

BOARD BRIEFS

News from the New Trier Township High School District 203

Board of Education Regular Meeting

March 21, 2022

District Reviews Strategic Plan Progress During 2021-2022 School Year

New Trier entered its third school year affected by the COVID-19 pandemic with a commitment to “Reconnecting, Reclaiming, and Reinventing” while continuing to make progress on the goals outlined in the District’s strategic plan, [New Trier 2030](#).

Superintendent Paul Sally told the Board that the District exceeded those expectations in many ways, and he thanked every member of the school community for their enormous efforts to sustain in-person opportunities for students all year.

Reconnecting, Reclaiming, and Reinventing was an annual theme meant to recognize the many changes students, staff, and families faced amid evolving guidance during the pandemic. Sally said the District wanted to make sure students and staff had opportunities to reconnect in person, reclaim the parts of New Trier that make it such a special place, and reinvent the way the school thinks about teaching, learning, and supporting students into the future.

Some examples of reconnecting include the District’s commitment to sustained in-person learning and extracurricular activities, a high level of collaboration between students, staff, and parents, more alumni engagement, creating more opportunities for student/staff meetings, and promoting student belonging through a culture of dignity.

Sally said the District successfully reclaimed its full athletic and activities program and re-established the individual student/staff relationships that were more difficult in remote and hybrid settings and the school’s collaborative culture. And even as the District worked on reclaiming a sense of normalcy, there were opportunities for creating new ways to support students, such as through a new block schedule, adviser room choice for incoming 9th graders, executive functioning lessons for freshmen, and the East Side Academic and Athletic Project.

While adhering to the year’s theme, the District also advanced many of the other goals set out in the six frameworks of *New Trier 2030*, the long-term strategic plan approved in 2019. For example, New Trier began a series of Board presentations focused on civil discourse and critical thinking, created programming around national recognition months such as Black History Month and Native American Heritage Month, and collaborated with student leaders on mental health and sexual assault awareness. The District launched a new website, engaged in a collaborative negotiations process with support staff, and engaged in an evaluation of student technology. Click for the [New Trier 2030 Annual Plan Update](#).

New Trier Transition Program to Move to New Space in Glencoe

New Trier's Special Education Transition Program will be moving to a new space in Glencoe this fall that will offer numerous opportunities for job training and life skills activities for New Trier young adults in the program.

The Board approved a recommendation for the District to enter into a 5-year lease with the option of two additional 5-year renewals for the space at 640 Vernon, formerly a Coldwell Banker office.

The Transition Program serves approximately 35 young adults ages 18-22 who qualify for transition services under Illinois law. The program emphasizes a smooth transition to adulthood by teaching life skills such as meal planning and money management, offering vocational training, and helping students access community resources such as transportation and recreational opportunities. The program currently operates at the Winnetka Campus, although most students spend part of each day at jobs within the community.

Associate Superintendent Chris Johnson said that most school districts in the area have moved their transition programs off-site to provide a more authentic experience in which adult students can develop skills in the community where they may live and work. The District worked collaboratively with local Villages and with a realtor with non-profit experience to explore many potential sites before deciding on the Glencoe location.

In addition to needing minimal renovation compared to other community sites, the space within Glencoe's business district will allow access to many community opportunities and offers the chance for students to open and run their own retail New Trier spirit shop on site. The site will open to students this fall, with renovations taking place in two phases.

Johnson also updated the Board on the [East Side Academic and Athletic Project](#), which is moving forward on schedule. Demolition will be completed soon, and excavation is ongoing. Concrete foundation work has also begun in preparation for structural steel work to start in April. Click for the [Facilities Update](#).

Peer School Consortiums Offer New Ideas, Opportunities to Collaborate

New Trier administrators met with peers from across the country in recent weeks to share best practices and innovative ideas on topics including mental health, special education programs, college preparation, and student and staff mentorship programs.

Superintendent Paul Sally and Assistant Superintendents Joanne Panopoulos and Peter Tragos met with members of Consortium 2034, a benchmarking consortium formed in 2008 for high-performing high schools with similar community profiles. Discussions included re-engaging students and staff after COVID disruptions, bell schedules, community relations, multi-tiered systems of support, and school mental health, well-being, and suicide prevention programs.

Meanwhile, Winnetka Campus Principal Denise Dubravec participated in the Large High School Consortium with leaders from other similar-sized schools in Minnesota, Indiana, and Colorado. Hosts Wayzata and Minnetonka High Schools offered facility tours and shared innovative programs including advanced professional studies tracks, student-taught ACT prep courses, and a leadership, mentorship, and support program for students of color.

Administrators involved in both meetings said they came away with new ideas for New Trier and a shared understanding of the issues similar high schools are facing. Click for the [Consortium Presentation](#).

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

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

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