

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

March 17, 2025

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

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<https://www.newtrier.k12.il.us/boardofeducation>. Please refer to these webpages if you would like more information on an item.*

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, March 17, 2025, at 6:30 p.m.

Members Present

Ms. Kimberly Alcantara
Mr. Avik Das
Mr. Keith Dronen
Ms. Jean Hahn, President
Ms. Courtney McDonough
Ms. Sally Pofcher
Ms. Sally Tomlinson, Vice President

Administrators Present

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

Also Present

Dr. Renee Zoladz, Director of Human Resources; Ms. Niki Dizon, Director of Communications; Mr. Michael Marassa, Chief Technology Officer; Mr. Chris Mitchell, Associate Principal for Student Services; Ms. Kristan Kenney, Equity Liaison; Mr. Alex Zilka, Equity Liaison; Mr. Leif Gamrath, Kinetic Wellness Department Faculty; Ms. Gail Gamrath, Associate Principal - Northfield Campus; Ms. Sara Gries, English Department Faculty; Dr. Chimille Tillery, Director of Curriculum & Instruction; Mr. Augie Fontanetta, Athletic Director; Mr. Mike Hill, Technology Department; Mr. Eric Johnson, Technology Department; Mr. Jeff Bailey, Technology Department; Ms. Lindsey Ruston, Board of Education Secretary; members of the press and community.

BUSINESS MEETING

I. CALL TO ORDER – 5:15 p.m. – C234

Ms. Hahn called the Regular Meeting of March 17, 2025, of the Board of Education to order at 5:15 p.m. in room C234 at the Northfield campus. Roll call was taken, and all members were present except for Ms. Alcantara, Mr. Das, and Ms. Pofcher. Ms. Hahn asked for a motion to move to Closed Session. Mr. Dronen 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. Ms. Tomlinson seconded the motion. Upon a roll call vote being taken, the members voted as follows:

AYE: Ms. McDonough, Mr. Dronen, Ms. Tomlinson, Ms. Hahn

NAY: none

ABSENT: Ms. Alcantara, Mr. Das, Ms. Pofcher

The motion passed.

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

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

Ms. Hahn called the Regular Meeting of March 17, 2025, of the Board of Education to order at 6:30 p.m. in room C234 at the Northfield campus. Roll call was taken, and all members were present.

IV. Minutes and Reports

***A. Regular Meeting of February 18, 2025 (open and closed session)**

Ms. Hahn asked for any comments or adjustments on the minutes of the Regular Meeting of February 18, 2025 (open and closed session), of which there were none. Ms. McDonough moved, and Ms. Tomlinson seconded the motion that the Board of Education approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting of February 18, 2025 (open and closed session). Upon a roll call vote being taken, the members voted as follows:

AYE: Ms. McDonough, Ms. Pofcher, Ms. Tomlinson, Ms. Alcantara, Mr. Das, Mr. Dronen, Ms. Hahn

NAY:

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:

- The campus hosted a Chili Cook Off as part of its Staff Belonging Initiative. He thanked the Applied Arts, Student Activities and Human Resources departments for organizing this event. There were six chili cooks and many tasters. First place went to Ms. Rachel Rescorl, Speech/Language Pathologist, with a tie for second by Mr. Peter Collins, Kinetic Wellness Department Coordinator, and Ms. Niki Dizon, Director of Communications. There is also a March Madness pool taking place as well as an ongoing Ping Pong tournament.
- New Trier hosted the Chicagoland Learning Center Forum on February 21st in collaboration with Glenbrook South High School. The schools hosted 18 local members of the Chicagoland Learning Center Forum which is similar to New Trier's Academic Assistance Center (AAC). The goal was to connect and share ideas to help each school create centers that empower students to reach their full potential. He thanked AAC Coordinator, Ms. Steph Moretta, for hosting the event.
- All adviser rooms attended a presentation by Dare 2 Tri in the Cornog. This event kicked off Disabilities Awareness Month. He thanked Ms. Liana Pasquini, Modern and Classical Languages, for connecting the school with the organization. The group helps people with physical disabilities stay active, with some participating in triathlons. There are future opportunities to continue to partner with Dare 2 Tri by volunteering and fundraising.
- The Go Baby Go event recently took place. It is an authentic engineering experience where students design cars to give to children who have physical disabilities. It is heartwarming to watch families and their children receive their cars. Students did a great job engineering, but more importantly connecting with the families.
- Pep Club and Triship have organized a toiletry drive, and items will be donated to the Northfield Township Food Pantry over spring break.
- The Frosh-Soph play, *Miss Nelson is Missing*, recently took place. The performing arts department selects pieces that encourage viewing from a wide variety of community members. A show by each cast was performed on Saturday, March 1st in the McGee, which was packed with kids and adults, many of whom were staff members and their families. Students also performed at Romano School in Wilmette and South School in Glencoe.
- Mr. Waechtler thanked Library Coordinator, Ms. Pam Strom, for her many years of dedicated service to the District as she is set to retire at the end of the school year. He then announced that Ms. Stephanie Beck is recommended as the next Library Coordinator and provided details about her background and experience.

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

- Mrs. Dubravec also shared about Go Baby Go, noting that Intro to Engineering students have been helping children with spina bifida and other significant mobility impairments by fitting them for cars. This work is also done in collaboration with the New Trier Educational Foundation. Applied Arts Department Chair, Mr. Jason Boumstein, and his faculty oversaw the students' work on this project. Mrs. Dubravec agreed with Mr. Waechtler that the best part of the event is watching students interact and problem solve along with the compassion and care that they show.
- She thanked Ms. Dizon and her team for their work on the video, *The Trevian Experience*. It showcases what students can experience at New Trier. Mr. Terry Maday from Maday Productions assisted in creating the video.
- The Literary Festival took place on February 27th and 28th and Mrs. Dubravec highlighted several writers who presented.
- German club went to UIC for the annual German high school day competition. Several students placed first, second, and third.

- Voices in Prevention club visited students at Sears School to spread awareness about drug prevention, not giving into peer pressure and promoting the development of health lifestyles.
- The Post-High School Counseling department hosted a job fair which was well attended by students.
- The Class of 2025 hosted the Winter Carnival for the community and proceeds supported the Midwest Veterans Closet and Salute. Dr. Sally even competed with students in tough Foosball games.
- The senior class has worked to re-envision their service project. The New Trier Parents' Association (NTPA) have partnered with them and have raised an additional \$4,000 to support veterans in need of financial assistance.
- Ms. Clara Crossgrove took first place on floor at the state gymnastics meet. Ms. Jen Pistorius was named gymnastics coach of the year.
- The Central Suburban League Athletic Conference presented EmpowerHER. Ms. Stephanie Kuzmanic, Athletic Coordinator, attended with students and they worked on leadership skills with others.
- Boys swimming were sectional champions and placed third in the state.
- Ms. Jillian Giller placed first in regional girls wrestling, second in sectionals and went on to place fifth at state.
- The Winnetka campus also had a chili cook-off contest in support of staff connection and belonging.
- Choir Opera recently performed *Brigadoon*. Mrs. Dubravec noted the exceptional work by the stage crew and lighting.
- The Class of 2026 collected books and are working with two schools in North Chicago who asked for support in their annual event, Stop, Drop and Read. In meeting with the NTPA about this request, and thanks to a private donor, 2,000 books were provided. Each New Trier student was assigned to a student from the North Chicago schools. New Trier students then selected books for their students based on requests students sent in letters.
- Mrs. Dubravec shared briefly about the Class of 2027's service project.
- Girl Up hosted ten speakers in honor of International Women's Day for various classes.
- DECA had 60 students compete at state.
- Mrs. Dubravec highlighted three NTPA Parent University presentations that are coming up.

Dr. Johnson gave the FOIA report noting that there have been two requests since the last Board meeting, one is closed, while another remains open. One was regarding bids, and one was regarding employment.

V. Communications

Ms. Hahn 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 to Ms. Niki Dizon, Director of Communications. Ms. Hahn stated that due to the number of issues which must be considered at the Board Meeting, commenters should limit their statement to three minutes per Board Policy 2-230. Likewise, if a comment requires a response, either Ms. Hahn or an administrator will contact the commenter in the days following the meeting. Questions and comments should address the Board of Education as a whole only. No comments should be directed to an individual Board member, audience, principals, or other staff members. No complaints against individual employees are allowed during a Board of Education Meeting. She also asked that the audience refrain from clapping or a response of any kind regarding people's comments. There were 13 requests for public comment.

1. Adam Puljic, student, spoke in support of the school's affinity groups.
2. Lucas Weissbluth, student, spoke in support the school's affinity groups.
3. Skye Warner, student, spoke in support of New Trier's climate, culture and equity program.
4. Christina Gill, parent, spoke in support of the school's affinity groups.
5. Kira McClellan, student, spoke in support of the school's affinity groups.
6. Lisa Oldson, parent, spoke in support of the school's affinity groups and thanked the board for the school's culture of inclusiveness.
7. Aleksei Sokolov, student, spoke in support of the school's inclusion policies.
8. Julie Campbell, community member, spoke in support of the school's affinity groups as well as encouraged the opportunity to continue to learn open.
9. Rob Drewry, alum and future parent, spoke in support of students and faculty initiatives related to diversity, equity, and inclusion.
10. Dorothy Elfring, parent, spoke in support of diversity, equity, and inclusion, and the strategic plan, and thanked the Board for their support of that plan.
11. Elle K.M., student, spoke in support of the school's affinity groups.
12. Nathen Heftman, student, spoke about his experience in the New Trier Jewish affinity group.
13. Heather Oliver, parent and substitute teacher, spoke in support of cell phone regulation in the classroom.

Ms. Hahn thanked all those who came to share their perspectives in the current environment. The Board appreciates hearing from the community as it helps them to do their job.

VI. Special Orders of Business

A. Student Belonging Council Presentation

Mrs. Dubravec began the presentation on the Student Belonging Council which is part of the series that the District is doing on student voice. This council began last spring and is comprised of many student voices that support every student every day. It is led by equity liaisons, Mr. Alex Zilka and Ms. Kristan Kenney, with support from Dr. Chimille Tillery, Director of Curriculum and Instruction, as well as Mrs. Dubravec. Each council member is committed to ensuring that New Trier is a place where students feel like they are welcomed, connected, and belong. They are also committed to listening to voices and considering different perspectives that will make New Trier a better place. Mrs. Dubravec introduced the students: Jacqueline, Aaliya, Natalie, and Nathan. They went on to share their experiences, the impact of their work and how their involvement with the council and in school has shaped their perspectives and aspirations.

Mr. Zilka shared the core values that inspire the council which are derived from the culture, climate, equity, and belonging strand of the Strategic Plan as well as the civil discourse and critical thinking statement. Ms. Kenney then shared about how belonging is the outcome we want from the work we are doing. Mr. Zilka went on to note that students are encouraged to communicate, disagree respectfully, collaborate, and work towards initiatives that are driven by common goals.

Aaliya is the equity liaison for Student Council, and she represents Student Council on the Student Belonging Council. There are 24 students on the council, and they meet twice a month to share ideas as well as develop belonging initiatives throughout the school. The Student Belonging Council is rooted in the Strategic Plan and its work relates to all five *Characteristics of a New Trier Graduate*. She shared two experiences where she felt most included at New Trier. Her goal is to continue creating spaces where all students feel seen and valued. Quotes from students in the council were then displayed.

Jacqueline shared that the Student Belonging Council represents students from various Affinity Groups, Athletics, the Adviser Chair Council, and Student Council. She shared how the group participated in a workshop led by Dr. Keren Fraiman and Dr. Dean Bell from the Spertus Institute. She then shared how she built a sense of community within the group.

Natalie shared that the council members split into committees such as social media, announcements, outreach, and creating visuals to display around the school. She went on to note the kind of work and initiatives that have come out of the committees.

Nathan noted that the council wanted to take action in the school and community. The council is piloting a belonging workshop to teach their peers about the importance of standing up against prejudice. He shared the importance of this type of work being student-led. He concluded with how the committee has helped him feel more welcome and accepted at school.

Ms. Kenney shared her gratitude for those students who not only presented, but all those who are a part of the Student Belonging Council. She went on to share a quote from University of California – Berkeley Law Professor John A. Powell about belonging relating it to how the Student Belonging Council is giving students the opportunity to create their own space, and where their stories are seen and valued by each other and where everyone has dignity and a voice.

Lastly, Mr. Zilka shared how the council wants to see tangible action and results within the school. In the coming weeks, the council will select students to help it grow and allow it to start quickly next school year. Mr. Zilka then invited questions and comments from the Board.

Ms. McDonough thanked the students for their presentation. She then inquired if there was anything the group was looking for in terms of next year such as new initiatives or ideas. Natalie replied that they have thought about having one meeting a month with the adult Affinity Groups so they could learn about the work the students are doing.

Mr. Dronen thanked the students, noting that hearing directly from students is a highlight for him as a Board member. He was also impressed with the public comments he heard from students. After additional comments, he thanked them for sharing their unique perspectives and insights, noting they are developing a skill set that will serve them well. He then inquired how the council will bring their understanding of inclusion and community to the broader student community. Nathan replied that this has been done through their workshop as well as their monthly

announcements. Natalie also added that they will bring their workshop to adviser rooms. Mr. Dronen also appreciated Nathan's earlier comment that students hearing from fellow students is more impactful than hearing from adults.

Mr. Dronen inquired how the program would be assessed. Mrs. Dubravec shared that the council will participate in a survey. Additionally, Mrs. Dubravec shared that the CSCI data will provide an overall idea of how the school feels about connectedness.

Ms. Alcantara also thanked the students for their poise, presence, and bravery in presenting to the Board. She also acknowledged how busy they are, but how much it is appreciated that the Board can hear directly from students. Ms. Alcantara also noted the wonderful experience that students are gaining from this work.

Ms. Tomlinson thanked the students for their effort, courage, and the time they took to create their presentation. She went on to build on a comment that was made earlier, that belonging is an outcome. She shared the various outcomes that come from a sense of belonging such as higher academic outcomes as well as post-secondary success rates. Ms. Tomlinson highlighted ways that students feel connected such as having a teacher to speak with, a supportive peer group through an Affinity Group, as well as feeling accepted for who they are. For those on the council, they are taking on the responsibility to help others and are intentional in their work, making sure that everybody feels like they belong.

Mr. Das joined the other Board members in admiration and expressed his gratitude for the work they are doing and the space that they are holding. He also acknowledged their parents and loved ones who support these students. He then spoke to their work on the council as their craft. The techniques that the students speak of in their workshops are critical skills that one must actually do or risk losing. The structure that these students have created takes an immense amount of courage and care and they are artisans in the making. It is what is needed now and is being tested. He went on to say that the craftspeople of human dignity and of community building need to get to work, and these students are showing how it is done, and that courage is needed and supported.

Ms. Pofcher thanked the students for presenting. She shared that the goal of belonging seems unassailable. There have always been voices of hate and those who are uncomfortable with differences and while acute, it is not new. She also encouraged the students that whether an idea works or not on any given day, they should continue to experiment as one never knows how many people they may be influencing who are not saying anything. They will create places for students who want to feel safe, and others who did not know that they did not feel safe and will find new ways to do that, as well as a lot of people who will just have their perspectives broadened.

Ms. Hahn thanked the students for their work and noted how the Board appreciates hearing how the mission and vision that they articulate is translated by students and staff in the classroom and extracurricular spaces. Ms. Hahn went on to share additional comments, including a quote from Maya Angelou that "people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel." Ms. Hahn said that she can think of no endeavor more noble, more worthwhile, more generous, than the work the students are doing to make people feel like they belong.

Ms. Hahn inquired if there were perspectives that are missing from the current Student Belonging Council that could enrich their work. Aaliya replied that as long as the council can provide space to talk about varying perspectives such as immigration status or socio-economic status, being able to have those discussions is a big accomplishment and valuable.

Ms. Hahn referencing Mr. Dronen's comment on assessment, inquired when the Board might expect to see feedback and if it something that makes sense to add to the Annual Plan to hear how the school is assessing and thinking about this to ensure that this work continues to progress in a way that benefits students. Dr. Sally replied that the hard data is easier to engage with and present. One challenge for the council is to show what else they are getting out of it because belonging as an outcome means that there are students who are more engaged in more areas and feel like their voice is heard. Gathering this type of information to present at some point is a piece that the group can talk about.

B. Mobile Device Plan for 2025-26 School Year

Mr. Waechtler began the presentation on the Mobile Device Plan for the 2025-26 School Year. He also introduced one of the co-chairs, Mr. Chris Mitchell, Associate Principal for Student Services, who joined him for the

presentation. Mr. Waechtler shared that cell phone usage in schools has been a discussion topic for many years and has received additional attention in the past year or two. New Trier formed a Technology Usage Committee to research the topic and provide a recommendation for the school. He noted that Governor Pritzker is recommending legislation that requires schools to ban cell phones in classrooms. He went on to share those who were on the committee, noting that almost every area of the school was represented. There were four co-chairs – two administrators and two association representatives. Mr. Waechtler provided background as well as noted the input that the committee received. The Northfield campus implemented a consistent policy this year with all classrooms having students put their smart phone in a caddy for the entire block. Many teachers at Winnetka are also using this same policy. The committee met five times and focused on research, outreach, and stakeholders, which included speaking with several local school districts and gathering feedback.

Mr. Mitchell shared that the current policy allows the school to make a change in practice. The committee is not recommending that the Board touch the policy. Mr. Mitchell shared that the recommendation is that phones should be off and out of sight. The intent is that the practice feels the same for every student in every space all the time and using the phone caddies becomes standard practice. Not only does this remove the burden for students to have to make the decision to be on their phone or not in certain spaces, but it helps faculty and staff by having uniform practice and removing distraction from instructional time. Mr. Mitchell then spoke about the use of iPads, which are school devices. The recommendation from the committee is to keep the iPad more restricted since it is meant to be an educational device and in the past parents could opt out of restrictions on the device.

Mr. Mitchell then walked through responses to several frequently asked questions. The committee, in some iteration, will continue to meet to review new practice implementation, consider other technologies, and adjust as necessary. Mr. Mitchell welcomed questions and comments from the Board.

Mr. Dronen inquired if Mr. Mitchell anticipated any compliance issues. Mr. Mitchell replied that as with other items, complete compliance will not happen, and when that occurs, the focus will be on redirecting, teaching, and setting expectations. Mr. Waechtler added that compliance is much easier when the expectations are consistent across the institution.

Ms. McDonough thanked the team for all the work that they did in a short amount of time. She thinks it is a nice balance between providing a more focused, distraction-free learning environment while helping students to navigate and self-monitor their use. Ms. McDonough inquired as to when the Board can expect an update and how the committee will collect feedback. Mr. Mitchell noted that they will want to give it enough time to understand what the implementation looks like. Feedback would be collected via surveys and focus groups.

Ms. Tomlinson shared that she does not anticipate issues with the rising sophomores as they were familiar with cell phone policies at the sender schools but does think that there will be juniors and seniors who are not happy and inquired if the association is 100% behind this. Mr. Mitchell noted it was purposeful for the association and administration leadership to partner on this as they feel it is very important and that the faculty will support it. Ms. McDonough noted that it is short-term pain for long-term gain.

Mr. Das shared that given the inspirational subject matter that preceded this device policy, he noted that this is good timing because the proliferation of cell phones in the school environment actually undermines a culture of belonging. He noted that one can be so connected and yet so alone which is a critical piece of this powerful device. He is intrigued by this practice and is hopeful that it will create the kind of space where young people get to know what it means to be present and be present for each other. Mr. Das noted his comments are affirmation that this is good timing and that the Student Belonging Council might inherently have some intersection with this culture change of the mobile device policy and what it means to be connected to each other.

Ms. Hahn thanked the committee for their measured response and for starting it in the classroom where the acute distraction is taking place. She commented that cell phone addiction is often compared to drug and alcohol addiction in adolescents and that leads to the conclusion that cell phones should be completely banned or eliminated. However, it is important to prepare students for the future which will include cell phones. She noted that healthier habits need to be developed around how one uses cell phones and use them less as substitutes for intellectual growth and personal connection but rather use them to fuel those things productively. Ms. Hahn then spoke to unstructured spaces and inquired if the District is considering offering spaces where cell phones are discouraged. Mr. Mitchell noted that while some spaces like this exist in the school, the committee has not dived into this area but could in the future. Mr. Mitchell went on to share additional comments. Mr. Waechtler added that this would be a great piece to

talk about next year. He also shared that as he walks around the school, he rarely sees students on their phones, noting that students mentioned in the focus groups that their unstructured time is when they can have face-to-face interactions and while they may use their phones to look something up, the phones are not being used in order to avoid interacting with people.

***C. Naming Proposal for Athletic and Kinetic Wellness Offices**

Dr. Sally introduced Ms. Gail Gamrath, Associate Principal for the Northfield Campus, and Mr. Augie Fontanetta, Athletic Director. Ms. Gamrath proceeded to present the naming proposal for the Athletic and Kinetic Wellness (KW) Offices at the Winnetka campus after Ms. Lee Kennicke and Ms. Bonnie Beach. She thanked Dr. Sally, Mr. Fontanetta, Mr. Andy Butler, Kinetic Wellness Department Chair, and Ms. Teri Rodgers, Social Studies Department Faculty and Girls Basketball Coach for their work on this. She went on to share their resumes not only as educators but as trailblazing leaders in the arena of girls and women in sports in the 1970s and beyond. Ms. Kennicke was assistant athletic director, a teacher in the KW department, and coach. Ms. Beach was instrumental in bringing together the individual boys and girls physical education departments into what is known today as the Kinetic Wellness department. Ms. Gamrath shared anecdotes about and her experiences with both women, noting the leadership and encouragement she received from them, which was a common experience amongst students and staff. Ms. Beach, along with former Northfield Campus Principal, Ms. Jan Borja, created professional development called *Safe Schools*, which looked at how the school could be better for its marginalized students. This, too, was before its time and offered faculty a lens into what they should be thinking about when working with all students in front of them. Ms. Beach was also instrumental in changing part of the school's motto. The last part used to say, "*and lives to the service of mankind*," and in working with Superintendent Hank Bangser, that last word was changed to "*humanity*" which is representative of all Trevians. Honoring these women by naming the Athletic and Kinetic Wellness Offices after them is fitting as it is a place where thinking and ideas will continue to grow.

Ms. Hahn thanked Ms. Gamrath for her presentation, noting that she and Mr. Dronen served on the Naming Committee. She noted that like most decisions at New Trier, this process was thoughtful, thorough, intentional, and creative. She enjoyed learning about how these pioneering coaches enriched the lives of generations of New Trier students. By naming the Athletic and Kinetic Wellness offices after these leaders, the school not only recognizes their contribution, but ensures that their legacy continues to inspire future Trevians to strive for excellence and inclusion.

Ms. Pofcher moved, and Mr. Das seconded the motion that the Board of Education approve that the Kinetic Wellness/Athletic Department office suite be named in honor of both Bonnie Beach and Lee Kennicke. Upon a roll call vote being taken, the members voted as follows:

AYE: Ms. Pofcher, Ms. Tomlinson, Ms. Alcantara, Mr. Das, Mr. Dronen, Ms. McDonough, Ms. Hahn

NAY:

The motion passed.

Dr. Sally shared that he spoke with Ms. Kennicke and Ms. Beach on Friday, and both were honored and humbled that the Board was even considering this. He congratulated Ms. Kennicke and Ms. Beach, noting it was a well-deserved honor and thanked them for all that they have done. Dr. Sally also mentioned that there will be a ceremony in the fall and more information will follow.

VII. Administrative Items

A. Treasurer's Report for February 2025

Dr. Johnson provided the Treasurer's Report for February 2025, or the eighth month of the fiscal year. Receipts are typical with significant property tax disbursement from the first installment of tax bills. Interest rates for short-term investments with PMA are at 4.15% and longer-term investments or the weighted yield portfolio with 5/3 is at 4.32%. The fund balance for all accounts is \$131,104,598. The Finance Committee also completed a periodic review of the District's investment portfolio. Dr. Johnson shared that short-term investments and cash are part of the Illinois School District Liquid Asset fund which allows for maturities to be timed with payrolls and other disbursements. Long-term investments such as with 5/3 and the ladder's performance allows the District to maximize investment returns and still have flexibility in terms of maturities to meet needs as they arise.

B. Financial Report for February 2025

Dr. Johnson then provided the Financial Report for February 2025. Operating revenue for the first eight months of the fiscal year was \$98,368,000, or about 15% higher compared to last year. Revenue from all sources should continue to trend at or above the adopted budget for operating revenue, which is four percent higher, and will equalize more as the year moves along.

Operating expenditures, exclusive of transfers, through February was about \$78 million or 8.77% higher than last year. Based on historical spending patterns, the District still anticipates coming in near the budget for expenses, and with a positive variance in revenue, which should also help close the gap. The adopted budget for operating expenditures is 6.64% higher or about two percent higher than budget.

Ms. Hahn shared her appreciation for the District's financial advisor joining the Finance Committee and noted it was great to hear how well managed the District's finances are. Particularly in this time of uncertainty, it makes it more difficult to budget and Ms. Hahn thanked Dr. Johnson for doing an excellent job.

***C. Conduct of Public Hearing concerning the intent of the Board of Education to sell not to exceed \$15,000,000 Working Cash Fund Bonds for the purpose of increasing the District's Working Cash Fund**

Ms. Hahn called the public hearing to order at 8:15 p.m. concerning the intent of the Board of Education to sell not to exceed \$15,000,000 Working Cash Fund Bonds for the purpose of increasing the District's Working Cash Fund. Dr. Johnson noted that the Board of Education approved the next phase of the Winnetka Campus North / Tower Building Renovation at the August 19, 2024 Board meeting, including the financing plan for the project. The project will renovate large portions of North Building on the first floor and the Tower Building on the second floor, including improving spaces for science, campus administration, student services, and security. The financing plan called for issuing the bonds in two sales, the first occurring in January 2025 and the second occurring in January 2026. Due to possible changes in tax law related to a school district's ability to issue tax exempt bonds, the first bond sale was moved from January 2025 to December 2024. For the same reason, the Administration and the District's financial advisor, Ms. Liz Hennessy of Raymond James, recommend that the District prepare to issue the second set of bonds this spring. If school districts are no longer able to issue tax exempt bonds, the cost of issuing this debt would increase by an estimated \$2.5 million. The next set of bonds includes \$4.5 million in Alternate Revenue Bonds and up to \$15 million in DSEB bonds. Originally, the DSEB bond issuance was estimated at \$10 million, but due to inflation and to prepare for unexpected conditions, the resolution will allow the issuance to be up to \$15 million if required. A resolution will be presented to authorize their issuance once this public hearing concludes. This will allow the Administration to consider issuing these bonds earlier if market conditions and the threat to tax exempt status would warrant it. These bonds could be issued later in the spring, however, if the tax-exempt status would remain the same, then the District would proceed with the normal schedule to issue the bonds in January 2026. This process is being accelerated now to give the District the maximum flexibility to adjust to changing market conditions for debt that was already set to be issued.

Ms. Hahn asked for any public comments, of which there were none.

Ms. Pofcher moved, and Mr. Das seconded the motion that the Board of Education adjourn the Public Hearing concerning the intent of the Board of Education to sell not to exceed \$15,000,000 Working Cash Fund Bonds for the purpose of increasing the District's Working Cash Fund. Upon a roll call vote being taken, the members voted as follows:

AYE: Ms. Tomlinson, Ms. Alcantara, Mr. Das, Mr. Dronen, Ms. McDonough, Ms. Pofcher, Ms. Hahn

NAY:

The motion passed.

***D. Consideration and action on a resolution declaring the intention to issue not to exceed \$15,000,000 Working Cash Fund Bonds the District for the purpose of increasing its Working Cash Fund and directing that notice of such intention be published in the manner provided by law**

Mr. Das moved, and Ms. McDonough seconded the motion that the Board of Education approve the resolution declaring the intention to issue not to exceed \$15,000,000 Working Cash Fund Bonds of Township High School

District Number 203, Cook County, Illinois, for the purpose of increasing the Working Cash Fund of said School District, and directing that notice of such intention be published in the manner provided by law. Upon a roll call vote being taken, the members voted as follows:

AYE: Ms. Alcantara, Mr. Das, Mr. Dronen, Ms. McDonough, Ms. Pofcher, Ms. Tomlinson, Ms. Hahn

NAY:

The motion passed.

VIII. Consent Agenda

- Bill List for Period, February 1 - 28, 2025
- Personnel Report (Scale IV Movement, Scale IV Review, Tenure, Appointments, Changes of Status, Dismissals, Resignations, Retirements, Completion of Assignment for Support Personnel, Sabbatical, Stipends - Appointments, and Stipends - Separation)
- Resolution Authorizing the Honorable Dismissal and Recall of Teachers
- Resolution Authorizing the Non-Renewal of Non-Tenured Teacher
- Resolution Authorizing the Non-Renewal of Part-Time Non-Tenured Teachers
- IHSA Renewal 2025-2026
- Winnetka Campus Plumbing Bid Package #1 (HLS)
- Winnetka Campus North and Tower Building Renovation Bid Package 1

Ms. Hahn inquired if any members wanted to pull an item off the Consent Agenda, no one chose to do so. Ms. Pofcher moved that the Board of Education approve the Consent Agenda, which includes: Bill List for Period, February 1 - 28, 2025; Personnel Report (Appointments, Changes of Status, Dismissals, Resignations, Retirements, Completion of Assignment for Support Personnel, Scale IV Movement, Scale IV Review, Tenure, Sabbatical, Stipends - Appointments, and Stipends - Separation); Resolution Authorizing the Honorable Dismissal and Recall of Teacher; Resolution Authorizing the Non-Renewal of Non-Tenured Teacher; Resolution Authorizing the Non-Renewal of Part-Time Non-Tenured Teachers; IHSA Renewal 2025-2026; Winnetka Campus Plumbing Bid Package #1 (HLS) as presented; and Winnetka Campus North and Tower Building Renovation Bid Package 1 as presented. Mr. Das seconded the motion. Upon a roll call vote being taken, the members voted as follows:

AYE: Mr. Das, Mr. Dronen, Ms. McDonough, Ms. Pofcher, Ms. Tomlinson, Ms. Alcantara, Ms. Hahn

NAY:

The motion passed.

IX. Board Member Reports

Ms. Pofcher attended the **Community Engagement Committee** meeting where Ms. Dizon shared a preview of the video, *The Trevian Experience*. Other content from the filming of the video will be used as sub-stories for social media. There is a lot of good material for further usage. Other discussion topics included the new website as well as the roll out of the new superintendent.

Ms. Pofcher attended the **Facilities Steering Committee** meeting that discussed projects for some of the athletic facilities that are being evaluated.

Mr. Das attended the **TrueNorth Leadership Council** meeting on March 12th; he noted that the next meeting is April 9th. At their March meeting, there was a presentation from a person who has been long involved in the passage of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), originally passed in 1975 and now in its 50th year. Mr. Das provided further comments on the presentation.

Ms. Alcantara attended the **New Trier Fine Arts Association (NTFAA)** on March 12th. The group received an update from Mr. Zigmund with the Post-High School Counseling department. The NTFAA board is looking to fill various positions for next year. They are also putting materials together for the Pursuing Your Passion event which will be held on April 8th. Information is also being gathered from alumni about their experiences in the arts at New Trier and how they are continuing those interests post-high school. The NTFAA also continues to receive applications for and award scholarships to students for the summer scholar program. Ms. Alcantara also shared her

congratulations to everyone involved in the production of choir-opera's *Brigadoon*. The next meeting will be on April 9th.

Mr. Dronen shared that the **Booster Club** will meet tomorrow.

Ms. McDonough attended the **New Trier Parents Association's (NTPA)** meeting on March 11th. She highlighted the great work they are doing to create community among the parents such as with the well-attended parent coffees. The group also received updates on the various class service projects. Finally, the grad party reveal will take place after spring break.

Ms. Hahn noted that the **New Trier Education Foundation (NTEF)** moved their meeting to this Thursday.

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

Dr. Sally highlighted the following events:

- Spring Break is next week.
- The Improv Showcase will take place this Thursday in the Hayes-McCausland Theatre.
- State testing will take place in early April.
- The Freshman play will also take place in early April.
- The next Board meeting is April 14th.

Ms. Hahn 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. McDonough seconded the motion, to adjourn. Upon a voice vote being taken, all members indicated they were in favor.

The meeting adjourned at 8:28 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lindsey Ruston, Secretary

Jean Hahn, President