

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

**July 10, 2023**

**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, July 10, 2023, at 6:30 p.m.

**Members Present**

Mr. Avik Das  
Mr. Keith Dronen, President  
Ms. Jean Hahn, Vice President  
Ms. Sally Pofcher  
Ms. Sally Tomlinson

**Administrators Present**

Dr. Paul Sally, Superintendent  
Dr. 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/Assistant Supt.  
Mr. Paul Waechtler, Principal – Northfield Campus

**Members Absent**

Ms. Kimberly Alcantara  
Ms. Courtney McDonough

**Also Present**

Ms. Niki Dizon, Director of Communications; Dr. Renee Zoladz, Director of Human Resources; Mr. Myron Spiwak, Director of Business Services; Ms. Gail Gamrath, Associate Principal – Northfield Campus; Mr. Scott Williams, Assistant Principal for the Class of 2024; Mr. Chris Mitchell, Associate Principal for Student Services; Ms. Megan Zajac, Director of Special Education; Mr. Dan Paustian, Assistant Principal for the Class of 2027; Ms. Trish Sheridan, Assistant Principal for the Class of 2026; Ms. Sarah Struebing, Assistant Principal for the Class of 2025; Mr. Dan Weidner, Associate Principal for Academics and Administrative Services; Mr. Jeff Bailey, Technology Department; 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 – 5:25 p.m. – C234**

Mr. Dronen called the Regular Meeting of July 10, 2023, of the Board of Education to order at 5:25 p.m. in room C234 at the Northfield campus. Roll call was taken, and all members were present except for Ms. Alcantara, Ms. McDonough, and Ms. Pofcher.

Mr. Dronen asked for a motion to move to Closed Session. Ms. Tomlinson 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; litigation, when an action against, affecting or on behalf of the particular District has been filed and is pending before a court or administrative tribunal, or when the District finds that an action is probable or imminent, in which case the basis for the finding shall be recorded and entered into the closed meeting minutes; and discussion of minutes of meetings lawfully closed, whether for purposes of approval by the body of the minutes or semi-annual review of the minutes as mandated by Section 2.06. Mr. Das seconded the motion. Upon a roll call vote being taken, the members voted as follows:

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

NAY: none

ABSENT: Ms. Alcantara, Ms. McDonough, Ms. Pofcher

The motion passed.

## **II. CLOSED SESSION – 5:25 p.m. – A201A**

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

Mr. Dronen recalled the Regular Meeting of July 10, 2023, of the Board of Education to order at 6:35 p.m. in room C234 at the Northfield campus. Roll call was taken, and all members were present, except for Ms. Alcantara and Ms. McDonough.

## **IV. Minutes and Reports**

### **\*A. Regular Meeting of June 5, 2023 (open and closed session)**

Mr. Dronen asked for any comments or adjustments on the minutes of the Regular Meeting of June 5, 2023 (open and closed session). There were no requests for changes to the minutes. Ms. Tomlinson moved, and Mr. Das seconded the motion, that the Board of Education approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting of June 5, 2023 (open and closed session). Upon a roll call vote being taken, the members voted as follows:

AYE: Ms. Pofcher, Ms. Tomlinson, Mr. Das, Mr. Dronen

NAY: none

ABSENT: Ms. Alcantara, Ms. McDonough

ABSTAIN: Ms. Hahn

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 provided photos from summer school Athletics who are using the campus' facilities.
- New Trier hosted the Township Equity Summit at the Northfield Campus on June 22<sup>nd</sup>. Over 150 educators from the Township schools attended. Thanks to the committee who organized it, especially Ms. Pat Savage-Williams, Equity Liaison. The purpose of the Township Equity Summit was to learn together and collaborate to create more equitable systems, inclusive environments, and foster a sense of belonging for students, staff, and families. There was an opening activity, many choices for two sessions, and then closing together with teachers from their respective schools. Mr. Waechtler shared his reflection, noting it was a powerful day and great to see the commitment of so many Township educators.
- iPad Training is taking place for incoming freshmen. Mr. Waechtler thanked the IT department for their work. Students are also able to have their photo ID taken while on campus.
- The Adviser Program sent out letters to advisees and parents informing them who their freshman adviser will be as well as their Senior Helper.
- Finally, Mr. Waechtler welcomed Mr. Dan Paustian to the Northfield administrative team.

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

- Mrs. Dubravec began with the Transition Services celebration, noting it was an opportunity to recognize these young adults who have completed their time at New Trier.
- New Trier was one of six schools awarded the National Gold Council of Excellence Award. Members of Student Council put together a presentation and moved this work forward. Those members were Ms. Via McGrath, Ms. Emma Atou, Ms. Edyssa Elias, and Ms. Shaili Das.
- Transfer Family Day is August 16<sup>th</sup>. It is hosted by parents who were once new to New Trier as well. Parents and students eat lunch, take tours and hear about New Trier. Currently, the Winnetka campus has around 17 new families, with the Northfield campus also in the mid-teens.
- Ms. Lonnie Stonitsch and the Family Action Network (FAN) along with New Trier Parent University will host Ms. Jennifer Wallace, author of *Never Enough*.
- Mrs. Dubravec then shared that shortly she would introduce new administrators and positions.

Dr. Johnson gave the FOIA report, noting that there were nine requests since the last Board meeting, all of which are closed. Two were regarding staff development, then one of each of the following: athletics, list of Board members, property tax appeals, construction bonds, utilities, construction, and FOIA.

## **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 to Mr. Peter Tragos, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction. There were no requests for public comment.

## **VI. Special Orders of Business**

### **A. Graduating Class Teams Update**

Mrs. Dubravec began the update on Graduating Class Teams (GCTs), noting the plan was announced in December to enhance support for individual students while partnering with families and staff. This change was prompted by the escalating number of students who were seeking academic and social emotional support as well as challenges that were being seen such as school avoidance, attendance issues, depression, executive functioning difficulties, eating disorders, among others. The rise in students accessing social work services and an increase in hospitalizations related to mental health concerns is something that the school has been observing as well as a decline in student resiliency. Another additional stress is the changing college landscape. The college stress is not exclusive to New Trier and the District has been in contact with its consortium schools to see how they are dealing with this issue. Since December, much progress has been made on implementing a new leadership structure and establishing the Graduating Class Teams. These teams are charged with carefully monitoring and supporting students and families in academic and social emotional spheres with the multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS). These well-defined teams foster a more comprehensive and profound understanding of students and families. They serve as a centralized resource providing support for all students in a graduating class throughout their time at New Trier by closely monitoring student needs and engaging in frequent communication with students, families, and teachers. They will enhance the school's ability to address needs effectively. The Graduating Class Teams will accompany students through their academic journey, similar to Advisers.

Mrs. Dubravec shared that for this plan to work well, it needs time, patience, and support along with people understanding their roles and expectations. Mrs. Dubravec displayed an organizational chart for the Winnetka campus with the two associate principals, the assistant principals, adviser chairs and then each team's liaisons. Mr. Waechtler detailed the Northfield campus with Ms. Gail Gamrath as Associate Principal, Mr. Dan Paustian as the Assistant Principal for the Class of 2027, as well as the adviser chairs and liaisons.

Mr. Waechtler went on to share the anticipated outcomes from the new structure, providing detail for each, which included understanding and supporting students, classroom support, partnerships with parents, review and development of interventions, development of cohesive and consistent structure as well as adviser programming.

Dr. Joanne Panopoulos, Assistant Superintendent of Special Education and Student Services shared that the Graduating Class Teams will be led by Mr. Chris Mitchell, Associate Principal for Student Services, in collaboration with Ms. Gamrath as well as both principals, and Ms. Megan Zajac, Director of Special Education. The team is comprised of the adviser, adviser chair, assistant principal, school psychologist liaison, social worker liaison, MTSS coach, special education liaison and a post-high school counseling (PHSC) liaison. Next, Mrs. Dubravec displayed the members of each graduating class team. Mr. Waechtler introduced the Class of 2027 team, while Mrs. Dubravec introduced the other three teams. Mrs. Dubravec also introduced Mr. Dan Weidner, Associate Principal for Academics and Administrative Services.

Mr. Scott Williams, Assistant Principal for the Class of 2024, spoke about the movement of the team members. The assistant principal, PHSC, psychologist, and social work liaisons will rotate between the campuses. The adviser chairs, MTSS coaches, special education liaison and department assistant on the Northfield campus will remain at that campus. Those same positions will rotate with their respective class at the Winnetka campus. When the year concludes for the senior class, those particular adviser chairs, MTSS coaches, special education liaison and department assistant will rotate and support the incoming sophomore graduating class.

Mr. Chris Mitchell, Associate Principal for Student Services, shared some of the meetings that will be held as part of the new structure such as the Tier 1 Weekly Data Review. Ms. Pofcher, referencing coffees she attended while running for the school board, shared one concern that she heard frequently, which was a variability in advisers in general. She noted that this would require a meaningful change or consistency in adviser behaviors. She went on to share that she is curious as to how to have that behavior and culture change in advisers. Mr. Mitchell noted that that would be covered later on in the presentation. He did say that there will be direct oversight by adviser chairs to make sure that advisers are contacting parents when needed.

Next, Mr. Mitchell shared snapshots of Unified Insights, the new software program that interfaces with PowerSchool. Unified Insights is a dashboard that allows the user to filter information and create watchlists based on specific criteria. Ms. Zajac then shared about another change, noting that a lot of data is collected on students, but there is not a simple way of looking at that information. She went on to say that the team will also review assessment data. This review may also trigger a Problem-Solving Team meeting to see if a student needs additional support. Ms. Zajac went on to detail these meetings, noting that this team includes the core team as well as additional members. Those members include a special education liaison, social worker liaison, and PHSC liaison as necessary. She then outlined the premeeting work needed, what is covered in the meeting and post meeting next steps.

Ms. Gamrath shared the Tier II and III interventions and support for academics and social emotional needs. These supports include Strategic Studies, Strategic Reading, and Strategic Math. Students are placed in these classes preemptively as they are identified as they go through 8<sup>th</sup> grade. Some of these same programs also take place at Winnetka such as reading and writing support. Ms. Gamrath went on to share details about other programs of support available on both campuses such as Bridges, Guided Study, Guided Assistance Program (GAP), meeting with teachers and student tutoring. Ms. Sarah Struebing, Assistant Principal for the Class of 2025, shared about other supports that are available such as social work, student assistance program, student support groups, social language group, attendance success plans, a check in/check out process with an adviser chair to game plan for the day, accountability projects, and behavior plans.

Mr. Dan Paustian, Assistant Principal for the Class of 2027, shared about other team meetings, those typically held on an as needed basis. He shared that not only will the teams support students, but they will also support faculty and staff in their support of students. He went on to share about Child Find meetings which is an obligation of the public school district to be proactive in seeking out and identifying students who may have a significant disability that is impacting their ability to attend school and reach their educational milestones. After additional comments, Mr. Paustian shared that if a student goes on for an evaluation through the Child Find process, it would be an indication that the school's interventions have not been successful. Regardless of if an evaluation proceeds, MTSS supports could be continued. Next, Mr. Paustian spoke about an update to 504 meetings as parents and students will be invited to attend. This will be a way to lift up student voice so they can help problem-solve about how to make a situation better for them. Ms. Pofcher noted that families participate in 504 meetings at the sender school level and inquired if it is the frequency of meeting or if it simply did not happen at the high school level. Mr. Paustian replied that in many of the sender schools parents do participate, but this is new for New Trier. Historically, when there was an application for an initial 504 meeting, parents did not directly participate, but did provide information. While parents could join if they requested, this was not a consistent practice. Finally, Mr. Paustian shared details about the Adviser Planning meetings.

Ms. Trish Sheridan, Assistant Principal for the Class of 2026, shared details on a guiding document for the Adviser Program. After that, she shared that in order for the Adviser Program to work well, students need to be present with parents supporting that effort while advisers help students make the most of their time together. Mr. Williams then presented on attendance and the guiding documents that have been created for that work. There will be a tiered approach to attendance to build consistency across the school as well as the implementation of supportive measures while maintaining an individualized approach.

Mr. Mitchell presented the goals for the Graduating Class Teams. One of the goals for the fall is allowing time for the teams to become teams. This includes understanding the common vision and goals while also being able to communicate that to students, faculty, and parents. In January, feedback and data will be analyzed to determine that the correct data is coming in and it is useful. Small adjustments will be made if necessary. During this same time period, interventions will be reviewed. Next summer, an analysis will be done of the various meetings and the structures in place. Feedback will be gathered from various constituencies. Unified Insights will help to identify at-risk groups for next school year. Summer will also be a time for a review of interventions and student success with adjustments made if needed.

Mrs. Dubravec shared a variety of next steps including Institute Day communication, campus leadership team meetings, professional development, as well as Unified Insights training. Mrs. Dubravec then invited questions and comments from the Board.

Ms. Hahn thanked everyone for the presentation, noting she has been encouraged by this program since the Board first heard of it. She referenced the teen mental health crisis in the country to which New Trier is not immune and noted that instead of hiring more psychologists and social workers, the school came up with a plan and approach that

is innovative to support and partner with students, teachers and families. She is excited to see how this is implemented, noting that change was necessary. She also encouraged the school to continue to use Graduating Class Teams instead of the acronym. She shared appreciation for hearing that part of the work being done is understanding the structure and the roles as people begin to wrap their heads around this.

Ms. Hahn then inquired how this will be rolled out to families. She also inquired how the Board will hear about progress. Dr. Sally replied that there are a couple of formal presentations on the docket for Board meetings, possibly at the end of first semester. He anticipates that it will also come up naturally as the work of the teams intersects with many things that are happening in the school. Mrs. Dubravec replied to Ms. Hahn's first question, sharing that the website will be redesigned so parents can better understand the GCTs. She also shared that a letter would go out from her and Mr. Waechtler introducing the teams. Communication will also be sent to families from the assistant principals and adviser chairs. Mr. Waechtler added that freshmen and sophomores have parent evenings and information will be shared then.

Ms. Hahn also appreciated hearing how this structure will support students, but it will also support faculty as well. Referencing the data that the teams will collect and reaching out to teachers, she imagines that there will still be subjective channels for teachers to funnel information to the teams, as well as if it was accurate to say that it will be clearer for teachers as to whom they should go when they are noticing an issue with a student. Mrs. Dubravec replied that teachers will still reach out to the adviser chair with Mr. Mitchell adding that the data streams are part of the larger system. There will still be channels, such as going to the adviser or adviser chair, that teachers can go through to get students the support they need.

Ms. Tomlinson shared that it is unbelievable that in six months' time the school has been able to create this great change. After additional comments, she shared that New Trier is continually evolving to figure out how to better serve students. She thanked the group for pivoting, being flexible and for the time that has gone into this. Ms. Tomlinson then noted that when MTSS was first introduced, she was unsure how all the data would be pulled together but is excited about Unified Insights as it will help everyone understand what is happening. Next, Ms. Tomlinson spoke to what Ms. Gamrath shared about regarding working with the sender schools to identify students early on who may need certain supports. Ms. Tomlinson then inquired how one will know this is working, which she provided thoughts on. Mrs. Dubravec replied that more discussion is needed, but the items that Ms. Tomlinson noted are all items that need to be mapped out. Mrs. Dubravec noted that Ms. Zajac has done a lot of work with some of the academic supports and calibrating them and how they determine the entrance and exit criteria. She added that work will be done with multiple groups to talk about their successes with similar language and criteria. Ms. Tomlinson added that she anticipates that more students will come under this support umbrella because they are being identified. Dr. Sally agreed, adding that hopefully in the attendance area there are far fewer students that the school is concerned about based on the work of the attendance committee. He noted that this is an incredibly comprehensive set up for how the Graduating Class Teams are going to work. Its implementation is going to take time and adjustment. In the long run, the school should start to see students served better in the classroom and at the lowest tier possible to support academic success and overall well-being. As a former adviser chair, Ms. Gamrath knew which advisers may be more reticent to approach her for support, the changes will put systems in place where an adviser will have to collect the data and add their anecdotal information - this change will help to even out the inconsistency that Ms. Pofcher had mentioned. Regarding attendance, it will be important to make sure that students feel like they belong while partnering with parents and supporting them as well.

Mr. Das echoed the excitement of this, sharing it is a privilege to be on this Board at this transition. He noted the presentation was very helpful so he could think about what he will ask of this work six months from now. He shared that there are multiple pathways that a given student will show up on the team's radar. Mr. Das then spoke to the baselines of the classes and how a class may be unique in a certain way. He noted he is interested in the next Board presentation and the baseline including graduating class needs, how the GCT has identified what is on the radar, and what the pathways are to get on the radar. He would like to understand the expectations of those who are operating at Tier One versus Tier Two versus Tier Three and where the resources are going from one class to another. As a member of the Board, Mr. Das would like to be able to say this is what was witnessed, this is what was put in place and this is where the reasonable goals are between the class of 2024 team and the class of 2027 team, along with what has been in place in the evolving work. Referencing the *Characteristics of a New Trier Graduate* and why someone would select to attend New Trier, Mr. Das believes that the school gives someone a legitimate, credible shot at having these characteristics and there are four Graduating Class Teams working in unison to get a student to develop those characteristics. To Mr. Das, there is something about the baseline and something about how the characteristics are shown as the product of this work. He feels that at the next update, he will be able to get a sense of

what the picture looks like for the teams and what the expectations might be. Mrs. Dubravec replied that the Adviser document goes over the different themes and goals for each of the year groups. Work is starting to take place with the *Characteristics*, so students are able to monitor their development and growth, noting this role of the student is needed. One thought is to use the new Maia platform to do track this progress and the team looks forward to putting something together that will have this piece.

Mr. Dronen noted it was a tremendous report. He went on to say that the number of social workers and psychologists were up a bit pre-Covid, and he inquired if the goal is to stay where the school is now or possibly increase if more support is needed. Dr. Sally replied that is yet to be determined, but the numbers will stay where they are for now. The hope is that as the new structure goes into place, the needs of students are being met at various levels and not at the intense one-on-one social work level. Dr. Sally shared this would be evaluated along with other comments.

Mr. Dronen, referencing getting a head start on the freshman class, inquired if the school is limited to the information, it can get if a student does not have a 504 or IEP. Mr. Waechtler shared that the school gets quite a bit of information regardless of if a student has a 504 or IEP or not. Ms. Lori Worth, the Eighth Grade Transition coordinator, reviews every single student with their respective sender school. Mr. Dronen shared that a child may have a mental health issue that was not identified during their time at the sender school because it had not developed yet. The focus will be on identifying that student when someone sees something develop. Mr. Waechtler said this can manifest in a variety of ways and this piece is on the school's radar.

Mr. Dronen inquired what happens to a student's data in Unified Insights once they graduate. Dr. Sally replied that the data is handled like student records are in terms of the legal requirements the school must follow. Dr. Johnson replied that for the most part it is data that the school already has, it is just presented in a different way and allows for better insight into the data that the school is already using.

Ms. Pofcher added that it will be an exciting, even maybe messy, first year of such a transformational program, however year two will incorporate all that has been learned.

**\*B. NT 2030 Annual Plan: 2023-2024 and District/Supt 2023-2024 Goals**

Dr. Sally presented the NT 2030 Annual Plan: 2023-2024 and District/Supt 2023-2024 Goals. Under the New Trier 2030 Strategic Plan, an Annual Plan has been created each year. The goals in the annual plan become part of the superintendent's goals for the next school year. The strategic plan has six framework areas. Dr. Sally then shared seven major initiatives for the 23-24 school year, which include graduating class teams, other student focused initiatives, and support for classroom teachers. Other initiatives include the continuation of successful initiatives in equity and belonging, finance, facilities, and human resources. Dr. Sally said this is not meant to dismiss the importance of these initiatives, but rather recognizes that the work that has been done is becoming part of what the District naturally does. They do not need to be named the same way in the annual plan as this is how the school is starting to function, which is a success. Other major initiatives include implementing recommendations from the Communications Audit, *Characteristics of a New Trier Graduate*, and future focused initiatives such as human centered design, postsecondary and career pathways, and hiring and succession planning.

Dr. Sally discussed the student focused initiatives beyond the Graduating Class Teams. The first being student mental health and well-being and social emotional learning which is embedded in all of the school's work. While there is significant overlap with the Graduating Class Teams, it is not exclusively their responsibility. This initiative also includes parent programming and partnerships along with community partnerships. Student voice is also a focus beyond the teams and having students involved in these initiatives to the extent that the school can. He shared further details on this.

Dr. Sally then went into further detail about the support for classroom teachers. The complexity of students creates complexity in the classroom and the demands on teachers are significant. Dr. Sally spoke to the day-to-day management with part of this plan including attendance, consistent communication from the GCTs, support managing difficult cases and technology support. Another part of support for classroom teachers is professional learning which includes instructional coaches, learning collaboratives, and continuing to value individual professional learning time. The final part is to bring together a school-wide culture and climate committee to discuss and address issues within the school. This piece came out of the negotiation process between the District and the teachers' association.

Mr. Tragos shared about the Trevian Professional Learning Collaborative (TPLC) which is a new term and structure

for the District. The term professional development has now shifted to professional learning which is a significant shift in language that signals a different type of professional engagement and learning. Teachers are engaged for a sustained line of inquiry around a topic of their choosing with an interdepartmental group in a small to medium-sized group. Teachers then experiment with what they have learned in their classrooms and after that, teachers assess whether their change is having an impact on student learning. The TPLC will coordinate all professional learning that occurs around the school by aligning to strategic initiatives and future initiatives in education. Mr. Tragos provided an example of artificial intelligence. There will also be a new space dedicated to professional learning. Mr. Tragos went on to share additional information about these learning collaboratives. A variety of interests and needs will be represented in these learning collaboratives, but all will be aligned to strategic initiatives and the *Characteristics of a New Trier Grad*. Ms. Tomlinson then noted that she liked the idea of sustained inquiry where teachers will stay together for the entire year and inquired if time has been carved out in the calendar. Mr. Tragos replied that time has already been allocated to learning collaborative time, individual professional time and department time through late starts and Institute Days.

After sharing about learning collaboratives, Mr. Tragos discussed instructional coaching, which is a research-based model for improving practice and is peer-to-peer. Often when referring to coaching in a school setting, it tends to be around remediation, however, this model is very different. The District is entering a time with many retirements, and this will support new faculty and provide continuous improvement for experienced faculty. Seven administrators and faculty will attend Jim Knight's Instructional Coaching Institute at the end of the month. It is a week-long institute, and the group will be certified instructional coaches at the end.

Mr. Tragos then shared about the *Characteristics of a New Trier Grad (Characteristics/CNTG)* which is an important part of the strategic initiatives. It fulfills the aspirations of the school motto to realize the vision of the strategic plan. New Trier's responsibility moves beyond building academic and technical skills to cultivating deeply human qualities found in the *Characteristics*. These are characteristics, qualities, or skills that young people need to thrive in a complex world. Mr. Tragos coined them "durable skills" as they endure beyond any one set of academic or technical skills. In PLCs, faculty will align one learning experience to one domain in the *CNTG*. There will be support as teachers determine how to design these lessons. Teachers will facilitate student reflection to develop awareness and competency. Students will develop a digital portfolio in MaiaLearning, which is taking the place of Naviance and is the District's new college and career platform. Students will curate their personal digital portfolio over their four years at New Trier as a way to display what they have done in addition to their transcripts. Ms. Tomlinson inquired if students will be exposed to this during freshman year, which Mr. Tragos confirmed, though he noted that collaboration with the GCTs is needed to align the implementation of this. Finally, Mr. Tragos shared that the *Characteristics* logo will be rebranded and there will be a communications campaign around this as well. Questions and comments were invited from the Board.

Ms. Hahn thanked Dr. Sally for a comprehensive preview of the annual goals. She noted that when she reads through these materials, it is daunting to hear this exhaustive list, but it is also important to remember that this is not a checklist of items that will be crossed off at the end of the year with its success determined by how many items were crossed off. Ms. Hahn noted that it is a roadmap of where the District wants to go with its success measured as progress is made, and the school will have to refine some items, revisit and even completely pivot or change them. She noted that items are being integrated into who the District is and what it does and are no longer isolated as goals. Ms. Hahn shared that it is an iterative process that keeps the District on track when things go wrong and keeps it looking at the big picture in how it's serving students.

Referencing the Climate, Culture, and Equity framework, Ms. Hahn noted that it had been discussed with some community members to put the department equity goals in a place more readily accessible for the public and inquired if this was still something the school intended to do. Dr. Sally confirmed that this would happen.

Referencing the personal portfolios and the MaiaLearning platform, Ms. Hahn shared that at the Innovation Hub retreat one of the representatives from higher education recommended putting together a portfolio at the end of the human centered design work because it does not always lend itself to specific grades. Ms. Hahn shared that college admissions seem to be increasingly more subjective, and inquired if this is how the Personal Portfolio is intended to be used so students have a cohesive story that is personal to them and not just their grades and potentially a test score. Mr. Tragos replied that it is a goal of the school's but will take some work with Post-High School Counseling and GCTs. He went on to share additional details. Dr. Sally added that the District is working towards this outcome and what stories students want to tell. Mrs. Dubravec reiterated that it is a lot of work, and a decision would be needed about who would manage it and what might be taken off their plate to do so.

Referencing the Innovation Hub and human centered design, Ms. Hahn noted that there were pilot projects done. She inquired if the Board would be able to hear more about what that looked like and how it went. Mr. Tragos replied that he can provide an update.

Ms. Hahn went on to say that she assumed that there are ongoing continuing education requirements that teachers have to fulfill and asked if these lines of inquiries would satisfy those or if it is only something that is being offered internally to teachers. Mr. Tragos replied that they are internal but will also fulfill the hours that teachers need to maintain their professional educator license.

Mr. Das moved, and Ms. Hahn seconded the motion, that the Board of Education approve New Trier 2030 Annual Plan 2023-2024 and the associated Superintendent 2023-2024 Goals as presented. Upon a roll call vote being taken, the members voted as follows:

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

NAY: none

ABSENT: Ms. Alcantara, Ms. McDonough

The motion passed.

### **\*C. FY24 Tentative Budget Approval**

Dr. Johnson began the presentation on the FY24 tentative budget. One of the most important functions the District asks of the Board is to approve the Tentative Budget. This is the culmination of a process that began last fall, and has had significant input from across the institution, the finance committee and other stakeholders. This budget works to align resources to support much of the work that was shared earlier such as the GCTs and the TPLC, and other programs. It allows the school to continue to provide the same high-level instruction and comprehensive education program that it has provided for generations. It is supported primarily through resources provided by the community, which he thanked the community for. Dr. Johnson then welcomed Mr. Myron Spiwak, Director of Business Services, who oversees this process, to present the budget.

Mr. Spiwak provided a brief overview of the budgeting process. When it is time to build the salaries and benefits budget in January, the process is very collaborative between Dr. Johnson, Mr. Tragos, payroll, and Human Resources. The revenue budget is built in March, which Mr. Spiwak shared details about. He then went on to share about the expenditures process. The budget is then reviewed at the District-wide level and is fine-tuned to a comprehensive, realistic balanced budget.

Revenues will have a budgeted increase of 6.99% with the two biggest drivers of this being property taxes and investment earnings. Investment earnings are higher because interest rates are higher than they were at the beginning of FY23. Mr. Spiwak explained about property taxes this year and how Cook County is limited by PTELL laws. The District can only do a maximum increase to its tax levy of the lower of CPI or 5%. In December of 2021, the figure was 7%, so the levy could only be raised to 5% for FY22. Since taxes lag a year behind, FY24 will be the first year that the District sees the revenue stream increase for property taxes because of the higher CPI levy.

On the expenditures side, there will be a budgeted increase of 5.75% which is close to the salary and benefits increase which represents 79% of the District's budget. One category that is increasing more than others is purchase services, which includes categories that tend to increase higher than inflation. This includes transportation services which are increasing close to 8%. The District works well with Alltown, its provider, and 8% is actually a decent percentage compared to peer schools and nationwide, though it is higher than average. Purchase services also include liability insurance and workers compensation insurance, which both had significant increases for FY24. The final category is technology maintenance contracts, which are not unexpected, but some new contracts are starting which are always significant dollars.

Mr. Spiwak noted that there is a budget surplus of \$7.5 million. The surplus amount needs to be at least \$3 million as the District funded part of the East Side Athletic and Academic (ESAA) project with the alternative revenue bonds meaning the District has to make the principle and interest payments out of its operating surplus not out of a levy. The scheduled payment for the bonds is about \$3 million each year, so after this payment, the true budgeted surplus will be \$4.5 million.



Lastly, Mr. Spiwak noted that for the past five years the District has done a transfer of fund balances to the capital projects fund to help pay for the many projects taking place including the ESAA. In January, this transfer was going to be \$15 million, at last week's Finance Committee, that amount was amended to \$18 million. A main driver of this was due to cash flow concerns with the construction projects and delayed property taxes in order to ensure that there was enough to pay for the summer work. This is more of a timing issue than anything. However, at the Finance Committee, it was determined to do a bond sale in the fall, which will alleviate the cash flow pressure as the proceeds from the bonds can be used. Due to this, the District is reverting back to the \$15 million for the bond transfer. Board Policy for fund balances requires the District to maintain at least 50% of the expenditure budget in fund balance. With the \$15 million transfer, the District has about 54% fund balance which is about six and a half months' worth of expenses covered as long as everything goes according to budget.

Dr. Johnson thanked Mr. Spiwak for his leadership in putting this budget together. He also thanked Mr. Tragos for his work. It reflects the settlement of the teachers' contract and as of last week, the District is done with faculty hiring, for which Dr. Johnson thanked Dr. Zoladz, Director of Human Resources, for her work. He also thanked the administrative team for their work ensuring there are highly qualified faculty for next year.

Dr. Johnson mentioned that the last time the District had an operating rate referendum was 2003. At that time, the Board made a 5-year commitment until it would ask for another operating rate referendum. That has now been extended for 20 years, which is a testament to the leadership of the Board and Administration and the trust that the community has given. The District continues to meet the needs of its students by offering a comprehensive program and accomplishing other strategic goals, such as facilities improvements. Dr. Johnson then asked the Board for their approval of the tentative budget with the final budget being presented in September, which will be revised with the latest available information. Dr. Johnson invited questions and comments from the Board.

Ms. Hahn moved, and Ms. Tomlinson seconded the motion, that the Board of Education approve the Fiscal Year 2024 Tentative Budget and that a Public Hearing date be set for September 18, 2023. Upon a roll call vote being taken, the members voted as follows:

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

NAY: none

ABSENT: Ms. Alcantara, Ms. McDonough

The motion passed.

#### **D. Facilities Update: Winnetka Campus East Side Academic and Athletic and 15 Year Plan Summer 2023 Projects**

Dr. Johnson provided an update on the Winnetka Campus East Side Academic and Athletic Project (ESAA) and the 15 Year Plan Summer 2023 Projects. He began with the ESAA project noting that final inspections are in progress with the final Regional Office of Education inspection on July 18<sup>th</sup>. Classrooms have furniture and final details are being installed. Dr. Johnson provided an update on the air handling units. He then walked through several pictures of the facility. Ms. Tomlinson noted that she liked the old gym floor that could be seen in the athletics office. Dr. Johnson replied that they salvaged the "NT" portion of the gym floor from the Gates Gym as a way to honor the past. Final milestones are being hit on the schedule. Regarding the budget, there is a change order totaling \$101,000 and projected future change orders have increased. Next month, Dr. Johnson will share where the District is in the project budget. The District was able to invest some of the bond funds during the project and achieve significant investment earnings in interest which will offset some of the change orders. Dr. Johnson shared that the building will be dedicated on Saturday, September 9<sup>th</sup>. The community is invited and there will be tours of the facility. It will be a great opportunity to thank the community, construction team, and everyone involved in the project. Mr. Dronen inquired when notice is going out for this event, to which Dr. Johnson replied that a notice will go out next week to VIPs and it is already on the Board's calendar. Dr. Johnson then confirmed that this event will be open to the community with a ribbon cutting ceremony followed by tours.

Next, Dr. Johnson shared an update on the 15 Year Plan: Summer 2023 work. He began with Duke Childs Field, noting that New Trier's work is well underway and that this project is being done in partnership with the Village of Winnetka. The work at the Transition Center is making tremendous progress and is on-track for a fall opening. Dr. Johnson shared details around how this is another great example of collaboration with the Village of Glencoe. The

next project Dr. Johnson shared about was the Northfield campus solar, about 75% of the install on the F building is complete and almost all interior conduit is also complete. Classroom modernization, concrete work, and work on the Innovation Hub are also underway at the Northfield campus. Ms. Tomlinson inquired what building the Innovation Hub is in, to which Dr. Johnson replied it is on the first floor of the D building. At the Winnetka campus, the Bickert Gym roof is under construction. Dr. Johnson invited questions and comments from the Board.

Ms. Hahn noted it was amazing work, especially since the project is on time and very close to budget during a supply chain crisis and historical inflationary environment. Ms. Hahn noted that the air handler will no longer arrive via helicopter but by crane. Ms. Hahn noted that the solar panels are on multiple roofs of the Northfield campus making it a more complicated and expensive process, which Dr. Johnson confirmed. He explained that each of the six buildings on the campus will have solar panels on them, then conduit is being done to interconnect them, making it more complex. Ms. Hahn inquired if progress is being made at the Winnetka campus to include solar panels and if it would be a simpler process there. Dr. Johnson noted that the design process has started as well as investigating what rebates may be available. The District would likely do a bid process for this and is researching when it would do something like that.

Dr. Johnson thanked the Board for supporting this work, noting that the Facilities Steering Committee and Finance Committee have been engaged in this. He also thanked the leaders in the Physical Plant Services (PPS) department, not only are they juggling operating the campuses, but managing this construction as well.

Mr. Dronen inquired that the climbing wall will only be in use when staff are present, which Dr. Johnson confirmed.

## **VII. Administrative Items**

### **A. Treasurer's Report for June 2023**

Dr. Johnson presented the Treasurer's Report for June 2023 which are the preliminary results from the last month of the fiscal year. Changes to both reports are to be expected as the District engages in the audit process, which begins shortly and will be presented to the Board in the fall. Overall, preliminary results show that the District is ending the year in a strong financial position. The fund balance for all accounts is \$114,648,000. The weighted portfolio yield for PMA, which is about \$72 million of that, is 5.82%. The District is benefiting from investment earnings. It is lower on longer term investments at 1.82%, but as those mature, they are turned over on higher yield investments. Receipts are typical through June, although there appears to be a delay with final distributions of the first installment tax bills. If they arrive this month or early next month, they can be attributed to last year.

### **B. Financial Report for June 2023**

Dr. Johnson presented the Financial Report for June 2023. The operating revenue was \$128,323,000 for the full fiscal year, or 0.15% higher compared to last year. Any funds attributable to the 2022-23 school year that are received by August 31, 2023, will be recognized in that year. Operating expenditures were \$131,853,000 or 5% higher than last year. Exclusive of interfund transfers such as those Mr. Spiwak mentioned to fund facilities work, expenses were 0.21% higher than last year. This will change slightly as bills received in July for goods and services that occurred in June will be attributed back to last year. The District looks to be coming in a little over its revenue budget and under its expenditure budget based on preliminary results, which is a good place to be in. The District will monitor this closely as it goes through the audit process. Dr. Johnson invited questions and comments on these reports.

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

Mr. Dronen called the public hearing regarding the Resolution Authorizing Transfer of Funds from the Education Fund to the Operation and Maintenance Funds (O&M) to order at 8:49 p.m. Dr. Johnson shared that occasionally, the Board is asked to transfer money between funds. The transfer between the Education Fund and O&M fund requires a public hearing. The recommendation is to transfer \$15 million between the Education Fund and O&M fund, which is consistent with the five-year financial plan that was presented to the Board in January and that the Finance Committee has reviewed as well as consistent with the District's 15-year facility plan. Some of the fund balance will be used to fund some of these projects. 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 of Education 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: Mr. Das, Ms. Hahn, Ms. Pofcher, Ms. Tomlinson, Mr. Dronen

NAY: none

ABSENT: Ms. Alcantara, Ms. McDonough

The motion passed.

The public hearing was adjourned at 8:51 p.m.

### **VIII. Consent Agenda**

- Bill List for Period, June 1 - 30, 2023
- Personnel Report (Appointments, Changes of Status, Resignations, Retirements, Stipends - Appointments, Stipends - Separation and Terminations)
- ED-RED Membership Renewal
- Closed Session Records Review
- Resolution to include compensation paid under an Internal Revenue Code Section 125 Plan as IMRF earnings
- 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
- Contract renewal with Infinity Transportation for Coach Bus Services
- Agreement with Hanover Research

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 Period, June 1 – 30, 2023; Personnel Report (Appointments, Changes of Status, Resignations, Retirements, Stipends – Appointments, Stipends – Separation and Terminations); ED-RED Membership Renewal; The destruction of the Closed Session Meeting tapes of July 2021 through December 2021; That the District adopt IMRF Form 6.72, the resolution to include compensation paid under an Internal Revenue Code Section 125 Plan as IMRF earnings, with an effective date of 9/1/23; Resolution of the Board of Education directing the School Treasurer to permanently transfer moneys from the Education Fund to the Operations and Maintenance Fund; Resolution of the Board of Education directing the School Treasurer to transfer funds from the Operations and Maintenance Fund to the Capital Projects Fund; Extend the contract with Infinity Transportation through June 30, 2024 and authorize the Associate Superintendent to execute the agreement; and Agreement with Hanover Research. Mr. Das seconded the motion. Upon a roll call vote being taken, the members voted as follows:

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

NAY: none

ABSENT: Ms. Alcantara, Ms. McDonough

The motion passed.

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

Ms. Hahn shared that the **New Trier Education Foundation (NTEF)** met June 15<sup>th</sup>. They agreed to amend their by-laws and elect their new directors. They also detailed the five Marran Grants, two of which were fully funded with the rest partially funded. The partnership between New Trier and the NTEF allows the District to provide enriching educational experiences to students and innovative opportunities to teachers. Should the District ever need a referendum, they are an invaluable resource to have working to support students. Ms. Hahn looks forward to next year.

Mr. Das attended the **TrueNorth Leadership Council** meeting on June 21<sup>st</sup>. The final budget was passed by the council. Over the next two months, Mr. Das' role as vice president of the council, along with the president and superintendent is to do orientation for the council's new members.

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

Dr. Sally highlighted the following events:

- Second semester summer school recently began.
- Summer school ends on July 28<sup>th</sup>.
- The next Board meeting is Monday, August 21<sup>st</sup>.
- Opening Teacher Institute Day will take place on Thursday, August 17<sup>th</sup>.

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

**XI. ADJOURNMENT**

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

The meeting adjourned at 8:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Lindsey Ruston, Secretary

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Keith Dronen, President