



Informational Memo: 2014-2015 New Trier Freshman Perception Survey

TO: School Board
Trisha Kocanda, Superintendent

FROM: Dr. Alison Hawley, *Director of Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment*
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Overview & Background

For the past six years, students at New Trier High School have been surveyed during the spring of their freshman year. The survey provides a summary of student perceptions of their preparedness for high school. New Trier also provides information on freshmen enrollment in a variety of levels of courses. Finally, questions are also asked about a variety of topics including organizational skills, homework, community service, and adult support at the middle school.

This report will focus on the responses of the 205 Washburne graduates. Comparisons will be drawn between the Washburne graduates and the responses of all freshman surveyed (1,104 total students).

Preparedness By Subject

Students self-rated their level of preparedness as Well Prepared, Adequately Prepared, Somewhat Prepared, and Not Prepared. Continuing with our traditional reporting of this data, the ratings of Well Prepared and Adequately Prepared will be combined and identified as "Prepared" and the ratings of Somewhat Prepared and Not Prepared will be combined and identified as "Unprepared". This report will present a summary of student perceptions of preparedness in English, Math, Science, Social Studies, and Foreign Language. As can be seen in the tables below, our students are reporting high levels of preparedness for NTHS.

Table 1: Students' Self-Perception of Preparedness By Subject

Subject	Washburne		Township	
	Prepared	Unprepared	Prepared	Unprepared
English (Literature)	83%	16%	82%	16%
English (Writing)	78%	21%	78%	21%
Mathematics	87%	12%	78%	21%
Science	78%	14%	74%	21%
Social Studies	81%	10%	77%	13%
Foreign Language	69%	21%	70%	20%
*Totals may not equal 100%. Some students answered N/A.				

Table 2: Historical Data by Subject (% Reporting Being Prepared)

Subject	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
English (Literature)	---	74%	74%	70%	80%	83%
English (Writing)	61%	61%	65%	67%	72%	78%
Mathematics	81%	74%	78%	80%	77%	87%
Science	88%	86%	75%	83%	78%	77%
Social Studies	88%	85%	86%	86%	81%	81%
Foreign Language	61%	74%	66%	71%	66%	69%

The Freshman Experience: Related Areas

New Trier also surveys freshman to learn about general preparedness, community service, the presence of a trusted adult, amount of homework, and organizational skills.

It should be noted that 87% of Washburne freshman state that their experience in the Winnetka school system prepared them to be successful at New Trier High School.

	Washburne		Township	
Question	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree
I feel my elementary and middle school experiences prepared me to be successful in high school.	87%	13%	86%	14%
As a student in my elementary school district, there were community service opportunities to use my talents and skills to help others.	75%	25%	78%	22%
When I was an elementary and middle school student, there was an adult I felt comfortable going to when I needed help or wanted to talk with someone.	84%	16%	86%	14%
The amount of homework I received in middle school was appropriate to prepare me for high school expectations.	74%	26%	71%	29%
In middle school I learned adequate skills to be organized and study appropriately.	82%	18%	80%	20%

Table 4: Historical Data by Related Areas

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
I feel my elementary and middle school experiences prepared me to be successful in high school.	83%	81%	84%	85%	87%
As a student in my elementary school district, there were community service opportunities to use my talents and skills to help others.	63%	63%	63%	70%	75%
When I was an elementary and middle school student, there was an adult I felt comfortable going to when I needed help or wanted to talk with someone.	83%	78%	83%	82%	84%
The amount of homework I received in middle school was appropriate to prepare me for high school expectations.	73%	72%	72%	66%	74%
In middle school I learned adequate skills to be organized and study appropriately.	79%	75%	75%	76%	82%

Student Enrollment in Courses by Level

The New Trier survey also provides data regarding course enrollment and requests for changes in course levels. Tables 5 – 8 demonstrate the distribution of Washburne graduates in each academic course by level. Table 9 reports the percentage of students who requested levels other than those recommended by New Trier.

Table 5 – 8: Distribution of Students Enrolled in Each Course

Level 2E Courses – College Prep, smaller class, may be co-taught

Level 2 – College Prep

Level 3 – Honors

Level 4 – High Honors

Level 9 – Combination of Levels 2, 3, 4 – weighted as an Honors course.

English	2E	2	3	4	Eng/His 9	Eng/His 4
CWS	7%	15%	54%	17%	7%	0%
NT	5%	15%	48%	18%	11%	3%

Math	Dbl Alg 2	Alg 2	Alg 3	Geo 2	Geo 3	Geo 4	Alg/Trig 4	Fresh Math
CWS	3%	18%	28%	1%	34%	14%	2%	1%
NT	4%	20%	20%	3%	35%	13%	5%	1%

Science	Bio 2E	Bio 9	Bio 4	Geo 2E	Geo 9	Geo 4	PCB 3	PCB 4
CWS	3%	46%	11%	1%	8%	2%	21%	8%
NT	4%	45%	13%	1%	11%	1%	12%	12%

Social Studies	WH 2E	WH 2	WH 3	WH 4	E/H 9	E/H 4
CWS	5%	11%	51%	25%	7%	1%
NT	3%	12%	47%	21%	13%	4%

Table 9: % of Students Not Taking Course at Recommended Level and % of Course Changes to a Higher Level

	% Not Taking Course at Level Recommended by NTHS		% of Course Changes To Higher Level	
	Washburne	Township	Washburne	Township
English	20%	14%	76%	65%
Math	16%	15%	65%	51%
Science	12%	10%	65%	67%
SS	29%	15%	74%	69%

Summary

- 87% of Washburne graduates report they are prepared for success at New Trier High School (this is the highest percentage since the survey has been administered).
- There have been upward trends in perceptions of preparedness in English (Literature), English (Writing), and Mathematics.
- The largest increase during the past two years has been in the perception of preparedness for Mathematics: from 77% to 87%.
- There have been consistent increases in the related areas of general preparedness, community service opportunities, presence of a trusted adult, homework that prepares students for high school, and organizational skills
- On average, 19.25% of Washburne students take a course other than that

recommended by New Trier. On average, 70% of those course changes were to a higher level course.

The data above demonstrates that Washburne students report being prepared for their freshman year at New Trier High School. Eighty-seven percent of students reported that the Winnetka school system prepared them for a successful high school experience. When considering the historical data, Washburne students report an increase in preparedness in several areas. All this is occurring while – on average – more than 19% of students request levels of courses not originally recommended by NTHS.

The transition to high school is important. Washburne staff will review the above data to ensure we continue to provide an optimal learning experience for our students.

(Graphical representations of the data in this report can be found [here](#).)