

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

June 1, 2026

**New Trier Township High School
7 Happ Road, Room C234
Northfield, IL 60093**

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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, June 1, 2026, at 7:00 p.m.

Members Present

Mr. Avik Das
Ms. Jean Hahn
Mr. Joo Serk Lee
Ms. Courtney McDonough, Vice President
Ms. Sally Pofcher
Ms. Sally Tomlinson, President

Administrators Present

Dr. Peter Tragos, Superintendent
Dr. Christopher Johnson, Deputy Superintendent
Dr. Joanne Panopoulos, Asst. Supt. for Special Ed and Student Services
Dr. Chimille Tillery, Asst. Supt. for Curriculum & Instruction
Mrs. Denise Dubravec, Principal – Winnetka Campus/Asst. Supt.
Mr. Paul Waechtler, Principal – Northfield Campus

Also Present

Ms. Niki Dizon, Chief Communications Officer; Dr. Nashwa Mekky, Chief Human Resources Officer; Mr. Michael Marassa, Chief Technology Officer; Ms. Lauren Owens, Chief Technology Officer; Ms. Angie Woodul, Extension Department Assistant and Educational Support Professionals President; Ms. Heather Ecklund, Post High School Counseling Department Faculty; Mr. Eric Johnson, Technology Department; Mr. Jeff Bailey, Technology Department; Ms. Lindsey Ruston, Board of Education Secretary; and members of the press and community.

BUSINESS MEETING

I. CALL TO ORDER – 5:00 p.m. – C234

Ms. Tomlinson called the Regular Meeting of June 1, 2026 of the Board of Education to order at 5:01 p.m. in room C234 at the Northfield campus. Roll call was taken, and all members were present, except for Mr. Das. Ms. Tomlinson asked for a motion to move to Closed Session. Ms. Hahn 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; and the selection of a person to fill a public office, including a vacancy in a public office, when the District is given power to appoint under law or ordinance, or the discipline, performance or removal of the occupant of a public office, when the District is given power to remove the occupant under law or ordinance. Mr. Lee seconded the motion. Upon a roll call vote being taken, the members voted as follows:

AYE: Mr. Lee, Ms. Hahn, Ms. McDonough, Ms. Pofcher, Ms. Tomlinson

NAY: none

ABSENT: Mr. Das

The motion passed.

II. CLOSED SESSION – 5:00 p.m. – A201A

III. BUSINESS MEETING – Open Session – 7:00 p.m. – C234

Ms. Tomlinson called the Regular Meeting of June 1, 2026 of the Board of Education to order at 7:28 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 May 18, 2026 (open and closed session)**

Due to the timing of this meeting, the Regular Meeting minutes from May 18, 2026 will be approved at the July 13, 2026 Board meeting.

B. Report from Campus Principals, Assistant Superintendents, and FOIA Report

Mr. Paul Waechtler, Principal for the Northfield Campus, shared the following student events and program updates from that campus:

- Springfest took place on May 21st and raised almost \$3,000 which was donated to the North Chicago Community Partners. Students had a great time, and adviser rooms and clubs sold food or experiences. He thanked Student Senate and sponsors for organizing it.
- The choral class had a singalong event with the Bright Horizons daycare.
- Trevian Awards recently took place and is where advisers select a student who has demonstrated being brave, kind or proud. It is a great event to recognize a wider variety of students and award winners get to enjoy a nice breakfast and ceremony. Adviser chairs, Mr. Mark Howard, and Ms. Sue Ellen Haak, along with Assistant Principal Mr. Matt Koulentes, organized activities to have students reflect upon their freshman year and how they can carry that positive energy and influence over to the Winnetka campus.
- Mr. Waechtler also shared activities that took place before the end of semester such as distributing yearbooks, finals, students playing hacky sack, comfort dogs visiting thanks to Ms. Steph Moretta from the Academic Assistance Center, and students meeting their sophomore advisers.

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

- The Class of 2026 hosted food trucks on Trevian Way and proceeds were donated to the program they have been working with.
- Several students qualified for the National Technology Student Association Conference in Washington D.C. and will take part in an architectural design challenge. Mr. Jason Boumstein, Applied Arts Department Chair, and Ms. Devan Castellano, Applied Arts Department Faculty, will coach the team. New Trier was the only Illinois high school who qualified.
- Northwestern University has opened their newly constructed Ryan Field and will host the Evanston versus New Trier football game this fall. They will also host the girls' and boys' Evanston versus New Trier basketball games.
- Science Olympiad, for the third year in a row, are state champions and placed ninth in the nation. Mrs. Dubravec acknowledged all the work that club sponsor, Mr. Alex Howe, does with Science Olympiad.
- Ms. Sue Vaughan, Music and Theatre Department Faculty, is retiring this year and in tribute to her work with the High Five Choir, alumni of the program returned to New Trier.
- Over 100 students recently completed their Senior Projects.
- The Fine and Performing Arts Signing Day took place in May which was the largest in the school's history of those who will major in some type of art, dance, music or theatre in college.
- Mrs. Dubravec then shared about athletic championships: boys tennis are state champions with a third place in singles and a first and third place in doubles, girls rowing went to nationals with various levels placing second and fourth, boys rowing placed second at nationals, and boys track and field took fourth, seventh, and eighth in various races at state. Some teams are still completing, but sectionals were won by girls' soccer, girls lacrosse and boys lacrosse with baseball winning regionals.
- Mrs. Dubravec congratulated the students and families of the Class of 2026 who participated in New Trier's 126th Commencement ceremony.

Dr. Tragos then shared words of congratulations to Dr. Joanne Panopoulos, Assistant Superintendent for Special Ed and Student Services, and Dr. Michael Marassa, Chief Technology Officer, on their upcoming retirements. Before he shared his comments, he thanked Mrs. Dubravec and her team for all their work on Commencement. He also introduced Ms. Megan Zajac, Executive Director of Special Education, who will replace Dr. Panopoulos and Ms. Lauren Owens, who will replace Dr. Marassa.

Dr. Johnson gave the FOIA report noting that there have been no requests since the last Board meeting.

V. Communications

Ms. Tomlinson 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 Ms. Niki Dizon, Director of Communications. There were no requests for public comment.

VI. Special Orders of Business

A. Appointment of Board Member to fill Board Vacancy*

Ms. Tomlinson announced the appointment of a board member to fill a board vacancy. She expressed gratitude for the contributions that Ms. Kimberly Alcantara made over the past five years as a Board member. Ms. Tomlinson stated that the Board had 60 days to fill this Board seat, and its goal was to keep the Board functioning at its highest level. The Board was fortunate to have a number of talented and passionate community members apply for the position and sit for interviews. The Board recommended that it seat Mr. Brad McLane as the interim member. He already received the community's endorsement, having been elected and served a four-year term. While previously serving on the Board, he was also involved in the Facilities Steering Committee and Community Engagement Committee, to which he will return during this tenure.

Ms. McDonough moved that the Board of Education appoint Brad McLane as a board member from the June 1, 2026 meeting through the April 2027 Regular Meeting. Mr. Das seconded the motion. Upon a roll call vote being taken, the members voted as follows:

AYE: Ms. McDonough, Ms. Pofcher, Mr. Das, Ms. Hahn, Mr. Lee, Ms. Tomlinson

NAY:

Mr. McLane joined the Board table, shared comments, and then read the Oath of Office.

B. New Trier Education Support Professionals Association 2026-2031 Agreement*

Dr. Johnson shared about the New Trier Education Support Professionals Association (NTESPA) 2026-2031 Agreement, which he is recommending for approval between the District and the New Trier Education Support Professionals Association. The Association represents approximately 190 educational support professionals across the District. These employees serve in a wide range of critical roles, including instructional assistants, campus security staff, office support personnel, technology support, nurses, athletic trainers and other operational positions that are essential to the daily functioning of the school and the support of students. This agreement is the result of a collaborative negotiation process that began in January and included 11 bargaining sessions over approximately 70 hours. The agreement reflects a balanced approach that supports employees while remaining fiscally responsible and aligned with the District's long-term financial planning.

A major focus of the negotiations was addressing the economic pressures many support staff employees continue to experience due to inflation and labor market conditions. Particular attention was given to Instructional Assistants and Campus Security staff, who have been disproportionately impacted in recent years. In recognition of those challenges, the agreement provides additional wage increases for those employee groups during the first two years of the contract. The agreement includes a 4.5% increase for all employees in 2026-27 and a 4% increase in 2027-28, along with the additional 1.5% increases for Instructional Assistants and Campus Security staff in each of those first two years. Year three has a 4.25% increase. The final two years of the agreement are tied to CPI with established minimum and maximum limits to provide both flexibility and financial stability. The agreement also maintains the salary structure implemented in the previous contract, which continues to support recruitment and retention in a highly competitive labor market while recognizing employee experience and contributions to the District.

In addition, the contract includes several operational and employee-support enhancements, including increased tuition reimbursement, enhanced retirement benefits, a stipend for employees maintaining bus driver credentials, and revisions to evaluation and job description language intended to improve clarity, consistency and communication. Overall, this agreement recognizes the outstanding work of the District's educational support professionals, supports its ability to attract and retain high-quality employees, and does so in a manner that remains fiscally responsible.

Dr. Johnson thanked the members of the District's bargaining teams, including Dr. Nashwa Mekky, Chief Human Resources Officer, Dr. Dan Weidner, Associate Principal for Academics and Administrative Services, and Board member Ms. McDonough, for their work throughout this process. He also acknowledged the ESP Association negotiation team, led by Ms. Angie Woodul, Extension Department Assistant and Educational Support Professionals President. Having strong association leaders willing to step up and spend time beyond the workday on behalf of all of

their members is important to having a vibrant organization where employee perspectives are represented, and the District was fortunate to have Ms. Woodul's leadership, along with her colleagues Ms. Rhonda Geater, Campus Security, Katherine Kapustiak, Application Support Specialist, Mr. Eric Johnson, Instructional Technology Specialist, and Mr. Adam Vogltanz, Instructional Assistant. Dr. Johnson recommended that the Board approve the FY27 through FY31 agreement with the New Trier Education Support Professionals Association as presented.

Ms. McDonough extended her sincere thanks to all of the members of the bargaining team, but especially to the ESP bargaining team members for their time, dedication, and thoughtfulness that they brought to the process. Throughout the negotiations it was clear how deeply committed they are to the school, students, and colleagues. Ms. McDonough went on to share additional comments.

Dr. Tragos also extended his thanks to the bargaining teams for their time, patience, and ability to listen to one another in order to come to a fair agreement while addressing issues in a reasonable and consistent manner.

Ms. Pofcher moved that the Board of Education approve the New Trier Education Support Professionals FY27 – FY31 agreement. Mr. Lee seconded the motion. Upon a roll call vote being taken, the members voted as follows:

AYE: Ms. Pofcher, Mr. Das, Ms. Hahn, Mr. Lee, Ms. McDonough, Mr. McLane, Ms. Tomlinson
NAY:

C. DRAFT 2026-2027 Annual Plan

Dr. Tragos previewed the 2026-2027 Annual Plan which is still in draft form. He began by providing a brief history of the Strategic Plan, *New Trier 2030*, which was adopted by the Board in January 2019. It serves as a roadmap for the strategic direction of the District, while the Annual Plan sets the yearly priorities to make progress toward larger goals. This is the eighth Annual Plan under *New Trier 2030* and has five strategic goals that will focus on continuity, alignment, and steady progress. The final plan will be presented at the July 13th meeting for approval.

Dr. Tragos shared details on three key points for this year's plan and then shared how the 26-27 plan has evolved from the 25-26 plan. One change for the upcoming year, is combining two separate goals – the Culture of Belonging and the Culture of Wellness into one goal. This reflects the lessons learned during implementation such as their interconnectedness, so it makes sense to talk about them together. A “new” goal is Facilities Planning and Priorities, and while this work is not new given all the updates made to the campuses over the past several years, it is new to the Annual Plan and is closely aligned to *New Trier 2030*. In addition to the “new” goal, there are four continuing goal areas: Experiential Learning & Career-Connected Learning, Characteristics of a New Trier Graduate (CNTG), Belonging & Wellness, Access and Opportunity to Rich and Rigorous Coursework.

Dr. Tragos shared feedback and next steps between this meeting and the July Board meeting, including gathering Board feedback, faculty leader feedback, Admin Retreat input, making refinements and updating one-page summaries, which will share key actions, outcomes, deliverables, and expected outcomes. Dr. Tragos then invited questions and comments from the Board.

Ms. Pofcher encouraged a couple of items. The first was to define exactly what the District is trying to accomplish next year with each goal, so they are not themes, but rather they are specific. She went on to explain this further. Second, in regard to rigorous coursework and preparing students for the future, considering whether the District needs to level up and how to incorporate faculty and students' continuous evolution in how it prepares people to work in a world where AI continues to evolve. Ultimately, Ms. Pofcher encouraged preciseness about the exact destination that is wanted for each area of focus.

Ms. Tomlinson shared that both of her comments center around the ability to measure the effectiveness of what the District is doing against each goal. In particular, how the school will know how well students learned, embraced and demonstrated the *Characteristics of a New Trier Graduate* and how that competency will be communicated to colleges. Regarding career connected learning and experiential learning, it still seems like a big idea, and she would like to know how it will be measured as well as how this new programming could affect how the District deploys teachers and other resources.

Mr. McLane was on the Board when the Strategic Plan was implemented seven years ago and noted it is exciting to see it still come to life and move forward. He went on to echo what both Ms. Pofcher and Ms. Tomlinson said about identifying measurable metrics.

D. Facilities Planning Update

Dr. Johnson shared an update on facilities planning, including this year's accomplishments as well as work that is on-going. He then planned to share about the new long-term facilities plan, which will chart the course over the next ten years, and be presented in July.

He began with the on-going work happening at the Winnetka Campus with the North/Tower building. The new principal's office has been completed since December 2025 and in May, five new science labs opened. More spaces will open this August, early next year, and August of 2027. Dr. Johnson shared photos of the new spaces and provided details on the areas. He then went on to share details and pictures about the on-going work at Northfield which includes an athletic fields project and cafeteria renovation. Ms. Tomlinson noted that the walking path at Northfield is almost a half mile long. The Board approved Health Life Safety (HLS) projects in 2024 and 2025, which remain ongoing through 2027.

Dr. Johnson then went on to share about the long-term facilities planning. The District engaged architectural firms Wight & Co and Cashman Stahler Group for the creation of a new ten-year facilities plan roadmap. The process has included thoughtful feedback from students, staff, and community members. Work includes the logical order of the projects which will focus on addressing the most serious issues that impact the greatest number of students and is aligned with the Strategic Plan. This will not be a commitment to particular projects, however the Board, each year, will make decisions about which projects they would like the administration to engage in as well as how the projects will be funded.

The Board will participate in a Committee of the Whole Meeting prior to the July 13th meeting. This will allow for a thoughtful presentation and more focused discussion on facilities. Attendees will include the Board, architects, administration, and facilities leaders. Dr. Johnson further shared the focus of the Board workshop as well as the areas that the plan will focus on. If there are changes to the plan that the Board would like to see before it is adopted, they will be made and brought back to a future Board meeting for a shorter presentation and adoption. Dr. Johnson thanked staff, students, parents, community, and the Board for their on-going support, along with the Physical Plant Services staff and leadership as well as the architecture team at Cashman Stahler and Wight & Co. He then invited comments and questions from the Board.

Ms. Pofcher thanked Dr. Johnson for his leadership of spearheading a multi-faceted process to create a new ten-year plan. She shared additional comments, concluding that this is an incredible body of work that has been done, and the District is at the start of something very significant that will require a different kind of engagement next year along with a different level of effort and involvement of its broad-based community.

Ms. Hahn inquired when Board members could tour the new areas, Dr. Johnson replied that he will reach out to schedule tours. His plan is to also show Board members about the older spaces as well. Ms. Hahn then inquired if the science labs are interchangeable amongst the science disciplines. Dr. Johnson replied that the labs are mostly interchangeable, but the way they are stocked and planned specifically for physics, chemistry, and biology. Finally, Ms. Hahn outlined the process for July, concluding that the Board will be adopting the priorities. Dr. Johnson confirmed, noting that August or September would be the adoption of the priorities. There would be a subsequent vote at a particular time to commit to certain projects.

Mr. Lee echoed Ms. Pofcher's gratitude at the amount of effort and intentionality in everything. He looks forward to the report in July.

Ms. Tomlinson noted it was a great presentation, and a member of the public might inquire what is left to discuss in a ten-year plan. She reminded everyone that there is a lot of work left to be done. Ms. Tomlinson has attended a couple of the work sessions as an observer and acknowledged the variety of people that have been included in the planning process. In response, Dr. Johnson noted that the student voice was very helpful.

VII. Administrative Items

A. and B. Treasurer's and Financial Reports for May 2026

Due to the timing of this meeting, Dr. Johnson will share the Treasurer's and Financial Reports for May 2026 at the July 13, 2026 Board meeting.

C. Policy Revisions - First Reading - PRESS 121

Dr. Nashwa Mekky, Chief Human Resources Officer, presented the first reading of the policy revisions for PRESS issue 121, noting there were some minor revisions brought forward. These will be approved at the July Board meeting. Ms. Hahn, Board liaison to the Policy Committee, shared that one of the policies is an exhibit, 2:140 – Guidance for Board Member Communication. Typically, the committee does not review exhibits but because this is a Board specific exhibit, it is included. She encouraged Board members to take a close read and perhaps at some point in the future, discuss the exhibit in further detail. Ms. Tomlinson inquired if the Board would be able to have this conversation, which Dr. Tragos confirmed this could be done and he, Ms. Hahn, and Ms. Tomlinson spoke further about it.

D. Board Member Committee Liaison Assignments

Ms. Tomlinson shared that Board members have their committee liaison assignments for the 26-27 school year.

VIII. Consent Agenda

- Bill List for Period, May 1 - 31, 2026 (will be presented at the July 13, 2026 Board Meeting)
- Personnel Report (Appointments, Change of Status, Resignations, Stipends - Appointment, Stipends - Separation, Stipend List for Spring 2026, Administrator Contracts, and Addendum)
- Winnetka Campus North and Tower Building Construction Report #11
- FrontLine Contract Extension
- PowerSchool Contract Extension

Ms. Tomlinson inquired if any members wanted to pull an item off the Consent Agenda, no one chose to do so. Mr. Das moved that the Board of Education approve the Consent Agenda, which includes: Personnel Report (Appointments, Change of Status, Resignations, Stipends - Appointment, Stipends - Separation, Stipend List for Spring 2026, Administrator Contracts, and Addendum); Winnetka Campus North and Tower Building Construction Report #11; The renewal agreement with FrontLine Education and authorize the Deputy Superintendent to execute the agreement; and the agreement with PowerSchool for the FY27 – FY31 and authorize the Deputy Superintendent to execute the agreement. Ms. McDonough seconded the motion. Upon a roll call vote being taken, the members voted as follows:

AYE: Mr. Das, Ms. Hahn, Mr. Lee, Ms. McDonough, Mr. McLane, Ms. Pofcher, Ms. Tomlinson

NAY:

IX. Board Member Reports

Ms. Hahn attended the **New Trier Fine Arts Association** on May 20th, which was their end-of-year meeting. A summer scholar shared about her experience last summer. A member from the Post-High School Counseling Department also attended to answer parent questions. Also shared were their fundraising efforts and change in leadership.

Mr. Das shared that the **TrueNorth Leadership Council** will meet next week.

Mr. Das also shared that he was selected to be a director-at-large to serve on the Illinois Association of School Board's (IASB) North Cook Executive Committee.

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

Dr. Tragos highlighted the following events:

- Final exams are currently taking place.
- The last day of student attendance is this Friday, June 5th.
- Summer school begins on Monday, June 8th.
- The two-day Admin Retreat will take place on Tuesday, June 16th and Wednesday, June 17th.
- There will be no school on Friday, June 19th due to the holiday.
- The Committee of the Whole will take place on July 13th at 3:00 p.m., followed by the Regular Board Meeting.

Ms. Tomlinson then inquired whether there were any requests for staff research or future agenda items, of which there were none.

Ms. Pofcher thanked everyone for a great school year and wished Dr. Panopoulos and Dr. Marassa well in their retirements.

XI. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Das 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 8:43 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lindsey Ruston, Secretary

Sally Tomlinson, President