

BOARD BRIEFS

News from the New Trier Township High School District 203

Board of Education Regular Meeting

February 20, 2024

Culture, Climate, and Equity: Jewish Identity and Combating Antisemitism

Superintendent Paul Sally updated the Board on the District's work in the strategic plan area of Culture, Climate, and Equity, including important conversations held recently with Jewish students, families, staff, and community leaders about combating antisemitism and honoring Jewish identity.

Sally outlined the ways the District has included Jewish identity in its equity work in recent years as part of New Trier's effort to make all students and staff feel seen, valued, and welcome through a culture of dignity and belonging. These include Jewish student affinity groups at both campuses, recognition of Jewish American Heritage Month and Holocaust Remembrance Day, speakers and field trips to the Illinois Holocaust Museum, and inviting national experts to speak to staff about topics including combating antisemitism and providing Holocaust education.

He also acknowledged that the District's strategic planning around culture, climate, and equity has not included a comprehensive thread on educating students about and preventing antisemitism. Sally said this education is critical now at a time when the Jewish community has seen an alarming rise in antisemitism and has come to the school asking for support.

The District plans to center one of its annual strategic plan goals around education to combat antisemitism. Along with conversations with departments, staff members, students, and parents, Sally said District leaders will meet with representatives from the Jewish United Fund and local Jewish leaders to help build a better understanding of how New Trier should think about curriculum, staff training, and equity work in this area.

New Trier's work on combating antisemitism and recognizing Jewish identity is part of its overall strategic goal to make sure all students, families and staff feel welcome at New Trier and celebrated for their own faith, race, background, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, and ability. Sally said the District has made great progress over the last few years in working toward that goal by helping students and staff see themselves in the hallways, in the curriculum, and in programming through efforts like New Trier's monthly recognitions and department goal-setting. However, he said the District has more to do before all students see New Trier as a place where they can thrive, and the school is committed to reaching that goal. Click for the [video of the Superintendent's update to the Board \(beginning at 20:00\)](#).

Trevian Professional Learning Collaborative Leads Faculty Development

New Trier has a unique professional learning program for faculty that aligns with the District's strategic plan and professional practices, allowing the school's excellent teachers to learn from each other and continually grow in their craft.

Director of Curriculum and Instruction Chimille Tillery, Assistant Superintendent Peter Tragos, and the District's Instructional Coaches briefed the Board on the Trevian Professional Learning Collaborative (TPLC), a new learning program that encompasses different strands of professional development at New Trier.

The TPLC includes four key areas of professional learning: New Teacher Induction, Instructional Coaching, individual Learning Collaboratives, and the annual Professional Learning Catalog.

New Teacher Induction is a four-year program in which newly hired teachers learn about New Trier's culture, experiment with instructional strategies, engage with the district's approach to civil discourse and critical thinking, and explore unconscious bias and best practices in assessment and grading. New teachers are paired with mentors who guide them through the stages of induction.

Instructional Coaching is a new program at New Trier in which teachers can seek out a peer-to-peer, non-evaluative relationship to enhance student learning through collaborative support and reflective practices. This year the five Instructional Coaches have worked with 49 teachers across 10 departments, including more than 20 veteran teachers and 15 teachers who have been at New Trier for five years or fewer.

The school's individual Learning Collaboratives are groups of teachers who pursue a specific line of inquiry over a year, engaging in collaboration and experimentation and creating a community of belonging. Examples of these collaboratives this year include responding to student feedback, supporting student emotional health, and exploring AI in support of teaching and learning. All 396 teachers are engaged in one of 17 learning collaboratives of their choice.

Professional learning is built into New Trier's schedule, taking place during late start days, institute days, before and after school, during lunch and learns, and at half- or full-day workshops. The professional learning catalog includes a summary of opportunities for teachers. Click for the [professional learning presentation](#).

Other News from the February 20 Meeting

- The Board approved an [e-learning plan](#) that allows New Trier to provide remote learning on days when extreme weather or other circumstances prevent a safe opening of school. Under the plan, teachers in all courses will provide asynchronous assignments that students must complete by the end of a regular school day to be marked in attendance and receive credit for the work. Teachers will be available to students during regular school hours for questions. These days will generally be used after New Trier has already designated a Grading Day as a make-up day for school closure previously in a semester.
- The Board approved a [calendar of Board of Education meeting dates](#) from July 2024 through June 2025.

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>