

**Board Notes**  
February 26, 2024

The regular meeting of the School Board was held at 6:00 p.m., Monday, February 26, 2024, at New Prairie Middle School in the LGI Room with Mr. Phil King, Mr. Jason DeMeyer, Mrs. Jill Smith, Mr. Dale Groves and Mr. Rich Gadacz present. Dr. Paul White, Superintendent, was also present.

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

There was a motion by Mr. Groves to Amend the Agenda adding Action Item "M" to approve the Athletic Trainer Contract with Northwest Health LaPorte Hospital, seconded by Mr. Gadacz and approved 5-0.

**INSTRUCTIONAL PRESENTATION**

Mr. Holmquest, NPMS Principal, began his presentation by describing some of the challenges that they see with students post-COVID. He explained that last year negative student behavior had increased on a level that hadn't existed for many years. Mr. Holmquest introduced NPMS Guidance Counselors, Mrs. Harmon and Ms. Walden, and Ms. Jenkins, Social Worker at NPMS, who put together supports for severe disciplinary issues. The team explained their support plans that have proven to be positive for those students this year. In response to those behavior problems, Mr. Holmquest described his behavior intervention plan and student expectations called the Cougar Pride Matrix, stating that behavior issues this current year have, by far, improved.

Mr. Holmquest then explained that the State of Indiana designated New Prairie Middle School a "Purple Heart School" which means that NPMS displays a significant commitment to service members, veterans and their families.

Mr. Holmquest also added that New Prairie Middle School is the first Middle School in the State of Indiana designated as "Heart Safe". He gave a huge shout out to the New Prairie High School HOSA program that are the sponsors for obtaining that designation as well.

Mr. Holmquest introduced Miss Heidi West, the new Assistant Principal at the Middle School who is a great addition to their staff.

Mr. Holmquest then listed the increased number of activities for students this year that have been highly attended. Mr. Holmquest concluded that with academic interventions and behavior interventions they should see success closing academic gaps for students.

**CONSENT ITEMS**

The Board approved Consent Items as follows:

- (A) Minutes – January 24, 2024
- (B) Financial Reports
- (C) Claims
- (D) Payroll
- (E) Personnel Report as follows:

**CERTIFIED**

- Leaves/Resignations/Retirements
  1. Ashley Grylewicz – ECA Resignation as Olive Twp. Elementary 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Volleyball Coach effective 5/24/2024
  2. Jennifer Hite – FMLA Leave as NPMS 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Science Teacher beginning 1/17/2024 through 3/15/2024
  3. Kelly Jarka – Retirement as RPES/PVES PE Teacher effective 6/30/2024
  4. Allison Middlebrook – Intermittent FMLA Leave as Counselor at Olive Twp. Elementary beginning 1/15/2024 through 7/15/2024
  5. Julie Cinal – FMLA Leave as NPMS 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Science Teacher beginning 2/9/2024 through 4/6/2024
- Employment
- Employment – Extra-Curricular

1. John Arndt – NPHS Head Boys Cross Country Coach for the 2024-2025 school year
  2. Jason Lenig – NPHS Girls Head Track Coach beginning 2023-2024 school year
  3. Cathleen Lower – NPMS Co-Head Swim Coach for the 2023-2024 school year
  4. Bobby Whitenack – Olive Twp. Elementary Wrestling Coach for the 2023-2024 school year
- Adjustments
    1. Mark Stone to be compensated his hourly rate for 3 hours per week of homebound teaching (Principles of Agriculture) for a high school student beginning March 4<sup>th</sup> through the end of the semester.
    2. Adam Branch to be compensated his hourly rate for 3 hours per week of homebound teaching (Algebra I) for a high school student beginning March 4<sup>th</sup> through the end of the semester.

## **CLASSIFIED**

- Leaves/Resignations/Retirement
  1. David Buell – FMLA Leave as NPUSC Grounds Maintenance Worker beginning 2/6/2024 through 5/6/2024
  2. Gretchen Kubit – Resignation as Rolling Prairie Elementary School Health Aide effective 2/16/2024
  3. Colin Layman – Resignation as NPUSC Bus Driver effective 2/10/2024
  4. Kayla Lindgren – Resignation as Nutritional Services Worker at NPHS effective 2/12/2024
  5. Kateri Krueger – Resignation as Nutritional Services Worker at NPHS effective 2/12/2024
  6. Kristina Emerick – Medical Leave as Prairie View Elementary Instructional Assistant beginning 1/29/2024 through 3/25/2024
- Employment
  1. Danielle Blint - NPHS Single Route (Bus 39) Bus Driver from sub Bus Driver beginning 2/5/2024
  2. Jamie Black – Rolling Prairie Elementary School Health Aide beginning 2/19/2024
  3. Lara Cada – Olive Twp. Elementary School Instructional Assistant start date pending criminal background check results
  4. Amy Grad – Nutritional Services Worker, Full-Time, at NPHS beginning 2/14/2024
  5. Jenny Harringer – NPUSC IT Building Technician start date pending criminal background check results
  6. Lori Jackson – Rolling Prairie Elementary School Instructional Assistant start date pending criminal background check results
- Employment – Extra-Curricular
  1. Jared Emmons – NPHS Assistant Baseball Coach for the 2023-2024 school year
  2. Austin Price – NPHS Co-Assistant HS Wrestling Coach for the 2023-2024 school year
  3. Amanda Straup – Olive Twp. Elementary Math Bowl Coach for the 2023-2024 school year
  4. Alexis Lichtenbarger – NPHS Assistant Girls Track Coach for the 2023-2024 school year
  5. Eric Lower – NPMS Assistant Swim Coach for the 2023-2024 school year
- Adjustments
  1. Jackie Woltman – NPUSC Bus Driver to drop her McKinney Vento route and go back to a single MS/HS single route.
  2. Katherine Ring – NPUSC Bus Driver to drop her mid-day preschool route effective 2/5/2024 and going back to a single MS/HS route.
  1. Jessica Frye to transfer positions from NPMS Secretary/Treasurer to NPUSC Administrative Assistant to the Curriculum Director effective 2/26/2024.

## REPORTS

### Superintendent's Report

- Dr. White thanked Mr. Holmquest and the New Prairie Middle School Counselors for their thoughtful and detailed presentation about the academic supports happening throughout the school. It is exciting to see early interventions in order to prevent situations from occurring have had impact, according to the data presented, which is an excellent effort.
- Dr. White explained that the corporation has a lot to celebrate. He introduced Mr. Jared Jaggi, NPHS Band Teacher, who introduced his two students, NPMS 8<sup>th</sup> grade student, Lukas Hannewyk and NPHS 12<sup>th</sup> grade student, Kodie Wilhite who achieved Gold Winner Distinction at Indiana State Solo and Ensemble Contest which is the highest distinction the State of Indiana gives. Mr. Jaggi described what the students had to do for the contest and stated that he is very proud of the students. Mr. Jaggi concluded by thanking Dr. White and the Board for inviting them and celebrating the student's accomplishment. Dr. White congratulated the students and their excellent representation of the Band program.
- Dr. White concluded his report by congratulating the Girls Basketball Team along with Coach Litka for their record-breaking season and multiple milestones. He also congratulated the Wrestling Team that had some individuals who advanced to state competition finishing very well.

## ACTION ITEMS

- (A) The Board accepted Donations:
  - NPHS Robotics received the following donations:
    - OmniSource donated \$1,000
    - Lego Corp./Christopher Warren Trust donated \$500
    - EPAK Machinery, Inc. donated \$500
    - Michigan City Paper Box Company donated \$500
    - IBEW Local 531 donated \$200
  - Rolling Prairie Elementary School received a grant donation from the Cheryl Lyn Welter Family Charitable Foundation for \$600 for the 4<sup>th</sup> Grade Frog in the Bog field trip for the next school year
  - Rolling Prairie Elementary School received 85 student dictionaries and animal gazetteers for 3<sup>rd</sup> grade classes from the Rolling Prairie Lions Club
  - Heston Hills Event Center donated the room fee and discounted meals for the Etiquette luncheon for 5th grade students at Olive Township, Prairie View and Rolling Prairie Elementary schools valued at \$2,025
  - The NPUSC Nutritional Services Angel Fund received the following donations: \$30 from Carol Norris, \$50 from Ellen Borkowski, \$100 from Suzanne Flagg, & \$100 from Susan Powers
- (B) The Board approved Conflict of Interest Disclosure Statements
- (C) The Board approved the 2025 Budget Calendar
- (D) The Board approved the Rolling Prairie Baseball Association Agreement & New Prairie Baseball Agreement for 2024
- (E) The Board approved 2024 Summer School & Athletic Camp Dates
- (F) The Board approved Insurance Renewal with Gibson Insurance
- (G) The Board approved Closure for all Transfer Students, K-12, beginning February 1st for the remainder of the 2023-2024 School Year
- (H) The Board approved the Sale of a Surplus Technology Item
- (I) The Board approved the MOU between the LaPorte County Health Dept and NPUSC
- (J) The Board approved an updated Job Description:
  - Director of College & Career Readiness
- (K) The Board approved Overnight Field Trip Requests
- (L) The Board approved PowerSchool Contracts for:
  - Schoology LMS Subscription

- PowerSchool SIS Customizations Maintenance & Support
  - PowerSchool Enrollment Registration
  - PowerSchool SIS Maintenance & Support
- (M) The Board approved the Athletic Trainer Contract with LaPorte Hospital d/b/a Northwest Health LaPorte Hospital

### **DISCUSSION ITEMS**

- (A) Mr. King read the 1st Reading of updated Board Policies:
- Po 0113- Boundaries
  - Po 5111 - Determination of Legal Settlement and Eligibility for Enrollment of Students without Legal Settlement in the Corporation; Proof in Indiana Residency
  - Po 8600 – Transportation
  - Po 8600.01 - Student Safety in Transporting
  - Po 8640 - Transportation for Field and other Corporation Sponsored Trips
  - Po 6550 – Travel Payment and Reimbursement/Relocation Costs
  - Po 8500 - Food Services
  - Po 8500.02 – Food Services -Meal Charging and Uncollectible Debt (***New Policy***)

There was no discussion from Board members regarding these policy updates. Mr. King stated that these proposed updated policies will be posted on the NPUSC website under the School Board tab/Current Documents. These policies will be voted upon at the March meeting.

### **BOARD COMMENTS**

- Mr. Groves thanked the Middle School for presenting tonight. Always great to see the wonderful things going on in our schools. Mr. Groves congratulated the students who came tonight to speak on their accomplishments.
- Mr. Gadacz echoed Mr. Groves. He stated that there are a lot of great things happening at New Prairie.
- Mr. DeMeyer congratulated the students who spoke tonight and their accomplishments. Mr. DeMeyer said that the middle school data presented tonight regarding the success of the interventions says a lot. He appreciates what they are doing for students at the middle school.
- Mrs. Smith thanked the Middle School for their presentation and congratulated the students present tonight. Mrs. Smith also congratulated Emma Tulacz for her state swim title finishing 12<sup>th</sup> in the 50 freestyle.
- Mr. King congratulations to all our student athletes including the gymnastics team. Congratulations to our Band students as well. Mr. King went on to say that today is the start of Public Schools Week. Public Schools are the backbone of K-12 education adding that many of our Legislators, especially our wonderful Attorney General Todd Rokita, would beg to differ. Mr. King went on to congratulate all Public Schools throughout the US and the work our teachers and administrators put in day to day.
- Mr. King stated that the next regular Board Meeting will be held March 25<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 pm at Olive Twp. Elementary School.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

Mr. King asked if the Board had any further business. The Board had no further business to discuss. The meeting was adjourned at 6:53 p.m.