

Board Notes
March 24, 2025

The regular meeting of the School Board was held at 6:00 p.m., Monday, March 24, 2025, at New Prairie United School Corporation in the Central Office Board Room with Mr. Phil King, Mr. Jason DeMeyer, Mrs. Jill Smith, Mr. Rich Gadacz and Mr. Rich Shail present. Mrs. Jennifer Sass, NPUSC Curriculum Director, was also present.

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

There was a motion by Mrs. Smith to amend the Agenda adding a Legislative Report following the Curriculum Director Report and tabling Action Item (B) until the April 28, 2025 Regular Board Meeting. Mr. Gadacz seconded the motion and was approved 5-0.

CONSENT ITEMS

The Board approved Consent Items as follows:

- (A) Minutes – February 24, 2025, February 28, 2025, March 19, 2025
- (B) Financial Reports
- (C) Claims
- (D) Payroll
- (E) Personnel Report as follows:

CERTIFIED

- Leaves/Resignations/Retirements
 1. Susan French - Intermittent FMLA Leave beginning 2/6/2025 through 2/6/2026
 2. Wendi Hemphill - Intermittent FMLA Leave beginning 3/5/2025 through 6/30/2025
 3. Melissa Kuczmanski - Intermittent FMLA Leave beginning 2/24/2025 through 2/24/2026
- Employment
- Employment - 2025 Summer School & Camp Staff
 1. Keith Hite – Building Trades Cougar Career Camp Leader
 2. Juan Alvarez Gomez – Robotics Cougar Career Camp Leader
 3. Cheryl Karczewski – Plant & Animal Science Cougar Career Camp Leader
 4. Terrie Sult – Digital Design Cougar Career Camp Leader
 5. Adrienne Hurt – Visual Arts Cougar Career Camp Leader
 6. Maria Sobecki – Biomedical Sciences Cougar Career Camp Leader
 7. Sarah Huff – Education Professions Cougar Career Camp Leader
- Employment – Extra-Curricular/Ancillary Duty
- Adjustments
 1. Ashley Wojtysiak to receive \$100 stipend for working the Family Swim Night event on Friday, March 7th.
 2. Kortney Brennan, New Prairie High School ELA Teacher, to voluntarily transfer her position to NPUSC Online School Coordinator beginning 7/1/2025
 3. Gabriela Post – Voluntary position transfer from Rolling Prairie Elementary Title 1 K-2 Teacher to ½ Time Interventionist at Rolling Prairie Elementary School and ½ Time Interventionist at Prairie View Elementary School for the 2025-2026 school year.

CLASSIFIED

- Leaves/Resignations/Retirement
 1. Kristine Gadacz,- Intermittent FMLA Leave beginning 2/22/2025 through 4/3/2025
 2. Kristine Gadacz – Resignation as Prairie View Elementary School Librarian & Summer Technology Assistant effective 4/3/2025
 3. Christal Jonas – Resignation as Administrative Assistant to the Director of Facilities and Director of Athletics effective 4/1/2025
 4. Heidi Nix – Resignation as Rolling Prairie Elementary School Instructional Assistant effective 3/28/2025
 5. Jane Bealor - Intermittent FMLA Leave beginning 3/21/2025 through 3/21/2026
 6. Kayla Vogel – Resignation as Rolling Prairie Elementary School Instructional Assistant 3/20/2025

- Employment
 1. Austin Amor – NPUSC Transportation Department Mechanic beginning 3/18/2025
- Employment - 2025 Summer School & Camp Staff
 1. Bryce Bloode – HFL “Be Your Best” Camp Week 2 Staff Member
 2. Jessica Finn – Health Aide/Secretary for Summer Programming May 29th – June 18th and June 24th – June 27th
 3. Jason Clemons – Business & Entrepreneurship Cougar Career Camp Leader
- Employment – Extra-Curricular
 1. Jared Emmons – NPHS Head Boys Tennis Coach for the 2025-2026 school year
 2. Amanda Schwingendorf – Prairie View Elementary School Cross Country Coach for the 2024-2025 school year
- Adjustments
 1. Erin Jenkins, NPMS Social Service Counselor, to receive a \$200 stipend for a McKinney-Vento event on March 7, 2025 to be paid out of the McKinney-Vento Grant.
 2. Barb Chappell, current NPUSC Technology Administrative Assistant, to change position to New Prairie High School Secretary/Registrar effective 3/24/2025.
 3. Donald McClure to receive a \$200 stipend for transporting students to and from Band and Choir competitions paid from College & Career Grant.
 4. Tina Balanow to receive a \$200 stipend for transporting students to and from Band and Choir competitions paid from College & Career Grant.
 5. Paul Friedrich to receive a \$200 stipend for transporting students to and from Band and Choir competitions paid from College & Career Grant.

REPORTS

(A)

Director of Curriculum Report

- Mrs. Sass wished everyone Happy Spring/winter! She reported that we are in the homestretch as we wrapped up quarter 3 and are heading into our last quarter.

Mrs. Sass highlighted some of the great things that are happening at our schools: all NPUSC elementary schools put a special focus on reading with read aloud activities with fun themes to get our students excited about reading during read aloud time; New Prairie High School Senior Academic Team competed at PNW and were highlighted in the newspaper; New Prairie Middle School wrestling team had a great article in the local paper collaborating to become Heart Smart; Mr. Kendell Fowler, New Prairie Middle School band teacher, has been recognized as an ISSMA Academic Educator. Mrs. Sass stated that she just arrived to the meeting following a toe tapping concert full of sweet smiles from 1st and 3rd graders at Olive Elementary choir students in our HS auditorium.

Mrs. Sass recognized Valeria Markewicz, NPHS student present at the meeting, who used her lifesaving skills she acquired in Mrs. Aerts’ classroom to save a life. The endless support from HFL, Play for Jake, and Mrs. Aerts in making heart safety a priority and helping all our schools become Heart Safe has made a lasting impact.

Mrs. Sass concluded that these are just a few of the engaging, exciting experiences our students receive daily from our dedicated staff. I hope all have a restful and rejuvenating spring break next week and get ready for a fast and furious wrap up to the school year.

(B)

Board President Report

- Mr. King reported on the 2025 Legislative update as follows:
 - SB 146 passed the House which will raise the minimum teacher pay from \$40K to \$45K. They also passed SB 249 which will allow districts to hold some funds back from collective bargaining, if they choose, in order to provide bonuses (this will be replacing TAG (Teacher Appreciation Grant) funds that teachers have been getting because state lawmakers feel as if public school administrators do not know how to evaluate classroom teachers properly and exploiting the system). In the new process, although they call it “bonuses”, the state would fund the increase the first two years and then the school districts would have to absorb the cost and continue to pay it by adding it to the base pay of the teacher thus increasing the obligation of the school district.

- SB 255 has been held for changes after concerns that could allow students to miss several hours of school time a week to attend off-campus religious instruction. The current limit is two hours which began July 1, 2024. The bill that was introduced would have allowed a student to choose the off-campus option as an elective; however, these would supersede the current law that allows only up to two hours.
- Senate Education voted through bills on math education, A-F grades (yes, they are making a comeback but factoring more in than just test scores) and home school diplomas.
- SB 287 which is Partisan School Boards is still waiting on a third and final reading in the House. If the House passes SB 287, the Senate could accept the changes the House made or go to a conference committee and work out a compromise. Should be noted, the House version of this bill did not pass - changes that were made to the Senate's version are similar to the one that failed in the House.
- Mr. King concluded that he will have a final report for everyone at the next regular board meeting as this long session is winding down quickly. By then the session will be over and we will know more on how the State will be screwing over public schools as we await the budget bills and to see whether or not SB 518, which has seen a few changes and might be attached to one of the budget bills instead of standing alone now, passes or not.... as a reminder, SB 518 is the bill that would, in some cases, make it so public schools would have to share property taxes with Charter schools but still not be held accountable like public schools are for said money.

ACTION ITEMS

- (A) The Board accepted the following donations:
- NPHS Drama Club received a donation of a Nursing Cap from Connie Blatter
 - NPHS Biomed/HOSA Team received a donation of \$2,500 from Northwest Indiana Area Health Education Center for classroom supplies & equipment
 - NPMS received the following donations for a fundraiser to raise money for an AED for the LaPorte County Fairgrounds Rebel Pavilion:
 - \$500 from LaPorte Community Federal Credit Union
 - \$500 from Heston Supper Club, Tim and Jackie Ohlund Owners
 - \$50 from Mike Rosenbaum
 - \$100 from Dr. Sam West
 - \$500 from Todd Hudson
 - Olive Twp. Elementary School received the following donations:
 - \$200 from the family of Anne James in her memory
 - 6 pieces of furniture as a donation from New Carlisle Public Library
- (B) **The Board tabled approving the Closure of Grade 12 to Transfer Students for the 2025-26 school year until April 28, 2025**
- (C) The Board accepted and adopted the 2nd Reading of the Revised Board Policies: NEOLA updated Board Policies Volume 36, No.2, EDGAR UGG Volume 36, No.2 & Volume 37, No.1; & NPUSC Updated Policies
- Po 0164 – Notice of Meetings – Technical Correction
 - Po 0164.4 - Meeting of the Board Defined - Rescinded Policy
 - Po 0165 – Board Meetings – Revised
 - Po 1130 – Conflict of Interest – Revised
 - Po 1213.01 – Staff-Student Relations – Technical Correction
 - Po 1220 – Employment of The Superintendent – Revised
 - Po 1230 – Responsibilities of the Superintendent – Revised
 - Po 1617 – Weapons – Revised
 - Po 2370 – Education Options – NPUSC Revised
 - Po 2370.02 – Flex Program – NPUSC Revised
 - Po 2430 – Corporation Sponsored Clubs and Activities – NPUSC Revised
 - Po 2623 – Student Assessment – Revised
 - Po 3217 – Weapons – Revised
 - Po 4217 – Weapons – Revised

- Po 5111 – Determination of Legal Settlement and Eligibility for Enrollment of Students without Legal Settlement in the Corporation; Proof of Indiana Residency – Revised
 - Po 5410 – Promotion, Placement, and Retention – Revised
 - Po 5460 - Graduation Requirements – Adopt
 - Po 5500 – Student Conduct – Revised
 - Po 5610– Suspension and Expulsion of Students – Revised
 - Po 5772 – Weapons – Revised
 - Po 6110 – Grant Funds – Revised
 - Po 6111 – Internal Control Standards and Procedures – Revised
 - Po 6112 – Cash Management of Grants – Revised
 - Po 6114 – Cost Principles – Spending Federal Funds – Revised
 - Po 6250 – Required ADM Counts for the Purpose of State Funding and Verification of Residency for Membership – Revised
 - Po 6325 – Procurement – Federal Grants/Funds - Revised
 - Po 6550 – Travel Payment and Reimbursement/Relocation Costs - Revised
 - Po 7217 – Possession of Firearms and Weapons by Visitors – Revised
 - Po 7310 – Disposition of Surplus Property – Revised
 - Po 7450 – Property Inventory – Revised
 - Po 7540.03 – Student Network and Internet Acceptable Use and Safety – Revised
 - Po 7540.04 – Staff Technology Acceptable Use and Safety – Revised
 - Po 7540.09 – Artificial Intelligence – ***New Policy***
 - Po 8400 – School Safety – Revised
 - Po 8420 – Emergency Preparedness Plans and Drills – Revised
 - Po 8500 – Food Service Program – NPUSC Revised
 - Po 8600.01 – Student Safety in Transporting – Revised
 - Po 9270 – Equivalent Instruction for Compulsory Attendance Compliance Purposes – NPUSC Revised
- (D) The Board approved Conflict of Interest Statement Forms for:
- Justin Holmquest, NPMS Principal
 - Jill Smith, NPUSC School Board Secretary
 - Paul White, NPUSC Superintendent
 - Tara White, NPHS Administrator of College and Career Readiness
 - Phil King, NPUSC School Board President
- (E) The Board approved the School Bus Replacement for 2025
- (F) The Board approved the Mobile Device Management Licensing Renewal with Mosyle
- (G) The Board approved Roof Repairs to Multiple School Buildings Roofs
- (H) The Board approved Upgraded Sound Systems for Athletic Fields
- (I) The Board approved the Updated School Board Meeting Schedule for 2025

DISCUSSION ITEMS

BOARD COMMENTS

- All Board members wished everyone a safe and happy Spring Break!
- Mr. King reminded everyone about the next regular Board meeting to be held at New Prairie Middle School in the LGI Room at 6:00 pm, CST.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. King asked if the Board had any further business. The Board had no further business to discuss. The meeting was adjourned at 7:36 p.m.