

## BOARD NOTES

July 27, 2020

The regular meeting of the School Board was held Monday, July 27, 2020, at the NPHS Auditorium with Mr. Phil King, Mr. Allen Williamson, Mr. Dale Groves, Mr. Jason DeMeyer, and Mr. Richard Shail. Dr. Paul White, Superintendent, was also present.

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

Mr. Shail made a motion to approve the Agenda, seconded by Mr. DeMeyer and approved 5-0.

### CONSENT ITEMS

The Board approved the Consent Items as follows:

- (A) Minutes – June 22, 2020
- (B) Financial Reports
- (C) Claims
- (D) Payroll
- (E) Personnel Report as follows:

### CERTIFIED

- Leaves/Resignations/Retirements
  1. Joshua Bolakowski – ECA Resignation as NPMS Head Football Coach effective 2020-2021 school year
  2. Paul Kil – Retirement as Elementary Art Teacher at Olive Twp Elementary and Prairie View Elementary schools effective 7/31/2020
  3. Samantha Vogeler – ECA Resignation as NPHS Girls Swim/Dive Assistant Coach effective 6/30/2020
  4. Daniel Reffo – ECA Resignation as Olive Twp. Elementary 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Girls Volleyball effective 6/30/2020
  5. Lydia Carroll – ECA Resignation as NPMS 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Head Volleyball Coach effective 6/30/2020
  6. Jennifer Smith – ECA Resignation as NPMS Assistant 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Volleyball Coach effective 6/30/2020
  7. Julie Schroeder – Resignation as Olive Twp. Elementary/Prairie View Elementary PE Teacher effective 6/30/2020
- Employment
  1. Scott Soos – NPHS Business Teacher beginning 7/1/2020 pending criminal background check results
- Employment – Summer 2020-2021
  1. Patrick Teykl – NPHS Summer Band Instructor
  2. Daniel Weinberg – NPHS Assistant Summer Band Instructor
- Employment – Extra-Curricular
  1. Bobby Whitenack – NPHS Varsity Assistant Football Coach for the 2020-2021 school year
  2. Bobby Whitenack – NPHS Head Wrestling Coach for the 2020-2021 school year
  3. Kortney Brennan – NPHS Theatre Director beginning 2020-2021 school year
  4. Marlene Nickerson – NPMS Head Girls Cross Country Coach for the 2020-2021 school year
  5. John Arndt – NPHS Head Boys Cross Country Coach for the 2020-2021 school year
  6. Kristina DeMeyer – RPES Student Council Co-Chair beginning 2020-2021 school year
  7. Michele Kenaga - RPES Student Council Co-Chair beginning 2020-2021 school year

- Adjustments
  1. Jennifer Younggreen –Involuntary Transfer from RPES Teacher to Olive Twp. Elementary School Teacher beginning 2020-2021 school year
  2. Daniel Reffo –Voluntary Transfer from RPES/PVES PE Teacher to Olive Twp. Elementary/PVES PE Teacher beginning 2020-2021 school year

## **NON-CERTIFIED**

- Leaves/Resignations/Retirements
  1. Crystal Snyder – Resignation as NPMS Health Aide effective 6/22/2020
  2. Tabitha Downs – Resignation as Prairie View Elementary School Nutritional Services Crew Leader effective 7/13/2020
  3. Paul Smith – Retirement as Olive Elementary Custodian effective 8/7/2020
  4. Janet Herod – Resignation as NPUSC Transportation Aide effective 7/23/2020
- Employment
  1. Meredith Carnes – Instructional Assistant at Rolling Prairie Elementary School beginning 8/13/2020 pending Criminal Background Check Results
  2. Emily Morlan – Instructional Assistant at Prairie View Elementary School beginning 8/13/2020
  3. Amy Talboom – Instructional Assistant at Prairie View Elementary School beginning 8/13/2020
  4. Jessica Finn – NPHS Band/NPUSC Transportation Secretary beginning 2020-2021 school year pending criminal background check results
- Employment – Extra Curricular
  1. Anna Piesyk – NPHS Co-Dance Coach for the 2020-2021 school year
  2. Tara Dome –NPHS Co-Dance Coach for the 2020-2021 school year
  3. Dan Luther – NPHS Assistant Wrestling Coach for the 2020-2021 school year
  4. Dan Luther – NPHS Assistant Football Coach for the 2020-2021 school year
  5. Kyle Young – NPHS Assistant Boys Swim Coach for the 2020-2021 school year
  6. Shaunna Sommers – NPHS Head JV Softball Coach for the 2020-2021 school year
  7. Derek Hicks – NPHS Head Varsity Softball Coach for the 2020-2021 school year
  8. Evan Beakas – NPHS Assistant Boys Cross Country Coach for the 2020-2021 school year
- Adjustments
  1. Cara Holmes – NPUSC Bus Driver transfer of route from Prairie View Elementary School to Rolling Prairie Elementary School beginning 2020-2021 school year.
  2. Elizabeth Hall – Transfer position from Nutritional Services Worker to Nutritional Services Lead at Prairie View Elementary School effective 7/21/2020

## **REPORTS**

- Superintendent's Report
  - Dr. White began with thanking everyone for coming out tonight to listen and share their comments during the Discussion portion of the meeting regarding the start of school. Dr. White added that the decisions being made are not being taken lightly. On one hand, we have the health and safety of our students and staff and on the other, we have the ultimate responsibility to educate our students. It is a really difficult, complex topic with many different opinions in the room. He applauded the Board for setting up the meeting in this format tonight to hear public input. He thanked Mr. Mark Norton, Technology Director, for helping with the technology for the evening. Dr. White shared the various survey results from teachers and the community on options for returning to

school. NPUSC will provide a virtual option for families during the COVID crisis only throughout the 2020-2021 school year that provides full online curriculum while maintaining status as a NPUSC student. This will *not* be offered long term. Dr. White expressed his appreciation for Dr. Cannon and her staff for putting the virtual option together in a short amount of time.

### **ACTION ITEMS**

- (A) The Board approved the Conflict of Interest Disclosure Statement for Jim Holifield, Director of Finance/Corporation Treasurer
- (B) The Board approved the Second Reading and Adoption of Updated Board Policies 0164.4, 0165, 0167.1, 0167.3, 4162, 7510, 8415, 8416, and 8450
- (C) The Board accepted the Donation:
  - NWI Masks for Healthcare Workers donated Protective Fabric Masks for every teacher in the corporation to help combat the spread of COVID 19
- (D) The Board approved the Updated MOU with Meridian Health Services
- (E) The Board approved the Updated Position Description:
  - Receptionist for Band & Transportation
- (F) The Board approved the 2020 Summer Band Hours and Schedule
- (G) The Board approved the Emergency Chiller Repair at NPHS
- (H) The Board approved the 2020 Bus Replacement Recommendation
- (I) The Board approved the Edmentum Contract for 2020-2021
- (J) The Board approved the NWEA Contract for 2020-2021

### **DISCUSSION**

#### **(A) Sub Pay Rates:**

- Dr. White explained that at present substitute bus drivers make \$1.59 less than beginning full time drivers. We need to raise the rate to the level of a beginning driver so we can get closer to a competitive level to obtain more sub drivers as needed. Board members agreed to look at making adjustments. There was no audience comments.

#### **(B) Return to School Options – Plan:**

- Dr. White briefly shared highlights of the virtual option. There will not be an additional cost for NPUSC students beyond the usual fee that you will pay. NPUSC teachers will not be involved in the virtual process. Anyone opting for virtual learning must commit to 1 full semester at a time. The student cannot commit to virtual learning then change their mind during the semester and start attending school due to the cost. Dr. White added that we are doing more to improve on eLearning when we need it. It was never meant to be a long term solution.
  - Mr. Groves shared his thinking on what he looks at in making his decisions for the district. In addition to listening to the community, he asked the three people in his home, of which two are New Prairie students, what they want. They shared 3 different answers. He is removing as much fear and emotion as he can from his decision making. He prefers to look at data as he is a data driven person. He looks at Indiana Dept. of Health data and the New Prairie community data for positive COVID case rates, of which our percentage of infection is very low. He is definitely paying close attention to the New Prairie data when making his decisions.
  - Mrs. Jennifer Hite, 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Science Teacher and NP Classroom Teacher Association President, would like to thank the Board and the administration for the all the time spent working with the teachers to come up with a plan as we are all moving through this uncharted territory. Returning to school is definitely a priority of the Board, the administrators, and the teachers. The plan that has been brought here

tonight has been put together after endless hours of talking and discussing while always keeping students, teachers, staff, administrators, parents and community safety in mind. There is not a perfect plan and this may change throughout the year. Mrs. Hite added that the teachers miss the kids' tremendously.

- Parent commented on his concern about virtual and eLearning for the families who have minimal access to internet or no internet at all. Is there a plan for those families in place?
- Parent voiced concern on eLearning and how it did not work well last year. Will it be a better experience for the students than last year?
- Parent wanted to let the Board know that they are entrusting them with their students' education, extra-curricular and mental health. The parent explained she wants the extracurricular activities to continue and realizes that there are a lot of tough choices to make. They will support the school system with their decision and will do their best to help their students with the eLearning environment.
- Community member talked about risk. People 60 and above make up 92% of fatalities in Indiana due to COVID. Data shows that young people are simply not contracting COVID. Most of all industrialized nations have opened their schools with no increase in COVID. Our children have not been educated in-person since March. Data should drive our decisions, not fear. Children are not vectors of this disease as has been documented. Children need to be in school.
- Parent thanked the Board and Dr. White for their transparency regarding the options available for opening our schools. He believes students need to be in school with little or no interruptions citing data statistics and facts supporting schools opening as usual this fall.
- Parent stated that he knows the socialization of students is most important to kids. The fact is that stats were compiled while students were not in school. How many kids go home to grandparents and people with health issues? He supports a hybrid schedule, however, if the decision is made to attend full time he will look at virtual learning for his student.
- Parent stated that she has 2 students in NP district. Parent stated that her students want to be in school as well as she wants her students in school full time. Her students did not do well with eLearning the end of the last school year. She will look for private schooling if students are not going back to school.
- Dr. White explained that it is interesting that the data he has been studying is the same data mentioned here tonight. He has considered the data while trying to balance the risk versus the responsibility to educate which has led to the recommendation he will make to the Board tonight. The points made tonight regarding eLearning were well taken. There is going to be improvements to eLearning this year, with more focus on real-time interaction through video conferencing technology. Dr. White recommended that we start the year with the 50% hybrid option until Labor Day while keeping an eye on the data daily. This plan gives us the best chance to address health concerns and educate in-person at the same time.
- Mr. Shail stated that he supports Dr. White on this decision of 50% at this point in time. He worries most about the kids acting as carriers and taking it home, however, we do need to get kids back in school with a phase-in method. Mr. Shail understands that no one knows how it will be with the number of cases once kids are in school. Watching the data and listening to the Governor will help us know how to proceed.
- Mr. Groves added that he agrees with Dr. White and Mr. Shail with the 50% option. He completely understands that it doesn't make things easy for parents but feels it will be a good way to ease kids into returning with the social distancing and getting used to wearing the masks then reevaluate on a week by week basis.

- Mr. Williamson stated that this is going to be trial and error and the situation will be fluid and changing with time. He feels the 50% option is the best way to start. We need to protect our students first but must also protect our administrators, teachers and staff as we cannot lose any of them. He feels right now we are sitting well here at New Prairie but understands it can change. Mr. Williamson went on to explain that Dr. White as well as all Board members have had many sleepless nights as this has not been a simple decision. We will do what we feel is best for our students and staff.
- Mr. King agreed with the starting point of 50%. We will continue looking at data day by day and hopefully after Labor Day we can get the kids back in school full time. This could be a roller coaster ride this year with changes possible which we must be ready for those possible changes. It is understood that kids learn best with their teacher in the classroom 100% of the time which is our goal.
- Ms. Zielke, the Corporation Nurse and Director of Health Services, added that she also agrees that the 50% option is the best plan to start school. Monitoring the data for the safety of the students and staff is top priority as safety is first.

**(C) Mask Expectations:**

- Dr. White stated that he had done extensive research on the topic of masks and recommends that there is a full mask expectation along with social distancing at the 50% option until Labor Day. He further explained he is recommending students/staff be required to wear masks in the schools even when social distancing beyond 6ft-he feels this precaution is in everyone's best interest and gives us the best chance to minimize spread. He added exceptions will include when students are eating or exercising. Students with medical documentation will also be eligible for an exemption from the expectation. Common sense will be applied with reasonable breaks for students worked in by teachers. Finally, Dr. White acknowledged K-2 will need additional consideration but in the end is recommending those students wear masks also. Full information will go out this week. We also have a very aggressive cleaning and sanitizing schedule.
- Mr. Groves feels that the expectations Dr. White proposed is reasonable and agrees.
  - Parent is wrestling with the mask expectation knowing his young children will wrestle with it. How will the children be disciplined when removing the mask when not allowed to.
  - Parent commented that he feels masks work no matter how much they are uncomfortable and feels is the most socially responsible thing to use. He is happy to hear using masks is what the Board wants.
  - Parent stated that there are some people who cannot wear masks due to medical reasons. Is there medical accommodations for students and teachers who cannot wear masks? Mr. Groves mentioned that children learn by example. He feels that it is important that adults lead by example and wear the masks. Dr. White stated that there can be medical and religious exemptions for those who cannot wear the mask. We will work those issues. K-2 age group will be handled very carefully. Parent communication will be key. The virtual option commitment will need to be made by August 10<sup>th</sup>. Once the commitment is made students cannot go back and forth between in school learning and virtual, but an opportunity would be there for families struggling with the mask expectation that start with in-person attendance to move to the virtual option as long as it is done by Sept 11<sup>th</sup>.

**(D) Instructional Grading expectation:**

- Dr. White presented a preliminary draft of instructional/grading expectations at 50% or eLearning attendance. The days students are not in school will be called "Practice at Home" Days, with students engaged in the content learned the previous day or introductions to be

followed up on during the next in-person day of attendance. Students with the last name beginning with A –L will attend school Mondays and Wednesdays and students with the last names beginning with M-Z will attend Tuesdays and Thursdays. Fridays will be eLearning for students. Late start days will not be happening while attending the 50% hybrid plan and teacher PLC meetings will happen on Friday before E-Learning begins on that Friday.

- Parent asked a question regarding absences. If a child tests positive what is the expectation and what supplies will the children be able to bring home. Dr. White answered that regarding testing there will be protocols in place following the Indiana Dept. of Health that we will follow. When students have symptoms we will request students be tested and that we receive the results; isolation will also be involved. Contact tracing will be such that we will try to follow-up on who was within 6 ft. of the student for at least 15 minutes. This could mean that the entire class may be sent home for 14 days of eLearning.

**(E) Transportation:**

- Dr. White stated that masks will be required on the school bus.

**BOARD COMMENTS**

- Mr. DeMeyer thanked everyone for their input in regard to this ever evolving situation. Tonight's decision is a difficult one. Mr. DeMeyer continued that we must all be ready to adapt and work together to get through this difficult time.
- Mr. Shail also thanked everyone for attending and voicing their concerns. Congratulations to Jen Sass and everyone involved in accomplishing a memorable graduation ceremony for our seniors. Mr. Shail wrapped up by saying that he applauds Dr. White and his staff for what they have done to get New Prairie to the point of starting the school year.
- Mr. Williamson thanked everyone for coming this evening. He was glad to hear everyone's comments. He went on to mention that Mrs. Sass did an excellent job with graduation. Mrs. Sass encouraged parents and everyone to cheer and make the graduation exciting and not somber. Mr. Williamson said that we need to learn to accept the challenges given to us and make this situation better.
- Mr. Groves thanked everyone for attending tonight and stated that he is excited for the school year to begin.
- Mr. King thanked everyone who attended and watched via Facebook Live. Next Board meeting is August 10<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 p.m.

**ADJOURNMENT**

- Mr. Shail made the motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:55 p.m.