

BOARD NOTES

March 17, 2020

A special meeting of the NPUSC Board of Trustees was held on Tuesday, March 17, 2020, at the NPUSC Central Office Board Room with Phil King, Al Williamson, Dale Groves, Rich Shail and Jason DeMeyer present. Dr. Paul White, Superintendent, was also present.

Phil King, Board President, reviewed guidelines for speaking on agenda items.

There was a motion by Al Williamson to adopt the agenda, seconded by Jason DeMeyer. A motion was made by Dale Groves and seconded by Rich Shail to amend the agenda to add additional discussion and action items and approved 5-0.

INSTRUCTIONAL PRESENTATION

There was no instructional presentation at this meeting

CONSENT ITEMS

There were no consent items or personnel report at this meeting

REPORTS

The Superintendent's report was shared during Discussion Items

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Classified Handbook- Discussion occurred around classified handbook language stating all personal-sick-vacation days must be exhausted before requesting or receiving sick bank leave, special approval for leaves, etc. Dr. White stated this language is likely not appropriate for the current national health crisis with COVID-19. It was agreed language would be amended to allow approved leave time in the present circumstance without requiring all sick-personal-vacation to be exhausted.

Classified Employee Sick/Personal Days- The possibility of extending additional sick/personal days was discussed due to the COVID-19 situation. Board members stated this is such a unique situation and it is hard to predict how long it will last. It was suggested it probably makes more sense to simply approve normal wages for all classified/hourly employees until the health concern subsides. Dr. White stated at present we started the week trying to keep everyone engaged/working through online modules or work duties, but both LaPorte and South Bend Schools recently passed pay resolutions like what was being discussed. Also, keeping employees at home as much as possible may assist in the national trend to limit crowds to prevent germ spreading. Board members agreed to amend Action Item D to a resolution for all classified staff to be paid until further notice without expectation of reporting unless work duties were identified as essential.

General Resolution Recommendation from Bill Kaminski- Dr. White explained Bill Kaminski, NPUSC Attorney, sent a recommendation to adopt a general board resolution to all school districts he represents which would allow for broad discretion of the Superintendent or designees to take necessary actions to ensure safety, well-being, and administration of the school system for the remainder of the school year without further board action. After discussion Dr. White stated he would stay in communication with the board or impacted employees with any decision or action taken under this resolution.

March 16th Cleaning Day & Classified Staff- The original discussion centered around paying all classified employees for this past Monday since most employees were told to stay home due to professional cleaning of NPUSC facilities. 3/16/20 was originally planned as a work day for all employees. Dr. White noted that many custodial and nutritional services staff came in to assist with the cleaning and to prepare meals for the community. It was discussed to further amend Action Item to D to reflect retroactively paying all classified employees for Monday 3/16/20 and to provide one additional personal day for all classified employees who worked/helped with the unique circumstances of 3/16/20.

Revision to the School Calendar- NPUSC has approval at present for 4 additional E-Learning Days for this school year. Dr. White noted the uncertainty of the present situation and local schools agreeing to conduct online learning through at least April 3rd, with the hope to return to regular school programming April 13th after spring break. Recent CDC guidance suggesting schools be closed for at least nine weeks was discussed, as well as the possibility that the national health crisis could last much longer than through our spring break. Discussion acknowledged the 3 day per week approach is likely best for students and teachers that will use the additional two waiver days to grade and prepare for the coming E-Learning. It was discussed to amend Action Item A to approve additional unlimited E-Learning days for the 19-20 school year due to the present situation at 3 days per week.

Discussion on Possible Impacts on ECA Events, Prom, Graduation- It was agreed to hold off on canceling any events beyond spring break until more information is available locally and nationally. Dr. White suggested by taking things month to month and week to week we may be able to help salvage some or all ECA spring seasons or major events, even if they are postponed first. Discussion acknowledged some students that need extra support or are at-risk of graduating may struggle in an extended E-Learning window. Dr. White shared input from Mrs. Sass that we may need to evaluate the timing of our graduation ceremony and think about unique options like holding a second ceremony later for students that need the summer to fulfill graduation requirements. P. King added that we need to possibly consider the cancellation of the Top 10 Dinner. The Board's general consensus was that if the Top 10 Dinner was cancelled, we should make sure to still acknowledge the students, their parents and special educator. It was agreed that at this time we will wait until any further action is taken and that if need be, the Board would discuss at the April 27th board meeting.

Weekly Meal Options during E-Learning Plan- Meal pick up for families this past Monday at Rolling Prairie and NPMS was discussed. It was shared Mike Hale, NPUSC Nutritional Services Director, was working on plans to double the amount of meals available for next week. Dr. White asked about the option of having one pick up location to streamline logistics for the Nutritional Services team. Board members expressed interest in maintaining two pick up locations as a service to families and asked about the possibility of preparing meals at one site to help. It was stated that the pickup configuration would be changed at the Middle School to better help the flow of traffic. Dr. White stated he would discuss with Mr. Hale and would work with him to prepare two meal pick up sites for March 23rd.

ACTION ITEMS

- (A) A motion by Rich Shail, Seconded by Dale Groves, The Board approved the Revised 2019-2020 School Calendar to allow unlimited E-Learning Days (at 3 per week) as needed for the remainder of the school year due to the national health crisis with a 5-0 Vote.
- (B) A motion by Al Williamson, Seconded by Jason DeMeyer, The Board approved the Emergency Operations Fund Expenditure for WiFi access Hot Spots for families in need with a 5-0 Vote.
- (C) A motion by Dale Groves, Seconded by Al Williamson, The Board approved the Emergency Operations Fund Expenditure for professional cleaning of all NPUSC facilities through Cat-5 Restoration with a 5-0 Vote.
- (D) With a motion by Dale Groves and Seconded by Rich Shail, The Board amended this Action Item and approved Compensation for all Classified Staff at normal daily wages (beginning 3/16/20) until further notice without expectation to report due to the national health crisis. This will be re-visited after Spring Break. Also, the Board approved an additional personal day for any Classified Staff that worked on 3/16/20 with a 5-0 Vote.

(E) With a motion by Jason DeMeyer and seconded by Dale Groves, The Board approved a temporary amendment to the Classified Handbook allowing approved paid or unpaid leave during the national health crisis, even if all personal-sick-vacation days of the Classified employee are not yet exhausted with a 5-0 vote.

(F) With a motion by Rich Shail and seconded by Al Williamson, The Board approved the Resolution of the Board of Trustees to allow for discretionary decision making of the Superintendent and/or designee without further board action during the national health crisis with a 5-0 vote.

BOARD COMMENTS

- The Board thanked the teachers in attendance for their input on the School Calendar

ADJOURNMENT

- Mr. Groves made the motion to adjourn the meeting. Meeting was adjourned at 6:13PM