



New Trier High School 2026-2027 Annual Plan



Year 8 of 12 of Strategic Plan



Priority Goal

Strategic Plan Framework 1: Intellectual Engagement, Growth, and Readiness

Annual Plan Initiative 1: *Experiential and Career-Connected Learning*

Goal 1: *Launch the Center for Experiential Learning and implement the Pathways Framework to connect every student with meaningful real-world learning that helps students chart an individualized path toward their future.*

Strategic Plan Framework 1: Intellectual Engagement, Growth, and Readiness

Annual Plan Initiative 2: *Characteristics of a New Trier Graduate*

Goal 2: *Empower students to tell their own unique story of who they are and what they can do by reflecting on and documenting their growth in the Characteristics.*

Strategic Plan Framework 3: Culture, Climate, and Belonging

Annual Plan Initiative 3: *Culture of Belonging and Wellness*

Goal 3: *Embed belonging and wellness practices across the district so students and staff feel supported and connected to each other and the institution:*

Strategic Plan Framework 6: Finance, Facilities, and Human Resources

Annual Plan Initiative 4: *Facilities Planning and Prioritization*

Goal 4: *Create modern, flexible, and sustainable learning environments by adopting the District's long-range facilities plan and presenting responsible funding options.*

Strategic Plan Framework 1: Intellectual Engagement, Growth, and Readiness

Annual Plan Initiative 5: *Access and opportunity to advanced coursework*

Goal 5: *Expand access to advanced coursework by creating more pathways and opportunities for students, including AP and dual credit.*

Strategic Plan Framework:

Initiative 6: *Artificial Intelligence Literacy and Leadership*

Goal 6: *Build the foundation for AI literacy, responsibility, and innovation so students and staff can learn, work, and lead in the age of artificial intelligenc*



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Strategic Plan Framework 1: Intellectual Engagement, Growth, and Readiness

Annual Plan Initiative 1: *Experiential and Career-Connected Learning*

Goal 1: *Launch the Center for Experiential Learning and implement the Pathways Framework to connect every student with meaningful real-world learning that helps students chart an individualized path toward their future.*

Why This Matters

We believe students learn best when they can connect what they are learning today to who they want to become tomorrow. Research and student feedback consistently show that students want more opportunities for career exploration, internships, and real-world learning. This initiative creates a connected experience that helps students discover purpose in their learning and direction for what comes next.

Key Actions

- Launch the Center for Experiential Learning by hiring its inaugural Director and establishing the partnerships and programming that support internships, community partnerships, and experiential learning.
- Implement the Pathways Framework to support academic planning and career exploration.
- Expand career-connected learning through DYNTÉ, elective workshops, internships, and community partnerships.
- Integrate the Center, Pathways, DYNTÉ, and Portfolio into one coherent student experience.
- Prepare staff, students, and families for implementation through communication, professional learning, and advising.
- Evaluate implementation and refine the model based on stakeholder feedback.

Success Indicators

1. The Center for Experiential Learning is launched, including the hiring of its inaugural Director and establishment of the structures and systems necessary for the 2027–2028 opening.
2. The Pathways Framework is implemented and integrated into academic advising and course planning for the 2027-2028 school year.
3. Expanded student participation in career-connected learning opportunities, including DYNTÉ, mini-electives, internships, and community partnerships.
4. Students, staff, and families report increased awareness and understanding of the Center for Experiential Learning and the Pathways Framework.

Champions

Dan Weidner, Dan Paustian, Sarah Struebing, Paul Waechtler, Matt Koulentes, Trish Sheridan, Chimille Tillery



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Priority Goal

Strategic Plan Framework 1: Intellectual Engagement, Growth, and Readiness

Annual Plan Initiative 2: Characteristics of a New Trier Graduate

Goal 2: *Empower students to tell their own unique story of who they are and what they can do by reflecting on and documenting their growth in the Characteristics.*

Why This Matters

We believe students should leave New Trier not only with strong academic preparation, but also with the essential human skills needed to thrive in a complex and changing world. The Characteristics of a New Trier Graduate define these durable skills, such as critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, communication, and resilience. By providing students with opportunities to reflect on their learning and growth, we empower them to tell their own unique story in ways a transcript alone cannot.

Key Actions

- Launch the Student Portfolio and establish a consistent four-year process for every student to reflect on, document, and communicate their learning and growth.
- Embed the Characteristics of a New Trier Graduate into adviser curriculum, classroom learning, extracurricular activities, through intentional reflection and application.
- Connect Design Your New Trier Experience (DYNTE), Pathways, experiential learning, and the Student Portfolio into a coherent four-year student journey.
- Develop common practices and tools that help teachers and advisers support meaningful student reflection and growth.

Success Indicators

1. Student Portfolio is implemented as a consistent four-year reflection process.
2. Students regularly reflect on and document their growth in the Characteristics of a New Trier Graduate.
3. Teachers, advisers,, and extracurricular leaders use common reflection practices and tools.
4. DYNTE, Pathways, experiential learning, and the Student Portfolio form a coherent four-year student journey.
5. Students can articulate who they are, what they can do, and how they have grown through their New Trier experience.

Champions

Melissa Dudic, Denise Dubravec, Chimille Tillery, Chris Mitchell, Dan Weidner, Dan Paustian, Paul Waechtler, Scott Williams



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Priority Goal

Strategic Plan Framework 3: Culture, Climate, and Belonging

Annual Plan Initiative 3: Culture of Belonging and Wellness

Goal 3: *Embed belonging and wellness practices across the district so students and staff feel supported and connected to each other and the institution.*

Why This Matters

Research shows that students who feel a sense of belonging are more likely to thrive academically, socially, and emotionally and engage in learning and school life. Similarly, staff who feel connected to their colleagues and institution are more likely to contribute, collaborate, and find satisfaction in their work.

Key Actions in 2026 - 2027

- Gather and use staff feedback on the new belonging and wellness survey to guide continuous improvement.
- Launch the Wellness Toolkit and promote wellness resources for students and staff.
- Expand the role and impact of the Student and Staff Belonging Councils.
- Design and implement an Institute Day focused on the *Characteristic* of Healthy, Resilient Individuals.
- Review and apply findings from the Senior Exit Survey to inform future improvements.
- Launch the Alumni Survey to better understand graduates' experiences and perspectives.

Success Indicators

1. Student belonging and wellness survey trends (CSCI, Senior Exit Survey, YRBS)
2. Baseline data from new staff belonging and wellness survey
3. Student participation in extracurricular activities and school programs
4. Student and staff attendance and retention trends
5. Belonging Council recommendations and initiatives implemented
6. Implementation and use of the Wellness Toolkit
7. Actions taken in response to student and staff feedback

Champions

Denise Dubravec, Nashwa Mekky, Chris Mitchell, Chimille Tillery



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Priority Goal

Strategic Plan Framework 6: Finance, Facilities, and Human Resources

Annual Plan Initiative 4: Facilities Planning and Prioritization

Goal 4: *Adopt the District's long-range facilities plan and present responsible funding options to create modern, flexible, and sustainable learning environments.*

Why This Matters

Our students need learning environments that support the education we want to provide today and in the future. Modern facilities are essential infrastructure for delivering our Strategic Plan, creating spaces that inspire learning, foster connection, and serve generations of New Trier students. The Board and Administration are committed to investing in the District's facilities in a manner that reflects our community's priorities and values. This initiative establishes a clear path to advance that work through thoughtful planning, responsible financial stewardship, and partnership.

Key Actions in 2026 - 2027

- Build shared understanding with the Board, staff, families, and community around facility priorities, long-term needs, and funding considerations.
- Adopt the District's long-range facilities plan.
- Establish phased project priorities and implementation timelines for the first set of priorities.
- Identify a responsible funding strategy that supports future facility investments while maintaining the District's commitment to fiscal stewardship.
- Continue implementation of current capital improvement projects.

Success Indicators

1. The Board of Education adopts the District's long-range facilities plan.
2. Clear implementation priorities, project sequencing, and timelines are established.
3. A responsible funding strategy is identified to support future facility investments.
4. The Board, staff, families, and community demonstrate greater understanding and support for the District's long-range facilities vision and priorities.
5. Current capital improvement projects are completed on schedule, within budget, and enhance learning environments for students and staff.

Champions

Chris Johnson, Peter Tragos, Jim Maile, Niki Dizon



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Priority Goal

Strategic Plan Framework 1: Intellectual Engagement, Growth, and Readiness

Annual Plan Initiative 5: Access and opportunity to advanced coursework

Goal 5: *Expand access to advanced coursework by creating more pathways and opportunities for students, including AP and dual credit.*

Why This Matters

We believe more students can succeed in advanced coursework when they have the opportunity and support to do so. By expanding pathways and removing unnecessary barriers, we can open more doors for students to pursue advanced learning.

Key Actions in 2026 - 2027

- Continue building faculty capacity in Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and differentiated instruction.
- Expand access to Advanced Placement coursework through prerequisite review and phased implementation.
- Develop dual credit opportunities in partnership with academic departments and postsecondary institutions.
- Analyze enrollment data to identify opportunities to expand access.

Success Indicators

1. Evidence of increased classroom implementation of UDL and differentiated instruction.
2. AP prerequisite revisions and new dual credit opportunities implemented.
3. Increased enrollment in Advanced Placement and expanded dual credit courses to content areas.
4. Increased participation in advanced coursework across student groups.
5. Annual Class Profile Report shows expanded access to honors and high honors courses and course-taking opportunities over time.

Champions

Chimille Tillery, Melissa Dudic, Megan Zajac



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Priority Goal

Framework 1: Intellectual Engagement, Growth, and Readiness

Annual Plan Initiative 6: Artificial Intelligence Literacy and Leadership

Goal 6: *Build the foundation for AI literacy, responsibility, and innovation so students and staff can learn, work, and lead in the age of artificial intelligence.*

Why This Matters

Learning to use artificial intelligence responsibly, ethically, and effectively is an essential part of how we learn and work today. As AI reshapes education, careers, and society, developing AI literacy is a new foundational skill and an important part of preparing students for their future. AI also presents opportunities to improve how educators teach, collaborate, and work, creating more time for the relationships and learning experiences that matter most. New Trier has an opportunity to help shape the future of AI in education.

Key Actions in 2026 -2027

- Use the AI Advisory Committee to establish a district AI stance and governance framework for responsible, ethical, and human-centered AI use.
- Develop guidance and tools for faculty and staff to use AI in teaching, learning, and professional work.
- Continue AI Learning Collaboratives and department-based inquiry to build staff confidence, capacity, and shared practices.
- Pilot an AI literacy experience for all ninth-grade students to build a common foundation for responsible and effective AI use.
- Evaluate implementation and refine district practices to support continuous improvement and position New Trier as a leader in AI.

Success Indicators

1. District AI stance, governance framework, and faculty guidance are adopted.
2. Faculty demonstrate increased confidence in responsible AI use through professional learning and collaborative practice.
3. Ninth-grade AI literacy pilot successfully launched.
4. Student and staff survey results demonstrate increased confidence in responsible AI use.
5. District-developed examples of effective AI integration inform continuous improvement and future implementation.

Champions

Lauren Owens, Peter Tragos