



# The New Trier News

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## CPS exchange day advocates for funding equality

Program aims to reveal social justice issues to local students  
*by Sarah Zhang*

In a school with updated facilities, hundreds of extracurriculars and athletic programs to choose from and a campus wide renovation, it can be difficult for New Trier students to remember that other schools may not be as fortunate.

As part of a partnership with Social Service Board and two Chicago Public Schools, Kelvyn Park High School and Richard T. Crane Medical Preparatory High School (RTC), students from all three schools met here on Feb. 25 to discuss the inequities of Illinois school funding.

This partnership, called the Metro Community Project, aims “to encourage kids to reflect on how schools are funded, to see that there’s inequity in schools, and that this is a social justice issue,” Dan Lawler, co-sponsor of Social Service Board, said.

This inequity can most clearly be derived from a difference in property tax; funding for districts is

largely made up of property taxes, so the value of the area contributes directly to the resources each student receives.

The New Trier district has such a high property tax that it spends around \$22,000 on each student, according to Lawler’s estimates. On the other hand, Kelvyn Park spends a minimum of roughly \$6,000 on each student.

This disparity is made even larger when state funding is taken into account. The Illinois State Constitution mandates that Illinois must provide at least half of each school’s budget, but in 2015 only 28% of dollars spent on education came from the state, according to ABC affiliated WQAD News 8—the U.S. average is around 50%.

RTC students Ana Romero and Lance Cunningham find the funding disparities most noticeable in the amount of extracurriculars offered and funded.

“The difference is that New Trier has all these extra activities, where we just don’t have it at all,” Romero said. “You guys have things like glass art, and that’s something we wouldn’t see in Chicago schools.”

Cunningham echoed Romero, saying “We don’t have as much



Students from the three schools take a break outside of Gaffney for a pizza lunch and discussion | **Blickstein**

money, so we don’t have as many activities as we would like to have. I saw the wrestling rooms, and you have multiple gyms here, and you guys have enough funding to be able to afford these activities and things.”

Kelvyn Park Principal Allyson Fox appreciates what the Metro Project sets out to do.

“Being here today, I’m glad that [Kelvyn Park and RTC] students have had the chance to see the disparities between services and even just the building itself, how it varies from their world,” Fox said. “But I don’t want them leaving here feeling badly about their circumstances. I want

them to think about how to make those legislation changes concerning funding, and how to get the word out.”

The project invited two state senator representatives to discuss this issue with students from all three schools.

While there are certain bills set to close this funding gap, such as the 2015 School Funding Reform Bill, Fox thinks that there’s still more to be done.

“One of my students posed a question to the legislators: ‘What can you do to help us? What can we do?’ and I hope that we go even further

with this,” Fox said. “We need to continue to engage legislatures about this, because they’ve seen it first hand, they’ve joined us, they’ve heard our concerns.”

The students themselves want legislative change just as much as their administration does, not only to be able to have more extracurriculars, facilities, or classroom necessities, but to be able to raise the quality of their education.

“Students aren’t understanding that they could be doing better. Just because [their] school isn’t as up to par as it could be, they feel as though  
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## Oberembt announces retirement

Randy Oberembt, NT Athletic Director, will retire in June  
*by Brooke Bernstein*

After 40 years in the education industry and nine years at New Trier, Athletic Director Randy Oberembt will be retiring this June.

“There have been great interscholastic athletics here for a long, long time,” Oberembt said. “The constant level of competitive excellence really hasn’t changed.”

However, Oberembt finds the rate of constant improvement within the athletic program to be remarkable.

“In terms of the performance aspect, our athletes are quite exceptional,” Oberembt said. “Each year they throw a little further, and row a little faster. All that is going to happen, but the pace they do it at is pretty remarkable.”

Oberembt said that students mature in many ways by participating in the athletic program. Student athletes learn long term values and develop their depth of feeling towards teammates and coaches.

“To me, the New Trier student

athletes do an exceptional job of taking all the good things about the activity and can reach their fullest potential in every aspect,” Oberembt said.

By being with the same students over the years, their growth can clearly be seen. “You see their talent progress, but the more important part is the growth piece,” Oberembt said.

According to the website, Superintendent Linda Yonke said, “Randy made innumerable contributions to our athletic program during his time at New Trier and is highly respected among both coaches and fellow athletic directors.”

One such contribution was his addition of bass fishing and rowing to the athletic roster.

In 2008, he was a part of the Mission Statement project, which aimed to craft a guiding statement for the athletic program.

The project created student athlete surveys to assess the sport’s practices and coaches.

There have been roughly 4,400 individual student athletes surveyed, with 88,000 questions in total. Over the last two years, the athletic coaches have been breaking down all of the survey responses to establish

whether they are meeting this mission statement.

In addition to the Mission Statement project, Oberembt and the New Trier Booster club led the charge for the artificial turf fields at the Northfield campus.

The assistant athletic director Deborah Ofcky said, “There is a lot of time, energy, and effort spent when you’re an athletic administrator, especially here. I’m really excited for him to go off and do things that he enjoys.”

“He has built a very strong legacy, just with the amount of lives that he has touched,” Ofcky continued. “The number of relationships that he’s built is what will always live in people’s minds after he’s gone.”

Oberembt’s positive impact on New Trier staff, students, and community earned him the 2015 Distinguished Service Award from the Illinois High School Association.

As far as retirement plans go, Oberembt said he and his wife will definitely stay in the Chicagoland area. In regards to his new freetime, Oberembt said, “I will probably get to watch more athletics, which I really enjoy.”

## From lip sync to face paint: Winter Carnival delights

Community gathers to raise money for Habitat for Humanity  
*by Connor Josellis and Eden Perl*

For the past 22 years the Winter Carnival, staffed by seniors, has supplied the community with an outlet to a fun, stress free atmosphere for kids and parents.

All of the senior advisories are involved in some sort of booth or activity, in which other students and kids from the community can participate.

This year, the carnival took place Friday, Feb. 26, and was held throughout the school. There were different activities set up, ranging from mock weddings to dance parties to casino night providing entertainment for all ages.

The Winter Carnival again worked to raise money for the Habitat for Humanity project.

They raised money by selling tickets for \$1 that could then be used for activities and food costing from one to three tickets.

Along with ticket sales, this year they also raised money by holding a raffle to win a GoPro. Senior Boys Adviser Chair, Chris Pearson, could not confirm an official amount raised before the deadline of this issue.

Parents and kids alike enjoyed the Winter Carnival, though for different reasons. The carnival gave

kids a safe and fun environment in which they could meet other kids and socialize with their friends.

Brooklyn Weiss, 7th grader, came to the carnival with her friends because her sister was working a booth. Weiss particularly enjoyed the casino activity.

Deciding which activity to do can be hard since all of the gyms and most of the second and third floors are filled with different activities.

However, finding out about all the activities is not hard, since seniors walk around promoting their activities like vendors at a baseball game.

Senior Anders Aschkenase said, “We’re just walking around, we got an airhorn, trying to get people to come out. We’re doing the Home Run Derby and so far people seem to like it.”

Senior adviser Mike Baeb said the turnout was good and that his advisory had fun. “Guys from the advisory remember coming here when they were kids, so they had fun helping little boys and girls, showing them how to shoot and just generally playing with them. I think it is great for the senior class to come together and represent.”

“I really think the carnival is just a perfect time to hangout with friends and have fun. I’m a junior this year so I’m really looking forward to next year when I’m able to really participate in it,” junior Meredith Embree said.

Winter Carnival also provides  
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