

# the NEW TRIER NEWS



## Sally to replace retiring Yonke as Superintendent

After the extensive search process, Paul Sally is chosen out of 35 candidates to succeed Dr. Yonke

by Connor Josellis

At the Nov. 21 board meeting, current Associate Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction Dr. Paul Sally was chosen to take over as the district superintendent replacing Dr. Linda Yonke.

Yonke has led the district for 11 years beginning in 2006 and was the fifth district superintendent in 85 years. Yonke announced her plans to retire effective June 30 after postponing retirement twice.

Following Yonke's retirement announcement this June, the board began an extensive superintendent search to name her replacement. They hired the recruitment firm School Exec Connect to help with the search.

The Board faced a difficult decision in replacing Yonke, Board of Education President Greg Robitaille said, "The Board had an enormous challenge to find a replacement for Dr. Yonke. For the past 11 years, Dr. Yonke's strong leadership has benefitted our community's high school and its students, teachers,

staff and parents in very meaningful ways. We are deeply grateful for her contributions."

In July and the months that followed, the firm built a profile for an ideal candidate. This profile used input from 19 focus groups comprising of students, faculty, and community members and an online survey that garnered 379 responses, according to Board President Greg

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Robitaille.

Over 35 candidates either applied or were recruited. The pool of candidates was narrowed down to 11. From there, phone interviews were conducted, and then five candidates were called back for an initial face-to-face interview.

Three finalists returned to meet with the board and two other interview committees. The detailed input from the committees was given to the board, where a decision was

made.

One of the final interviews Sally faced was over dinner, during Game 7 of the World Series, where board member Alan Dolinko said he received text updates from Yonke.

On Nov. 9 the full school board met and unanimously decided Sally will succeed Yonke. The entire process was kept confidential in order to not deter strong candidates from applying.

Sally graduated as valedictorian of his high school class at Evanston Township High School, holds a bachelor's degree in Applied Mathematics from Yale University and attended graduate school at Northwestern University, receiving a master's degree in Computer Science. His parents were also mathematicians and his mother, Judith, attended the Nov. 21 board meeting.

Sally has worked at New Trier for the past 22 years, serving as the math coordinator at the Northfield campus, and Assistant Superintendent. In 2014, he became the district's associate superintendent.

Sally also served in different leadership roles throughout the school, including the Board of Education Finance Committee, the Facilities Steering Committee, and he helped negotiate the past three faculty contracts on behalf of the board.

Yonke and Sally have worked together for 13 years and Yonke said



Dr. Sally to fill place of Dr. Yonke following retirement in June | New Trier

she appreciates Sally not being afraid to disagree with her.

"He is a crucial member of the administrative team, a brilliant educational leader and an enthusiastic advocate for New Trier students, faculty and staff. I look forward to working with Paul to make sure the transition is a seamless one for New Trier," Yonke said of Sally.

"I would like to thank the Board for their faith in me. I would also like to thank Dr. Yonke for her leadership, years of mentorship and commitment to making sure every student who enters New Trier finds a place to

explore his or her unique passions," Sally said in a short speech given at the board meeting.

During this speech, Sally focused on students. During the cake-cutting ceremony he said, "It's truly an honor, I'm humbled, and I'm really excited. [New Trier] is just a great institution. It has such a deep tradition of excellence and innovation and that's just exciting to think about how we move that forward and I think students are really an important part of that, I think we do a lot to involve students. Your voices matter."

## Switching classes difficult for students, advisers

Ability to change courses proves to be difficult for some students

by Eleanor Kaplan

Unlike previous school years, students are having an increasingly difficult time changing levels or sections due to overfilled classes and a reduction in staff.

Every student chooses their desired classes in January and the master schedule of when every course runs is set by March. However, some students change their minds about their selections due to the difficulty of their current level or a shift in interest.

Dyan Marich, math teacher and advisor for seven years, said, "In the past I've been able to accommodate those requests for advisees. This year it's been very difficult."

Student schedules are made so that there is room for some movement in classes or levels. For example, a level 3 Algebra class would not be originally scheduled to full capacity, which is 28 students.

According to the Board of Education's meeting on Oct. 15, the number of classes with over 30 students has increased from 0.4 percent in 2015 to 1.6 percent this school year. In the past five school years, not one has had more than one percent of its classes with over 30 students.

This has created scheduling problems for some students, such as senior Molly McGowan. McGowan changed her mind about the following year's courses during second semester last year--after she sent in her schedule requests.

McGowan wanted to take AP Calculus, but, due to the unavailability and already full classes, she was wait-listed and ended up taking Intro to Calculus and Statistics instead.

McGowan said of the early

*'I have another advisee who wanted to change her gym class this year and there were zero options. Literally nothing in her schedule could be changed.'*

decisions on next year's schedules, "I think it would be nice to wait to sign up for classes until a little bit later in the school year. I think a lot of students haven't figured out what they want to do with their lives yet and change their minds a lot as a result."

However, according to Assistant Principal Gerry Munley, with 4000 students needing their schedules to work perfectly, time is necessary. To create student's individual schedules, the school uses the computer program eSchool. In the program, every student's schedule is run through an algorithm 6,000 to 12,000 times to



Students often visit the Assistant Principal Gerry Mundley for inquiries regarding course changes

Zervas

produce the highest percentage of students who can have their original requests, usually about eighty to eighty-five percent, said Munley.

"A lot of schools, when they do their scheduling, (have) so many sections of honors chemistry at their school. They know how many students that is from the start and you have no choice, you can't choose another science, you have to be in that one. It's a lot easier to schedule. We do a lot of our scheduling based on the interest of the student," said Munley.

When students change their minds about a level or a class, the almost perfect schedules created months ago can prove difficult to change. Because of the difficulty of creating an entirely new section of the course, there may be classes with

more students than capacity, or some students are simply unable to join certain classes.

Marich said, "I have another advisee who wanted to change her gym class this year and there were zero options. Literally nothing in her schedule could be changed. None of her other classes could move either."

Although some students have had trouble getting into the classes they wanted, others are changing classes without problem. Sophomore Alice Guo wanted to transfer to PCB chemistry level 4, and she was able to do so easily.

Over the past decade, students have consistently been requesting to take more classes than before. Munley said, "Not including lunch or advisory, in 2003-4, the average student was taking 6.9 periods per

day of a 9 period day. Now we're at 7.1. It's a big [increase]."

More classes per student combined with an increase in class sizes has created a difficult situation for those who want to switch classes. Marich said, "There are just fewer teachers teaching classes so there's more students in each class."

Increasing class sizes has had a negative impact on student's learning, said Marich. "If I divide that 40 minutes [of class time] by the number of students I have, that's less time that I can have per student. Outside of class, the amount [of time] spent grading goes up and the number of student meetings go up. It's really hard to get to know individual students as well as I'd like because there are just so many of them."