

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

July 13, 2026

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

Full videos of Board meetings are available online at <https://nths.mediaspace.kaltura.com/category/BOARD+OF+EDUCATION/>. Information about Board of Education members, upcoming meetings, agendas, minutes, and other documents are available at <https://www.newtrier.k12.il.us/boardofeducation>. Please refer to these webpages if you would like more information on an item.

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 13, 2026, at 5:05 p.m.

Members Present

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

Administrators Present

Dr. Peter Tragos, Superintendent
Dr. Christopher Johnson, Deputy Superintendent
Dr. Chimille Tillery, Asst. Supt. for Curriculum & Instruction
Mr. Chris Mitchell, Associate Principal for Student Services

Also Present

Ms. Niki Dizon, Chief Communications Officer; Dr. Nashwa Mekky, Chief Human Resources Officer; Ms. Lauren Owens, Chief Technology Officer; Mr. Myron Spiwak, Director of Business Services; Ms. Angie Woodul, Extension Department Assistant and Educational Support Professionals President; Mr. Eric Johnson, Technology Department; Mr. Jeff Bailey, Technology Department; Mr. Mike Hill, Technology Department; Ms. Lindsey Ruston, Board of Education Secretary; and members of the press and community.

BUSINESS MEETING

I. CALL TO ORDER – 5:05 p.m. – C234

Ms. Tomlinson called the Regular Meeting of July 13, 2026 of the Board of Education to order at 5:11 p.m. in room C234 at the Northfield campus. Roll call was taken, and all members were present. Ms. Tomlinson asked for a motion to move to Closed Session. Mr. Das moved that the Board of Education adjourn to closed session for the purpose of the appointment, employment, compensation, discipline, performance, or dismissal of specific employees, specific individuals who serve as independent contractors, or specific volunteers of the District or legal counsel for the District, including hearing testimony on a complaint lodged against an employee, a specific individual who serves as an independent contractor, or a volunteer of the District or against legal counsel for the District to determine its validity 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. Lee seconded the motion. Upon a roll call vote being taken, the members voted as follows:

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

NAY: none

ABSENT:

The motion passed.

II. CLOSED SESSION – 5:10 p.m. – A201A

III. BUSINESS MEETING – Open Session – 6:00 p.m. – C234

Ms. Tomlinson called the Regular Meeting of July 13, 2026 of the Board of Education to order at 6:00 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 and Regular Meeting of June 1, 2026 (open and closed sessions)**

The first order of business was to approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting of May 18, 2026 and the Regular Meeting of June 1, 2026 (open and closed sessions). Ms. Hahn had one change to the minutes that was incorporated. Ms. McDonough moved, and Mr. Das seconded the motion, that the Board of Education approve the minutes from the Regular Meeting of May 18, 2026 and the Regular Meeting of June 1, 2026 (open and closed session). Upon a roll call vote being taken, the members voted as follows:

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

NAY:

The motion passed.

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

Mr. Chris Mitchell, Associate Principal for Student Services, shared the following student events and program updates from both campuses:

- Incoming freshmen are attending iPad Orientation and Mr. Mitchell thanked the Technology department for their work.
- The Northfield campus is hosting summer school.
- Construction continues at Northfield on the turf fields and in the cafeteria.
- Girls' soccer was state champs and is Coach Jim Burnside's eighth state championship.
- Mr. Josh Runkle, swimming coach, was recognized by the National Interscholastic Swimming Coaches Association with their outstanding service award. Mr. Pete Drevline was inducted into the Illinois Coaches Association Hall of Fame. He recently retired and was head golf coach who led the team to 12 state titles.
- Students attended the Design Challenge Competition hosted by the National Technology Student Association.
- The second annual Lift for Life took place in June and raised over \$24,000 for non-profit Uplifting Athletes. More than 70 football and basketball players participated and they more than doubled the amount raised from last year. Typically, this is a colligate event and New Trier is one of the few high schools in the nation that hosts it.
- Mr. Mitchell also shared important upcoming August dates.

Dr. Johnson gave the FOIA report noting that there have been five requests since the last Board meeting: residency verification services, grading policies, application for a position, aggregate GPA, and directory information. All are closed.

Dr. Johnson also reported on the Village of Northfield as they continue to move forward with establishing a TIF. The next step in the process, a Joint Review Board, will be held at 2:30 p.m. Wednesday at the Village Hall and is open to the public. During the meeting, the District will share the results from an analysis conducted by a TIF expert retained by New Trier, Avoca, and Sunset Ridge - the three school districts in the TIF zone. The report shows that the Village's consultant, SB Friendman, has prepared, does not meet the criteria for establishing the TIF and that the TIF will have a detrimental effect on the finances of the school districts and there are other mechanisms available to the Village to fund their needs. The school districts have prepared a letter to the Village stating their concerns and a summary of the report, which is available on Board Docs.

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. New Trier 2030 Annual Plan: 2026-2027 and District/Supt 2026-2027 Goals**

Dr. Tragos presented the New Trier 2030 Annual Plan: 2026-2027 along with his superintendent goals for the year. The plan has evolved since the June 1st Board meeting and reflects the collaborative process with faculty, administration, and the Board. He began by providing a brief history of the Strategic Plan, *New Trier 2030*, which was adopted by the Board in January 2019. The guiding principle of *NT 2030* is that the world and students are changing, and New Trier is adapting. The Strategic Plan documents complement one another with the plan serving as a roadmap for the strategic direction of the District, the Annual Plan defines the District's priorities, and the one-page

summaries build shared understanding.

This year's Annual Plan focuses on six goals to build on seven years of progress and ensures each goal is clear, concise, measurable, and aligned with New Trier's mission and vision and the daily work of staff and departments. He then provided the structure of the Annual Plan One-Page Summaries. Dr. Tragos then went on to share the initiatives and the reason why this work matters for each one. Dr. Tragos provided a summary of the goals noting that there will be more focus on institutional, student and staff outcomes that the District wants these initiatives to create. It is more about what will be different for students, staff, and New Trier because of this work. Dr. Tragos then shared that the goals are intended to answer the question: if the District is successful, what will be the outcomes for students, staff, and the institution. Dr. Tragos shared the quarterly timeline for monitoring progress. He then invited questions and comments from the Board.

Ms. Hahn recognized and applauded how Dr. Tragos has taken the strategic plan and made it his own. After additional comments, Ms. Hahn noted that these goals are ones that the Board shares with Dr. Tragos. She also shared her appreciation for how Dr. Tragos has engaged stakeholders to develop a plan that they can support and see to fruition. Referring to the Parent Community Advisory Group, the focus of these meetings has touched on pieces of the plan. She inquired if any of this year's Annual Plan goals will be brought to this group, particularly for engagement with the community. Dr. Tragos responded that typically the group meets three times a year and he does not yet know which topics he will bring to them.

Ms. Hahn then inquired to whom is the Director of the Center for Experiential Learning going to report. Dr. Tragos replied that that person is likely to report to Dr. Tillery, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction.

Mr. McLane shared that he was on the Board when the Strategic Plan was approved eight years ago, it was a grand plan. The plan today is very actionable and to Mr. McLane it is more concrete and better defined, where he can see the outcomes and measurables. Mr. McLane then inquired about the champions listed with each goal and to what degree they have embraced and identified their role. Dr. Tragos replied that he has tried to put the plan in front of the admin team as much as possible. He shared that the team worked on it during the admin retreat as well as in other meetings and in the document itself. Mr. McLane and Dr. Tragos continued their conversation around this. Mr. McLane then went on to inquire if there was a goal seven that Dr. Tragos felt he needed to cut, to which Dr. Tragos replied that this is the plan that the school can do and there is no number seven hanging out there.

Ms. McDonough inquired if there was a goal or two that would turn into an evergreen one besides wellness and belonging in the next year or two. Dr. Tragos replied he thought the *Characteristics of a New Trier Graduate* would be one. He noted one key piece of the *Characteristics*, the Portfolio, still needs some work. He also thought experiential learning would be another one once the Center is up and running.

Mr. Das shared his appreciation for the graphics of the path to 2030 and the relationship among the Strategic Plan documents. Given the earlier conversation about the long-term facilities plan, it seems, timing-wise, the road to the next strategic plan coincides with the conversations with the community about facilities. Mr. Das thought there might be value in being to be able to say that the Annual Plan is connected across the Strategic Plan and the Facilities Plan. After additional comments, Mr. Das shared that the way the visuals are set up will make the District ready to talk about the interconnection and what is currently being talked about and bringing it all together as a springboard to some future excellence.

Mr. Lee noted that Dr. Tragos has approached this year's plan with a different level of passion, focus, and clarity, which reflects the ownership that Ms. Hahn spoke to earlier. Mr. Lee went on to share that he believes there are a couple of learnings from the private sector that will be important regarding goal six, particularly around cost control.

Ms. Pofcher shared her appreciation for the degree to which Dr. Tragos engaged the Board effectively both individually as well as a group. Ms. Pofcher also shared that there may be an opportunity to tighten below the hood of these initiatives in terms of frameworks and language. She encouraged this with the frameworks and tools so that the institution, families, and students can see how these lock together. Ms. Pofcher is also excited that Ms. Owens, Chief Technology Officer, has joined the team, particularly in regard to AI, which she shared further comments on.

Ms. Tomlinson shared comments on the process and her appreciation for the collaboration with different groups as well as Dr. Tragos' ability to take feedback, reflect on it and refine the plan. She also shared appreciation for the "why it matters" part of each goal as well as the success indicators. She noted that the way Dr. Tragos has crafted the

plan and written it up helps the District make sure it is on track, student-centric, and making progress.

Mr. Lee moved, and Mr. Das seconded the motion, that the Board of Education approve the New Trier 2030 Annual Plan 2026-2027 and the associated Superintendent 2026-2027 goals as presented. Upon a roll call vote being taken, the members voted as follows:

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

NAY:

The motion passed.

***B. Resolution Authorizing the Naming of Northfield Athletic Facilities**

Dr. Johnson presented the resolution authorizing the naming of Northfield Athletic Facilities. The Naming Committee met to consider the recommendations related to the Northfield Athletic Project, which modernizes that campus' outdoor athletic facilities and is scheduled for completion this fall. The project includes new and replacement synthetic turf fields, lighting, bleachers, press boxes, scoreboards, and a new community walking path and outdoor fitness area. This work has been made possible through a combination of District funding and extraordinary private philanthropy, including an anonymous gift of approximately \$11 million, along with support from the New Trier Educational Foundation and Booster Club. In accordance with Board Policy 8:80, the Naming Committee reviewed two requests.

First, the anonymous donor has requested that the facilities funded through their gift not be named for another individual for the next 25 years. During that period, the donor would retain the option to request naming recognition in the future for Board consideration.

Second, the Committee recommends naming the new Field 2 scoreboard in honor of legendary football coach Eugene "Chick" Cichowski. Coach Cichowski dedicated decades of service to New Trier, building one of the state's premier football programs while making a lasting impact on generations of student-athletes. The scoreboard was funded entirely through donations from New Trier football alumni and former players, reflecting the tremendous respect and appreciation for Coach Cichowski's legacy. Based on these recommendations, the Naming Committee recommends approval of the proposal as presented.

Ms. McDonough moved, and Mr. Das seconded the motion, that the Board of Education approve the naming proposal as presented. 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:

The motion passed.

VII. Administrative Items

A. Treasurer's Report for May and June 2026

Dr. Johnson provided the Treasurer's Report for May and June 2026. Reports for both months are presented due to the early June Board meeting. Dr. Johnson focused on the June reports, which encompass the May results. June is the final month of the fiscal year and provides an early look at the results of the previous year. The District uses accrual-based accounting, which allows for revenue and expenditures attributable to the prior fiscal year to be recognized for 60 days after the conclusion of that year, so the June results provide the first look, but a very preliminary one, on the last year. Property taxes continue to be a concern and a focus for the District. It was pleased to see tax disbursements in June after a long break, bringing the District to just under the total it expected for the year with 99% collected. There is concern about future disbursements, with at least a two-month delay in the second installment tax bills. Mr. Spiwak, Director of Business Services, is working closely to monitor cash flow and it will be reviewed on a monthly basis. Cook County has offered a bridge loan program and administration recommended that an application be authorized for that. The weighted portfolio yield is 3.56% at PMA and 4.09% at 5/3 for long term investments. Cash balances for all accounts are \$159,379,212.

B. Financial Report for May and June 2026

Dr. Johnson then provided the Financial Report for May and June 2026. Operating revenue for the twelve months of Fiscal Year 2026 was \$144,880,000, or 0.16% lower compared to last year. The overall revenue for operating funds appears to be on track to end the year very near to the adopted budget.

Operating expenditures through June were \$141,300,000 or 0.02% lower than last year. Expenditure total will increase as payments for FY26 goods and services are processed in July and August. The adopted budget for operating expenses is 1.52% higher than the 2024-25 fiscal year. Final results for the fiscal year will be included in the Annual Comprehensive Financial Report upon conclusion of the audit and will be presented to the Board in December.

***C. FY27 Tentative Budget Approval**

Dr. Johnson introduced the FY27 Tentative Budget, noting that July 1st is the start of the new fiscal year. The tentative budget is based on a process that started in January 2026, with the review of our five-year financial projections. Throughout the winter and spring, the administration has worked closely with departments and stakeholders to develop a budget that is aligned to the District's strategic goals and is student focused. The largest part of the budget is salaries and benefits, which are primarily driven by student choices in courses through a process led by Dr. Tillery. The budget is balanced in operating funds, with a one-time use of fund balance for on-going capital projects. Mr. Spiwak provided an overview of revenues, which are increasing by 4.23% and expenditures which are increasing by 2.1%. This leads to a starting budget surplus of \$8.1 million and after debt payments due to the two capital projects, the surplus is \$3.5 million. After additional comments, Mr. Spiwak spoke to the property tax piece, noting his concern is more of a timing one. State revenue has been reliable at \$2.4 million. Federal funding remains flat from a collection perspective and the District has already received its allocation.

On the expenditure side, salaries and benefits are the largest portion of the District's expenditures. Salaries will increase by 4.8% with benefits also increasing, which Dr. Johnson further explained. Mr. Spiwak then went on to explain the categories that helped the District in keeping the increase in expenditures for FY27 at 2.1%. He also spoke about the costs of special education. Mr. Spiwak then invited questions and comments from the Board.

Ms. Hahn noted her appreciation for the ability to budget under normal conditions, let alone the volatility of the past few years. She then inquired that if the Northfield TIF is successful where that might be seen. Mr. Spiwak replied that it will impact the District's tax revenues primarily such as the tax revenue from new construction would be frozen. Ms. Hahn inquired about the levy, which Dr. Johnson explained. Ms. Hahn then inquired if the new Executive Director of Special Education will take on the work to keep special education costs in line like the Assistant Superintendent for Special Education did prior to retirement. Dr. Tragos replied that Ms. Megan Zajac, the new director, will be tasked with overseeing and managing these costs.

Mr. Lee commented that the District is using surplus to fund critical unfunded projects right now and inquired if there is any benefit to paying down the principal and interest on those projects that are already underway instead of funding new initiatives. Mr. Spiwak replied that all of the District's bond issues received very competitive rates and shared that the District, from a cash flow standpoint, is saving by keeping them. Dr. Johnson added that for the \$11 million donation, the largest in the District's history, did trigger some costs for the District in order to move the project forward.

Ms. Tomlinson commented that the District is confident that Cook County will get the money it owes to the District, but timing is a concern, so cash flow is an item that will be monitored, and the District's investments will be impacted, to which Mr. Spiwak confirmed. Mr. Spiwak and Dr. Johnson then answered a question from Ms. Tomlinson about a \$7 million transfer placeholder.

Dr. Johnson added his thanks to Mr. Spiwak and the Business Office staff, and the administration, for their diligence in preparing a student-focused budget that is aligned to the District's strategic vision and needs.

Ms. Hahn moved, and Mr. Das seconded the motion, that the Board of Education approve the Fiscal Year 2027 Tentative Budget and that a Public Hearing date be set for September 22, 2026. 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:

The motion passed.

***D. Consideration and action on a resolution expressing official intent regarding certain capital expenditures to be reimbursed from proceeds of an obligation to be issued by the District**

Dr. Johnson presented on the consideration and action on a resolution expressing official intent regarding certain capital expenditures to be reimbursed from proceeds of an obligation to be issued by the District, noting that periodically, the District issues bonds to fund capital improvement projects. Later this year, the District expects to issue debt to finance the upcoming energy savings project. Some project costs will be incurred this summer, before those bonds are issued. This reimbursement resolution is a standard financing tool that preserves the District's ability to reimburse those eligible expenses from future bond proceeds. Approving the resolution today provides flexibility in how the project is financed and helps ensure the District maximizes the appropriate use of the bond funds. This action does not authorize the issuance of bonds. It simply establishes the District's official intent to reimburse eligible capital expenditures with proceeds from a future bond issuance, should the Board move forward with that financing. Dr. Johnson then invited questions from the Board.

Mr. Lee inquired if there was a window of time when the District needs to pay itself back. Dr. Johnson replied that the resolution allows reimbursement for expenditures two months before it was passed and lasts six months to a year.

Mr. Das moved, and Mr. Lee seconded the motion, that the Board of Education adopt the resolution expressing official intent regarding certain capital expenditures to be reimbursed from proceeds of an obligation to be issued by Township High School District Number 203, Cook County, Illinois. Upon a roll call vote being taken, the members voted as follows:

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

NAY:

The motion passed.

VIII. Consent Agenda

- Bill List for Period, May 1 - 31, 2026 and June 1 - 30, 2026
- Personnel Report (Appointments, Changes of Status, Resignations, Retirements, Stipends – Appointments, Stipends – Separation, and Terminations)
- Winnetka Campus North and Tower Building Construction Report #12
- Policy Revisions - Second Reading - PRESS 121
- Closed Session Records Review
- Capital Expenditures (FY27)
- ED-RED Membership Renewal
- NTEF Resolution
- Guaranteed Energy Savings Contract - Convergence Energy
- Approval of Application and Participation in Cook County Property Tax Bridge Loan
- Resolution Authorizing the Prompt Payment of Bills

Ms. Tomlinson inquired if any members wanted to pull an item off the Consent Agenda, no one chose to do so. Ms. Pofcher moved that the Board of Education approve the Consent Agenda, which includes: Bill List for Period, May 1 - 31, 2026 and June 1 - 30, 2026; Personnel Report (Appointments, Changes of Status, Resignations, Retirements, Stipends – Appointments, Stipends – Separation, and Termination); Winnetka Campus North and Tower Building Construction Report #12; Policy Revisions - Second Reading - PRESS 121; The destruction of the Closed Session Meeting tapes of July 2024 through December 2024; Capital Expenditures (FY27) which exceed \$50,000 as presented; ED-RED Membership Renewal; Resolution Providing Operational Resources for the New Trier Educational Foundation as presented; Enter into a Guaranteed Energy Savings Contract with Convergence Energy, subject to attorney review; The District's participation in the Cook County Bridge Fund Program and authorize the Deputy Superintendent to complete and submit all necessary application materials; and the Resolution Authorizing the Prompt Payment of Bills. Mr. Das seconded the motion. Upon a roll call vote being taken, the members voted as follows:

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

NAY:

IX. Board Member Reports

Ms. Hahn attended the **New Trier Educational Foundation** meeting on July 9th where the Foundation shared their annual goals for the year. They will focus on increased engagement, large donors and moving the Foundation to the next level.

Mr. Das attended the **TrueNorth Leadership Council** meeting on June 10th. The meeting included the election of officers with Mr. Das continuing in his role as vice president. The next meeting is on September 16th.

Mr. McLane noted that he and Mr. Lee took a tour of the Winnetka campus with Dr. Johnson. The information covered at the **Facilities Steering Committee** meeting was previously covered.

Ms. Pofcher noted that what was discussed at the **Finance Committee** meeting was fully covered earlier in the meeting.

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

Dr. Tragos highlighted the following events:

- July 23rd is the last day of second semester summer school.
- The Admin Retreat Part 2 will take place on August 5th.
- Leaders return on Monday, August 10th.
- Opening Institute Day is scheduled for Monday, August 17th, which is also the date of the next Board meeting.
- The first day of student attendance is Wednesday, August 19th.

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

XI. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. McLane moved, and Mr. Das seconded the motion, to adjourn. Upon a voice vote being taken, all members indicated they were in favor. The meeting adjourned at 7:23 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lindsey Ruston, Secretary

Sally Tomlinson, President