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# The New Trier News

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NEW TRIER HIGH SCHOOL, 385 WINNETKA AVENUE, WINNETKA, IL

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## EPI Center renovations lead way to future

by Tanya Kurepina

For years the EPI Center served a variety of student, staff and parent meetings, such as adviser in-service, leadership team and student activities meetings. Teachers used this space to incorporate technology not available in other classrooms and to bring other classes together for collaboration or presentations.

According to New Trier's website on future facilities plans, the average academic classroom size is 610 square feet. As a result, they are "inadequate for integration of technology, or for interactive and interdisciplinary learning," making the EPI center one of the few places teachers, students and staff can experiment with technology and new methods of teaching.

As the school year slowly gets into gear, so does the newly improved EPI Center, equipped with new collaborative furniture and technology.

"The goal is to look at how we can use the intersection of furniture and the larger space to support

teaching and learning in a different way," said Christopher Johnson, Director of Technology at New Trier. "We want to know what we can do with multiple sources, like watching a video on one side of the screen while having a class discussion on the other."

According to the renovation letter Johnson sent to Superintendent Linda Yonke, former budget director, Don Goers, and the Board of Education members, one of the main installations was the audio/visual system, the video wall.

This wall is composed of 42" monitor panels that can be controlled from a computer on a new lectern which will allow one to twelve sources to be displayed simultaneously. These sources include a video conference system, a computer based presentation, mobile device content such as laptops or iPads, a document camera and other video sources.

According to Johnson, this system will allow teachers and staff to connect to outside experts and other schools from around the world



*The EPI Center featuring a new interactive wall |Schiller*

for videoconferences while having the ability to share work with outside presenters or experts.

The EPI Center's renovation was completed a week before school started and this space has already been used for a number of different presentations, including French, Social Studies and IGGS classes.

Other upgrades included a new ceiling, flexible lighting, new doors, improvements to the HVAC

system and new carpet. Even the new furniture supports collaboration and flexibility for groups whether they are watching a speaker or holding meetings and presentations.

According to Johnson, the total project cost was \$368,500. Capital expenditures funded \$268,500 and was approved in March of 2012; a capital request was in April 2013. The remaining \$100,000 was funded by two foundation grants of \$50,000.

"The alumni and The Education Foundation were very generous. With the the two grants and the district's capital funds, it is all essentially paid for," said Johnson.

Even though there are still many renovations needed throughout the building including the Gates Gym and the arts wing, the board decided the EPI project was of high priority in order to test out new teaching methods, technology and furniture that could later be used in other classrooms in the future.

According to Johnson the EPI Center renovations did change or modify as a result of a future facilities project "Even in the proposed 2010 facilities project the Tower Building, which houses the EPI Center, was not slated for demolition, and the space would have been maintained as a meeting and collaboration space."

"We're already seeing what the teachers and students are bringing to the EPI center space. They will find interesting uses to the new technology and we are excited to find out what those are," said Johnson.

## Green Bay Road gets a new look

by Bella Smith

After almost eight years, the project to reconstruct Green Bay Road at the intersection of Winnetka is almost complete. The new and improved cross-section is laid out not only to be safer, but also to relieve traffic congestion.

The \$650,000 project included adding a left turn lane northbound onto Green Bay Road and traffic turn signals in all directions. The crosswalks have also been consolidated so that they are better coordinated with the traffic signals.

Though it caused irritation over the summer, the construction will hopefully make Green Bay Road a safer place.

Efforts to redo the intersection started back in 2004, but as the project grew the village faced significant delays. Green Bay Road, is a state route, and was the cause of many of the delays. "Because Green Bay Road is under Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) control, all of the work required their approval," Steve Saunders, Winnetka Village Engineer, explained.

The village needed 11 separate variances - permits to expand the street - from the IDOT design requirements, which meant that the project wasn't granted until earlier this year.

The village agreed that this



*Green Bay Road featuring new left hand turn lanes and signals |Curran*

was a necessary change. There have been numerous pedestrian and car accidents in and around the intersection, almost all caused by the confusing walking paths and turn signals.

Most notable was a hit-and-run incident that occurred right after school in 2011, where a sophomore was critically injured. "The previous configuration allowed numerous pedestrian movements through the intersection that were not always clear," said Saunders.

In addition to reconstructing the roads and pedestrian walkways, the village also has plans to move the pace bus stop to the north side of Winnetka Avenue.

"This way students using the bus to travel to and from school do not have to cross Winnetka Avenue to get to school," explained Saunders. The Village hopes that all these efforts will make the intersection a safer place.

Students' responses to the construction have been varied; many found that the summer construction was annoying to deal with; especially as so many other roads were under construction around the same time. "The construction was pretty annoying to drive through because it caused a lot of traffic," said senior Katie Muth.

However, most students understood that the project was necessary to improve safety. "I think that the construction was a very important project," senior Greer LaFontant explained, "Everyday since I was a sophomore, when I walk to school I'm afraid for my life when I cross that intersection."

Now that the construction is done, many agree that the aggravation was worth it.

Saunders estimates that the rest of the project, including installing the permanent traffic signals, should be finished within the next month.

## New to New Trier

by Joe Blackman

August 26 marked the first day of attendance for the 2013-2014 school year. Unlike previous years, all students at the Winnetka Campus had to attend all of their classes. This was just one of the many changes students found as the school year swung into motion.

For the new first day schedule, it turned out that New Trier had to meet the minimum number of days, or more specifically, minutes, of student attendance. While freshmen and sophomores were going to attend all their classes anyway, upperclassmen were disappointed with this change.

Senior Matt Lecinski found it unfair as "previous upperclassmen did not have to stay the whole day." He later added that sophomores should have the day to themselves to get a hang of the school.

In addition to a new first day, a majority of students are now participating in the Mobile Learning Initiative, or more commonly called, the iPad Program. Approximately 2400 students have an iPad for one or more classes this year. Their reception has been hit or miss with some students finding it distracting during class and other praising its collaborative potential.

Senior Tariq Khan used an iPad last year for debate. "It was really helpful to have all the information at your fingertips," said Khan.

A more subtle difference this year deals with the teacher's association and school board. According to the Chicago Tribune, teachers at New Trier started the

school year without a contract with the school board. Negotiations have been ongoing for multiple months and in July, a mediator was brought in to help move along discussion.

Both the School Board and the Teacher's association have kept quiet about current negotiations. Despite both sides keeping mum, teachers have come together to bring awareness to the negotiations by wearing association buttons and t-shirts.

Another change brings a new face to the second floor. The new principal, Denise Hibbard, started her first day on July 1. While that may have been her first day with a new title, the day she was looking forward to most was August 26.

"The first day of school was a fresh start," said Hibbard. "It's wonderful to see everyone come together."

It was a sad farewell for the student body when Dr. Tim Dohrer left New Trier, but Hibbard has already begun interacting with the student body and already attending extracurricular events from football to field hockey. Additionally, Hibbard will also act as a liaison for the student body to the administration through Student Alliance.

As for greeting the staff, Hibbard said, "All the faculty is highly qualified and have been very welcoming." Hibbard looks forward to learning and living New Trier's tradition through the staff and student body.