



*a culture of excellence*

Publication of the New Prairie United School Corporation

WINTER 2018-19



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Revamping Student Learning Culture with Professional Learning Communities  
Marching Band Makes History With First-Ever Semi-State Appearance  
District Construction Reaches Halfway Point

*We take pride in training up our students to make the world a better place. In this issue of our corporation newsletter, you'll see how we are working toward ensuring higher levels of learning for all students, making our schools safer, and teaching our students to be compassionate and responsible citizens.*

## MISSION

Our purpose is to Ensure High Levels of Learning for ALL Students



## Superintendent's Message

The New Year is the perfect occasion to look toward the future and set goals for growth. While many of our students and family members are setting New Year's Resolutions for themselves, New Prairie United School Corp. is also working on setting goals for our future. Our school district — including administrators, teachers and school board members — has been engaged in a comprehensive review of our mission as a school corporation and how we can build the best learning environment possible for all students.



A strong mission statement is incredibly important. It is a "north star" that serves as a navigation tool

for our schools. It reminds our teachers why we exist and what direction we should be heading for our students.

At New Prairie United School Corp. it is our mission to *Ensure High Levels of Learning for All Students.*

In this newsletter, you will learn more about how we are using professional learning communities to carry out this mission. You will also read about how New Prairie has taken steps to ensure student safety in the wake of traffic accidents across the state, and how our marching band made history with its semi-state appearance this fall.

I sincerely hope everyone in our community enjoys a relaxing Winter Break. Perhaps you will make your own personal mission statement to guide you to your own goals, just like we have done at New Prairie.

Yours in Education,  
Paul White, Superintendent

## Revamping Student Learning Culture with 'Professional Learning Communities'

While students are sleeping in once a week on late-start days, teachers within New Prairie United School Corp. have been busy collaborating. Leaders say that extra time has already improved instruction and increased student engagement within the classroom. In an effort to ensure high levels of learning for all students within New Prairie schools, the district has spent time reflecting on its student learning culture. Leaders have developed a vision statement and a list of commitments that will guide all decisions and all instruction within the district. A common theme within those documents has been the concept of "professional learning communities."

Teachers and administrators are gathering in these professional learning communities to share best practices and work together to find ways to help all students succeed.

"This process has really helped teachers collaborate not only within our school, but across the district to get on the same page about what students need to be successful in the long term," Superintendent Paul White said. "We are already seeing a positive impact in the classroom. We are just getting started, and we are very excited about how this will help students academically."

The basic commitments of a professional learning community include:

- An intense focus on what is best for student learning for all students, with teachers working collaboratively to share best practices to help students learn and achieve at higher levels.
- Identification of the most essential standards at each grade level and in each course.
- A system of teaching, learning, and assessing students' performance that is immediate and consistent.
- Providing more consistent and timely feedback for both students and parents.
- Establishing an assessment system that is more reflective of student progress on essential learning standards with additional opportunities available for students to show mastery.

Late starts will run again on Wednesdays from Feb. 6 through March 27 to allow more time for teachers to build professional learning communities. New Prairie is currently collecting feedback from parents and guardians regarding late starts for the 2019-20 school year. Please fill out a survey to help guide our decisions: [surveymonkey.com/r/2019-2020schoolcalendar](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/2019-2020schoolcalendar).

## New Prairie Reviews Bus Safety

NPUSC mourns with two northern Indiana communities that have suffered student fatalities due to bus accidents. One situation involved a car ignoring a bus stop with the stop arm deployed/lights flashing, and another situation involved a truck driver hitting a stopped bus at a railroad crossing.

The tragedies prompted NPUSC to review its transportation and bus safety practices. Some district bus stops have been adjusted to ensure maximum visibility and safety, but community members with any concerns about a bus stop should contact the transportation office at 574-654-7373.

"Our entire community must come together to keep our students safe," Superintendent Paul White said. "We ask all drivers to remain alert as they share the roads with children and buses."

Below are some additional safety tips related to bus safety for your student and family:

- Always follow driver instructions
- Wait for bus to come to a complete stop
- Wait for the bus driver to hand signal you when it is okay to cross the road
- Be at your bus stop in plenty of time so as not to be in a rush
- Wear bright colored or reflective clothes and/or backpack
- Encourage parents to meet bus at bus stops with students if possible and help student cross the road



With the right tools for the job, New Prairie students have what it takes to succeed.



- Drivers will recommend if there is a change in bus stop location for safety reasons. Parent input is encouraged and welcomed.
- Encourage students to be aware of their surroundings and any vehicles that may be around
- Encourage parents for in-town stops to form a walking line to school and/or bus stops for students
- Parents should never chase down a bus for a student that has missed the bus
- Driver keeps count of students getting off bus at the stops
- No students are to cross a state highway; all state highway bus stops will continue to be on the door side
- We make sure the bus is completely off the road for all highway stops
- Encourage parents to call in when students are not going to ride — especially on highway stops

## Construction Corner

By the time New Prairie High School students return from Winter Break in January, all but four of the planned classroom renovations will have been finalized and the cafeteria addition will be complete with new glass installed.

“We are pleased to announce our renovation projects have reached the point that we are more than halfway completed,” said Tim Short, project manager of the construction company New Prairie contracted for the project. “We are heading toward the finish line.”

New Prairie broke ground in Spring 2017 on the major renovation project, which included work to all district schools like secure entries, classroom updates and building additions. Construction is in the final stretch as work continues on the new auditorium at the high school and the auxiliary gym addition at the middle school.

Anyone who has been by the high school lately is aware that the exterior work is complete on the high school’s new auditorium, Hall of Excellence and the main entry.

“It is exciting to stand inside the new Hall of Excellence and the new auditorium and see the plans come to fruition,” Superintendent Paul White said.

Work has also been completed on the high school’s east wing, which includes new areas for robotics, building trades, art and business. Portions of the high school’s west wing and the cafeteria have also been renovated.

Over the coming months, work will be focused on the high school’s library and converting the current high school auditorium into new classrooms for band and choir, as well as a new athletic field for soccer and football behind the middle school.



## Marching Band Makes History With Semi-State Appearance

When Band Director Patrick Teykl heard New Prairie High School’s name called over the speakers at Chesterton High School on Oct. 13, he could barely contain his excitement: His students had made history.

“I think I accidentally lifted my assistant director in the air,” Teykl said with a laugh.

For the first time, New Prairie’s marching band received a gold rating in the Indiana State School Music Association regionals and advanced to semi-state. Although the Marching Cougars did not make it past the semi-state competition, Teykl said this season has been his most rewarding as a teacher — and bigger things are yet to come for New Prairie.

“It was so exciting to see the students take the field and perform with such energy and passion,” he said. “We’re not a school with a lot of history, we don’t have the foundation of 50-plus years like some of our competitors.”

The Marching Cougars had 90 musicians participating this year, but those numbers could double or triple in coming years as

middle school participation in band classes continue to grow.

“We want to give any kid a chance if they are interested,” said Daniel Weinberg, director of the middle school program. “Right now, we can’t fit the full band in our space at one time, but our new space will allow all of us to come together and keep achieving. Our students are taking a lot of ownership in what we’re doing as they help build the program from the ground up.”

*New Prairie High School currently does not have enough uniforms for all students interested in marching band in coming years — and the ones they do have are on their last leg. The district is covering half the cost of new uniforms for the New Prairie Marching Cougars, but the band boosters still need help covering the remaining portion.*

**To donate, contact**  
Patrick Teykl at [pTeykl@npusc.k12.in.us](mailto:pTeykl@npusc.k12.in.us)  
or 574-654-7271.



## You're Invited

You are invited to attend meetings of the School Board of NPUSC. These meetings are generally conducted at 6 p.m. CST on the fourth Monday of each month in the Superintendent's Office, 5327 N Cougar Rd., New Carlisle, IN, unless otherwise advertised.

## School Board

Richard Shail..... President  
 Al Williamson..... Vice-President  
 Dale Groves..... Secretary  
 Phillip King..... Member  
 William Romstadt (term ending 1/7/19) .Member  
 Jason DeMeyer (term beginning 1/7/19) .Member

## Feedback is Welcome

We welcome our readers' letters, comments and critique. Write to us at Editor, New Prairie United School Corp., 5327 North Cougar Road, New Carlisle, IN 46552, or call (574) 654-7273.

## Contact Us

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 (219) 778-4740  
 Prairie Elementary Phone..... (574) 654-7258  
 (219) 778-9388  
 Rolling Prairie Phone ..... (219) 778-2018

## Our Website

[www.npusc.k12.in.us](http://www.npusc.k12.in.us)



*There is something to smile about at New Prairie!*



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## ECRWSS POSTAL CUSTOMER



*Students at New Prairie not only excel academically, they also excel in extra-curriculars.*



*Forming lifelong and meaningful relationships with their peers is our goal for each student.*

## All-School Calendar, 2018-19

Dec. 21-Jan. 4.....	Winter Recess
Jan. 8.....	Students Return
Jan. 21.....	Martin Luther King Day (snow make-up day)
April 1-5.....	Spring Break
April 19.....	Good Friday (no school)
May 22.....	Last Student Day
May 27.....	Memorial Day (no school)
June 2.....	Graduation

