

**NEW TRIER TOWNSHIP HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT 203
REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION
September 19, 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, September 19, 2022, at 6:30 p.m.

Members Present

Ms. Cathy Albrecht
Ms. Kimberly Alcantara
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

Also Present

Mr. Michael Marassa, Chief Technology Officer; Ms. Niki Dizon, Director of Communications; Ms. Athena Arvanitis, Assistant Principal for Student Services and Operations; Ms. Teri Rodgers, Social Studies Department Faculty and Education Association President; Mr. Jon Lepeska, Math Department Faculty; Mr. Gary Schubert, Modern and Classical Languages Department Faculty; Ms. Gail Gamrath, Northfield Campus Assistant Principal; Ms. Rachel Rescorl, Speech/Language Pathologist; Mr. Brandon Stiller, Science Department Faculty; Ms. Juliet Smith, Sophomore Adviser Chair; Ms. Sue Ellen Haak, Freshman Adviser Chair; Ms. Susie Paunan, Senior Adviser Chair; Ms. Cindy Fialka, Math Department Faculty and Strategic Planning Liaison; Mr. Greg Sego, Junior Adviser Chair; Mr. Mark Howard, Freshman Adviser Chair; Ms. Trish Sheridan, Junior Adviser Chair; Mr. Scott Williams, Assistant Principal for Student Services; Ms. Dyan Hillhouse, Math Department Faculty; Mr. Ted Koulentes, Sophomore Adviser Chair; Ms. Marie Thomas, Special Education Department Faculty; Ms. Alicia Landes, Art Department Chair; 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 – 5:50 p.m. – C234

Mr. Dronen called the Regular Meeting of September 19, 2022 of the Board of Education to order at 5:50 p.m. in room C234 at the Northfield campus. Roll call was taken, and all members were present.

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 the placement of individual students in special education programs and other matters relating to individual students. Ms. Tomlinson seconded the motion. Upon a roll call vote being taken, the members voted as follows:

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

NAY: none

The motion passed.

II. CLOSED SESSION – 5:50 p.m. – A201A

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

Mr. Dronen recalled the Regular Meeting of September 19, 2022 of the Board of Education to order at 6:36 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 August 22, 2022 (open and closed session)

Mr. Dronen asked for any comments or adjustments on the minutes of the Regular Meeting of August 22, 2022 (open and closed session). There were no requests for changes to the minutes. Ms. Alcantara moved, and Ms. Albrecht seconded the motion, that the Board of Education approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting of August 22, 2022 (open and closed session). Upon a roll call vote being taken, the members voted as follows:

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

NAY: none

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:

- He noted it has been a good start to the year with teachers and students settling into their routines.
- The Extracurricular Assembly took place over two days for freshmen. Mr. Paul Moretta, Athletics Coordinator, Mr. Tim Hayes, Student Activities Coordinator, and Ms. Anne James-Noonan, Performing Arts Coordinator, shared about athletics, activities, clubs, and performing arts opportunities.
- The Extracurricular Fair took place on Friday and was an opportunity for students to talk to representatives from various extracurricular areas.
- Students now scan their IDs when entering campus. This has gone well, and Mr. Waechtler thanked security for their work. He also thanked Chief Technology Officer, Mr. Michael Marassa, and the technology team for their work as well as students for having their IDs ready.
- Freshman Parent Adviser Nights recently took place. Mr. Waechtler, along with Ms. Gail Gamrath, Assistant Principal and Adviser Chairs provided opening comments. Parents then met with their student's adviser and senior helper as a way to build the adviser-parent relationship. Senior helpers also shared what parents can expect from freshmen year. Mr. Waechtler thanked them for a successful evening.
- Recently, there was an Academic Assistance Center open house that over 300 students attended. Students were greeted with cake and encouraged to use the center. Ms. Stephanie Moretta, Academic Assistance Coordinator, and the tutors did a wonderful job with the event.
- New Trier participated in Wilmette's Sesquicentennial Block Party. The District's choir, string quartet, dance division, dance team, and drumline all performed.

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

- Mrs. Dubravec displayed pictures from various competitions, including rowing, cross country as well as speech and debate. Mr. Dave Weston, Speech and Debate coach, shared with Mrs. Dubravec that some competitions remain virtual as they provide more opportunities for students to participate.
- New Trier is now part of the Illinois High School Esports Association (IHSEA). Mr. Nate Silvers and Mr. Ryan Dunn are the sponsors. Mrs. Dubravec spoke about the opportunities this new club provides for students.
- Ms. Lia Fahs, Communications Coordinator, made Instagram Reels for the One Stop Trev Stop Winnetka Campus and Glencoe locations. Every Friday, the One Stop Trev Stop will reveal its newest item via Instagram.
- Lagniappe-Potpourri, a student created and run production, recently presented "Glass Half Full."
- September is Hispanic Heritage Month, and like last year, there are a variety of opportunities for students and staff to be a part of the creation of the month's activities. Departments are also putting up information as it relates to their respective discipline.
- Mrs. Dubravec shared that the New Trier Fight Song was brought back about six years ago. Now, Fridays are Fight Song days. Each week a new group sings and nominates who will sing the following week.
- There was the first meeting with student leaders to discuss restorative practices. Student leaders from various activities, athletics and performing arts were in attendance.

- At the administrators' leadership retreat, Dr. Sally conducted an activity where a small group got together and determined what they had in common along with what their differences are. Mrs. Dubravec, in turn, did the same activity with her leadership team and one of the art leaders took it back to one of his classes. Students completed the activity and their various art pieces were put together in a mural. It is an example of one of the ways that teachers help students create connections with their peers.

Mr. Johnson gave the FOIA report, noting that there were three requests since the last Board meeting, and all are closed. One was regarding information related to staff, one regarding public comments submitted to the Board as well as one pertaining to communications submitted to the Board.

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. Ms. Bernie Hossfeld shared comments about New Trier's Identity Project and critical race theory.

VI. Special Orders of Business

A. Foreign Exchange Students

Ms. Athena Arvanitis, Assistant Principal for Student Programs and Operations, introduced the foreign exchange students for this school year. New Trier partners with AFS, who presents the school with applications for review. Students are accepted for a full-year experience based on criteria such as their academic performance in their home country and their English language fluency. Host families also review applications. This year, New Trier has five students in attendance. Ms. Arvanitis introduced each student and their host family, with the students providing some information about themselves and their experience at New Trier so far. Taiki Katagiri from Japan is hosted by Paul Henri and Tanja Chevalier of Wilmette, Ariana Patelli from Italy is hosted by Christine and William Guthrie of Northfield, Mattia Petitto from Italy is hosted by Emily and Andrew Cittadine of Winnetka, Nicole Sperafico Tochetto from Brazil is hosted by Gretchen Rakowicz of Winnetka, and Gero Wyslucha from Germany is hosted by Nancy and Kent Davidson of Wilmette. Ms. Arvanitis shared that the students, who have only been here for a month, are noticing what New Trier prides itself on from social emotional learning to relationships with teachers to their involvement in extracurricular programs. Ms. Arvanitis thanked the Board for their continued support of this program. The Board will hear more about their experiences this spring. Mr. Dronen asked for any questions or comments from Board.

Mr. Das welcomed the students and thanked the host families. He shared that the students did amazing with their presentations. He also noted it was a privilege to be their host school and to learn from them.

Ms. Tomlinson shared that both of her children had opportunities to go abroad, and they came back changed and moved by the experience. She wished the same experience for these students.

Ms. Albrecht noted their great presentations and thanked the host families. She shared an anecdote of her daughter befriending a German exchange student. She noted that everyone is glad these students are here.

Mr. Dronen shared that New Trier and the community welcomes these students. He encouraged the students to make the most of their time here. He went on to thank the host families as well.

B. NT 2030 Culture, Climate and Equity: Be Brave, Be Kind, Be Proud/Restorative Practices

Dr. Sally introduced the NT 2030 Culture, Climate and Equity: Be Brave, Be Kind, Be Proud/Restorative Practices presentation by discussing the connection between this work and the strategic plan. The focus of this framework area is a culture of belonging and this initiative is an important one along this continuum.

Mrs. Dubravec, referencing the research that has been done on restorative practices, noted that it requires an entire school to adopt and implement common strategies both inside and outside the classroom. She shared that New Trier already has the culture and climate in place that provides the opportunity for growth, values the importance of honoring relationships and harboring a deep feeling of moral responsibility to oneself and to others. Mrs. Dubravec was joined by the adviser chairs; along with assistant principals Ms. Gail Gamrath and Mr. Scott Williams;

sophomore adviser chair, Mr. Ted Koulentes; junior adviser chair, Ms. Trish Sheridan; and Ms. Cindy Fialka, math department faculty and teacher on special assignment to support the adviser program.

Mr. Koulentes began by noting that when one thinks of restorative work, they may often think of it in terms of discipline and restorative justice. This effort began with Senate Bill 100, which was created to limit the number of out-of-school suspensions that schools were able to issue. Adviser chairs were not suspending many students outside of school even prior to this bill, but they saw this as an opportunity to learn more effective methods to help develop positive student behavior. Discipline is a small piece of restorative work, and at the core it is about the development of a positive school culture, which prioritizes relationships, holds students accountable and provides them with an opportunity to learn and grow. Mr. Koulentes noted that without this type of school culture, discipline efforts would only suppress negative behaviors rather than teach positive alternatives. After additional comments, Mr. Koulentes provided an example of a piece of New Trier culture that remains despite student and administrative campaigns over many years – students not cleaning up after themselves in the cafeteria and hallways. He expanded on this issue, noting it is also an adult problem as they often leave their garbage behind as well. The cleanliness of the building sends a message about the school’s culture and values and what adults permit, they promote. It is an example, that as a community, people depend on each other and hold one another accountable to build a culture one can be proud of.

Ms. Fialka noted that to shift the school culture, a visual campaign was needed as restorative practices is a broad term. Using common language throughout the building is an effective way to reinforce the school’s core values. The New Trier Trevian is the center of the logo, encircled by the characteristics of bravery, kindness, and pride. While these are broad, a list of more specific indicators has been developed under each theme that will become action statements for the school. These show how students can contribute school-wide. Ms. Fialka then described each theme, noting that Being Brave is a focus on oneself, speaking one’s truth, challenging oneself and experiencing discomfort. Next was Being Kind, or how one treats others, with school culture and climate being the foundation of this work. It is important for students to treat one another with kindness and compassion so they feel a sense of belonging at New Trier. Being Proud is an emphasis on the school community with students feeling proud to be a Trevian as well as proud of themselves, their work and one another. The logo was implemented this year and students have been introduced to it through their adviser room and extracurriculars. Mr. Koulentes then shared details about the professional development that coaches and extracurricular sponsors participated in on Institute Day. He went on to share that he and Ms. Fialka also had an opportunity to meet with student leaders and provided details around that.

Ms. Fialka shared that as more research was conducted, connections were made from the logo and restorative practices to the strategic plan. Ms. Fialka went on to note the skills and dispositions that the school wants students to build and embrace which are displayed in the Characteristics of a New Trier Graduate. She shared an example of how to successfully handle conflict in the area of effective courageous communicators. Students should be able to have face-to-face communication by stating how they are feeling, what they need, forgive others, and move forward. Knowing how to sincerely offer and genuinely accept an apology is the foundation to rebuilding broken relationships. Ms. Fialka went on to share the connection to the school’s *Civil Discourse and Critical Thinking* statement. Brave spaces were implemented at the Winnetka Campus last year and builds on the idea of a safe space, which is the baseline and foundation for classrooms. In these spaces, students listen to seek understanding, speak their truth, challenge themselves and take risks. Restorative practices also connect to Social Emotional Learning (SEL) as many of the skills are the same between the two. Some of the core SEL skills that the school will continue to emphasize in its work with students include empathy, listening, understanding others’ perspectives and practicing forgiveness.

Mr. Koulentes noted that New Trier has always had a restorative approach to education and has recognized the importance of a culture that embraces understanding, celebrates diversity and promotes belonging among all of its members. Restorative practices are the foundation for the SEL and equity work being done in adviser rooms. The goal in the adviser program has been to vertically articulate developmentally appropriate lessons in these areas to make connections among all four-year groups. He also shared a graphic of the themes from each year group.

As restorative practices start to move school-wide, teachers and families need a way to think about this. Mr. Koulentes noted that it would be similar to the Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS). The majority of students will be reached by using proactive strategies throughout the school. Tier One encompasses all students receiving high quality instruction and proactive strategies focused on building relationships, setting clear expectations, creating a sense of belonging and maintaining healthy relationships. Tier Two is targeted interventions, used when things are not going well and would take place in the adviser chair’s office and involves work with individual teachers,

students, and families. Tier Three is for situations that require a more intensive support, and some level of mediation may be required. Ms. Fialka spoke about Tier One Proactive Strategies to build community and deepen relationships and went on to share examples of this at each grade level. Also, this year, all adviser rooms are creating a respect agreement. This agreement includes student input, and the goal is to create culture, norms and expectations. Ms. Sheridan spoke about the Tier Two strategies that have been used and how they add to students' understanding of behavior, how to repair an issue and help them to grow and develop.

Ms. Sheridan noted that humans, especially adolescents, can be complex and most often what accompanies a particular behavior is more than meets the eye. Many think of traditional discipline as a way to change behavior and by having a consequence to a broken rule, one's behavior will suddenly change. For many, this method is not effective. The question is how to acknowledge that students make mistakes and hold them accountable while also helping them to grow and develop. Adviser chairs often assign discipline to students who break school rules. As a team, they look at every discipline and consequence as an opportunity for students to learn, grow and develop. Discipline is viewed as a form of teaching. The goal is to move students beyond the mindset of getting caught or in trouble and acknowledging that actions have an impact on oneself and others and to help them take responsibility for that. Ms. Sheridan noted that there is a time and place for traditional consequences, restorative practices do not replace them, but are viewed as value added. The restorative practices approach is a holistic vision of discipline and considers the whole child and what led to a particular behavior while acknowledging the impact on oneself and others. Over the past few years, adviser chairs along with the administration, have reviewed policies, procedures, and past practices to be more in line with a restorative philosophy. Ms. Sheridan then shared examples of what has come from this work. Mediation, or Tier Three, is a restorative approach that is time intensive, sensitive and requires a great amount of preparation, thought and care. The goal is to continue to explore methods that involve more formal mediation processes into practice.

Next, Ms. Fialka shared details about professional development, noting that the school is working with Mr. Kelvin Oliver, who specializes in implementing restorative practices in schools. A five-year phased implementation plan was also specifically for New Trier. Mr. Oliver also conducted a workshop for administrators and adviser chairs over the summer and there will be further training in October. Ms. Fialka then outlined the five-year plan and shared concluding comments. Mr. Dronen then invited questions and comments from the Board.

Ms. Hahn thanked the group for the presentation and their work. She shared that the Board has been hearing about the District's plan to introduce restorative practices and it is exciting to see the work that is taking shape with students. She acknowledged that the introduction to this, by practical necessity, will need to be confined to specific context, and progress will be incremental. She appreciates the ambitious intention of establishing restorative practices across the District, but they have also drawn a through-line from this work to broader strategic goals. Ms. Hahn also added that safety and security is also addressed by this work. After further comments, she noted that as this is rolled out to the entire school and particularly the wider community, she encouraged continued emphasis between this work and broader strategic goals as this is much more than an alternative form of discipline. She also encouraged them to think about how to communicate the interdependence of some of the action items listed under the categories, as it is a laudable attempt to translate a complex system into an acceptable framework. Her concern is that some of the concepts were decoupled and that some aspects could be lost in translation. Ms. Hahn also noted that a fantastic job was done of dispelling her concern of the phrase "speak your truth." She also shared comments about listening to others. Ms. Hahn went on to say that if practiced in isolation, there is risk of ending up with many voices, but losing the one New Trier. When practiced together, speaking bravely and listening graciously, it will create an inclusive community to which everyone aspires. She encouraged that when talking with parents and students, that this is shared together and is not people talking past one another.

Regarding the Code of Conduct, Ms. Hahn noted that, as a parent, it can be helpful to have something objective to point to that if a student does a certain behavior, they will receive a specific consequence. She encouraged that parents be brought along on this process as well as hearing from students about what will impact their behavior.

Ms. Tomlinson mentioned how impressed she was that this is being undertaken for a school the size of New Trier as work is done to seed this through the various communities and environments at the school. She noted that there are still consequences, but it is done in a way that will help students grow and change behavior in a more positive way. Ms. Tomlinson then inquired who will help them do this work. Mr. Koulentes replied that this work is usually done in the adviser chairs office, noting that Tier Three is what the group is starting to explore such as researching what other schools are doing. He noted that Tier Three work will take a significant amount of time. Ms. Tomlinson followed up by inquiring if students would be involved in the process such as peer mediation. Mrs. Dubravec replied

this piece is still being looked into because the schools that are doing this well are private ones with small populations. She also built on Mr. Koulentes comments, that there is an immediacy when it comes to managing these situations with students. It is important to work on resolving the issue as soon as possible so it does not linger.

Dr. Sally, referring to the staffing piece, noted that the District needs to think through, by the end of this year, what will be needed for next year. He added that the more this gets ingrained in the way the school works, the more the work gets spread out. The intensity that has been spoken about needs attention, but the largest part of the pyramid is Tier One or the majority of the students.

Ms. Alcantara thanked the group for their presentation. She shared comments around the adviser system, noting that sometimes it is described somewhat elusively, that even for parents, it is unclear as to how it differs from a homeroom. She stated that the presentation did a great job of showing the depth and breadth the adviser system brings to the richness of students' and families' experiences.

Mr. McLane shared that when developing the strategic plan, he had no idea how this would be tackled. He noted not only was he thoroughly impressed by their well-delivered presentation, but also by the thought that has gone into this. He described it as a nebulous, transitional, change management process and putting it into an actionable five-year plan is impressive. Mr. McLane then inquired if there is a plan for this outside of New Trier such as with friends or a club team. Mrs. Dubravec replied that students shared feedback during their leadership meeting and will meet with their coaches or sponsors to share this information. The student leaders will then go to their team or club and ask them to help develop the expected actions in each area of Be Brave, Be Kind, Be Proud. At the end of the program, students will nominate and acknowledge a team member that was living the logo. This will be repeated again this winter and spring as athletics change with the seasons.

Mr. McLane then inquired how unique this program is compared to other schools like New Trier. Ms. Fialka replied that it is hard to compare as there is no school quite like New Trier and the adviser program lends nicely to do some of this work. She observed that schools who take this on, often remove traditional discipline or consequences when doing this work, so it is hard to find a school that is not private, that has done this well. Ms. Fialka shared that the way this is being done with student input and the logo are unique to New Trier. Mrs. Dubravec added that the group spoke with Mr. Oliver about this, and he noted that New Trier is far ahead as it has the adviser system in place, it has the ability to bring this to the whole community as well as the time to do the right program for the school. She shared about an upcoming professional development opportunity that will share options and approach for this

Ms. Albrecht noted that the five-year plan to roll this out is a huge project. She shared since coaches will be follow-up with quarterly, it would be interesting to see what type of progress is being made with concrete examples. Examples as to how changes to the adviser program incrementally adjusts things would also be helpful. This would also include how this is integrated with security and physical plant services staff. She then inquired as to how New Trier might work with the sender schools to start a coordination that leads from them to the school. She noted that this is basically a retraining with every new class of students and teachers. Dr. Sally replied that while it can have the feeling of retraining, this work is already a large part of New Trier's culture. The way that this work is becoming explicit and improving certain areas is important. As students enter the school, they become immersed in it. Regarding sender schools, Dr. Sally mentioned that the superintendents meet monthly, and this will be shared with the group.

Mr. Das affirmed that it was a great presentation and noted it was the adviser room and five-year plan slides that resonated for him. The quote that was used in the presentation personally resonated with him. The things done with each other can either dehumanize or humanize and there is ownership of where one goes. He encouraged reference to that quote as well as pulling out the theme of what is one doing to preserve humanity for all of our sakes. Mr. Das shared further comments around this.

Next, Mr. Das noted that he likes the logo of Be Brave, Be Kind, Be Proud and he continues to put it in the center of the Characteristics of a New Trier Grad. He shared there is something wholistic to what the value propositions are and what is being worked on.

Mr. Dronen commented that it was an excellent presentation. He then asked if he could be given an example that if a student would go to an adviser chair and say they have been harmed, how would this process be explained to them. Ms. Sheridan replied that it is hard to answer that question right now as a process is not fully laid out. She explained that when a student comes to them with a situation, adviser chairs begin by asking various questions and gathering

information. In this gathering, the goal is to understand the immediate issue and what led to it. The chairs also consult one another and other members of student services. From there, the most appropriate next step is determined. She noted that there are many ideas that may be implemented, and they are relying on the Board and community to support these efforts as it is the intent to help students learn and grow. Referring to Mr. Das' comments about humanizing situations, she noted it is not a value judgement on the student as everyone brings a story to the table.

Mr. Dronen inquired of Dr. Sally what additional resources, if any, are needed over the next five years to make this program successful. Dr. Sally replied that is a question that can be better answered later in the year as more is thought about the way in which this will be implemented. The group will work with administration in terms of what is needed for professional development. Dr. Sally noted that it is the people piece that will need further discussion and is a part that may change from year-to-year.

Mr. Dronen inquired if restorative justice is something that can be assessed. Mr. Koulentes replied that one might look at discipline numbers and the categories in which they fall. Dr. Sally added that there will be good anecdotal data about how situations were resolved. He noted it is also a climate piece and the District has its climate surveys that it will continue to watch. There are also many pieces of the strategic plan that are trying to work on making New Trier as positive of a climate as can be for students. Mrs. Dubravec shared that the number of repeat offenders might also be an indicator and how this has improved their thinking and understanding of the impact that their decision had on themselves and others. She also noted that the opportunity to have students talk face-to-face is important as phones often get in the way of this. She shared that this is one area where students are lacking, particularly in those interactions with their peers as they work to resolve an issue. Mr. Dronen noted that the Board looks forward to future updates.

C. 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) as well as other ongoing facilities work. He provided a progress update on the current construction. Concrete work has been going well, decks are being completed, the steel contractor is on-site as well as the masonry contractor. Much progress has been made and the trades have been working together to keep the project on schedule. Mr. Johnson then shared a variety of pictures and details about them. The project schedule is monitored closely and due to numerous days of rain, the project is tracking about two weeks behind schedule. The District is working with Pepper Construction to either maintain the two weeks or close it. The District feels it is getting strong service from all the trades as they work long days to keep the project on time and budget.

Mr. Johnson then introduced Mr. Tragos who replied to a Board member's request from the last meeting about how Kinetic Wellness (KW) is doing given that the athletic and academic wing is under construction. Mr. Tragos said that the department is doing the best it can with what it has, knowing that in about 11 months, they will have a state-of-the-art facility. Mr. Tragos thanked Mr. Andy Butler, KW Department Chair, Mr. Pete Collins, KW Department Coordinator and Ms. Katie Kritek, Dance Coordinator for their flexibility and creativity in making this work. Mr. Tragos shared pictures of spaces that are being used for classes. This fall is not that different from what KW usually does with classes as they try to stay outdoors as far into October as possible. The biggest difference is the lack of locker rooms. Some classes are affected more than others, mostly team activity ones. Those such as strength and conditioning, yoga, dance, and health are all relatively unaffected. Scheduling spaces and rotations is a challenge and takes significant oversight from Mr. Butler, Mr. Collins, and Ms. Kritek. It has taken flexibility from teachers and students to adapt to this. Mr. Tragos thanked the Board as well as Mr. Johnson and his team for the upgrades to the Bickert Gyms. The new lights, baskets and floors have been a huge improvement for students. Mr. Johnson added that with the west side project, the commitment was made to offer a full set of curricular options to students during construction. Both Mr. Butler and Athletic Director Augie Fontanetta have risen to the same challenge for the east side project. Mr. Fontanetta is offering a full athletic program as well.

Ms. Alcantara inquired if the project is nearing the point of interior construction to make up for some of the delays due to weather. Mr. Johnson replied that for most of it, that work is weeks away.

Ms. Hahn thanked Mr. Tragos for the update on KW. She also shared her appreciation for the efforts and adjustments that teachers are making. She went on to share additional comments.

Ms. Albrecht asked if Mr. Johnson could provide an update on LEED certification. Mr. Johnson responded that the building is being built to the highest standard that is practical for this type of construction. LEED certification is an environmental standard that gives the District a cost benefit while demonstrating to the community and students that

it values and respects the environment and wants to invest in a way is respectful of that. Mr. Johnson noted that the project is tracking to at least LEED Silver, but more likely LEED Gold, which is the second highest level. This will be monitored carefully with the architect. He noted that there can be an additional cost up front that usually pays for itself over time. Ms. Albrecht replied that the west side project was certified LEED Gold.

Mr. Dronen noted that the approved contingency usage for September was about \$133,000. He inquired if that was an accumulation from prior months or just through September. Mr. Johnson replied that it is an accumulation of prior months. It is what is processed that month, but it is not necessarily new change orders that month. Those are some that went on the books several months ago and move from pending future contingency usage to approved contingency usage. He went on to share additional details about this, noting that the change is processed only once all the details are confirmed.

VII. Administrative Items

A. Treasurer's Report for August 2022

Mr. Johnson presented the Treasurer's Report for August 2022. The continued low interest rates on investments that were locked in prior to the increases are showing minimal interest income. The District will look at future investments and if it is possible to adjust ones already in place, so it can benefit from higher interest rates. Receipts are lower than typical due to the property tax delay. Mr. Johnson noted that the county committed to issuing tax bills in November. Taxes would then be due 30 days after that. Therefore, receipts are expected to increase in the coming months. The fund balance for all accounts is \$132,098,794.

B. Financial Report for August 2022

Mr. Johnson presented the Financial Report for August 2022. The auditors are completing their fieldwork for the audit of fiscal year 22 which closed June 30th. They remain on track to present the final report for last year to the Board at the October regular meeting.

Operating revenue was \$3,443,000 for the first two months of the fiscal year, or 28% higher compared to last year. He noted that the tax bills were slightly late last year so the District is showing revenue higher for the first two months, while anticipating it will not receive taxes in September and October. The District is slightly ahead due to the Covid extension that was seen for the past two years. Nearly \$400,000 in property tax distributions have been made in the past two months that were left over from the first installment. The tentative budget for operating revenue is 1.3% lower for this year.

Operating expenditures were \$8.8 million through August, or 6.39% higher than last year. Year to year variances for the first several months make it difficult to identify trends as timing for start-of-year purchasing can shift. The tentative budget for operating expenditures is 3.52% higher than last fiscal year.

Separately, the District closed on the refinancing of \$57 million worth of bonds for the remaining debt from the Winnetka Campus West Side Project. This has been worked on with the Finance Committee carefully over the past year. This debt was issued in 2015 and was refinanced at historically low rates last January 2022 with J.P. Morgan. This will result in a small direct savings to taxpayers. Mr. Johnson noted that pre-referendum, the debt was projected to be \$250/year on a \$15,000 tax bill, but then dropped to \$226/year based on the favorable bond sale. Preliminary calculations now show a drop to about \$201 on a \$15,000 tax bill due to the refinance. It shows the District's strong financial stewardship as well as saving all it can on behalf of taxpayers. Mr. Johnson congratulated the Finance Committee, the District's financial adviser, Ms. Liz Hennessey, and everyone else involved in getting this large transaction done. Mr. Johnson invited questions and comments from the Board.

Ms. Albrecht inquired what tax bill the rebate will be on, to which Mr. Johnson replied it will be on the second half of next year's bill or the summer bill.

Mr. Dronen commented that in the liquid cash reserves, the District is earning about 170 basis point range. He noted that at least the District is earning something on it now as opposed to last year when the rate was basically zero percent. Brief discussion ensued between Mr. Johnson, Mr. Dronen and Ms. Hahn.

***C. Public Hearing: 2022-2023 Final Budget**

Mr. Dronen called to order the public hearing for the 2022-2023 Final Budget at 8:16 p.m. Mr. Johnson then provided an overview of the budget. It is a balanced budget in operating funds and is the result of planning that began last January with department leaders and administrators. Each year, the District must adopt a budget by September

30th, a preliminary one was shared at the July Board meeting. It is the spending plan for the year and allows the District to accomplish its goals and objectives. It also directly supports the educational outcomes for students.

The budget supports a deep and broad curriculum. Mr. Johnson highlighted that the budget supports student course selection, which was exemplified in the presentation by the foreign exchange students. This is also how the school does its staffing and builds its master schedule. The budget allows students to explore their interests.

The budget also supports a robust extracurricular program, with over 85% of students participating in one or more opportunities. It also responds to students' needs to allow for the creation of new clubs based on interest. It also supports addressing the individual needs of learners through the adviser program and special education with Mr. Johnson highlighting the new Transition Center.

Mr. Johnson provided a summary of the budget, noting that it is balanced in operating funds exclusive of transfers. Other transfers are also included such as typical transfers for capital work like the 15-Year Plan work as well as reserve usage for the East Side Academic and Athletic project. The District has revenue of \$128 million with expenditures from operations of \$120 million. It has also committed to pay debt from operations of \$3 million, which Mr. Johnson explained further. Operating funds surplus/deficit with those expenses is \$2.4 million. Funds will also be transferred to the District's capital projects fund of \$10.65 million. This is part of the District's commitment to fund the East Side Academic and Athletic project using its existing reserves as part of the financing plan as well as the 15-Year Plan facilities work.

Mr. Johnson shared that property taxes comprise about 90% of the District's revenue. The District last asked for an operating rate referendum in 2003 and made a five year no referendum commitment, which has now been extended over 18 years past the original date. After further comments, he noted it is remarkable to have done so and shows that the District has effectively used the resources that taxpayers have provided. Mr. Dronen added, especially in a low inflation environment up until the last two years. Mr. Johnson shared that low inflation capped the District's revenue at very small, inflationary increases. Mr. Johnson thanked the community for these resources and for the Board for helping the District to manage them. State revenue is up slightly while federal revenue is showing a one-time decrease as last year the District collected several million dollars in federal funds to reimburse it for Covid expenditures.

On the expenditures side, 66% of the budget is salaries, but when factoring in benefits, it is about 80% of the District's budget. The District employs about 382 FTE of faculty, teaching students in a wide variety of courses, leading academic departments and providing student services. Surveys have consistently shown that maintaining a high-quality teaching staff is a top priority of the community. The District has a very educated and experienced faculty with 97% having master's degrees, far exceeding the state average. About 80% of the school's teachers have 15 years or more of teaching experience. Employee benefits total 13% of the budget and include health insurance, 403b contributions and other retirement system payments. The largest component is health insurance, and the District is a member of the NIHIP insurance cooperative. Health and dental costs have increased six percent for this year with a five-year average of four percent although there was an unusual increase of 12% in FY 21. As the District looks to future years, it is seeing claim history increase, which is part of both a state-wide and national trend post-Covid with increased health insurance cost and increased claim experience. This will be monitored closely heading into next year ensuring that the District is providing the best quality healthcare while also managing costs. The IMRF rate will decrease from 4.2% to 2.6%, which is the public pension system for non-certified staff. The District is committed to paying down its pension obligations, so it is almost 100% funded.

Purchased Services such as professional development, printing, postage, and legal are projected to increase about 3%. Supplies are expected to decrease about 7% as the District backs out one-time Covid expenditures such as masks and testing supplies. Capital outlay is expected to decrease slightly within operating funds. With the capital projects fund, significant money is being spent to maintain and improve the facilities in order to deliver the best possible education to students of today and tomorrow. Funds are also allocated for the District's portion of the 15-Year Plan which includes improvements to both campuses, including solar energy at the Northfield campus and roof replacements. There are transfers of \$10.7 million to fund this work. There is also the last portion of a transfer for the District's use of reserves to fund the Winnetka Campus East Side project. The Other category includes Special Education tuition, room and board, which will increase by one percent. This is being monitored closely by Dr. Panopoulos and Ms. Megan Zajac, Director of Special Education. The District expects to see fewer Covid-related expenses and will seek reimbursement where possible. It will also closely monitor the impact of inflation and work

to align available revenue with increased costs. The District will work to continue to provide a top-quality education to its students while seeking the best pricing on goods, services, and other necessary expenditures.

The District is honored to receive the Association of School Business Officials International's (ASBO) Certificate of Excellence Award in Financial Reporting. It has also received other state and national awards including the Certificate of Achievement Award in Financial Reporting and the Certificate of Financial Recognition. The District has been honored for 17 consecutive years from each organization. This reflects the District's strong financial management of the support that the community provides to the school through its property taxes.

Mr. Johnson thanked the administration and the business office for their assistance in developing the budget. He noted this is one of Mr. Spiwak's primary tasks, to develop the budget with him, Human Resources as well as Mr. Tragos who puts together the staffing component of it. He also thanked the community for their support. He then invited questions and comments from the Board.

Mr. Dronen inquired if there were any public comments, of which there were none.

Ms. Hahn thanked Mr. Johnson, Mr. Spiwak, and the entire business office for preparing and presenting the budget. To Ms. Hahn, aside from hiring a superintendent, this is the most important duty as a Board. She went on to say they are entrusted by the community to ensure that the school reflects the community's values and employs their generous funds prudently. She quoted a politician who has often said, "don't tell me about your values, show me your budget and I can see what you value," and noted that it is clear what the community values, which is the student experience and prudent financial management of its resources. She commended them on the effort and is proud to approve the budget.

Ms. Albrecht thanked Mr. Johnson, Mr. Spiwak and the business office team for their hard work on the continued certificates of excellence in financial reporting and the Aaa bond rating.

Ms. Hahn moved, and Mr. Das seconded the motion, that the Board of Education move to Adjourn the Public Hearing on the 2022-2023 Final Budget. Upon a roll call vote being taken, the members voted as follows:

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

NAY: none

The motion passed.

The public hearing was adjourned at 8:31 p.m.

***D. 2022-2023 Final Budget Approval**

Ms. Albrecht moved, and Ms. Alcantara seconded the motion, that the Board of Education approve the Resolution to Adopt the Annual Budget for the 2022-2023 Fiscal Year and the School District Budget Form, as presented. Upon a roll call vote being taken, the members voted as follows:

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

NAY: none

The motion passed.

***E. Public Hearing: Resolution Authorizing Transfer of Funds from the Education Fund to the Operation and Maintenance Funds**

Mr. Dronen called to order the Public Hearing for the Resolution Authorizing Transfer of Funds from the Education Fund to the Operation and Maintenance Funds at 8:32 p.m. Mr. Johnson presented on the topic. Each year, the Board is asked to make several transfers as part of the adoption of the budget. These transfers serve two primary purposes that benefit taxpayers: to pay debt from operations for past facilities projects and to transfer funds to use for future facilities work. The District is fortunate to have the funds available for these transfers through its work and the strong fiscal management of it. Mr. Johnson noted that he would discuss all three of the transfers listed in the consent agenda although the public hearing requires discussion of only one of the transfers. The first is the Resolution Directing the School Treasurer to Permanently Transfer Moneys from the Education Fund to the Operations and

Maintenance Fund in the amount of \$10,150,000. It is this resolution that the public hearing is required. The second transfer is transferring the \$10,150,000 from the Operations and Maintenance Fund to the Capital Projects Fund and also transferring another \$500,000, for a cumulative transfer total of \$10,650,000. The third is a resolution transferring moneys from the Operations and Maintenance Fund to the Debt Service Fund, for two bond payments, for a total of \$3,068,101.

Mr. Dronen inquired if there were any public comments, of which there were none.

Mr. Das moved, and Ms. Hahn seconded the motion, that the Board move to Adjourn the Public Hearing on the Resolution Authorizing Transfer of Funds from the Education Fund to the Operations and Maintenance Fund. Upon a roll call vote being taken, the members voted as follows:

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

NAY: none

The motion passed and the resolution will be approved as part of the consent agenda.

The public hearing was adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

***F. Resolution providing for the issue of not to exceed \$9,750,000 General Obligation Limited Tax School Bonds of Township High School District Number 203, Cook County, Illinois, for the purpose of increasing the Working Cash Fund of said School District, providing for the levy of a direct annual tax to pay the principal and interest on said bonds, and authorizing the sale of said bonds to the purchaser thereof.**

Mr. Johnson noted this is part of the four-part financing plan for the Winnetka Campus East Side Academic and Athletic Project. In February 2021, the Board approved this four-step process which included three different bond issuances with the fourth step being the use of District reserves. Two of the bond issuances have been completed with the final bond issuance occurring in February 2023. The District is asking for the authorization for that issuance which is \$9.75 million in working cash debt with \$4.5 million designated for the Winnetka Campus East Side Project and \$5 million designated for Duke Childs field. The authorization to issue this debt allows for either a public or private sale, whichever is in the best financial interest of the District. It is a volatile market in terms of bonds and interest rates so the District will work with the Finance Committee and its investment advisor to make an assessment before the bonds are issued about which would be the most beneficial type of sale. Mr. Johnson went on to share that the District has issued about \$120 million in refinanced debt in recent years at historically low interest rates, bringing a tremendous value to taxpayers. This small portion of \$9.75 million will be exposed to today's market, however well over 90% of the debt reissued was at low interest rates, so it means more money is spent on students and enhancing facilities.

Ms. Albrecht moved, and Mr. Das seconded the motion, that the Board approves the resolution providing for the issue of not to exceed \$9,750,000 General Obligation Limited Tax School Bonds of Township High School District Number 203, Cook County, Illinois, for the purpose of increasing the Working Cash Fund of said School District, providing for the levy of a direct annual tax to pay the principal and interest on said bonds, and authorizing the sale of said bonds to the purchaser thereof. Upon a roll call vote being taken, the members voted as follows:

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

NAY: none

The motion passed.

VIII. Consent Agenda

- Bill List for the Period, August 1 – 31, 2022
- Personnel Report (Appointments, Change of Status, Resignations, Retirements, Stipends - Appointment and Stipend – Separation)
- Resolution Authorizing Transfer of Funds from the Education Fund to the Operations and Maintenance Fund
- Resolution Authorizing Transfer of Funds from the Operations and Maintenance Fund to the Capital Projects Fund
- Resolution Transferring Moneys from the Operations and Maintenance Fund to the Debt Service Fund
- Intergovernmental Agreement For Reciprocal Reporting Between The Village Of Wilmette And The Board Of Education Of New Trier Township High School District No. 203

- Intergovernmental Agreement For Reciprocal Reporting Between The Village Of Glencoe And The Board Of Education Of New Trier Township High School District No. 203
- Intergovernmental Agreement For Reciprocal Reporting Between The Village Of Kenilworth And The Board Of Education Of New Trier Township High School District No. 203
- Resolution Authorizing the Prompt Payment of Bills
- ISBE Compensation Report
- School Maintenance Project Grant

Mr. Dronen inquired if any members wanted to pull an item off the Consent Agenda, no one chose to do so. Ms. Tomlinson moved that the Board of Education approve the Consent Agenda, which includes: Bill List for the Period, August 1 – 31, 2022; Personnel Report (Appointments, Change of Status, Resignations, Retirements, Stipends - Appointment and Stipend - Separation); Resolution Authorizing Transfer of Funds from the Education Fund to the Operations and Maintenance Fund; Resolution Authorizing Transfer of Funds from the Operations and Maintenance Fund to the Capital Projects Fund; Resolution Transferring Moneys from the Operations and Maintenance Fund to the Debt Service Fund; Intergovernmental Agreement For Reciprocal Reporting Between The Village Of Wilmette And The Board Of Education Of New Trier Township High School District No. 203; Intergovernmental Agreement For Reciprocal Reporting Between The Village Of Glencoe And The Board Of Education Of New Trier Township High School District No. 203; Intergovernmental Agreement For Reciprocal Reporting Between The Village Of Kenilworth And The Board Of Education Of New Trier Township High School District No. 203; Resolution Authorizing the Prompt Payment of Bills; ISBE Compensation Report; and Authorizing the Illinois State Board of Education School Maintenance Grant application process in the amount of \$50,000 and reserve funds for the projects as required by the grant provisions. Mr. Das seconded the motion. Upon a roll call vote being taken, the members voted as follows:

A YE: Mr. Das, Ms. Hahn, Mr. McLane, Ms. Tomlinson, Ms. Albrecht, Ms. Alcantara, Mr. Dronen

NAY: none

The motion passed.

IX. Board Member Reports

Ms. Tomlinson attended the **New Trier Fine Arts Association** meeting on September 14th. The new board took their seats and most of their work this year will be to raise and distribute about \$50,000 in annual grants for artists and workshops, summer scholarships for students as well as financial assistance for students participating in school sponsored excursions. The art department is working with the equity committee to exhibit diverse artists. The Brierly Gallery will be turned into a working studio to dovetail with Hispanic Heritage Month with their project focused on The Day of the Dead. Ms. Tomlinson attended Lagniappe last week, noting she had to remind herself that the show was written, performed, and produced by students. She shared that it was amazing as well as about the skits performed.

Ms. Alcantara attended the **New Trier Parents Association** meeting on September 1st. It was an introductory meeting to get ready for the new school year.

Mr. McLane noted that the **Facilities Steering Committee** met and noted the importance of taking a refresh look at the 15-Year Plan.

Ms. Hahn was unable to attend the **New Trier Educational Foundation Board Meeting** but was able to get a sneak peek at the Liaison Committee meeting. They continue to partner with administration and staff on the Innovation Hub. She noted it is also time for their two-year by-law review. A retreat is also being planned for their board leadership as they bring in new people. There is also a push this year to reconnect, be in-person, and deepen ties to the organization at the leadership level.

Ms. Albrecht added two items pertaining to the **Facilities Steering Committee** noting that tomorrow is the ribbon cutting for the Transition Center in Glencoe. She also mentioned Duke Childs Field, with Mr. Johnson adding that construction is underway, and the Village has made its payment to the District. The District is waiting for the final MWRD approval for its portion as it would like to bid that work in December.

Ms. Albrecht shared notes from the **Environmental Committee**. The Binary Heart Club is looking to expand their recycling of technology hardware to tablets, smart phones, among other items. New Trier will partner with the Village of Winnetka to be a community composting drop-off site. Composting will also be added to the Culinary Arts classrooms and curriculum. The solar panels installation at Northfield was discussed and the estimate is that 37.5% of electric power offset will occur with that in 2023. Various Northfield campus controls will be upgraded to save energy. The sustainability part of the webpage is in the process of being updated. Environmental clubs are recruiting for new members. There was also discussion about connecting with the sender schools. The next meeting is November 9th.

Mr. Das noted that the **Booster Club** will meet tomorrow, and he will provide updates at the next meeting.

Mr. Das also shared that he attended the **TrueNorth Cooperative** meeting at the end of August. Discussion centered on the cooperative updating and consolidating their facilities into a singular campus. As this was Mr. Das' first meeting, a highlight for him was that leaders took a moment to acknowledge each other, the area and the great deal of care that came from TrueNorth faculty in the aftermath of the Highland Park shooting. There was significant need for counseling and support and TrueNorth, located in Highland Park, was a center for that support. He shared additional details around this.

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

Dr. Sally mentioned that his office was still gathering all the meeting dates for various organizations that the Board members participate in. Ms. Ruston, Board Secretary, continues to follow-up with various groups for that information.

Dr. Sally highlighted the following:

- The next Board meeting is scheduled for October 17th.
- Various committees will be meet between now and then.
- This Friday starts the four-day Fall break.
- The Transition Center Ribbon Cutting is this week.
- There is no school on Wednesday, October 5th due to Yom Kippur.
- Wednesday, October 12th is Freshmen Go-to-School Night.
- The Fall play, *The Importance of Being Earnest*, will take place in the Hayes-McCausland Theatre on October 13th, 14th and 15th.

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

XI. ADJOURNMENT

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

The meeting adjourned at 8:51 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lindsey Ruston, Secretary

Keith Dronen, President