



**NEW
TRIER**
TOWNSHIP HIGH SCHOOL
DISTRICT 203



New Trier Township High School District 203

Superintendent Search Leadership Profile Report

September 16, 2024

Tonight's Discussion

- Review Timeline
- Presentation of the Leadership Profile Report
- Application and Screening Process
- Interviews
- Selection of Next Superintendent



Timeline

MILESTONE	DATE
Recruiting and advertising	July 1 to September 30
Focus Groups and Forums	August 26 - September 6
Online Survey	August 26 - September 6
District Strengths, Challenges, and Leadership Profile Report Presentation	September 16
HYA Screening	September 1 - 30
Presentation of Slate and Interview Workshop	October 7
First Round Interviews	October 16-17
Finalist Interviews (scope and process TBD)	October 28 – November 1
Board Deliberations	November 7
Board Approves Superintendent	November 18
Superintendent Assumes Responsibility	July 1, 2025

Broad Spectrum of Data Collection

Quantitative: 999 Completed Survey Responses

330	Parents of Students
207	Students
159	Teachers and Certificated Staff
35	Support Staff
20	Administrators
227	Community members without students at NTHS
165	Alumni

Qualitative: 21 Focus Groups, 5 Open Forums and 9 individual interviews (166 people)

Five Big Takeaways

1. New Trier High School has a long tradition of exceptional excellence in academics, athletics, and the arts that requires a leader who will be dedicated to sustaining and continuing to strengthen all around excellence.
2. The new leader must be an immersive presence in the schools and community who values and embraces the traditions while encouraging the development of new opportunities to ensure student success in their continuing education and throughout their lives.
3. The top priority of the next superintendent must be to listen and learn. An “open door” is not enough. The individual will need to be out and about through that open door to personally and regularly engage with the community connectors, the student body, and the entire staff. Knowing the staff by name and being frequently visible and approachable to students will enable the superintendent to succeed in advancing the goals of the district.
4. Collaboration, communication, and distributed leadership are essential to the district’s continued growth and success and key components of “the New Trier Way.”
5. The new leader’s disposition is as important as the knowledge and skills they will bring to the job. Authentic empathy, deep compassion, impeccable integrity, being both trusting and trustworthy, exhibiting sincere humility coupled with commanding confidence, a solid work ethic, and a comfortable sense of humor and true joy in the job all matter to all stakeholders.

Focus Groups, Forums, and Interviews: Top 10 Strengths of the District

1. High Academic Standards and College Preparation
2. Strong Community Involvement
3. Well-Resourced and Financially Stable
4. Dedicated and Highly Qualified Staff
5. Comprehensive Support Systems
6. Inclusive and Welcoming Environment
7. Strong Arts, Athletics, and Extracurricular Programs
8. Collaborative Leadership and Governance
9. Connection to the Community and Generational Continuity
10. Focus on Personalization and Small-School Feel

Focus Groups, Forums, and Interviews: Top 10 Challenges / Opportunities for the New Leader

1. Managing High Expectations
2. Mental Health of Students
3. Diversity and Equity Issues
4. Internal Communication Consistency
5. Parental Pressure on Schools and Students
6. Financial Pressures on Residents' Property Taxes
7. Staff Recruitment and Retention Due to Retirements
8. Detrimental Impacts of Social Media
9. Adaptation to Change Necessitated by External Factors
10. Sustaining and Strengthening Special Education Supports

Focus Groups, Forums, and Interviews: Top 5 Immediate Priorities for the Next Superintendent

1. Build Strong Relationships & Listen

- Prioritize building relationships with all stakeholders, including students, parents, staff, feeder schools, municipalities, and the Board of Education.
- Spend time listening to all viewpoints, especially minority and frustrated voices.
- Get to know key leaders (e.g., top 15 contacts) to understand the community's values, concerns, and expectations.

2. Focus on Mental Health, Safety, & Student Well-being

- Address the rising concerns around student anxiety, mental health, and community safety. Be proactive in joint agency training and community preparedness.
- Engage in thoughtful initiatives around social media's impact on student well-being, technology use in classrooms, and student mental health.

3. Align with the Strategic Plan & Educational Excellence

- Review and align with New Trier 2030, particularly focusing on the adaptation of the strategic plan to meet new educational challenges.
- Ensure the district maintains its academic rigor (e.g., critical thinking, civil discourse, conscientious engagement with complex topics) while also fostering balance in student lives (e.g., career-connected opportunities, block scheduling).

Focus Groups, Forums, and Interviews: Top 5 Immediate Priorities for the Next Superintendent

4. Culture, Climate, Equity and Belonging

- Reassure the community of the district's commitment to cultivating a culture of belonging in which all members of the community feel welcome and supported.
- Focus on recruiting and retaining a more diverse staff, and strengthen inclusion efforts in both student life and faculty representation.

5. Visibility & Communication

- Be visible and available to students, staff, and parents by attending key events, student activities, and maintaining a presence at both campuses.
- Establish clear, open lines of communication to ensure all voices are heard and foster trust within the community.

Focus Groups, Forums, and Interviews: Top 10 Qualifications/Attributes for the Next Superintendent

1. Community Engagement & Relationship Building skills
2. Excellent Communication Skills
3. Integrity and Transparency
4. Student-Centered Focus
5. Empathy and Emotional Intelligence
6. Collaborative, Distributed Leadership
7. Visionary and Strategic Thinking
8. Courage and Decisiveness
9. Commitment to Culture, Climate, Equity and Belonging
10. Teaching and Educational Leadership Expertise

PART 3: These questions concern the relative importance of the superintendent's PROFESSIONAL qualifications and experience.

QUALIFICATION/EXPERIENCE	PERCENTAGE RESPONDING EXTREMELY IMPORTANT				
	PARENTS	STAFF	STUDENTS	TAXPAYERS	ALUMS
Q9. High school teaching experience or demonstrated understanding of it?	47	66	36	59	54
Q10. Proven ability to manage conflict & change with confidence & equanimity?	55	63	31	55	49
Q11. Leadership experience in a similar community and district	48	27	29	37	42
Q12. Expertise in school district finance?	20	14	16	23	31
Q13. Proven success in implementing new, innovative opportunities for retaining staff?	35	32	31	27	29
Q14. Worked with legislators to pursue legislative priorities of district?	6	6	11	4	6
Q15. Created new opportunities for community engagement and collaboration?	7	8	20	9	12
Q16. Ensured high standards of academic excellence for ALL students?	54	44	46	53	58
Q17. Explored and incorporated best practices from other top public & private schools?	37	17	26	31	28
Q18. A comprehensive knowledge of leading educational research and best practices?	30	25	26	27	29
Q19. Led regular evaluation of instructional and extra-curricular programs?	14	8	18	14	11
Q20. Provided consistent, proactive, and transparent INTERNAL communication?	25	58	31	29	30
Q21. Provided consistent, proactive, and transparent EXTERNAL communication?	31	35	27	34	32
Q22. Successfully addressed the needs of a diverse student population?	26	43	33	27	26
Q23. A record as an effective operational manager?	23	18	18	27	28
Q24. Distinction as a visible and immersive presence in the community and schools?	19	30	19	14	19
Q25. Ensured a culture of belonging and connection for all students and staff?	37	61	39	37	35
Q26. Articulated a compelling vision for district's future & moved district toward fulfilling it?	31	31	28	30	31
Q27. Experience and expertise in managing the upgrading of district wide facilities.	8	9	20	7	8
Q28. The proven ability to Inspire and motivate all stakeholders?	24	34	19	21	21
Q29. Experience as a superintendent?	28	10	23	22	22
Q30. An earned doctorate degree?	15	11	17	13	20
Q31. Leadership experience in a field other than education?	9	2	19	9	9
KEY:					
Green Shading = More than 50% marked extremely important					
Yellow Shading = More than 40% but less than 50% marked extremely important					

Q7. Please select what you see as the top FIVE priorities for the new superintendent to address in the next two or three years.

<u>Priorities</u>	<u>Responses</u>	
	<u>Percentage</u>	<u>Number</u>
Retaining and recruiting excellent staff.	52.5%	524
Advancing academic performance.	35.8%	358
Ensuring student and staff safety.	34.0%	340
Developing new educational opportunities to prepare students for future success.	33.9%	339
Ensuring a sense of student and staff connectedness and belonging.	32.3%	323
Fostering a trusting, respectful culture and climate between school and community.	31.0%	310
Maximizing students' college admissions success	30.8%	308
Evaluating curriculum content and effectiveness.	30.1%	301
Being an advocate for high quality public education	27.4%	274
Addressing students' and staff members' social emotional and mental health issues.	26.7%	267
Becoming an active, approachable presence in the schools and community	24.9%	249
Sustaining overall district financial strength and stability.	22.9%	229
Improving instructional practices in the classroom.	17.8%	178
Making continued progress on the New Trier 2030 Strategic Plan	12.8%	128
Improving professional development, training, and support for staff.	11.1%	111
Improving programs and services for students with special needs	10.4%	104
Improving INTERNAL communication to and from staff and students.	10.2%	102
Upgrading district facilities	9.1%	91
Improving EXTERNAL communication to and from parents and the community.	9.1%	91
Seeking stakeholder input.	7.6%	76
Other (please specify)		147
	Answered	999

Rankings of Top Five Priorities by Group

			PRIORITY RANKING				
			<u>PARENTS</u>	<u>STAFF</u>	<u>STUDENTS</u>	<u>TAXPAYERS</u>	<u>ALUMS</u>
	<u>PRIORITY</u>						
	Retaining and recruiting excellent staff.		1	1	4	1	1
	Advancing academic performance.		2	5	3	2	4
	Maximizing students' college admissions success		3		1		
	Developing new educational opportunities		4		5	5	2
	Ensuring student and staff safety.		5	5	2		
	Evaluating curriculum content and effectiveness.		5				3
	Ensuring student & staff connectedness & belonging.			2		4	
	Fostering a trusting, respectful culture and climate.			4		3	4
	Active, approachable presence in schools & community			3			

Top 10 Personal Attributes: Q 31 Please list the most important PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES you believe are essential traits for the next superintendent to have.

- All five groups (parents, staff, students, alums, and taxpayers) had these traits in common: **Integrity, Empathy, Honesty**
- Mentioned frequently by three groups were these: **Compassion, Communication, Open Mindedness**
- Mentioned by two groups were: **Leadership, Vision, Humility, Collaboration, Confidence, Emotional Intelligence**
- One off top tens were:
 - STAFF: **Wisdom, Approachability, Sense of Humor**
 - STUDENTS: **Reliability, Kindness**
 - ALUMS: **Decisiveness**

Summary of Key Qualifications and Attributes

- ✓ Understands and values the importance of building, nurturing, and preserving trusting relationships
- ✓ Demonstrated successful leadership in a high achieving, highly engaged public school district characterized by academic, artistic, and athletic excellence
- ✓ Demonstrated understanding of the high school teaching experience
- ✓ An exceptional communicator with outstanding oral and written communication skills, an authentic and active listener, inspiring speaker, and successful experience communicating via traditional, electronic, social, and emerging media
- ✓ The proven ability to genuinely engage with the full array of stakeholders as an immersive presence in the schools and community
- ✓ The ability to manage conflict and change with confidence and equanimity
- ✓ Impeccable integrity and unquestionable trustworthiness
- ✓ A sense of humor, abundant compassion, and authentic empathy
- ✓ Unwavering commitment to and focus on student and staff success
- ✓ Open-minded, accessible and approachable and comfortable and confident with leading controversial decisions as well as engaging in and enjoying casual conversations

Next Steps

- Post and distribute Leadership Profile Report
- Review all applications, continue recruiting/screening candidates and complete initial reference checks
- Slate presentation/Interview workshop for the Board on October 7
- Develop interview questions and protocols based on the Leadership Profile
- Board of Education schedules and completes first round of interviews week of October 16-17
- Schedule finalist interviews week of October 28 – November 1
- Name Superintendent – November 2024
- Questions?

With Special Thanks To:

- ★ Lindsey Ruston for organizing and scheduling the interviews, focus groups, and forums.
- ★ New Trier High School Communications Team for creating the informative web page and for getting the survey link and QR Code out to the schools and the greater community.
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