% to 5.4%. The District aims for that number to be below 5%, however, there are a number of factors as to why the percentage may be over that threshold.

Mr. Tragos provided context around the chart in section three where he identified if a class was a singleton, doubleton or had more than two sections offered. He reported the number of sections there are, so one could see the average across the class size. He went on to share perspective and reasoning as to the numbers found in the chart. Although there is variation, there is always a student-centered approach. It is a collaborative process with department leadership and administrators to make these decisions.

This report will be used as one of many data points that informs the District about the overall student experience. It will be used with departments to plan for next year. Mr. Tragos then invited questions and comments from the Board.

Mr. McLane spoke to the total number of students enrolled of 3,780 and referenced the trend line down. He inquired if the District knows the melt rate of potential students in the township who are opting not to go to New Trier. He also inquired if the District is seeing an acceleration of that melt rate. Mr. Tragos replied that those are numbers that are being reviewed. Dr. Sally answered that there will be a new demographic report soon. The biggest driver is the number of students in all of the sender schools and their numbers are going down at a similar rate. Dr. Sally has asked that a careful look be given to eighth-grade public enrollment versus New Trier's enrollment. The patterns once students are at New Trier are familiar in terms of the number of students added or lost. The freshmen campus looks carefully and gathers anecdotal information from families as to where their student is attending instead and why they chose not to attend New Trier. The demographer will help the District look at the melt rate. Mr. McLane shared additional comments. Ms. Tomlinson then inquired if the demographer also looks at housing turnover, which Dr. Sally confirmed. Mr. Johnson added it is one of the biggest factors being seen. There is an aging population that are empty nesters and not much housing turnover, however there is strong demand for houses when available. The area is almost 100% built-out so there are not new houses being built. The age, based on the 2020 Census, is increasing in the area. There is a drop in students for the next several years but that starts to build up again around the 27-28 and 28-29 school years. Mr. McLane noted he is not so concerned about the demographics but rather why parents are opting to not send their children to New Trier.

Mr. Dronen commented on the student services information, noting that there were 14.4 FTEs last year in social work and this year there are 15.6 FTEs. He thanked the administration for providing those resources as there is a focus on social emotional. He inquired if the District plans to stay at this level of FTEs. Mr. Tragos replied that the targets will meet programmatic needs as well as match to what the enrollment size is. Given where the school is now, he noted it looks to be consistent to where the FTEs are currently.

### **G. Facilities Update: Winnetka Campus East Side Academic and Athletic Project**

Mr. Johnson provided an update on the Winnetka Campus East Side Academic and Athletic Project (ESSA). Substantial work has been completed over the past month. Last week, Kinetic Wellness teachers toured the site, and architectural students will do so this week. He provided progress pictures of the site, noting that the crane has been removed. Also shown were interior progress pictures. Mr. Johnson shared a picture of the last steel beam, which was signed by several people, being installed.

The District is now at the mid-point of the project, so Mr. Johnson shared a more in-depth look at the budget. The total contingency and allowances started with an initial balance of \$7.6 million, allocated \$3.2 million. The estimated known future expenditures are \$1.9 million which could either increase or decrease. The estimate for potential future unknown change orders is \$700,000. Tentatively, the District has the budget it needs to finish the project with a small surplus. This, however, evolves on a day-to-day basis and is monitored carefully. After additional comments, Mr. Johnson invited questions and comments from the Board.

Ms. Hahn inquired if the project has reached the point where it is enclosed and no longer weather susceptible. Mr. Johnson replied that each day gets closer to less exposure to the weather, but there is some work left to do. Mr. McLane stated the same question was asked at the Facilities Steering Committee meeting and the answer was, with fingers crossed, December 1<sup>st</sup>.

Ms. Albrecht referenced some of the unforeseen circumstances that occurred at the beginning of the project, sharing that, to some degree, those situations are hopefully behind the project. Mr. Johnson noted that most of that is encountered during demolition, which the project is mainly past.

## **VII. Administrative Items**

### **A. Treasurer's Report for September 2022**

Mr. Johnson presented the Treasurer's Report for September 2022. Balances for all accounts were \$119,316,785. The weighted portfolio yield is beginning to rise to 1.58% for short term and 1.07% for long term. The District will invest a significant amount of the remaining bond funds for the Winnetka Campus East Side project and has an average portfolio yield of 3.34%. These funds will be used to pay the monthly bills going through the end of the project, but this is a chance to pick up some interest income. Unfortunately, due to the delay in property tax bills, the District is unable to invest most cash now as it needs to remain liquid to pay its obligations to support students and the school year. The latest information from Cook County is that tax bills will be distributed December 1<sup>st</sup> and due December 30<sup>th</sup>. The District has adequate cash balances through December to meet its obligations.

### **B. Financial Report for September 2022**

Mr. Johnson presented the Financial Report for September 2022. Operating revenue was \$3.8 million for the first three months of the fiscal year, or 86% lower compared to last year due to the delay in property tax receipts. Historically those begin in August or September. Other revenue categories are similar to last year. The tentative budget for operating revenue is 1.13% lower than last fiscal year as there no longer is the one-time FEMA grants or one-time payments that happened last year. Operating expenditures were \$17.9 million through September, or just less than one percent higher than last year. Variances will develop over the coming months once the school year is really underway. The tentative budget for operating expenditures is 3.52% higher than last year, so that variance is expected to increase in the coming months. Mr. Johnson then invited questions and comments from the Board on either report.

Ms. Hahn noting that everyone is dealing with the delay in taxes, and it is frustrating to lose interest in long-term investments, but she shared how impressed she has been. Mr. Johnson shared with the Finance Committee that with some nimble rearranging and taking advantage of opportunities that even with short-term cash, the District was still able to realize some amazing interest earnings on that money. Ms. Hahn noted that the District is in the position to be able to meet its obligations because of the generosity of the community and taxpayers, but it is also good for the community to be aware of how hard the District is working to maximize their funds with what is available. She applauds the efforts. Mr. Johnson appreciates the support, noting the team is doing the best it can with the situation. He noted that the District is very fortunate with the resources that the community has provided it. This has allowed for the continuation of uninterrupted operations and has not placed in the District in the position where it needs to seek a third-party financing source like others. While difficult to lose some interest income, it is better than paying loan costs of three or four percent. He thanked the community for the resources they have provided to the District. Mr. Dronen added the importance of maintaining a strong reserve, to which Mr. Johnson agreed it is critical.

#### **VIII. Consent Agenda**

- Bill List for the Period, September 1 – 30, 2022
- Personnel Report (Appointments, Changes of Status, Leave of Absence, Resignations, Stipends - Appointment and Stipends - Separation)
- Amendment to Quest Food Service Agreement

Mr. Dronen inquired if any members wanted to pull an item off the Consent Agenda, no one chose to do so. Ms. Albrecht moved that the Board of Education approve the Consent Agenda, which includes: Bill List for the Period, September 1 – 30, 2022; Personnel Report (Appointments, Changes of Status, Leave of Absence, Resignations, Stipends - Appointment and Stipends - Separation); and Amendment to Quest Food Service Agreement. Mr. Das seconded the motion. Upon a roll call vote being taken, the members voted as follows:

AYE: Ms. Albrecht, Mr. Das, Ms. Hahn, Mr. McLane, Ms. Tomlinson, Mr. Dronen

NAY: none

ABSENT: Ms. Alcantara

The motion passed.

#### **IX. Board Member Reports**

Ms. Tomlinson attended the **New Trier Fine Arts Association** last week. She took a moment to applaud the efforts of the performing arts department in promoting community outreach and engagement which is critical to the District's Strategic Plan. She provided the example of the Dance department supporting Dance Week last summer. She also attended the production of *The Importance of Being Earnest* and sat next to someone who came from Northwestern to watch the play. There are two upcoming events in the township with band and orchestra performances.

Mr. McLane noted that the **Facilities Steering Committee** met, and that information was covered earlier.

Mr. McLane noted that the **Community Engagement Committee** recently met.

He was also able to attend the **New Trier Parents Association** meeting in Ms. Alcantara's absence, noting it is a great group of people who are highly engaged and involved. He encouraged them to look at themselves as potential candidates for other roles within the system.

Ms. Albrecht asked Mr. Johnson to provide a brief update on Duke Childs. Mr. Johnson replied that the Village work is well underway. The District is invited to their weekly construction meetings and attends as needed. The District's work will be bid in two phases, precast concrete in November and the rest of the work in December. Work will begin in the spring after baseball season concludes.

Mr. Das noted that the September **Booster Club** meeting was a welcoming of the various committees of the club. They specifically set fundraising targets, which they are already outpacing. The Booster Club president also shared how successful and appreciated the equipment is that the fundraising supports across the athletic program.

Mr. Das also shared that he attended the **TrueNorth Cooperative** meeting last week. More clarity is being given on facilities construction and renovations they are looking to do to consolidate the TrueNorth campus. This work would also include much needed maintenance that has not happened since 2015. He anticipates the next meeting will have more details and potential discussion around how member organizations will cover some portions of those renovations and modifications.

**X. Calendar of Events & Board Members' Requests for Staff Research and Future Agenda Items**

Dr. Sally highlighted the following events:

- The next Board meeting is scheduled for November 14<sup>th</sup>.
- November 8<sup>th</sup> is Election Day and there is no school.
- November 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> are Parent-Teacher Conferences, which will be remote.
- November 11<sup>th</sup> is an Institute Day for faculty and staff and no school for students.

Mr. Dronen inquired if there were any requests for staff research or future agenda items of which there were none.

**XI. ADJOURNMENT**

Mr. Das moved, and Ms. Albrecht seconded the motion, to adjourn. Upon a voice vote being taken, all members indicated they were in favor.

The meeting adjourned at 9:22 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Lindsey Ruston, Secretary

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Keith Dronen, President